



The *Jeu d'Adam*

MS Tours 927 and the
Provenance of the Play

Edited by Christophe Chaguinian



EARLY DRAMA, ART, AND MUSIC

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Introduction

The *Jeu d'Adam*: Tours 927 and the Provenance of the Play

THIS VOLUME OF ESSAYS is closely related to my critical edition and translation into modern French of the *Jeu d'Adam* (Paradigme, 2014). As I began working on the *Jeu d'Adam*, I was astounded to realize that the extensive bibliography for the play concerns almost exclusively its literary aspects, with very few works on the milieu that produced it. After further study, I realized why: this classic of western theater has been transmitted in a single codex (Tours 927) whose history is sketchy, to say the least. When we first become aware of its existence, some time in the fifteenth century, the manuscript has left the clerical milieu from which it originated and landed in the library of a noble Provençal family, the Agout. Simply stated, we do not know whether it originated in a secular or a monastic establishment. The difficulty in finding the ultimate origin of the codex is compounded by the fact that it was copied in the south of France—somewhere in the *langue d'oc* territories—while its exemplar clearly came from the northern *langue d'oïl* domain: all the vernacular texts are in Old French with one exception, a later addition of an Occitan stanza on an empty space. Under these circumstances, I came to realize that only the codex's contents could shed some light on the milieu that produced the manuscript's model. Since the codex is made up of two fascicules that were originally independent (fols. 1r–46r; fols. 47r–229r), only the contents of the first 46 folios warranted analysis. These folios transmit four texts or groups of texts:

1. A Latin Easter composition, sometimes called *Ludus Paschalis*.
2. Thirty-six Latin compositions, thirty-one of which are refrain compositions, similar to vernacular *rondeaux*.
3. The *Jeu d'Adam*.
4. *Les 15 Signes du jugement dernier*.

Inasmuch as the *15 Signes* is a widely disseminated work without any discernible ties, it appeared that it would be of little help in pinpointing the

origin of the codex. On the other hand, thanks to advances made in the fields of musicology, the history of education, and the history of theater, the first two items could prove highly informative. It also appeared that the analysis of the Latin texts included in the *Jeu d'Adam*, namely the *responsoria*, could be equally useful for establishing the milieu that produced the text and even locate some establishments where it may have been written. Finally the linguistic origin of the text itself warranted closer scrutiny. The insular origin of the *Jeu d'Adam* has become a truism among scholars who did not take into account the possibility that its Anglo-Norman traits may be a result of its circulation in England. For example, I have argued in the article “Traces de la représentation dans le *Jeu d'Adam*” that some metrical irregularities, usually interpreted as characteristic of Anglo-Norman versification, are actually the result of changes made by actors. As I began researching these four components, I contacted various experts whenever I had questions about them. These exchanges taught me how to approach these texts and issues in a productive way in order to understand what each of them could or could not teach us—to separate the wheat from the chaff, if I may say. In 2013 I organized in Kalamazoo a session devoted to the manuscript of the *Jeu d'Adam* to which I invited the experts whose input had helped me in my editorial work. The contributors to this volume are these same specialists, and each presents those aspects of the codex that are helpful in establishing the origin of the *Jeu d'Adam*.

Christophe Chaguinian—
The *Jeu d'Adam*: Monastic or Secular?

The *Jeu d'Adam* clearly comes from an ecclesiastical milieu: it requires the use of liturgical books and the presence of a choir for the performance of chants. Unfortunately, nothing in the manuscript indicates—at first glance, at least—whether it belonged to a monastic or a secular establishment. Fortunately, the aforementioned advances in musicology, the history of education and the history of theater allow us to use the codex's contents to address the question of origin with some profit. In this contribution, I argue that the *Jeu* belonged to the repertoire of an important secular—as opposed to monastic—church, based on (1) the presence in the codex of Latin *rondeaux* which belonged to the repertory of large *secular* churches—a topic developed in Mary Channen Caldwell's contribution—and (2) the presence of the *Ludus Paschalis* and the *Jeu d'Adam* itself. An important characteristic—until now not taken into account—

shared by these compositions, that plays in favor of large secular churches is the size of their casts. In the twelfth century, far from being the rule, large monasteries were the exception and few abbeys could contribute several dozen of their members to big performances; on the other hand, such was the case for cathedral or collegiate churches whose membership was usually sizable. For a long time, critics have regarded such large compositions as school productions. The dating of both the *Ludus Paschalis* and the *Jeu d'Adam* to the twelfth century argues strongly yet again in favor of a secular church; by that time monastic schools were a thing of the past, and education was provided by secular clergy, very often canons of a cathedral's chapter. Students themselves were cultivated as future members of the chapter, and performing in large plays like the *Jeu d'Adam* gave them the opportunity to hone professional skills such as singing, memorizing texts, performing actions in a decorous fashion, etc.

In the second part of the contribution, I consider the use of the *Jeu d'Adam* during the liturgical year. While critics have usually favored Septuagesima as the time for the performance of the play, the Christmas season is a strong possibility as it contained the largest concentration of both dramatized rituals and large plays such as the famous *Danielis Ludus* from Beauvais. The first didascalia of the play also warrants studying the possibility that, like later *mystères*, the *Jeu d'Adam* may have been detached from the liturgical calendar and played whenever it was convenient. Indeed the stage instruction indicates that paradise must be decorated with fragrant flowers and fruits, props impossible to obtain in northern France during Septuagesima or the Christmas season.

Catherine Bougy—
The *Jeu d'Adam*, an Anglo-Norman Text?

There is a strong consensus about the linguistic origin of the *Jeu d'Adam* among its editors (Grass, Studer, Aebischer, Noomen, Barillari, Dominguez). According to them, it is an Anglo-Norman composition. While such agreement appears impressive, in reality it is superficial. It is not the result of independent analyses of the text since all the above-mentioned authors merely repeat the conclusions of the almost one-hundred-year-old analysis by Paul Studer (1918), itself based on the even older study by Karl Grass. In reality Grass's conclusions are by no means definitive. First, our knowledge of medieval dialects has improved since 1891, the year of Grass's first edition. Second, Grass—and Studer—did not take

into account the fact that the *Jeu d'Adam* was most certainly performed and therefore many metrical irregularities resulted from the play's performance. The *raison d'être* of many irregularities is thus not Anglo-Norman versification, influenced by a strong Germanic accent (an argument frequently offered in favor of an Anglo-Norman origin), but the actors' desire to improve their lines through the addition or deletion of short lexical items. Catherine Bougy's analysis of the language, the first study in almost one hundred years, is thus a welcome addition to the scholarship of the *Jeu d'Adam*. It is clear that the text circulated in England (hence the multiple Anglo-Norman spellings), but Bougy makes a strong argument with compelling evidence for a continental origin of the text. It is likely that the author was a native of one of the western regions of France (Normandy, the Romance-speaking part of Brittany, Maine, Anjou, or, going south, the Poitou or Saintonge).

While the establishment of the linguistic origin of the *Jeu d'Adam* is interesting in its own right, it is also the prerequisite for a study of the *responsoria* in order to determine the churches where the *Jeu d'Adam* may have been written. Based on Catherine Bougy's conclusions, only continental churches warrant analysis and insular establishments can be omitted.

Océane Boudeau—
The *Responsoria* of the *Ordo Representacionis Ade*

Scholars have known at least since 1878 that the seven Latin texts whose incipits are included in the play are *responsoria* used during matins of Septuagesima Sunday. Yet, until very recently, scholars have not tried to use them to determine the provenance of the *Jeu d'Adam*. This is unfortunate since these liturgical texts offer clues for identifying establishments where the play may have been written. The reason behind their usefulness is the existence of many local variations in medieval liturgy. As a consequence, the sequence of seven *responsoria* in the play is less common than one might imagine, and it is possible to match these texts with specific French churches. In 2002, the musicologist Charles Downey explored some possible candidates in his article "*Ad Imaginem Suam: Regional Chant Variants and the Origins of the Jeu d'Adam.*" To analyse the *responsoria*, he used the database *Cantus*, which, at the time, indexed 69 liturgical manuscripts. While his conclusions were dubious—he thought that the *Jeu d'Adam* originated from the monastery of Saint-Martial de Limoges, situated in the *langue d'oc* territories where the *Jeu d'Adam*—written in

French—would not have been understood—Downey showed the *responsoria's* potential for localizing the play.

While *Cantus* is a very useful tool, it is rather lacking in French sources (the database, expanding yearly, is still a work in progress). For this reason, the study of the *responsoria* of the *Jeu d'Adam* requires direct study of French liturgical sources with particular attention paid to codices originating from secular churches. Océane Boudeau undertook this task and proceeded to analyze 94 manuscripts; as a result, she discovered several secular establishments located in the western regions of France (Coutances, Rouen, etc.), where these *responsoria* were used. While these results are not exhaustive—many manuscripts were lost while others remain to be analyzed—they are precious since the *Jeu d'Adam* could have originated at any of these churches. Scholars can now study the festive practices of the chapters at these churches and, with a bit of luck, may be able to find references to an *Ordo Ade*.

Besides discussing the churches where the *responsoria* were used, Boudeau offers a clear presentation of the use of these texts in the liturgy of matins that will prove useful to non-specialists.

Mary Channen Caldwell—
Pax Gallie: The Songs of Tours 927

The second group of texts in Tours 927 is an unusual collection of sacred Latin songs comprising thirty-one Latin refrain songs, an antiphon, two polyphonic sequences, and a moralizing conductus by Philip the Chancellor. In this essay, Mary Channen Caldwell examines the lyrics, music, and manuscript contexts of this corpus with the goal of arriving at a more nuanced understanding of the codex's origin. In addition to a detailed study of the refrain songs as a genre, she locates clues to their broader historical, geographical, and cultural context through an analysis of concordances and internal poetic cues. For instance, the sixteen songs with concordances in other sources, most notably in Pluteus 29.1 of the Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana in Florence—the famous F for musicologists—connect Tours 927 with Northern French dioceses and suggest clerical authorship for the audience of a large secular church. The study of songs that include topical references point in the same direction. Two songs, for example, signal a French origin through their references to “Gallia” while their concordances in manuscripts from England, Germany, and Switzerland replace “Gallia” by the names of other locales. Hinting further

towards a secular—as opposed to monastic—milieu, the song *Nicholaus inclitus* celebrates a favored saint among clergy, the bishop-saint Nicholas. One further refrain song, *O Sedes Apostolica*, may even point to a specific church, the cathedral of Nantes, located in the Romance-speaking area of Brittany and belonging to the western Langue d’Oil linguistic zone, the geolinguistic zone of the author of the *Jeu d’Adam*, as the possible source of Tours 927 model. Caldwell’s results thus support Chaguinian’s and Bougy’s conclusions, favoring a large secular church located in continental France as the origin of the *Jeu d’Adam*. This essay concludes with an edition of the text and music of all thirty-one songs.

Michael Norton—The *Ludus Paschalis* of Tours

The Tours *Ludus Paschalis* has been seen by many as a mediocre play due to its disordered sequence of events and repetitions. In this essay, Michael Norton argues that the play’s structure is not the result of a careless author, but that it possesses a *raison d’être*. In his view, the critics’ negative judgment of the composition is the consequence of a generic misinterpretation. Rather than interpreting the Tours *ludus* as a play, a classification for which its construction makes no dramatic sense, Norton argues for its interpretation as a sophisticated exegetical composition and a type of Gospel harmony. He builds his case through a detailed analysis of its structure and music. Concerning its institutional affiliation, Norton concurs with the other contributors of the volume. The Gospel treatment reveals an author trained in scholastic scholarship that was flourishing in twelfth century cathedral schools. While no cue in the composition favors a continental over an insular origin, the author’s use of Norman/Angevin liturgical sources makes a western French origin quite possible. Norton concludes the essay with a new notated critical edition of the composition.

This collection of essays seeks to prompt further studies into the milieu that produced the *Jeu d’Adam*. The essays by Chaguinian, Bougy, and Boudeau invite work on archives of large secular churches located in the western regions of France, which may result in interesting discoveries. Caldwell’s and Norton’s contributions on Latin refrain songs and the *Ludus Paschalis* equally shed light on various festive practices of medieval clergy. Thus, this volume should be of interest to scholars of medieval theater, liturgy, and music.

Christophe Chaguinian