

## **Grimace, Magister Grimache, Grymace**

A late fourteenth-century composer of five surviving attributed French-texted *formes fixes* songs: three balades, one virelai and one rondeau. Grimace's identity is unknown and it seems likely that his name, like that of other composers of the period (Solage, Zaccar, Trebor, etc.), is a sobriquet. His songs' poetry is very similar to that of Machaut, and their music stylistically resembles those three- and four-part works of Machaut which probably date from the 1360s and 70s. Grimace's four-part counterpoint works exactly as that of Machaut with isolated moments of tenor-function in the contratenor which relate only to the triplum, usually when the contratenor is below the tenor. As the three-part version of "*A l'arme*" in **PR** proves, Grimace's tripla are contrapuntally excisable (effectively a 'fourth', rather than a third part). The contratenor in both four-part pieces by Grimace lies mainly below the tenor except at important section endings, thereby resembling late Machaut works, like "*Phyton*" (B39). The minim-rich rhythmic and melodic figures used by both composers in minor prolation are especially similar and like the later Machaut balades, Grimace's exhibit 'musical rhyme' (identical passages ending the A section the second time (*clos*) and the refrain). Notationally Grimace's songs are relatively straight-forward, occasionally using mensuration signs or coloration to fix a note at its imperfect value. However, as with Machaut, the value of the minim remains constant. Thus, notwithstanding the presence of three of Grimace's works in **Ch**, he cannot be associated with the notational habits of the composers of the so-called *ars subtilior* and may be considered a younger contemporary of Machaut.

Like Machaut's double balade "*Quant Theseus / Ne quier*" (B34) the two poetic texts of "*Se Zephirus / Se Jupiter*" have the same rhymes and share a refrain text. However, Machaut's double balade is in four parts, with those that function as cantus and triplum being texted (a pattern also seen in the Deschamps / F. Andrieu *déploration* on Machaut's death, "*Armes, Amours / O flour des flours*"). By contrast, Grimace's "*Se Zephirus / Se Jupiter*" is in three parts with the cantus and contratenor texted; it is thus technically closer to other pieces in **Ch**, Senleches's bi-textual balade "*Je me merveil / J'ay pluseurs fois*", and Vaillant's bi-textual rondeau "*Dame, doucement / Doulz amis*" (whose texts appear in **Pa** on the folio following those of "*Se Zephirus / Se Jupiter*").

As the copying of all three stanzas of both texts in **Pa** proves, the two stanzas of residual text in the **Ch** both belong to the cantus voice (erroneously, Apel gives both residual stanzas, and Greene the second, to the contratenor). These texts participate in a topos, frequently signalled by texts starting with 'Se', in which hyperbolic comparisons are made between the lady and/or patron and a list of figures from the classical, biblical and/or Christian past. The well-

documented late-fourteenth-century preoccupation with lists of names as a way of crystallising renown, together with the lack of conclusive evidence for the provenance of **Ch**, make specific identifications of patrons or dedicatees behind these texts as fraught as identifying the often similarly pseudonymous composers who wrote them.

The triadic melodic figures of the balade "*Des que buisson*", occurring in conjunction with static harmonies (tenor *longae*), are akin to mimetic moments in so-called "realistic" virelais. Like most of these, "*Des que buisson*" depicts the coming of spring. The traditional use of the birdsong motif as part of the spring topos may have prompted the triplum part's falling thirds, hocketing figures, and repeated notes, and the tenor's provision of three against two (e.g. breves 11-12), all features typical of more obviously mimetic birdsong pieces.

The triadic figures and striking imitation (partially texted in the lower voices) of Grimace's own mimetic virelai, "*A l'arme*", do not imitate birdsong, but instead depict the call to arms of a watchman whose stronghold is being attacked. This theme is transposed from its battle origins into a courtly register in which Love's arrow pierces the walls of the lover's heart. "*A l'arme*" is copied anonymously in **PR** in close proximity to the virelai "*C'estoit ma douce nourriture*" (Greene XXI no.22) whose similar triadic figures have prompted Greene to ascribe it also to Grimace, although is copied anonymously.

Grimace's balade "*Dedens mon cuer*", the only attributed piece surviving in the flyleaves of a thirteenth-century missal now in Bern, is incompletely preserved. Its refrain text, "*Resjouis est quicunques la regarde*", is shared with that of Trebor's balade "*Passerose de beauté*", although the music differs.

Only the incipit text of the rondeau "*Je voy ennui*" has survived and despite some passing similarities with Grimace's other works, its counterpoint is less clearly directional, perhaps indicating errors in Coussemaker's now uncheckable transcription, or that **Str**'s attribution (like several to Machaut in this source) is unreliable.

Elizabeth Eva LEACH (English original of MGG central text)