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## GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT AND HIS CANONRY OF REIMS, 1338–1377

At the heart of the biography of Guillaume de Machaut as currently understood there lies an inconsistency so great as almost to present a paradox, for it seems irreconcilable with the evident content of his surviving output of musical works. From 1338 until his death in 1377 Machaut possessed a canonry and prebend of the cathedral and metropolitan church of Our Lady of Reims. Conventionally it has been assumed that soon after his receipt of this benefice, and certainly by 1340, he had taken up residence within one of the prebendal mansions located in or near the precinct of the cathedral, and that he made this his permanent domicile for the remainder of his adult life – a period little short of forty years.<sup>1</sup>

Reims Cathedral was no musical backwater. Not only did it enjoy the highest prominence, as both the seat of France's most senior archbishop and the coronation church of its kings; it was also equipped with a fully professional choir, of twelve adult male singers. Yet among that enormous collection of 143 musical works by which Machaut wished to be remembered, no more than one single item was composed for use actually during the conduct of the ecclesiastical liturgy and the church service generally. The Machaut of the 1340s and 1350s was composing not sacred motets, mass movements and sequences for High Mass and Lady Mass, but *lais*

The first drafts of this article were written in 1991, and were initially intended to accompany a review of Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut's Mass*, eventually published in *Music & Letters*, 74 (1993), pp. 54–9. However, in the course of correspondence with Dr Leech-Wilkinson I learnt of the research then being conducted by Professor Anne Walters Robertson, and as a result of this information the present text was put aside until it could take account of Professor Robertson's work. My debt to both scholars will be evident and is warmly acknowledged. I am also grateful to Dr Leech-Wilkinson for assistance on particular points arising in the prosecution of research for this article. An early version was read at the Eighth International Symposium on Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Music, Kloster Neustift / Novacella, Italy, in July 2000.

<sup>1</sup> The principal text in this respect is A. Machabey, *Guillaume de Machaut, 1300–1377: la vie et l'œuvre musical*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1955), i, pp. 31–69 *passim*, esp. pp. 31, 34, 36–40, 47–8, 49–50, 56, 67–8, 69.

and virelais, ballades and rondeaux. Rather than music for the church, the principal output of these years of his maturity took the form of secular song and verse suitable primarily for use and appreciation in the environment of the noble court and chamber. Taken together, so conspicuous an absence of music for the church, and so strong a concentration of secular music, represent a strange anomaly within the work of a composer some two-thirds of whose adult life is considered to have been spent as a resident canon of one of France's two greatest cathedrals.

Concomitantly, the very individuality and isolation of Machaut's sole work for liturgical use, the *Messe de Nostre Dame*, projects the identification of a rationale for its creation as an issue thrown into particular relief. It might be thought that only a unique set of circumstances could have brought forth so uncharacteristic and unique a composition, so that it would be illuminating to identify the nature of those circumstances so far as the sources permit.

The purpose of this article is to endeavour to resolve both questions by suggesting that Machaut entered residence at Reims not in 1338 or 1340 but only some twenty years later at the end of the 1350s, his arrival there marking his retirement from an adult career spent all but entirely in the secular service of members of the aristocracy. This was the environment in which he produced his courtly poetry and song, while the composition of his mass at the beginning of the 1360s served as an act of devotion and dedication marking his arrival in the precinct of Reims as thenceforth one of its established residents.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims: Context and Meaning in his Musical Works* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 399–400 n. 15, has taken issue with a number of observations made in this article, which she saw in typescript in 2000. However, her remarks towards the end of her note do rather miss the principal points: (1) that for cathedral canons (especially those below the order of priest) collated in consequence of presentation by an aristocratic or royal employer, not residence but non-residence was the norm; (2) that in respect of Machaut's output between 1338 and *c.* 1360 the total absence of music for the ecclesiastical service (in favour of a prevalence of courtly music and literature) cannot be ignored but requires an explanation; and (3) that a familiarity with the nature of archival sources of information indicates that the 'compelling indications of Guillaume's presence in Reims' date not from 1340 to 1375 but only from *c.* 1359 to 1375. Nevertheless, the present article should not be considered as in itself compromising in any way the general tenor of Robertson's work. Reims was the prime metropolis of the region of Machaut's upbringing and boyhood education, and even if it was not the place of his adult residence at any date earlier than the late 1350s, in all likelihood he remained in close touch with both cathedral and city throughout his working life.

Scholars who have embarked upon the recovery of Machaut's biography have found themselves juggling with quite limited data drawn from two parallel and wholly distinct sources. Information derived from archival records has to be collated with inferences distilled from literary sources, furnished principally by Machaut's own writings.<sup>3</sup> This procedure seems to reveal that for some twenty years between about 1340 and 1360 the composer was leading a life experienced on two radically diverse tracks simultaneously, in a manner which, though not totally impossible, does appear strikingly improbable. On the one hand, he is perceived as a canon of Reims Cathedral, domiciled in that city from 1340 until his death.<sup>4</sup> On the other, he appears as a high-ranking servant gainfully employed within a series of secular aristocratic households: of Jean (1296–1346), from 1309 count of Luxembourg and from 1310 king of Bohemia, both lying within the Holy Roman Empire beyond the borders of France altogether; of Bonne (born 1315), Jean's daughter, from 1332 until her death in 1349 duchess of Normandy; of Charles (1332–87), from 1343 count of Evreux and also, from 1349, king of the small Franco-Spanish kingdom of Navarre; and of Charles (1338–80), dauphin of Viennois, from 1364 King Charles V of France.<sup>5</sup> Such a scenario supposes that somehow he contrived to combine the performance of active work for various royal and aristocratic patrons with residence on a fixed site in Reims, physically far removed from the peripatetic households of his benefactors.

This scenario is not completely impossible; nevertheless, such a perception is fundamentally improbable, since it lacks consistency with the fundamental nature of the motives for the collation of

<sup>3</sup> An extremely useful and fully annotated epitome of the current state of knowledge concerning Machaut's biography may be found in L. Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research* (New York and London, 1995), pp. 3–51. To this publication I am greatly indebted.

<sup>4</sup> Machabey, *Guillaume de Machaut*, i, pp. 31–69 *passim*; also Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 14–16, 20, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 8–14, 21–8, 33–8, 42–6. Much current discussion of Machaut's relationships with members of royalty and the aristocracy is somewhat confused by failure to make clear the distinction between patron and employer. Such distinction is cardinal in this context; for some hint of its nature, see R. Bowers, 'Obligation, Agency and *Laissez-faire*: The Promotion of Polyphonic Composition for the Church in Fifteenth-Century England', in I. Fenlon (ed.), *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources and Texts* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 1–19.

canonries of cathedral and other collegiate churches upon servants of royalty and the aristocracy. Among ecclesiastical historians it has long been recognised that for such appointees it was not residence that was the rule but formal non-residence, and in reality there is little reason to believe that during his working life, to *c.* 1359, Machaut represented any departure from that general provision.

In the case of every secular canon at this period who received collation at the instance of an employer to whom he was a valued and trusted servant, it was non-residence that was expected. Employers such as Jean of Bohemia, who exerted their influence to obtain canonries for their employees and clients at cathedral and collegiate churches, expected these benefices to fulfil two functions: firstly, to yield an income wherewith the employee received a financial return at no expense to his employer; and secondly, to provide that employee with an income, and a home if he wanted it, once old age or disability had terminated his capacity to serve. That is, an employer undertook to secure such a benefice for an employee not in order to divest himself of that person's services, *but in order to retain them.*<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, at any given moment the majority of secular canons were absentee from their respective churches, in the service of their employers. Studies of the chapters of northern French cathedrals align with those of the English secular cathedrals to show that during the fourteenth century it was unusual even for so many as one-third or even one-quarter of the chapter to undertake to be resident in any one year.<sup>7</sup> Awareness of simple and well-known historical realities, therefore, predicates that during his working life

<sup>6</sup> Machabey (*Guillaume de Machaut*, i, p. 38) appears to have been mistaken in his belief that canons of Reims Cathedral 'doivent résider à Reims'; certainly the compilers of the partial set of cathedral statutes dated 1327 made careful distinctions between canons resident and canons non-resident (*Archives législatives de la ville de Reims*, ed. P. Varin, 3 vols. in 4 (Paris, 1840–52), ii, pt. 1, 42–146, e.g. pp. 46, 106–7, 127, 128–9). Indeed, in the fifty years since Machabey wrote, the work of many a scholar investigating the biographies of musicians through tracking their receipt of benefices has established that recipients were not expected to reside at those benefices, but merely to draw income from them while remaining in personal attendance on their employers.

<sup>7</sup> Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, p. 20 n. 72; K. Edwards, *The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Manchester, 1967), pp. 70–83; D. Lepine, *A Brotherhood of Canons Serving God: English Secular Cathedrals in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 87–112 at 95–100. For non-residence as the norm at Reims Cathedral at this period, see the data given (though not the contradictory conclusion drawn from them) by P. Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois aux xiii<sup>e</sup> et xiv<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1979), pp. 296–7.

Machaut's relationship to the cathedral of Reims is likely to have been that of the typical non-resident canon.

Residence was indeed the exception, and could be undertaken only by those who in person opted into it. The financial rewards were considerable, but so also were the responsibilities, especially in terms of duties of management, the maintenance of hospitality, and attendance at and the celebration of mass. Residence was arranged on an annual basis; any canon who proposed to undertake its responsibilities in any year had to make formal announcement of his intention to do so in advance, so that he could be registered by the chapter clerk for execution of the duties and receipt of the rewards. At Reims Cathedral such declaration could be made only at the annual general chapter held at the feast of the Assumption (15 August).<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, the non-resident canons were by no means excluded from their cathedral. Any who so wished, or whose duties for his employer so directed, could at any time visit the cathedral without seeking formal admission to residence, dwelling for a shorter or a longer time in its vicinity. In this case, however, his status was merely that of a transient visitor; he took neither the rewards nor the responsibilities of formal residence, and he was free to leave as soon as his business was concluded.

The chapter at Reims consisted of the gigantic number of seventy-four canons,<sup>9</sup> of whom only a small fraction ever observed formal residence.<sup>10</sup> There is very little evidence to suggest that during his working life Machaut was either expected to keep, or did keep, residence there, and indeed there was very little that a canon such as he could offer to the cathedral. Out of seventy-four canons, the quorum for the conduct of chapter business was a mere twelve,<sup>11</sup> and in general the residentiary chapter consisted of some twenty of

<sup>8</sup> Cathedral statutes of 1327, nos. III, LIII: *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, pp. 44, 128. There are two principal sources of evidence for the formal residence of a canon: the declaration of his intent to reside, and the appearance of his name among those preserved in the formal chapter records as voting participants in the routine business of its weekly meetings.

<sup>9</sup> Seventy-two prebends supported seventy-four canons, since two prebends were divided in half: Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, p. 296.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297 n. 16: at the ceremonies of enthronement of successive archbishops in the cathedral fewer than half the canons were ever present, even including the attendance of non-residents able to make a flying visit for the occasion.

<sup>11</sup> Statute XIV: *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, p. 48.

those canons who were in priest's orders.<sup>12</sup> However, even so late as 1352,<sup>13</sup> when in his early fifties, Machaut had still not proceeded beyond the order of subdeacon to which in all likelihood he had been admitted in his youth over thirty years earlier,<sup>14</sup> and it is clear that he had neither vocation for, nor any intention of proceeding to, the priesthood. Certainly he appears never to have been addressed as or entitled 'dominus'. Rather, he was among that roughly half of his contemporaries as canons of Reims who had never advanced further than the subdiaconate (if they were in orders at all).<sup>15</sup> Thus disabled from performing the sacerdotal functions that formed the core of the liturgical duties of the resident managerial clergy, these non-priests, such as Machaut, inevitably became the canons non-resident.

It would of course have been usual for arrangements to be available enabling any resident canon to seek from the chapter leave to take periods of absence for the pursuit of his legitimate personal business elsewhere. Details of the licence permitted at Reims at this period are unknown; it may well have been the standard ninety days

<sup>12</sup> Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, pp. 297, 298.

<sup>13</sup> The canons present in chapter on 1 January 1352 to witness the oaths taken by Archbishop Hugues d'Arcy were particularised by their clerical orders; Machaut was the most senior of the three canons subdeacon present: Reims, Archives départementales de la Marne (hereinafter RsADM), MS 2 G 323, pièce 15. This public instrument emanating from the chancery of the cathedral chapter is plainly dated 1 January 1352 (=1353 modern style); however, local specialist authority (e.g. Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, p. 296) dates d'Arcy's enthronement to 1 January 1352 (modern style), and this appears to be confirmed by *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, ed. K. Eubel et al., 8 vols. (Munster, 1913–79), i, p. 419, which states that d'Arcy received papal provision to the see on 24 October 1351 and died on 18 February 1352 (modern style).

<sup>14</sup> It will be recalled that certain miniatures depicting Machaut in the manuscripts of his works portray him in the habit and tonsure proper to those ordained to the subdiaconate, as one of the three higher orders. At first sight, it seems that by proceeding no further than this Machaut had opted, irrationally, for the worst of both worlds. He had entered clerical life sufficiently far to disqualify himself from experiencing the responsibilities and rewards of marriage, family life, domestic companionship and the raising of sons and other children; but he had stopped short of putting himself in a position to enjoy the compensations to be derived from having attained the priesthood. He had disabled himself from much, for no evident compensatory gain. However, such a course of action was not uncommon at the time. Those who took it in fourteenth-century society were usually men of ambition; they were in the service of the rich and powerful, and as compensation for eschewing family life they expected to bask in the reflected glory of their employer and, through his influence, to acquire much by way of that ecclesiastical preferment for receipt of which their entry into major orders qualified them.

<sup>15</sup> Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, p. 297. It may be noted that 'canonry', 'proxy', 'subdiaconate', are the terms used in English to convey the meanings denoted in American English by 'canonicate', 'procurator', 'subdeaconate' respectively.

per year.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, seen from the perspective of an aristocratic employer, such privilege was immaterial. Only under the most special and unusual circumstances could any secular employer ever have granted to an important household officer leave to reside for some three-quarters of every year at some distant collegiate church, denying himself in consequence for the whole of that duration the benefit of that employee's service.

Consequently, with but a pair of exceptions relating to a single chapter year, 1351–2, the record of Machaut's appearances at Reims prior to the end of the 1350s is merely as a short-term visitor, not as a residentiary. Characteristically, he received admission to his canonry and installation in the cathedral on 28 January 1338 not in person but by proxy.<sup>17</sup> It would be expected that canons non-resident would endeavour to visit their cathedral, if they could, to be

<sup>16</sup> Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, p. 297, states that residence amounting to only seven months per year permitted a canon to qualify as a residentiary. However, and most unusually, he quotes no source; in the printed statutes of the cathedral I can find none, and this information, suggesting that each residentiary might take no less than five months' leave per year, cannot be considered to be securely founded. Indeed, it appears that it may be actually erroneous, having arisen from some misunderstanding of Statute LVI of the cathedral statutes of 1327: *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, pp. 128–9. This concerned the capacity of a canon resident to draw (*percipere*) certain quantities of firewood and candlewax as part of his emoluments, enacting that such privilege could be exercised in any given chapter year only by those residentiaries who had kept personal residence for a total of twenty-eight weeks between 29 August and 24 June, and had attended at least forty obits in that time. Such a ruling established merely that once a residentiary had kept residence of at least twenty-eight weeks (perhaps Desportes's 'seven months') he began to qualify for his livery of wood and wax; it certainly did not mean that he qualified fully as a residentiary despite taking five months' leave per year. Further provision, that a canon in only minor orders might draw no income at all from his prebend unless during that year he had made continuous residence (*continuum fecerit residenciam: ibid.*, pp. 45–6), certainly does indicate that at least some degree of leave was permitted to any residentiary who was in one of the three major orders; however, there is no evidence that this amounted to five months per year. Rather, given the durability and persistence of such rulings, perhaps this period was the ninety days per year recorded as having been allowed in the eighteenth century (*ibid.*, pp. 60, 80–1, 87–8).

<sup>17</sup> 'Nunc Guillelmus de Machaudio receptus fuit per procuratorem anno domini M<sup>o</sup> CCC<sup>o</sup> tricesimo septimo feria quarta post conversum sancti pauli': RsADM, 2 G 1650, fol. 54<sup>r</sup>. The date of Machaut's collation as given in the received literature, 30 January 1337, appears to be erroneous. January 1337 fell in 1338 by modern computation, since in ecclesiastical usage in Reims 25 March was the date on which each new year was considered to start: 'in the [ecclesiastical] province of Rheims the year was computed as beginning at Easter in the ninth century, at Christmas in the eleventh, on 25 March in the thirteenth, and in the fifteenth on 25 March in the year preceding the current year' (R. L. Poole, 'The Beginning of the Year in the Middle Ages', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1921–1923 (London, n.d. [1926]), 113–37, p. 114; also p. 135. Poole proceeds to point out that the fifteenth-century example was mistaken (indeed, that particular computation occurred nowhere other than in the Italian city of Pisa)). Moreover, in the original source quoted above (a contemporary entry found in a running catalogue of all holders of canonries of Reims Cathedral, begun in the early fourteenth

present at each enthronement of a new archbishop and to pay their respects. Machaut was duly present for such occasions on 13 April 1340 and on 4 November 1355,<sup>18</sup> but his attendance was of the kind that could be entered by a non-resident merely visiting for the occasion.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, a canon resident would have needed very good reason indeed to be absent from any enthronement, and Machaut was conspicuously not present on such an occasion conducted on 2 May 1353.<sup>20</sup>

So, with the exception of the chapter year 1351–2 there appear to be no grounds for imagining that at any time between 1338 and his attaining retirement at the end of the 1350s did Machaut undertake to keep residence at Reims at all. Rather, it appears clear that until that latter date he was engaged full time in the service of one or a series of royal and noble employers. Such an alternative scenario does seem much the more convincing. It conforms to conventional patterns of contemporary conduct; it explains Machaut's availability to accept from secular patrons the opportunity to work and to write for them; and it helps to explain the absence from his oeuvre of any substantial volume of composition for the church's liturgy.

Machaut had entered the service of Jean, king of Bohemia, at the latest by around 1323, and there is good evidence for his having continued to be active as a full-time household employee of the king, in the capacity of his *secretarius*,<sup>21</sup> right up until the latter's death in August 1346. In particular, he occurs as a member of the entourage of King Jean on Trinity Sunday (30 May) 1344, when both Guillaume and his brother Jean de Machaut were among eight

century and preserved as a separate fascicle within the factitious collection known as the 'Livre Rouge') the word easily misread as 'quinta' is in fact 'quarta'. The feast of the Conversion of St Paul was observed on 25 January, which in 1338 fell on a Sunday; the Wednesday (*feria quarta*) following thus fell on 28 January. It may be noted that in the fourteenth century the city, as opposed to the church, of Reims used the dating style of the French court, whereby the year began on Easter Sunday; Poole, 'The Beginning of the Year in the Middle Ages', p. 134.

<sup>18</sup> RsADM, MSS 2 G 323, pièce 13 [1340]; pièce 17 [1355].

<sup>19</sup> The compilers of each successive public instrument recording the taking of the archiepiscopal oath in chapter were at pains to note that this was not a routine chapter meeting (which only formal residents might attend) but an extraordinary meeting summoned for this particular purpose and thus open to canons other than formal residentiaries ('*Canonicis ipsius ecclesie, et specialiter propter infrascripta Capitulantibus et Capitulum tenentibus et facientibus*'): see RsADM, MSS 2 G 323, pièces 11–13, 15–18 [1325–94].

<sup>20</sup> RsADM, MS 2 G 323, pièce 16; Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 8–9, 12.



persons present to witness, in a solemn feudal ceremony conducted at the abbey of St-Rémi of Reims, the surrender and renewal by the king in person of the homage and fealty due from him to the abbot in respect of all the estates that he held in fee of the abbey.<sup>22</sup> In the abbey's written record Machaut's formal ecclesiastical identification was necessarily as a canon of the cathedral, his most senior benefice. Nevertheless, cathedral and abbey were utterly separate organisations, and this ceremonial act between king and abbot concerned Machaut in his capacity as a canon of the cathedral not at all; his presence can have been only as a member of the king's working entourage.

Further evidence arises in respect of December 1345, when Machaut received nomination as an agent to confirm the identity of one Johannes Arbalistarius, upon the latter's presentation of a grant in expectation to the chapter of the collegiate church of St Mary Magdalene, Verdun. Arbalistarius occupied an office in the household service of King Jean that indicates that he was a close subordinate of Machaut; he was a clerk of Petrus de Waben, who like Machaut was a *secretarius* to the king.<sup>23</sup> Such an appointment to be guarantor for Arbalistarius suggests very strongly again that at this time Machaut was still actively employed in the king's service.

<sup>22</sup> 'Roye de boheme [*margin*]. L'an mil CCC xliij le iour de la trinitet. Reprist de monsieur de S[aint] Remy de Reins nobles princes et puissans messires Johans roye de bohe[me] tout ce qu'il tenoit en foy et hommaige de l'eglise S[aint] Remy de Reins et en entra en la foy [et] en l'omage dou dit monsieur l'abbe, present monsieur Ernoul d'augimont, monsieur Jeh[an] de Trugny, Guill[aum]e de machaut chenoine de Reins, Jeh[an] frere dou dit Guill[aum]e chenoine de Verdun, Gilequin de Rodem[ac], Jeh[an] dit des pres de landres, Pensart lauribi de montois, Pierre de saumaise': RsADM, MS 56 H 74, pièce A, fol. 30<sup>r</sup>. Cf. the letters patent of Jean of Bohemia, 1 May 1334, their text authorised by Machaut himself, in respect of the feudal homage done by King Jean to the Count of Hainaut in respect of his fief of the county of Le Roche and the castle of Durbuy: N. Wilkins, 'A Pattern of Patronage: Machaut, Froissart and the Houses of Luxembourg and Bohemia in the Fourteenth Century', *French Studies*, 37 (1983), pp. 259, 282–4; also L. Gushee, 'Two Central Places: Paris and the French Court in the Early Fourteenth Century', in *Bericht über den internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress: Berlin, 1974*, ed. H. Kühn and P. Nitsche (Kassel, 1980), pp. 135–57 at 148.

<sup>23</sup> *Suppliques de Clément VI (1342–1352): textes et analyses*, ed. U. Berlière, Analecta Vaticano-Belgica, 1 (1906), pp. 110 (§§494, 495), 218 (§§883, 884), 243 (§§963, 964); *Lettres de Clément VI (1342–1352): tome 1 (1342–1346), textes et analyses*, ed. P. van Isacker, issued by U. Berlière, Analecta Vaticano-Belgica, 6 (1924), p. 644 (§1736). For Petrus (Pierre) de Waben, see also Wilkins, 'A Pattern of Patronage', pp. 259, 280, and Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, p. 21; however, it may be noted that de Waben was not necessarily Machaut's successor in the office of *secretarius*, but in every likelihood his colleague. King Jean was perfectly at liberty to appoint more than one *secretarius* at a time if he was so minded, and the onset of blindness in 1337 was precisely the sort of circumstance that would prompt his employment of two (or more) *secrétaires* simultaneously.

And indeed, such continuing service for Jean of Bohemia should come as no surprise. Even though his eldest son and heir had effectively assumed the government of Bohemia and its appendages, Jean still remained the proprietor of one of the greatest feudal estates in Europe. Consequently, as his incapacitation through blindness began in 1337 and became total in 1340, he needed the services of senior administrators and confidants such as his *secrétaires* more, rather than less.

Presently, however, on 24 August 1346 King Jean perished at the battle of Crécy, and upon the dissolution of his household Machaut would have needed to find alternative work with some other employer.<sup>24</sup> Certainly it appears that at this juncture he did not resort to the role of a canon residentiary of Reims. In respect of the fiscal year 1 November 1345–31 October 1346 he was actually listed as a non-resident canon on a schedule of cathedral prebendaries compiled to record their assessments for the royal tenth, payable for six-monthly periods ending at Ascension and All Souls 1346.<sup>25</sup>

Rather, the likely identity of his new employment is indicated by the autobiographical prologue that he appended to his poem ‘Le Jugement dou Roi de Navarre’. In this, he related how in the autumn of the year 1349 his then place of residence was overtaken by the arrival of the Black Death, and how, in order to escape the contagion, he sequestered himself within his house continuously until the following spring, 1350.<sup>26</sup> The text identifies this place of residence neither as Reims nor as anywhere else, but merely as an anonymous ‘town’ (*ville*).<sup>27</sup> Commonly it is asserted that it was in Reims that Machaut thus encountered and escaped the Black

<sup>24</sup> Although it is at this period that there arises the possibility of a brief spell of employment in the household service of Bonne (d. 1349), duchess of Normandy, daughter of the late king Jean, the traces of Machaut’s association with her are so slender and insubstantial that no such hypothesis appears very credible, at least on the evidence currently available.

<sup>25</sup> *Archives administratives de la ville de Reims*, ed. P. Varin, 3 vols. in 5 (Paris, 1839–48), ii, pt. 2, p. 1034. The resident canons were marked ‘ca.’ or ‘capitulum’, and enjoyed exemption from this instance of liability for the royal levy of a tenth (in their case probably borne instead by the *Communa*, the Common Fund managed by two of the canons resident as *senescalli*). Machaut is among the great majority, being non-residents, not so marked. It may be noted that, working over 150 years ago, Varin was evidently able to read on the original source manuscript (RsADM, MS 2 G 1650, fols. 269bis–270<sup>v</sup>) certain entries not now legible.

<sup>26</sup> Guillaume de Machaut, *The Judgement of the King of Navarre*, ed. and trans. R. B. Palmer (New York and London, 1988), pp. 2–22 (ll. 1–486).

<sup>27</sup> Line 451: Machaut, *The Judgement of the King of Navarre*, ed. and trans. Palmer, p. 20.

Death;<sup>28</sup> yet in reality there is no sense at all in which his chronology of this visitation of plague can be considered to conform to the course which it is known to have followed in Reims and in the Champagne. He gave a specific date, 9 November 1349, as that by which he had lately entered his self-imposed immurement upon the onset of the disease.<sup>29</sup> In Reims, however, the plague had struck one whole year earlier, in the autumn of 1348; after its progress had temporarily been slowed by the onset of winter, it burst out in full fury in the spring of 1349. Mortality was greatest between August and October of that year; after that point the contagion relaxed.<sup>30</sup> In November 1349, that is, the plague in Reims was not just beginning; it was just ending.

Consequently, wherever Machaut was at that point – and his quotation of dates is very particular – he was plainly not in Reims. Rather, the date at which he was overtaken by this onset of the plague occurs surprisingly late in its course, at a time, indeed, by which its consequences elsewhere were already sufficiently well known and notorious for Machaut both to know exactly what to expect, and how to avoid it.<sup>31</sup> In fact, his having been resident at a location overtaken by plague so late as November 1349 suggests strongly that at this particular moment he was not actually in France at all.

Indeed, once the assumed but wholly groundless and spurious association of this episode with Reims is dismissed, Machaut's actual location at this point becomes readily evident. In his own words we are told that it was in the kingdom of Navarre that he experienced his encounter with the Black Death. The title of the poem within which he incorporated his prologue takes the reader immediately to Navarre; under this title the poem itself celebrated the capacity of the King of Navarre to act as a wise and sagacious referee, and the kingdom duly serves as the location for the totality of the events

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, p. 27 and n. 58 (p. 342), accepts the traditional assumption without querying the discrepancy of dates.

<sup>29</sup> 'Lan mil .ccc. neuf quarente': Machaut, *The Judgement of the King of Navarre*, ed. and trans. Palmer, p. 2 (l. 25); see also p. 18 (l. 405). There appears to be no reason whatever to suppose that Machaut might have been resorting here to poetic licence permitting misrepresentation of the date of his self-isolation.

<sup>30</sup> Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, pp. 544–9. Mistakenly, ignoring the discrepancy of date, Desportes combines Machaut's account with local archival evidence, in the belief that Machaut was describing the plague as experienced in Reims.

<sup>31</sup> Machaut, *The Judgement of the King of Navarre*, ed. and trans. Palmer, pp. 18–20 (ll. 403–58).

experienced there by the poet. It may be understood that those for whom Machaut was writing this poem would immediately grasp the location of its action simply from its title and from the author's quotation of those very particular dates.

The story of the progress of the Black Death through Spain fully corroborates this conclusion, making clear that Navarre was indeed one of the areas stricken latest by the contagion. Much reading of histories of fourteenth-century Navarre indicates, by their unrelied silence on the matter, that unfortunately there survives no chronicle or other primary evidence yielding a precise date for the arrival of the plague and of its progress through the kingdom. Nevertheless, it is clear that the remoteness of its geographical location from the point of entry of the disease into Spain ensured a relatively late date for its arrival in Navarre. The kingdom was wholly land-locked, and so not subject to early infection through the primary route of sea-borne trade; moreover, Spain's northern coast, to which Navarre lay closest, was substantially less severely affected than its Mediterranean littoral. In Spain the disease arrived in Catalonia in April and May 1348, from where its initial progress took it steadily down the Mediterranean coast, successively to Valencia, Murcia and Granada. It spread thence into Aragón, and finally progressed first to Castile and at last, it appears, to Castile's smaller neighbour Navarre. So distant a town as Gibraltar, besieged by the Castilian army, it reached only so late as the spring of 1350; Béarn, Navarre's neighbour to the north, it never reached at all on this visitation, so precluding the possibility of infection having spread to the kingdom from the French side of the Pyrenees.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Most illuminating on the progress of the Black Death through Spain is C. Verlinden, 'La Grande Peste de 1348 en Espagne', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 17 (1938), pp. 103–46, esp. pp. 117–18, 143. See also J. Sobrequés Callicó, 'La Peste Negra en la península Ibérica', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 7 (1970–1), pp. 67–102 at 70–1, 90–2; F. J. Zabalo Zabalegui, 'Algunos datos sobre la regresión demográfica causada por la Peste en la Navarra del siglo XIV', in *Miscelánea ofrecida al Ilmo. Señor D. José María Lacarra y de Miguel* (Zaragoza, 1968), pp. 485–91; and J. del Burgo, *Historia general de Navarra, desde los orígenes hasta nuestros días*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1992), i, p. 840 (where, for 1352, read 1362). For Béarn, see P. Ziegler, *The Black Death* (London, 1969), pp. 116–17. Charles II, King of Navarre, acceded to the throne on 7 October 1349, but did not arrive in his kingdom for his coronation until May 1350: C. Claveria, *Historia del Reino de Navarra*, 3rd edn (Pamplona, 1971), pp. 165–6. Conceivably the outbreak of plague in Navarre was the cause of this delay. It may be noted that in Spanish historiography this initial visitation of plague appears always to be known as 'la Peste Negra (or 'la Gran Peste') de 1348', irrespective of its actual date of arrival at any given place. I am very grateful to Dr

Consequently it may be concluded that the tenor of Machaut's own words can be taken at their face value here, and that it was indeed in Navarre that in the autumn of 1349 he was overtaken by the Black Death. Moreover, it is readily possible to suggest exactly what he was doing there.

Much evidence already well known demonstrates that Machaut enjoyed, at least during the 1350s, not less than a very close association with the person and the court of Charles, count of Evreux and, from October 1349, king of Navarre. No matter for whom it may originally have been intended, it was by a title honouring the king of Navarre that Machaut wished 'Le jugement dou Roi de Navarre', to be known; its completion appears to date from the early 1350s.<sup>33</sup> In addition, his lengthy poem *Le confort d'ami* was addressed directly to Charles during the latter's period of imprisonment by Jean II, king of France, from 5 April 1356 to 9 November 1357.<sup>34</sup>

The evidence is archival as well as literary. These known associations of Machaut with Charles of Navarre make it highly probable that the composer is to be identified with the 'Guillaume de Machau' whose name occurs incidentally in the course of the text of a Warrant for Issue that was authorised by King Charles at Gavray (Normandy) on 16 October 1361, and is preserved in the archives of Charles's treasury of Navarre at Pamplona. Hereby, the tellers of the royal treasury were required to reimburse to one of the king's esquires, Juan Testador, upon his presentation of the warrant, the sum of 50 French écus. This sum was identified as the value of a 'trusty hackney' which arbitrarily had been appropriated from Testador by some royal officer so that, at the personal command of the king, it might be presented to 'Guillaume de Machau'.<sup>35</sup>

Peter Linehan, of St John's College, Cambridge, for directing my attention to much of this literature concerning the Black Death in medieval Spain.

<sup>33</sup> Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 209–11. Only in the title is the king actually identified; it is possible that the poem was first written with another dedicatee in mind, and that the present title, and also the prologue corroborating the Navarre dedication through location of its action specifically within that kingdom, were added later.

<sup>34</sup> Machaut, *Le confort d'ami*, ed. and trans. R. B. Palmer (New York and London, 1992); for a conveniently condensed account of the political career between 1349 and 1359 of Charles, count of Evreux and king of Navarre, see *ibid.*, pp. xvi–xxiii. Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 218–20.

<sup>35</sup> 'Charles, by the grace of God king of Navarre and count of Evreux, to our well-beloved and loyal treasurer of our kingdom, greeting. We are beholden to our well-beloved esquire Juan

Machaut's receipt from the king of the gift of a fine horse, and also of the respect and consideration informing the gift, suggests that his association with Charles was by no means merely casual, but that he had been engaged in the king's service at a high level.<sup>36</sup>

Happily, the precise nature of this service can be identified by a fortuitous correspondence between this transaction and the text of Machaut's *Complainte* 7 ('Sire, a vous fais ceste clamour'). The prevailing patterns of manuscript preservation indicate that this *Complainte* was written most probably in the later 1350s or beginning of the 1360s. It was addressed directly to a king,<sup>37</sup> and its subject matter coincides most remarkably with the circumstances narrated in the Warrant for Issue of 1361 discussed above.<sup>38</sup> Machaut's *complainte* to the king was in fact a semi-facetious request that the latter, in accordance with his earlier promise of help should ever the poet need it, make constructive response to the misfortunes now

Testador in the sum of 50 écus of [King] Jean, in respect of a trusty hackney appropriated from him by our officers and given, upon our command, to Guillaume de Machau; and [also] in respect of a workhorse which our said esquire lost on the road when our most-beloved companion the queen sent him [Testador] to Brabant, of the value of 30 royals. Thus we require that to our said esquire you pay these sums, and require of our well-beloved and loyal officers of our accounts that they deliver the aforesaid sum of écus of [King] Jean and 30 royals, receiving the due acquittance of our said esquire upon these presents.' Translated from the text given in J. Chailley, 'Du cheval de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles II of Navarre', *Romania*, 94 (1973), pp. 251–8 at 253. Probably some personal circumstances of Testador explain why this warrant was eventually cashed at the king's treasury of Navarre in Pamplona rather than at a treasury of one of his northern demesnes. Further on the role of Testador as a servant of the court of Charles of Navarre, see J. Zabalo Zabalegui, *La administración del reino de Navarra en el siglo XIV*, Colección histórica de la Universidad de Navarra, 28 (Pamplona, 1973), p. 74 n. 157.

<sup>36</sup> No significance attaches to the manner in which the date of this warrant, 1361, post-dates by two or three years the likely termination of Machaut's putative service with King Charles. Given the cumbersome nature of fourteenth-century financial administration, it is more than likely that by the time the warrant was issued up to three or four years had elapsed since the occurrence of the events to which it relates: see A. Wathey, 'Musicology, Archives and Historiography', in B. Hagg, F. Daelemans and A. Vanrie (eds.), *Musicology and Archival Research* (Brussels, 1994), 3–26 at 15–16.

<sup>37</sup> Lines 1, 11, 34: Jean Froissart, 'Dits' et 'Débats'. *Introduction, édition, notes, glossaire. Avec en appendice quelques poèmes de Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. A. Fourrier (Geneva, 1979), pp. 350–1. In the poem the king is not precisely identified.

<sup>38</sup> The possibility that both sources related to a single incident, first raised by Ursula Günther ('Contribution de la musicologie à la biographie et à la chronologie de Guillaume de Machaut', in *Guillaume de Machaut: poète et compositeur* (Paris, 1982), pp. 95–115 at 115), has been considered favourably in J. Cerquiglini, *Un engin si subtil: Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva and Paris, 1985), pp. 128–9 n. 36. See also Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 21, 27, 29, 33–8, 270–1. Other possible identifications for the royal addressee of this *Complainte* – Jean of Bohemia, Pierre de Lusignan of Cyprus, Jean II of France and Charles V of France – all seem, on a variety of grounds, rather less convincing.

befalling him on account of the broken-down state of some hackney horse given to him by the count of Tancarville, which was resulting effectively in Machaut's inability to travel. The manner in which this literary begging-letter is so exactly complemented and corroborated by the survival of an archival reference recording the gift to Machaut of an expensive hackney by Charles of Navarre seems almost too good to be true. Nevertheless, the evidence is plain and cannot be lightly dismissed. Charles of Navarre, grantor to Machaut of a fine hackney horse, appears certain to have been the king of whom Machaut begged such a gift.

Moreover, it is clear that the favour shown by this king to Machaut was founded not on mere patronage (for instance, recognition of the presentation of literary work) but on actual employment at a high level of seniority. The poem's author recollected that this king had shown him much favour and had indeed appointed him to be his *secrétaire* ('Quant secrétaire me feïstes').<sup>39</sup> This was an office of intimate trust which could hardly be discharged on a part-time basis. Consequently, it is beginning to appear entirely clear that Machaut was indeed at some time engaged in the household service of Charles in the senior salaried office of *secretarius*, just as he had served King Jean of Bohemia before him.

Awareness of such actual employment in the service of Charles, King of Navarre, finally makes it possible to identify the nature of the circumstances narrated by Machaut in the prologue to 'Le jugement dou Roy de Navarre'. It appears that at least by a date soon after 7 October 1349, the day of the accession of Charles to the throne of Navarre, Machaut had already entered his employment and service.<sup>40</sup> Given the nature of his experience as sometime *elemosinarius* (almoner) to Jean of Bohemia, he possessed precisely the knowledge and expertise that would qualify him to be sent ahead by Charles to make arrangements for his coronation in Navarre. Consequently, it was probably in Pamplona, the capital town of Navarre, that in November 1349 Machaut was overtaken by the

<sup>39</sup> Froissart, *'Dits' et 'Débats'*, ed. Fourrier, p. 350, l. 6.

<sup>40</sup> It is possible that through Jean de Vienne, archbishop of Reims since 1335, Machaut had become associated with Charles even earlier than 1349, at a time when the latter was still only the youthful count of Evreux. The archbishop was a trusted confidant of Charles, and served frequently at that time as an envoy between him and the Valois court: B. Leroy, 'Autour Charles "le Mauvais": groupes et personnalités', *Revue Historique*, 273 (1985), pp. 3–17, at p. 8; Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, p. 35.

Black Death,<sup>41</sup> and elected to isolate himself until the following spring. The coronation finally took place in the cathedral church of Pamplona on 27 June 1350.

It thus seems entirely plausible to propose that for some substantial part of the period 1349, or even 1346, to about 1358 Machaut was engaged full-time in service within the household of Charles, count of Evreux and king of Navarre.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, he had served for twenty years or more of his early maturity as confidant and adviser to an anointed king; given the right opportunity, he was hardly likely to exchange that status for anything less elevated after Jean of Bohemia's death.

Machaut's departure from household service in favour of entry into permanent domicile at Reims as a canon resident of the cathedral appears to have taken place towards the end of the

<sup>41</sup> Even allowing for poetic hyperbole, Machaut's estimate (*The Judgement of the King of Navarre*, ed. and trans. Palmer, p. 20, l. 452) of over 20,000 dead indicates a particularly severe mortality in his town of retreat. Nevertheless, the degree of mortality known to have been prevalent in Navarre between 1347 and 1350 is wholly consistent with Machaut's perception, though calculations made from taxation records concerning the consequences of the Black Death in the kingdom are unfortunately complicated by the incidence in just the previous year, 1348, of a degree of mortality already elevated in consequence of a failure of the harvest in 1347, which produced the most severe famine experienced there at any time between 1300 and 1500. For Pamplona itself (a city still easily exceeding 1,000 households in 1366) no casualty figures have been published. However, within the overall *merindad* (district) of Pamplona the annihilation of heads of tax-paying households was 17 per cent during 1347 and became even more grave in 1348; by the end of 1350, following the additional mortality of plague, the four years since 1347 had witnessed a total mortality of 54 per cent: M. Berthe, 'Famines et épidémies dans le monde paysan de Navarre aux xiv<sup>e</sup> et xv<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres: Comptes Rendus*, 124 (1983), pp. 299–314 at 305–6. In the district of Estella immediately west of Pamplona the population in 1350 was but 38 per cent of its figure in 1330: J. M. Lacarra, *Historia del reino de Navarra en la Edad Media* (n.p. [Pamplona], 1975), pp. 436–7. (For Lacarra's very general citation of dates, and Berthe's mere assumption that 1348 was the plague year in Navarre, see the important *caveat* in n. 32 above.) With levels of mortality such as these Machaut's reported experiences are entirely consistent. Moreover, it was in November 1350 rather than any earlier that order was given, following the epidemic, for new taxation registers of heads of households to be made for Pamplona: J. J. Uranga, 'La población de la Navarrería de Pamplona en 1350', *Príncipe de Viana*, 13 (1952), pp. 67–106 at 86–7. This appears to corroborate suggestions made above concerning a relatively late date for the arrival of plague in this town.

<sup>42</sup> Presumably it was through the degree of influence that his employment brought to Guillaume that the king was prevailed upon in 1354 to procure for Guillaume's brother Jean collation to a canonry and prebend of the cathedral church of Toul. Jean de Machaut enjoyed no known direct association with king Charles; he was noted as holding no office in the royal household or otherwise, but was merely 'dilectus suus', in this context a term denoting simply a person to whom Charles wished well but to whom he owed no particular obligation of patronage. See A. Thomas, 'Extraits des archives du Vatican pour servir à l'histoire littéraire', *Romania*, 10 (1881), pp. 321–33 at 330 n. 1. For Jean's career, see Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 28–33.



1350s.<sup>43</sup> Decades of research have identified *c.* 1300 as his date of birth; towards 1360 he would have been seeking the quieter life of a man in at least partial retirement, and it is precisely from this period and onwards to his death that evidence of his entry into formal residence at Reims becomes recognisable.<sup>44</sup> References in his literary works point to his presence in the city a little before and during the alarming but short-lived siege of Reims by the English from December 1359 to January 1360.<sup>45</sup> He was resident in Reims in 1361 to receive the Dauphin, and in 1363 to receive Jean II, King of France, and to offer hospitality to other *seigneurs*.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, even the location of the prebendal mansion of which he was in physical occupation at this time can be identified.<sup>47</sup> Infirmary and winter weather may have been the cause of his absence from an

<sup>43</sup> Other canonries and prebends so far known to have been devolved upon Machaut included one of the collegiate church of S. Quentin at Saint-Quentin (1333 × 5, till death); one of Amiens Cathedral, held only briefly from 1343 to 1344; and one of the collegiate church of S. Quentin at Noyon (1371, till death); Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 18–19; *Fasti Ecclesiae Gallicanae: Répertoire prosopographique des évêques, dignitaires et chanoines de France de 1200 à 1500*, i: *Diocèse d'Amiens*, ed. P. Desportes and H. Millet (Turnhout, 1996), p. 120; iii: *Diocèse de Reims*, ed. P. Desportes (Turnhout, 1998), p. 309. An estimate of the value of the prime income of Machaut's prebends of Reims and Saint-Quentin, which was but 100 livres per year (Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 19, 23, 44–5), may be calculated by reference to the sources mentioned in nn. 83 and 90 below. However, once Machaut had entered residence at Reims in *c.* 1358 the prime value of his prebend would be vastly enhanced by his receipt of much other revenue, including cotidians, the residentiary's annual dividend, and his share of the yield of entry fines; no resident canon of a great cathedral was ever impecunious.

<sup>44</sup> It may be noted that, given the politics of the time, the years 1358 or 1359 would have been a good moment for Machaut to terminate any such employment by Charles of Navarre, and retire to Reims.

<sup>45</sup> J. I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and his French Contemporaries* (Toronto, 1991), pp. 78–82; Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 22–3, 39, 266–8.

<sup>46</sup> Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 27, 28, 39, 43–8 *passim*; Machabey, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 51–70 *passim*.

<sup>47</sup> M.-É. Brejon de Lavergnée, 'Note sur la maison de Guillaume de Machaut à Reims', in *Guillaume de Machaut, poète et compositeur: Colloque, Table ronde, Actes et Colloques*, 23 (Paris, 1982), pp. 149–52. It may be noted that the context in which there arises notice of one Guillemete de Machaut, not an absentee landlord but an actual resident of the parish of S. Timothée in Reims (Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 21 and n. 51 (p. 342), 273), to whom in 1364 was granted remission and relief of one-third of his total tax assessment of 2 francs (he had paid 22s. 8d., but was unable to pay the remaining 11s. 4d.: RsADM, MS 2 G 191, fol. 141<sup>v</sup>), makes clear that he was but some simple townsman of the city of Reims, and in no way connected with Guillaume de Machaut. It is readily conceivable that this Guillemete was associated, or even is to be identified, with both the G. de Machau[t] from whom the city authorities of Reims purchased a packhorse in 1340/1, and with the G. de Machau, rope-maker, who in 1340/1 was a taxpayer of the parish of SS. Jacques and Marie Madeleine: *Archives administratives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 2, pp. 824, 831–2, 833–4.

enthronement on 29 December 1375;<sup>48</sup> he died in April 1377.<sup>49</sup> It appears, therefore, that it was towards the end of the 1350s that at last he entered actual full-time residence at Reims Cathedral, and so commenced with its daily and weekly patterns of worship an association for which, as will be shown, he presently found an expression in the composition of a polyphonic ordinary with which to amplify the potency of a particular Saturday Lady Mass first instituted some twenty years earlier.

Prior to the end of the 1350s, the sole indications of a year in which Machaut did undertake a formal period of residence at Reims during his active working life relate to the chapter year 1351/2. There was indeed a good reason for his choosing to enter residence for the duration of that particular year. At the start of the 1350s the historic provision for the remuneration and sustenance of the twelve singing-men and four boys of the cathedral choir<sup>50</sup> fell into collapse. Doubtless in consequence of the manner in which the shortage of manpower following the Black Death put into an enviable seller's market the labour of those working singers who had survived, the remuneration at Reims was now found to be insufficient to retain the services of the existing vicars choral and boys, who were reported to be absconding from the cathedral to take their training and experience to better-paid posts elsewhere. At this juncture, consequently, the chapter on 1 February 1352 obtained papal authority to appropriate the endowments of twelve of the cathedral's funded chaplaincies to be a resource with which to provide the vicars with a much enhanced stipend thenceforth.<sup>51</sup> Now once

<sup>48</sup> Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, p. 50. Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut's Mass*, p. 5 n. 17 (Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale [hereinafter RsBM], MS 1780, pp. 75–7).

<sup>49</sup> *Fasti Ecclesiae Gallicanae*, iii: *Diocèse de Reims*, ed. Desportes, p. 309.

<sup>50</sup> For the introduction of the team of twelve singing-men in 1285, see below, pp. 40–1 and n. 92. For the boy choristers see Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 43, 50–1, though of course full arrangements for their teaching and coaching will have existed long before the belated endowment, in about 1370, of the *maîtrise* through which they had always been educated. They are noted in a mid-thirteenth-century ordinal of the cathedral as taking in the services the roles standard for choristers of this period, and occur again in 1327, in which year Statute XXIV decreed that any person beneficed in the cathedral but not ordained to the major orders should sport the large tonsure, like the choirboys ('gerant magnam tonsuram, sicut pueri chori'): *Sacramentaire et Martyrologe de l'Abbaye de Saint-Rémy; Martyrologe, Calendrier, Ordinaires et Prosaire de la Métropole de Reims (VIII<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, ed. U. Chevalier, Bibliothèque liturgique, 7 (Paris, 1900), pp. 92–260 *passim*; *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, p. 50.

<sup>51</sup> RsADM, MS 2 G 410, pièce 5 (see Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, pp. 297–8), dated 1 February A.D. 1352 and in the tenth year of the consecration of Clement VI. It may be noted that although for bulls of major importance the papal chancery of this period dated the beginning

again, and perhaps with direct assistance from Machaut himself through the deployment of his influence, the cathedral was able to embark upon and maintain the employment of a professional choir.<sup>52</sup> It does appear likely that Machaut's decision to spend the chapter year 1351–2 in residence was associated with these moves to restore a sound financial basis to the cathedral's employment of singers.

Consequently, not only is Machaut found to have been present at an enthronement on 1 January 1352.<sup>53</sup> He was present also, as a residentiary, at that year's annual chapter meeting, held each year at the feast of the Assumption and deemed to conclude one chapter year and begin the next. Much, moreover, can be learnt from the record of his conduct there.

On 18 August 1352 there came before this meeting a proposal in favour of one of the canons, Hugues de Chastillon, that there be renewed licence granted to him on some previous occasion to appear both in choir and in the close wearing the almuce (an insignium of major orders) despite his being unordained and therefore not so entitled, and also to receive the full yield of his prebend and to participate in the deliberations of chapter despite his not undertaking the burdens of formal residence (the *stagium*). To the Provost of the chapter, Étienne de Courtenay,<sup>54</sup> so gross a departure from custom, canon law and the statutes of the cathedral was insufferable, and he opposed the proposal.<sup>55</sup> However, the case of Hugues de Chastillon, described as *prince* and in fact a younger son of a very great family indeed, was supported and championed by three of the canons present in chapter, of whom Guillaume de Machaut was one. Plainly indignant at the perceived temerity of their Provost, these three canons chose to indulge in a petulant

of the year at Lady Day (25 March), for simple briefs (*brevés*) and lesser bulls such as the present document, the year was dated from Christmas (Poole, 'The Beginning of the Year in the Middle Ages', pp. 122, 131, 136); consequently, in this case 1 February 1352 old style is the same as 1 February 1352 modern style.

<sup>52</sup> By 1370 the number of vicars choral had been raised to fifteen, and in 1384 that of the choristers to five: Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, p. 298; M. Dricot, 'Note sur la formation de Guillaume de Machaut', in *Guillaume de Machaut: poète et compositeur*, p. 146.

<sup>53</sup> RsADM, MS 2 G 323, pièce 15. For the dating of this document, see n. 13 above.

<sup>54</sup> As a prince of the blood royal, Étienne de Courtenay was of a lineage even more aristocratic than Hugues de Chastillon: Desportes, *Reims et les Rémois*, pp. 295 and n. 1, 296 and n. 10, 297 and n. 19.

<sup>55</sup> Such licence was in direct breach of Statute VII of the statutes of 1327: *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, pp. 45–6.

demonstration of their support for de Chastillon by refusing to approve any motion before chapter on that day unless his special privileges were renewed. Neither side would give way, and the consequence was deadlock. Three days later, however, the Provost won the day; he brought the chapter round to a ringing declaration that to no one, no matter how great his eminence, could dispensation from such long-established law and custom of the cathedral be granted, except with the consent of at least two-thirds of the chapter.<sup>56</sup> This left Machaut and his two associates isolated and vanquished in no uncertain terms. On this occasion Machaut was clearly acting as a residentiary canon fully entitled to participate in the deliberations of the chapter. However, after such a rebuff he may not have renewed his period of residence for the following year; he was not present at an enthronement nine months later, on 2 May 1353.<sup>57</sup>

This incident is particularly illuminating, since it may be considered very unlikely that in that disagreement with the chapter of Reims Cathedral in 1352 Machaut came to the support of canon Hugues de Chastillon purely as a matter of whim or abstract principle. Some nexus, direct or indirect, of patron and client may well be understood. It is worth, therefore, enquiring a little further into the family of Hugues de Chastillon (see Figure 1).

During the fourteenth century the comital house of Chastillon possessed enormous distinction and authority in northern France, having ramified into four distinct lines, as Counts of St-Pol, Blois, Porcien and Penthièvre respectively. Hugues de Chastillon was the fourth son of Jean de Chastillon (c. 1280–1363), Seigneur of Châtillon-sur-Marne, himself the second son of Gaucher de Chastillon (d. 1329), Count of Porcien and Constable of France – that is, commander-in-chief of all the king's military forces. Hugues's father, as a younger son, was principally an officer of the royal court, as were Hugues and his brothers in their turn. Jean de Chastillon was a King's Counsellor, *Grand Queux* and by 1350 Grand Master of the Household of King Philippe VI and subsequently also of his successor King Jean II.

<sup>56</sup> *Archives administratives*, ed. Varin, iii, pp. 31–2 (n. 1). For these aspects of the conduct of business in chapter, see especially Statute XV: *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, p. 48.

<sup>57</sup> RsADM, MS 2 G 323, pièce 16.

# Machaut and his Canonry of Reims

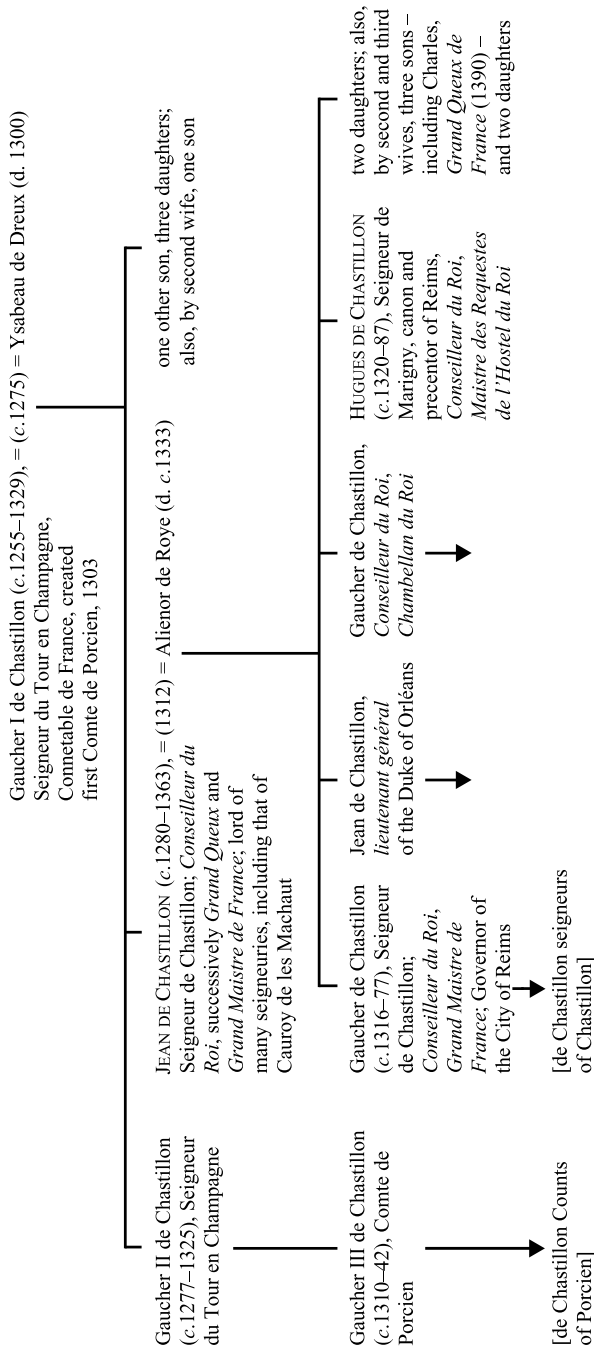


Figure 1 The family of de Chastillon, Counts of Porcien  
 Compiled from A. du Chesne, *Histoire de la maison de Chastillon-sur-Marne* (Paris, 1621), pp. 330, 337, 351, 410, 411, 420–1, 427, and *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, ed. M. Prevost and R. d'Amat (Paris, 1929–), viii, cols. 796–7, 805–6

Hugues himself was one of seven sons. His elder brother Gaucher (d. 1377), the heir to the seigneurie of Châtillon, carried great authority both at court and in the locality; he was a King's Counsellor, inherited from his father the office of Grand Master of the Royal Household, and from 1358, and thus during the siege by the English, was military Captain of the city of Reims and its hinterland. Other brothers held high office in the royal household, including the offices of *Grand Queux* and of Chamberlain; and Hugues de Chastillon himself, Seigneur de Marigny, followed the family calling into royal service. Born in about 1320, he was like his brothers a *Conseilleur du Roy*; apparently educated and trained in the law, he held the office of *Maître des Requestes de l'Hôtel du Roi* – a senior judicial office – in the royal household. He was also a canon of Reims, was royal nominee for appointment to the office of Precentor of the Cathedral in 1360, and occurs, as holder of that office, until his death in 1387.<sup>58</sup>

However, not only was the family of Chastillon undeniably one whose support, once won, was well worth cultivating among any clients seeking favour within the circles of Valois royalty. In the case of Machaut there is a likelihood that loyalty to canon Hugues de Chastillon sprang from a connection additional to and even more immediate and intimate than simple hope of advancement. His association with the family of Chastillon appears likely to have begun with his place of origin.

At the time of Machaut's birth and upbringing, there had been among the many lordships owned by Hugues's father, Jean de Chastillon, the *seigneurie* of a village known as Cauroy de les Machaut.<sup>59</sup> This village lay a couple of miles or so west of the town of Machaut, and about 25 miles east of the city of Reims; its name strongly suggests that in historic terms, over several generations, it

<sup>58</sup> A. du Chesne, *Histoire de la maison de Chastillon-sur-Marne* (Paris, 1621), pp. 409–11, 418–21, 430, 439. The association between Machaut and Hugues de Chastillon may well have been long-term; in 1372, when de Chastillon was resident as canon precentor of the cathedral, he and Machaut occupied neighbouring canonical residences: *Archives administratives*, ed. Varin, iii, pp. 369–70. De Chastillon, eventually ordained deacon, died on 30 May 1387, bequeathing to the chapter 20 livres for the endowment of his obit: *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, pp. 81, 117; RsBM, MS 1773, p. 65.

<sup>59</sup> Jean de Chastillon retained the lordship until 1327, in which year he sold it to the Masters, Brethren and Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu of Our Lady in Reims: du Chesne, *Histoire de la maison de Chastillon-sur-Marne*, p. 413; second pagination, pp. 245–6. The Hôtel-Dieu was a dependency of the cathedral, standing within the close.

had been dominated by one principal family of influence, that of de Machaut.<sup>60</sup> An explanation for Guillaume de Machaut's ostensibly irrational willingness in 1352 to court the displeasure of his fellow residentiaries at Reims may well be sought in the probability that Cauroy de les Machaut was the place of his birth and his youth,<sup>61</sup> and the historic home of his family, so that the canon whose extra-legal privileges he was so keen to support was no less than an influential son of his own sometime manorial lord Jean de Chastillon.<sup>62</sup> This latter individual thus emerges as very likely to have been his earliest supporter and patron.<sup>63</sup>

## II. THE MEMORIAL INSCRIPTION IN REIMS CATHEDRAL, 1377

If it be accepted that the weight of probability points to Machaut's entering residence at the cathedral of Reims only at the end of the 1350s, it becomes possible to consider in a new light the role within

<sup>60</sup> More commonly, a village was distinguished from others of the same name in its locality by the appending of the dedication of its parish church, or of words describing some distinctive topographical feature. Adoption of the name of a family is particularly striking, therefore, rendering it likely that Machaut sprang from a well-established family of prosperous landed gentry (and, *pace* Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, p. 36, was never 'a simple, perhaps penniless, youth').

<sup>61</sup> Although it is perfectly possible that Machaut spent some of his youth in Paris as a student, the manner in which not a single papal document of provision ever identified him as the possessor of a degree (Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, p. 8) suggests strongly that he actually completed no university course, and indeed in no sense did his subsequent career path require him to have done so. Any address to him as *Magister* / 'Maître' is likely to have been honorific, therefore, rather than academic.

<sup>62</sup> Although towards the end of the 1330s the St-Pol branch of the family of de Chastillon became intermarried with the house of Luxembourg (du Chesne, *Histoire de la maison de Chastillon-sur-Mame*, pp. 291–7), I have not been able to find any connection between the latter and the Counts of Porcien (the branch of the family to which Jean and Hugues de Chastillon belonged) which might explain how Machaut transferred from the putative patronage of Jean de Chastillon to that of Jean, Count of Luxembourg.

<sup>63</sup> In his office of *Maître des Requestes de l'Hôtel du Roi* Hugues de Chastillon was in fact a successor of Philippe de Vitry (Wathey, 'Musicology, Archives and Historiography', p. 23), and thus it is readily conceivable that some member of the de Chastillon family had been in a position to serve as an early personal link between Vitry and Machaut. I will have to leave to others more expert than me the task of examining the texts of Machaut's poems, motets and songs (especially the earliest), to discover if any allusions there can be explained in terms of his clientage of that much ennobled and multi-branched family of de Chastillon. A rather imaginative interpretation of the texts of Machaut's motet no. 9, *Fons tocius superbie / O livoris feritas / Fera pessima*, in which an allegorical interpretation is imposed on texts which really seem not to call for or need any such treatment, identifies the biblical Adam as representing Charles de Chastillon, count of Blois: K. Markstrom, 'Machaut and the Wild Beast', *Acta Musicologica*, 61 (1989), pp. 12–39 at 17–26 (esp. 21–4), 34–7. Unfortunately, this proposition does not seem very convincing, and is not considered in Robertson's discussion of this motet, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 137–51.

his musical output of the composition of his sole work for liturgical use, the setting of the Ordinary of the Mass. The stature of this composition, identified in one manuscript as a 'Messe de Nostre Dame', has provoked several attempts to identify the occasion or the circumstances which served as the stimulus for its creation.<sup>64</sup> There appears to be general agreement now that the production of the six-movement composition preserved by the manuscripts was not stimulated by mere whim or fancy on the part of its creator, but was generated either by the incidence of some occasion of specific ceremonial or celebration, or by the appearance of some specific opportunity for ongoing performance. Either of these eventualities is potentially identifiable. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has dated the composition of the mass to the early 1360s, and by far the most plausible hypothesis yet suggested for its inception is that proposed by him in 1990 and, with much amplification of detail, in 1992 by Anne Walters Robertson. Working independently, each seizing on a hint first offered in 1955 by Armand Machabey, both have proposed that Machaut's mass was composed for performance in the course of a Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary which, since 1341, had been celebrated weekly on Saturdays at the altar which was the most prominent among those dedicated to St Mary in the nave of Reims Cathedral.<sup>65</sup>

As part of their evidence, all three scholars drew attention to the text of a memorial inscription concerning Guillaume de Machaut and his brother Jean which was once to be seen in the nave of the cathedral, of which Guillaume was a canon and prebendary for almost forty years and Jean for twenty. No longer in existence, its text was noted by two early eighteenth-century antiquarians before its disappearance apparently later in that century.<sup>66</sup> Few

<sup>64</sup> Opinion appears to have converged on the conclusion that the mass reached its final form through a single campaign of composition at a single time, most probably in the early 1360s, rather than by means of the aggregation and appropriate revision of discrete movements composed individually at intervals over many years, or through the amplification of a collection of odd pre-existing movements by an ordered campaign of completion.

<sup>65</sup> Machabey, *Guillaume de Machault*, i, pp. 69–70; ii, pp. 114–15; Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut's Mass*, pp. 7–13; A. W. Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', in Thomas Forrest Kelly (ed.), *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 100–39 at 131–7; Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 257–75.

<sup>66</sup> Noted by Charles Regnault, in a manuscript collection which he entitled 'Recueil choisi des épitaphes anciennes et modernes': RsBM, MS 1941, p. 94; and by Jean Weyen: *ibid.*, MS 1773, fol. 488<sup>v</sup>, no. 178.



contemporary texts relating to the life of a medieval composer have been quoted and discussed quite so fully and frequently as this inscription.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, it might be thought that the translations tendered so far offer somewhat less than the fullest possible rendering of its original message and import, and consequently it can bear one further detailed examination, not only for the light which it sheds on the origins of Machaut's mass but also for the intrinsic interest of the drama which it records. For despite being commonly so described, this inscription was no epitaph for Machaut and his brother; quite plainly, neither its content nor its style is that of an epitaph. Rather, its text reveals it to have been erected by an altogether different party, to be a record of proud satisfaction in their achievement of constructive recovery following disheartening misfortune.

Its text is as follows.<sup>68</sup>

guillermus de machaudio	suusque Johannes frater	1–2
sunt in loco concordio	iuncti sicut ad os crater.	3–4
Horum aniversarium	est iuxta petitorium	5–6
oratio de defunctis	diebus sabbathi cunctis	7–8
pro animabus eorum	amicorumque suorum	9–10
dicetur a sacerdote	celebraturo devote	11–12
ad roellam in altari	missam quae debet cantari.	13–14
pro quorum oratione	cum pia devotione	15–16
ad eorum memoriam	percepimus pecuniam	17–18
trecentorum florenorum	nuncupatorum francorum	19–20
suis exequutoribus	pro emendis redditibus	21–2
ad dicte misse crementum	reddituum et fomentum	23–4
in eadem presentium	solerter venientium.	25–6
hos fratres salvet dominus	qui tollit omne facinus.	27–8

<sup>67</sup> A very full listing of transcriptions, translations and discussions appears in Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', p. 101 n.1. To this can now be added Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 43–4, 49–51, 344; Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 258–9, 269–72.

<sup>68</sup> From Regnault (RsBM, MS 1941, p. 94); basic punctuation added. Weyen's text (*ibid.*, MS 1773, fol. 488<sup>v</sup>) on line 1 reads 'Guillermus'; on line 5 'anniversarium'; on line 7 'oratio pro defunctis'; on line 19 'Florenorum'. These variants appear to have no significance. Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', pp. 100–1, appears to have been the first scholar to print a fully accurate transcription of the text. Regnault's gratuitous and unperceptive commentary on this text has been the source of much misunderstanding ever since: 'Guillaume et Jean de Machaux, tous deux frères et chanoines de l'église de notre dame de Reims, ce sont eux qui ont fondé la messe de la vierge qu'on chante les samedis dans la susdite église; c'est ainsi que s'en explique leur epitaphe que l'on voit sur du cuivre proche l'autel de la Roëlle à la nef.' The sole value of these remarks is to establish that in the early eighteenth century the weekly Lady Mass at the altar by the Roella was still being sung every Saturday.

When translating this text it is essential that respect be paid to its division into two distinct stanzas, each of seven couplets,<sup>69</sup> for each tells an entirely independent and self-contained section of the overall story. Indeed, there are two stories here, not one. A translation follows.

Guillaume de Machaut and Jean his brother have been joined in a place of harmony, as bowl to mouth. The memorial<sup>70</sup> of these men is as according to legal deposition – for the souls of them and of their friends a prayer for the dead shall be recited on every Saturday by the priest who is about to celebrate devoutly that mass at the altar by the *Roella* which is required to be sung.

On the behalf of the [memorial-]prayer of these men, we, with pious devotion to their memory, have collected for their executors a fund of three hundred of the florins called francs, for the purchase of rents for the increase of the revenues of the aforesaid mass and for the sustenance of those present and attending upon it with their skills.<sup>71</sup> May the Lord who takes away all sin redeem these brothers.

This text was conveyed by a brass plaque affixed to the sixth pier of the nave south aisle, facing the then location of the choir screen.<sup>72</sup> Its position is indicated on the plan appended as Figure 2.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> The translations by Machabey (*Guillaume de Machaut*, i, pp. 69–70) and by Leech-Wilkinson (*Machaut's Mass*, pp. 10–11; somewhat revised for the paperback edition (1992), pp. 10–11) perceive and respond to this division; that by Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', p. 101, is appropriately revised in *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 258–9.

<sup>70</sup> *An[n]iversarium* was used here in a specialised signification local to Reims cathedral. Normally it denoted an observance for the dead celebrated annually (that is, an obit), usually on the literal anniversary (and its eve) of the death of the founder. At Reims, however, the title of *senescallus* (or *officiarius*) *anniversariorum* was given to the officer responsible for the administration of the endowments of all the memorial offices and masses endowed in the cathedral, so that the term *anniversarium* became applicable to any such memorial, even one which like the Machaut memorial prayer occurred weekly. For some notice of the office of *senescallus* (or *officiarius*) *anniversariorum*, see the cathedral statutes of 1327: *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, pp. 79, 92–4.

<sup>71</sup> Literally, 'of those coming and skilfully present at it'.

<sup>72</sup> One of the eighteenth-century copyists recorded that the plaque was affixed to a particular pier ('Au dit pillier'), which had been described in the entries immediately previous as located in the lower nave (that is, west of the choir screen), facing the altar of the Blessed Virgin ('Dans la nef au bas', 'au dit pillier'; this latter was the 'pillier qui fait face au dit autel', being 'l'autel de la vierge': RsBM, MS1773, fols. 488<sup>r</sup>, 488<sup>v</sup>). The other copyist indicated that the inscription was to be found in the cathedral 'sur du cuivre proche l'autel de la roëlle a la nef' (on brass, near to the altar of the *Roella* in the nave): RsBM, MS 1941, p. 94.

<sup>73</sup> For some description of Weyen's manuscript, see A. Machabey, 'Le manuscrit Weyen et Guillaume de Machaut', *Romania*, 76 (1955), pp. 247–53. Because, unusually, this inscription bore no dates (it being no epitaph), Canon Weyen concluded his copy of the inscription by adding:

Guillelmus de Machaudio legitur anno 1337  
Johannes vero 1355.

The appearance of these words was rather misunderstood by J. Goy, 'Note sur la tombe de Guillaume de Machaut en la Cathédrale de Reims', in *Guillaume de Machaut, poète et compositeur*,

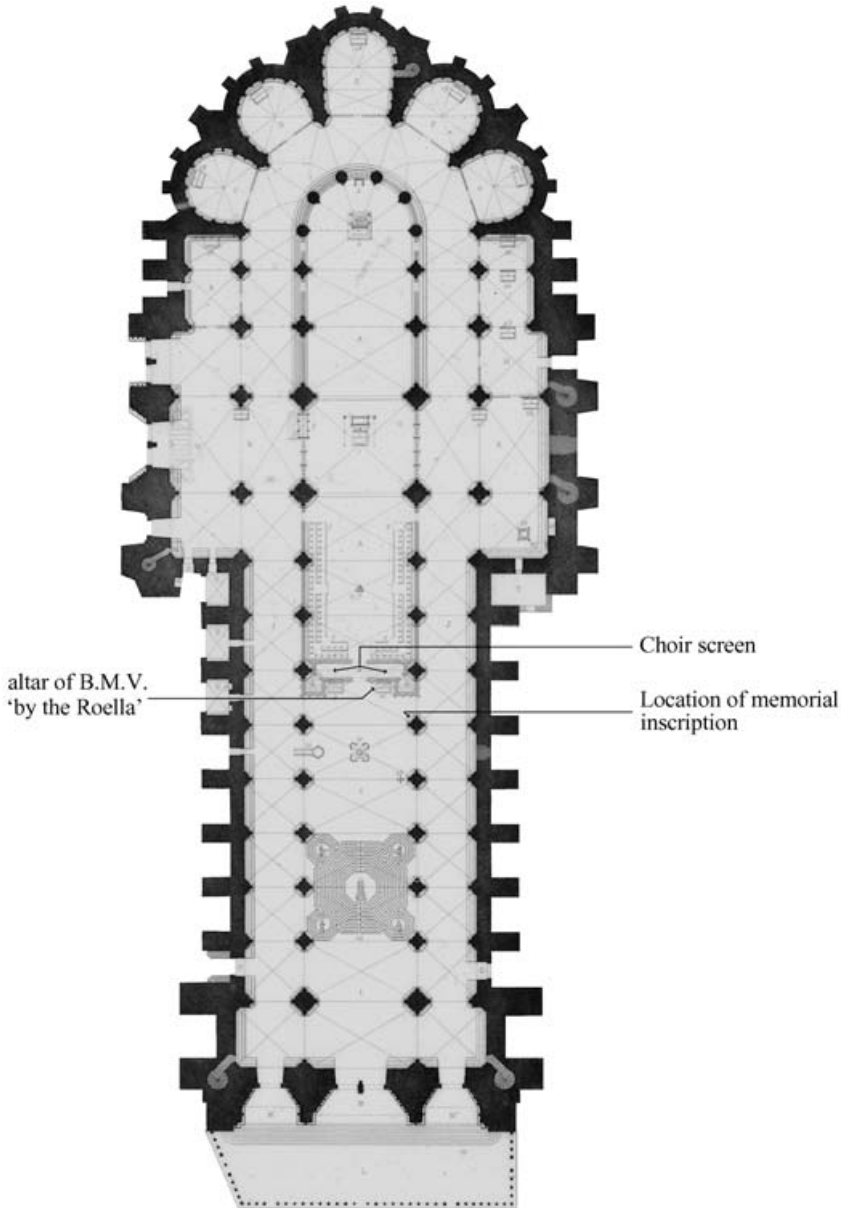


Figure 2 Reims Cathedral: ground plan in the fourteenth century from *L'architecture du V<sup>me</sup> au XVII<sup>me</sup> et les arts qui en dépendent*, ed. Jules Gailhabaud (Paris, 1858), vol. i, fasc. 1, sig. 1a<sup>r</sup>. Reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Library

The text observes a very elementary poetic scheme. Its twenty-eight lines (paired up into fourteen on the original inscription) divide into two stanzas each of fourteen octosyllabic verses, composed as simple rhyming couplets. The author has taken a few minor liberties. The rhyme scheme of the opening four lines observes the pattern *abab* rather than *aabb*; poetic rectitude could easily be restored by the transposition of lines 2 and 3, but at the cost of somewhat obscuring the sense. In line 3 the author has invented an unknown word *concordius* or *concordium* in order to create the rhyme *concordio*. In fact, the noun is *concordia* and the adjective *concoris*; the sense ‘in a place of harmony’ would be rendered by *in loco concordie*, and ‘in a harmonious place’ by *in loco concordi*. Nevertheless, despite the faulty language the sense is plain.<sup>74</sup>

It is, perhaps, most productive to establish at the outset what this inscription is not. Firstly, nothing in its wording suggests that it was intended to be perceived as an epitaph marking the spot where the Machaut brothers were buried. The first four lines say merely that the brothers were now united ‘in a place of harmony’ – meaning, it appears, that both are dead and have gone to a celestial reward common to both. Indeed, had the author wished to record that they were buried in close proximity to the location of the inscription, he could have written for its third line *Sunt in hoc concordi loco* (‘in this harmonious place’) actually improving the language of the text at this point, maintaining the scansion, and scarcely compromising the rhyme. The actual burial site (or sites) of the Machaut brothers remains unknown, therefore; it is perfectly possible that they were

pp. 153–5 at 154. Patently, and despite superficial appearances, these words formed no part of either the principal or some hypothetical additional inscription. If an epitaph, the text might well have given dates of death, but it certainly would not have recorded the dates of the brothers’ admissions to their prebends without also giving the dates of death. Rather, Weyen evidently added these dates to his transcription just for his own reference, allowing him to relate these raw occurrences of canons’ names to his own elaborate indices and catalogues elsewhere in his volume (‘legitur’ is one of his characteristic terms). It may be noted that Weyen did not convert into modern style dates which he found in the archives recorded in old style. This appears to be the source of the confusion discussed in n. 17 above. By the eighteenth century, the plaque was jostling for space on its pier with a plaque celebrating the foundation of Richard Picque de Besançon, archbishop (1387: see n. 91 below), and with another of 1523: RsBM, MS 1773, fol. 488<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> The manner in which two antiquarians independently prepared texts that are all but identical suggests that despite the age of this inscription its condition presented no problems of reading and transcription.

indeed buried close by, but it was never the purpose or objective of this inscription to mark any such site.

Secondly, and of crucial importance, in no respect is the language of this text that of a commemorative record of a holy bequest made directly by the Machaut brothers. In particular, and though I hesitate to disagree with prior and much respected authority, it certainly does not record the direct conferment by them of a cash endowment upon the weekly celebration of mass mentioned in the second stanza.<sup>75</sup> Such a benefaction did indeed take place; however, the inscription shows that this was executed by a different party altogether.

In identifying the true nature of this inscription there is as much to be read between the lines as actually on them. The first stanza is remarkable for its use of words taken from a technical legal vocabulary. *Concordia* is not solely a legal term, but is very commonly encountered in terms such as *concordia finalis* (final concord), denoting a reconciliation, agreement, compromise, or capitulation at the end of a lawsuit. The noun *petitorium* ending line 6 appears to be exclusively a legal term, and it enjoyed a technically specific meaning. It was not a synonym for *petitio*, and so cannot be understood to have been intended to denote some loosely expressed request, or even some specific bequest, on the part of the Machaut brothers.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, to convey meanings such as those, perfectly conventional wordings not resorting to obscure technical terminology could readily have been found for line 6. For instance, had the

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Machabey, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 69–70; Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut's Mass*, pp. 10–13; Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', pp. 125–6, 131–2, 135; Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 269–72.

<sup>76</sup> Robertson renders 'iuxta petitorium' as 'according to [their] petition', justifying this translation on the grounds that the ultimate root of *petitorium* is *petere*, 'to ask': *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 259, 399 (n. 15). However, so to deny *petitorium* its technical meaning seems unconvincing. That the author of the inscription actually found the creation of a pair of lines using the simple words *petitio* or *petere* so utterly impossible that resort had to be made instead to *petitorium*, a technical term both obscure and actually incorrect in this presumed context, just does not seem very likely. Rather, it can be understood that this word was used because it was the correct word for the circumstances. Robertson's remaining observations (*ibid.*, pp. 399–400) appear not to require attention here, since they attribute to me conclusions which I do not hold and have never stated. That the inscription was no epitaph to the Machaut brothers is apparent not for what it does not state, but for what it does. I do not claim 'that the Machaut brothers made no foundation in Reims Cathedral', only that none is recorded by this inscription. I do not 'maintain that the Machaut brothers were not buried near the altar of the *Rouelle*', only that it was never the purpose of the inscription to indicate where they were buried at all.

memorial prayer been inaugurated at the request of the Machaut brothers, the author could have written ‘est per eorum mandatum’ or the like; if by gift, ‘est secundum eius donum’ or ‘est iuxta eorum donum’; if by legacy, ‘est secundum testamentum’, and so on. Only when its technical meaning was required would any author choose to resort to use of a word like *petitorium*. A *petitor* was a litigant in a civil case, normally the plaintiff; the *petitorium* was the substance of his complaint, conveyed in written form, for which he was seeking redress. Indeed, *petitorium* is so exclusively technical and precise a term that it seems that it can have been chosen for use here only deliberately, to mean an actual written statement of case produced in the course of a lawsuit. The memorial inscription, that is, arose from events which had as their starting point some action at law which had involved the production of an actual written *petitorium*.

That the inscription was no commemorative record of a benefaction made directly by the brothers is shown by the language of the second stanza, and particularly by the identity of the subject of the main verb, *percepimus* (l. 18). Had the inscription been created to serve as a such a record, the brothers themselves would necessarily have furnished the principal focus of its author’s attention, his purpose being served by their projection as the subjects of a verb narrating the manner of the benefactions made by them. Had this indeed been the story which it was appropriate for the author to tell, then a perfectly straightforward wording could have been found for lines 17–18 with which to tell it, such as ‘propter suam memoriam / donaverunt (or legaverunt) pecuniam’. Instead, however, the author seems to have gone out of his way to avoid telling any such story. In a very oblique remark, the agents whose good deed is being recorded are identified not as the brothers at all, but as some unidentified persons who, in the first person plural, are the subjects of the verb *percepimus*. Thus it was not to record a benefaction made by the Machaut brothers that this inscription was created. Rather, it was raised on their own initiative by some group of worthies who were seeking to perpetuate the memory of a good work undertaken by ‘ourselves’, on the posthumous and evidently unsolicited behalf of the two brothers Machaut.

Clearly, appreciation of the true sense of the inscription depends on identification of the meaning and significance of the phrase *percepimus . . . suis exequitoribus*. Translations offered hitherto have

rendered this as ‘*We have received* the sum of three hundred florins, called francs, from their executors’, and ‘*nous avons reçus* de leurs exécuteurs testamentaires la somme de trois cents florins de France’ (my italics). Hereby, such renderings create the impression that the 300 francs constituted a bequest donated by the Machaut brothers through their executors for the endowment of the mass.<sup>77</sup> However, such translation is irreconcilable with simple good sense. Had this scenario been correct, the persons most likely to have set up the inscription were the executors themselves, in which case the inscription would have read not ‘we have received from their executors’ but ‘we executors have delivered’. So if not by the executors, then by whom was the inscription created? Who, that is, were the ‘we’ of ‘we have received’? If this translation is correct, only one identification seems possible: the recipient must be the *senescallus anniversariorum* who, as the officer responsible for the administration of the endowments of the memorial masses and offices endowed in the cathedral, was the person empowered to receive from executors moneys destined for such a purpose.<sup>78</sup> Yet it was no part of this officer’s function to set up any such inscription. In return for having done merely his routine job there redounded upon him no particular credit worth recording in such a manner, and there is no evident reason why he should ever have bothered or undertaken to do any such thing. Clearly, ‘we have received’ cannot be the appropriate understanding of *percepimus*.

Rather, in the present writer’s experience of contemporary documents written in Latin and dealing with the collection and receipt of moneys, the word *percipere* was habitually used not in this sense at all but in the active sense of ‘to collect’ or ‘to gather’; if the writer desired to convey the passive sense of ‘to receive’, the word

<sup>77</sup> Robertson, ‘The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut’, p. 101, and *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, p. 259; Machabey, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 69–70; see also Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut’s Mass*, p. 11. Robertson is certainly correct to observe that in no way can the inscription be interpreted to suggest that the brothers Machaut had themselves founded this mass; it was plainly a prior foundation. However, it no longer appears that Machaut composed his mass ‘in conjunction with a votive service *that he endowed* for the Virgin’ (my italics), and Robertson’s hypothetical reconstruction of some testamentary provision made by the brothers is difficult to sustain: Robertson, ‘The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut’, pp. 101, 125–6, 131–2, 135; *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 259, 269–70, 272–3.

<sup>78</sup> See n. 70 above.

for use was *recipere*.<sup>79</sup> Such usage conformed to classical precedent; it was simply what those words meant. In the immediate context of technical terms such as *redditus* (rents) and *pecunia* (fund) (ll. 18, 22, 24), *recipere* was the term used to denote the receipt of rents or moneys by the final receiver as passive recipient; *percipere* was the term used to denote the collection of rents or moneys by an agent or middleman as active gatherer. Concerning the sense of the inscription at this point it is not possible to be utterly dogmatic; nevertheless, its author did choose to write not *recepimus* but *percepimus* and, following the verb without preposition by a noun in the dative case, appears certain to have intended to convey ‘we have collected for their executors’.

It now becomes possible to suggest a reconstruction of the tale that appears to lie behind the erection of this extraordinary inscription. The story needs to be one that incorporates and explains the following phenomena: (1) the occurrence of the word *petitorium*, a technical legal term, and its intimation that these events began with a lawsuit; (2) the curiously inflated degree of concern expressed in the first stanza over what originally was in fact a very small-scale, almost trifling, memorial and its associated endowment; (3) the manner in which, as recorded in the second stanza, some third party subsequently effected the collection of the substantial sum of 300 francs, a sum far too large ever to have been intended as an endowment for a mere memorial prayer and now duly applied to create a very much larger and more noteworthy benefaction; and (4) the identity of those who chose to erect this memorial to their own good works, and their motive behind the decision to record these events in so permanent a manner. The following is what seems to have happened.

At the time of the occurrence of the events recorded, Guillaume and Jean de Machaut were evidently already deceased (ll. 1–4).<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> The standard dictionaries have been consulted. It has to be acknowledged that *Novum Glossarium Mediae Latinitatis: Fasciculum Per-Perlyrus*, ed. François Dolbeau (Copenhagen, 1998), cols. 323–30, does find instances (cols. 325–7) in which *percipere* was used to mean ‘to receive’. These, however, all come from the period 800–1200, and none arises in the context of financial accounting. Whenever in this latter context the word *percipere* did arise (section I.C: col. 325), its meaning was indeed ‘to collect’.

<sup>80</sup> Jean died in 1372, Guillaume in 1377. It may be noted that although the successor to Jean was collated by papal provision in 1372, his collation was received at the cathedral only in 1374 (RsBM, MS 1773, fol. 291<sup>v</sup>); this consideration appears to resolve the apparent confusion surrounding the date of Jean’s death (e.g. Robertson, ‘The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut’, p. 125 n. 67; Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 32–3).



However, it appears that late in their lifetimes they had endeavoured to secure for themselves a small contribution to the welfare of their souls after their deaths. This was to take the form of a weekly memorial in the shape of a prayer of intercession for the benefit of the dead, naming especially themselves and, just as importantly, certain friends, supporters and patrons – the usual meaning of *amici* in such a context (ll. 5–10). This prayer was to be recited by the celebrant prior to his performance of a mass that happened to enjoy a particular identity and prominence in the cathedral. It was observed weekly on Saturdays at a side altar situated within the church and located close to the *Roella*; this was a circular stone set in the nave floor denoting the site of the martyrdom of St Nicasius in 406, and was perhaps the most holy spot within the entire cathedral building. Moreover, either by the terms of its original foundation or through some subsequent accretion of practice, this was no ordinary chantry mass (a spoken low mass), but a sung mass (ll. 11–14).

The memorial so sought by the Machaut brothers was extremely slight; the prayer whose recitation they had endeavoured to implement immediately prior to the beginning of their chosen mass takes barely thirty seconds to recite.<sup>81</sup> And for his very modest trouble, the priest reciting this prayer might expect to receive a very modest honorarium. Indeed, such a memorial, consisting merely of a spoken prayer inserted into or appended to a devotion already well established, constituted just about the smallest, least expensive and most lightweight of all the recurrent personal memorials devised and operative in the fourteenth-century church. It was a very slight observance indeed, and seems utterly unlikely to have constituted the principal benefaction made by two prebendaries to the cathedral church of which Jean had been a canon for twenty years and Guillaume for nearly forty. Such principal benefactions may have been made either in their lifetimes, or by means of the written wills which the reference to their executors shows each to have made;<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> See below, p. 45 and n. 102.

<sup>82</sup> It is possible that in this instance the word *executores* was not being used to mean the formal executors appointed by a testator, but was applied in a usage local to Reims Cathedral, denoting (according to the statutes of 1327) those persons who were appointed by the chapter to wind up just those affairs of a deceased residentiary that directly concerned the cathedral (e.g. outstanding balances of stipend, the vacation of his house): *Archives législatives*, ed. Varin, ii, pt. 1, pp. 52, 95–6.

however, of the terms of these principal benefactions nothing at present is known. Meanwhile, it is evident that this extra recitation of a brief prayer for the dead was merely a supplementary, topping-up procedure, devised perhaps to be a gesture in defrayment of some moral debt which the brothers felt was due to those who had been their patrons and had helped their careers; this would be a perfectly conventional and standard procedure.

Yet it seems that this small-scale benefaction failed. It can be supposed that the brothers never put its terms into conventional written form duly witnessed and validated, and that in consequence the property or moneys that had been intended by them to constitute its endowment could not be taken into seisin by the executors for presentation to the chapter. In all likelihood, the assets that Guillaume (as the longer survivor) was known by word of mouth to have earmarked for the endowment formed part of the unparticularised residue of his estate, to which the claim of the residuary legatee was indefeasible. It seems that a lawsuit was initiated by the executors to resolve the ensuing dispute and so to attempt to obtain possession of the intended endowments; but it appears that the only substantiation that they as plaintiffs could produce for their case was no legally watertight written documentation but only the *petitorium* mentioned in the inscription (*Horum aniversarium est iuxta petitorium*): perhaps a statement, for production in evidence, of the recollections of witnesses relating what they knew orally of the brothers' final wishes. This *petitorium* constituted a clear statement of the brothers' intent as far as the cathedral worthies were concerned, but it would not have been sufficient in law to procure amendment to the terms of the will; consequently, the case was lost, if, indeed, so weak a claim ever came to trial. Nevertheless, the *petitorium* remained, as the written memorial of the brothers' final wishes. This is the story told by the first stanza of the inscription.

To this misfortune the associates of the Machaut brothers responded very much as might be expected. Dismayed at this frustration of the known wishes of respected colleagues lately deceased (*cum pia devotione ad eorum memoriam*), they organised the collection of a fund of cash to be handed over to the executors (*percepimus pecuniam . . . suis exequitoribus*) wherewith the latter might reinstate and duly implement the Machaut brothers' known original wishes. Indeed, considering that certain members of the chapter at

Reims may well have been among the *amici* for whose benefit the weekly intercession was to be endowed, it was much in their interest so to bring its implementation into effect.

However, as is apt to happen under such circumstances, the collection evidently produced a fund much exceeding both original expectations and the immediately envisaged requirement. It was found to extend to the very substantial sum of 300 francs, a sum possessing the purchasing power of around £54 in fourteenth-century English money.<sup>83</sup> Certainly such a sum far exceeded the immediate requirement; it was about ten times that which was needed to implement the weekly recitation of merely a single brief prayer, so that once the endowment and inauguration of the Saturday intercessory prayer was accomplished,<sup>84</sup> there would still be plenty of cash left over. For this latter sum a suitable use would have to be found.

The originators of this inscription, therefore – the ‘we’ of *percepimus* – seem certain to have been the immediate clerical colleagues of the Machaut brothers. These were their fellow canons residentiary of the chapter and perhaps senior members of the staff of the cathedral choir. It was they, not the Machaut brothers themselves, who decided how and for what purpose the surplus cash arising from their spontaneous collection should be invested. It is illuminating to note the manner in which, out of all the many good works which they might have fostered, their choice fell upon the yet further enhancement of that mass which the Machaut brothers had already selected to be the one to serve as the vehicle of their intercessory prayer; the money was handed over for the purchase of rents to be added to the existing endowments of the Saturday mass at the altar by the *Roella*. And finally, the Machaut brothers’ colleagues felt sufficiently pleased with themselves to spend what were presumably the last few francs of their collection on the creation of a memorial plaque recording their good deed for the enlightenment of posterity, for installation at the very location within the cathedral at which their communal bounty achieved its weekly realisation.

<sup>83</sup> Calculated by reference to P. Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange* (London, 1986), pp. liii, 191, 179, 201.

<sup>84</sup> See below, p. 42 and n. 95, p. 45.

The purpose of this inscription, therefore, was to act as a permanent memorial of the virtue and good works of those whose initiative and generosity not only had rescued the intention of the Machaut brothers for the inauguration of their memorial prayer, but also had made an additional substantial increase to the endowments of the particular sung mass in the nave during which this prayer was to be recited. Moreover, the collectors' benefaction was made with not a general but a precise objective. It was directed specifically that the income be spent on sustaining not the celebrant, for whom adequate provision evidently was already made, but some other personnel, who were in attendance at the mass – distinguished already as a sung mass – and who possessed particular skills (*presentium solerter venientium*) which they were bestowing upon its observance. The intention, that is, was to fill an existing shortcoming by providing an assured income for certain individuals who already were contributing to this celebration some particular and evidently conspicuous skill.

This latter enterprise, identified and undertaken not by the brothers themselves but on the initiative of their closest colleagues, clearly had not been chosen at random. This particular celebration of mass was perceived by their colleagues as possessing for the Machaut brothers some special affinity and rapport, which their benefaction was intended to consolidate and render permanent. Fortunately, through the researches of Anne Walters Robertson much is now known of the nature and origin of this particular observance, in particular the manner in which the terms of one particular foundation at the 'altar by the *Roella*' fit so precisely the characteristics distinguishing the celebration memorialised by the Machaut inscription that there can be little doubt of its identification.<sup>85</sup> Yet there remains scope to undertake a fresh review of the documents, in order to place in its larger context this present interpretation of the memorial inscription.

The 'altar by the *Roella*' to which reference is made in the inscription was located at the east end of the nave of the cathedral (see Figure 2). Immediately to its east, backing onto the screen

<sup>85</sup> Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', pp. 116–33; also Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 47–51, 270–2.

dividing nave from choir, there stood two altars, one on each side of the choir door. That to the north (to the left of the door) was dedicated to St Paul; that to the south (to the right of the door) to the Holy Spirit.<sup>86</sup> Most importantly in the present context, the altar to the right of the door had lately emerged as (after the high altar) the second most significant site of devotion to the Virgin Mary throughout the whole cathedral, so becoming of sufficient prominence to be denoted simply as ‘the altar by the Roella’.<sup>87</sup> In particular, by the early 1340s the enclosure of this altar had become distinguished by the installation of a majestic statue of St Mary. This was described as ‘new’ in 1343,<sup>88</sup> and almost certainly had been located there in association with an important mass foundation instituted just two years earlier.

This was a Mass of the Blessed Virgin celebrated weekly on Saturdays throughout the year, whose terms of foundation show that, out of all the numerous masses celebrated at this altar, it alone possessed the characteristics required to identify it as that within which the Machaut brothers wished their memorial prayer to be incorporated. It had been founded on 9 January 1341 when Jean de Vienne, archbishop of Reims, announced his bestowal upon the cathedral of rents intended eventually to yield an annual income of 10 livres and 8 sous of Paris. With this sum the chapter was thenceforth to employ some existing member of the cathedral community in priest’s orders to celebrate the Mass of the Blessed Virgin weekly on Saturdays at ‘the altar of her beauteous image next

<sup>86</sup> Robertson, ‘The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut’, pp. 128–9; Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 23–4, 25–7, 271–2.

<sup>87</sup> Robertson, ‘The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut’, pp. 126–31. Only recently had this altar been elevated to the status of an altar of the Blessed Virgin; in 1309 it had been merely ‘unum altarium que sunt in navi ecclesie nostre ante lapidem sancti nichasii in introitu chori nostri’: RsADM, MS 2 G 410, pièce 3.

<sup>88</sup> ‘altare ymaginis nove prope introitum chori et Roellam beate Nichasii a dextera parte dicti chori’: RsADM, MS 2 G 442, pièce 1 (26 April 1343); see also below, n. 91. Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, p. 27 and n. 84 (p. 344), notes that at least by the early eighteenth century this image (or a later successor) had been moved to a new location on the north side of the choir door, adjacent to the altar of St Paul. Nevertheless, as this document of April 1343 conclusively shows, the location of the original image of the mid-fourteenth century was most certainly by the altar on the south (right: *dextera*) side of the choir door. In Machaut’s time, therefore, it was this latter altar that was distinguished by the presence of the image of St Mary, and so furnished Jean de Vienne with the location of his weekly Lady Mass (*pace* Robertson: *ibid.*; also pp. 270–2 and n. 63 (p. 404)).

the choir door'; that is, at the altar by the *Roella*.<sup>89</sup> The terms of its foundation show that this was to be no self-effacing chantry mass, of purely private intent. Rather, its observance at a location in the nave, where it could be expected to attract in abundance the attention and attendance of devout members of the laity, indicates clearly the intention of its founder that it should enjoy a special prominence. In a foundation characteristic of its period, Jean de Vienne was adding to the cathedral's liturgy a weekly public Lady Mass.

Apart from these overt characteristics, Jean de Vienne's foundation was marked in particular by one special feature by which it can further be identified as the mass selected by the Machaut brothers to be the vehicle for their memorial prayer. The archbishop was acutely conscious of his leaving the celebration of this mass as yet somewhat underfunded in respect of his ambitions for it. He had duly conveyed to the church a property in the city of Reims able to yield 10 livres per year but he still did not know whence, in the long term, the remaining 8 sous were going to come. Moreover, unlike virtually all other similar founders, he had not yet specified how the income accruing to this mass was to be apportioned among those participating in its execution. He explained merely that such distribution should be effected according to an ordinance yet to be made, to be drawn up by unspecified persons yet to be appointed. Such proceedings added up to recognition by de Vienne that while the relatively modest sum so far provided by him would have sufficed to constitute a useful supplement to the prime stipend of,

<sup>89</sup> RsADM, MS 2 G 357, pièce 10; not easy to read and hitherto unpublished, a transcription and translation appear below, Appendix. Robertson ('The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', p. 126) considers that the benefaction of Jean de Vienne involved the relocation of an existing Saturday celebration of Lady Mass from some prior location to the altar by the *Roella*. However, the announcement of foundation by Jean de Vienne suggests no such thing, and it appears certain that this earlier Lady Mass, which originated in the thirteenth century or earlier and was celebrated in the usual location, namely at an altar at the far east end of the church (*ibid.*, p. 130 n. 84), continued to be observed there as previously, while Jean de Vienne inaugurated an additional and wholly new celebration in the nave. It may be noted that this celebration in the nave would be observed on every Saturday in the year (Holy Saturday excepted), and would not have been suppressed on certain days on account of liturgical considerations which in fact applied only to the choir service (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 133–5). Indeed, de Vienne's foundation charter stated expressly that the celebration was to take place 'quolibet die sabbati sine defectu'. See also Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, p. 272 and n. 73 (p. 405). By 1456 this mass was occasionally spoken, not sung, and its ministers were correspondingly reduced in number: Varin, *Archives législatives*, ii, pt. 1, p. 112.

say, a vicar choral in priest's orders to be celebrant of this mass,<sup>90</sup> it would have left little residue, if any, for the remuneration of additional participants.

Yet de Vienne went out of his way specifically to seek the presence of extra participants, particularly those possessing certain special skills, and – pending the availability of financial inducement – he went about obtaining their contribution to his mass in a manner which in these circumstances was less than conventional, albeit not particularly original overall. He offered forty days of indulgence not just to all who were simply in attendance at the devotion, but also to those who were able to amplify its performance by making voluntary contribution of certain particular skills bestowed upon them by God (*ad ulteriorem ac ampliolem ipsarum fundationem de facultatibus sibi a deo prestitis*). It seems certain that what de Vienne had in mind was particular musical proficiency. Certainly there appears to be no form of egregious skill other than musical that can have possessed or exhibited any relevance or pertinence in such a circumstance; and certainly a weekly celebration of Lady Mass undertaken in the nave of a church whose status was that of a metropolitan cathedral dedicated to the Virgin herself would have needed to be not some unremarkable and undistinguished spoken low mass but, if possible, a full-scale sung mass, with deacon and subdeacon to assist the celebrant and a team of singers to execute the chant.

Indeed, it seems clear that what de Vienne wanted was the standard corporate sung Lady Mass conventional for the period, celebrated by priest, deacon, subdeacon, and singers, and that because his endowment could not yet afford to pay assisting singers to attend, he offered reward in the afterlife instead. Nevertheless, for such a purpose regularity of attendance was best assured by the availability of financial reward for those whose presence was desired as assisting singers, and this as yet remained to be provided. Moreover, if with the passage of time this mass developed into an observance enhanced with not routine but specialist singing skills, such financial provision would become all but mandatory. Jean de

<sup>90</sup> Ten livres and 8 sous *parisis* possessed the purchasing power of some 20 to 25 shillings of contemporary English sterling (Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, pp. liii, 172, 176–7, 200). At a time when a chantry priest in England earned up to 10 marks (£6 13s. 4d.) per year for saying mass daily, de Vienne's foundation offered a fair rate for one mass a week.

Vienne's device could be no more than a short-term substitute for the usual cash remuneration; nevertheless, it might very well have succeeded in obtaining his objective for the immediate future.<sup>91</sup>

Such assisting singers would, of course, have been members of the cathedral's regular choral strength. It appears that up until relatively recently its choral resources had been curiously rudimentary. Until 1285 responsibility for singing the *Opus Dei* had lain with the residentiary canons; only in that year did the chapter acknowledge the evidently unsatisfactory nature of this expedient, and respond by creating twelve new offices of vicar choral, being four each for priests, deacons and subdeacons. Adequate provision was made for

<sup>91</sup> A number of further foundations were established at the altar of the Blessed Virgin by the *Roella*; however, all were independent foundations the resources of which would not have been available to subsidise the mass of Jean de Vienne. See e.g. RsADM, MS 2 G 442, pièce 1 (26 April 1343); letters patent of the provost, dean, precentor and chapter, accepting a chantry benefaction from Thomas de Cernay, canon of Reims, and acceding to his request that this be applied to the refoundation of a thitherto unfunded chaplaincy lately established in the cathedral by the chapter itself, to which chaplaincy the said chapter had assigned the 'altare ymaginis nove prope introitum chori et Roellam beate Nichasii a dextera parte dicti chori'. The chaplain of de Cernay's chantry was to celebrate four times per week; although his Saturday mass was to be of the Blessed Virgin Mary, this is clearly a foundation entirely separate from that of Jean de Vienne, requiring – as a spoken chantry mass – no assistants other than a single server.

A further chantry, of Hugues de Jully, canon and dean of Reims, was founded at this altar ('ad altare beate marie in navi ecclesie predicte Remensis iuxta Roellam') on 9 December 1363; the priest of this chantry likewise was to celebrate four masses per week, of which three were to be of Requiem and one of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In addition, an obit was to be observed annually in choir for the benefactor, and – very unusually – out of the first-fruits of each newly appointed chaplain 10 livres *tournois* were to be surrendered for application by the chapter to the celebration of a fully choral mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary (with canons, vicars and choristers), to be performed on 1 March of each new chaplain's first year, apparently at the altar by the *Roella*: RsADM 2 G 444, pièce 1. Again, this foundation was totally separate from Jean de Vienne's foundation of a weekly Lady Mass.

In May 1380 Charles V, king of France, founded and established a processional service in honour of the Blessed Virgin, to be observed weekly throughout the year on Mondays following Vespers (following Compline during Lent), during which the station was made 'coram imagine dicte virginis gloriose in navi eiusdem ecclesie': RsADM, MS 2 G 1550, pièce 1 (printed in G. Marlot, *Histoire de la ville, cité et université de Reims*, 4 vols. (Reims, 1843–6), iv, p. 634). It may be noted that no documentary evidence can be found to support the existence of an alleged foundation of Charles V created earlier, in 1364 (C. Cerf, *Histoire et description de Notre-Dame de Reims*, 2 vols. (Reims, 1861), i, pp. 82 n. 2, 84, 348, 432). This may indeed be a mirage; Cerf was aware of the foundation of 1380, and this he appears to have quoted twice, once under an incorrect date.

In 1387 a further chantry was founded 'in altari ymaginis beate marie gloriose virginis ante Roellam nostre prefate ecclesie' (Richard Picque de Besançon, archbishop: RsADM, MS 2 G 408, pièce 5), and in 1392 another 'ad altare de Roella in navi dicte ecclesie nostre' (Denis de Méry, succentor: RsADM, MS 2 G 357, pièce 15). These were spoken chantry masses of independent foundation, and their observance would in no way have affected, obstructed or benefited the performance of de Vienne's Saturday Lady Mass.



their remuneration.<sup>92</sup> Now at last the cathedral enjoyed the services of a skilled and professional choir, of the substantial number of twelve men, to take prime responsibility for the execution in choir of the plainsong of the daily Office and High Mass. Moreover, not only did these singing-men offer a pool of suitable talent from which the celebrant, deacon, subdeacon and singers for Jean de Vienne's weekly Lady Mass could be drawn. As has been noted above, it appears that those occupying these vicarages choral may have owed to Machaut himself some debt of gratitude for the contribution of his influence and participation in the procedures whereby, with effect from 1352 onwards, additional remuneration had been secured for them (see above, pp. 18–19).

There is every reason to believe that the celebration of Lady Mass first instituted in 1341 by Archbishop Jean de Vienne was that to which reference was made by those formulating the text of the memorial inscription concerning the Machaut brothers. It was celebrated on each Saturday at the altar by the *Roella* in precisely the manner particularised by the inscription; at the beginning of the 1360s this lately established Lady Mass was the most regular and most prominent of the celebrations of mass conducted at that particular location;<sup>93</sup> and its original endowment was acknowledged not to have been sufficient to enable its full potential to be met, so that scope certainly existed for its augmentation in just the manner narrated by the inscription.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, the wording of the inscription's reference to 'those attending upon it with their skills' seems to bear a direct and deliberate correspondence to de Vienne's original provision of 1341 for the contribution of those possessing particular 'skills bestowed by God'. Finally, this identification appears to be confirmed securely by the particular terms under which, in 1411, the chapter agreed that the chantry and intercessory arrangements

<sup>92</sup> RsADM, MS 2 G 410, pièce 1.

<sup>93</sup> So it would appear from the data tabulated by Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', pp. [121]–[124]. *Pace* Robertson (*ibid.*, pp. 120, 125, 132; *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, p. 272), the insertion of the intercessory prayer for the Machaut brothers could not turn this Lady Mass into a Mass of Requiem, many texts in the latter being very different from those of the former.

<sup>94</sup> Much later, the 200 florins (francs) bequeathed 'ad augmentationem misse de Rouella ecclesie Remensis' in 1407 under the terms of the nuncupative will of Laurence de Raillcourt, canon and a vigorous champion of the choir, do seem likely to have been intended to yield additional financial support for de Vienne's foundation: RsADM, MS 2 G 357, pièces 17, 18 (of these duplicates, 18 is marginally more readily legible than 17).

for Jean le Verrier, canon of Reims, should include two masses per year celebrated at the altar of the Holy Milk; it was directed that each mass should include ‘the prayer for the dead . . . namely “*Inclina domine aurem tuam*”, which has been accustomed to be said for Guillaume de Machaut, sometime canon of Reims, deceased, on Saturdays in the mass of the Blessed Mary celebrated at the Roella of the said church’.<sup>95</sup>

It can be considered certain, therefore, that it was this weekly mass first endowed in 1341 by Jean de Vienne that was the object not only of the piety of the Machaut brothers in seeking the observance of their memorial prayer,<sup>96</sup> but also of the beneficence of their colleagues in devolving upon it the yield of their spontaneous collection. It was this particular observance of mass, that is, that was perceived both by the Machaut brothers and, in due course, by their cathedral colleagues, as possessing for Guillaume and Jean some special and very particular affinity. This was the affinity which their colleagues wished to put on as sound a footing for the future as they could, and it remains only to establish exactly what its nature was.

As yet there has come to light no evidence establishing this conclusively.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, a circumstantial case can be built which, at the very least, appears persuasive. The way in which in 1377 there still existed a shortfall in endowment provision for Jean de Vienne’s mass, to be met after Machaut’s death on the initiative of his former colleagues, suggests strongly that Machaut had made no direct provision for its endowment in his lifetime. It appears to follow that the absence of any such cash connection renders especially clear the extent to which to the brothers themselves, who wished their memorial prayer to be uttered at this mass, the affinity arose from some ingredient that was not financial but immediately personal; and the nature of this affinity was no less evident to their

<sup>95</sup> ‘cum illa oracione de defunctis post eiusdem fratris nostri decessum, videlicet *Incline domine aurem tuam* etc<sup>a</sup>, que consuevit dici diebus sabbatinis in missis de beata maria ad Roellam dicte ecclesie pro defuncto guillermo de machaudio quondam Remensi canonico’: RsADM, MS 2 G 357, pièce 20.

<sup>96</sup> Robertson, ‘The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut’, pp. 131–2.

<sup>97</sup> The frequency with which the name of Jean de Vienne occurs, albeit incidentally, in Machaut’s biography up to de Vienne’s death in 1351 suggests that in selecting a celebration of mass founded by the archbishop for his bestowal of polyphony, Machaut may have been honouring the memory of a former patron. See n. 40 above, and Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 14, 35.

colleagues, in whose judgement the most appropriate way in which to enhance the honour of the brothers' memory was to plough the very substantial residue of their collection into the remuneration of those attending upon the mass and having some particular skill to contribute to its conduct. Indeed, it is possible that it was a desire on the part of Machaut's colleagues to set the performance of this mass on the soundest financial footing that explains their evident over-subscription to the impromptu rescue fund.

The most telling indication of the nature of this affinity arises from the need evidently experienced in 1377 for extra endowment for this service with which suitably to provide 'for the sustenance of those present and attending upon it with their skills'. By any criterion, there was at this period only one noteworthy form of skill that those physically in attendance upon a celebration of mass could contribute to it and so make themselves worthy of receipt of financial reward. That was musical skill and, in particular, the skill of performing composed polyphony. In terms of English money (a good yardstick, as the most stable of all European medieval currencies), an investment of £54 (= 300 francs) would yield some 45 to 50 shillings a year, thereby (after allowance for payment to the priest reciting the memorial prayer) providing the equivalent of some ten shillings per year to each of four singers. By contemporary standards, this was a fair reward for one mass per week, provided it presented challenges that were particularly taxing and exacting.<sup>98</sup> Certainly, therefore, there are good grounds for understanding that those intended to benefit from the investment of the 300 francs collected by Machaut's colleagues in his memory were singers from the regular choir of the cathedral whose contribution to the performance of the designated mass was the singing (in addition to its chant) of composed polyphony.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> For a closely corresponding arrangement in England, whereby a group of four singers selected from the overall cathedral choir received extra payment from special endowments to sing Lady Mass in polyphony (in this instance, daily), see Roger Bowers, 'Music and Worship to 1640', in Dorothy M. Owen (ed.), *A History of Lincoln Minster* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 47–76 at 52–3, 56.

<sup>99</sup> Some fortuitously close parallels exist between these circumstances and those under which, almost contemporaneously, a Lady Mass choir was inaugurated at Winchester Cathedral Priory in England. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, John and Alice Talmache bequeathed by will to the priory certain estates intended to endow in perpetuity an annual obit in the choir, plus the recitation of a prayer for the welfare of their souls; this latter was to be uttered daily by the monk celebrating the Mass of the Blessed Virgin. When the bequest

Given this consideration, therefore, it becomes entirely reasonable to propose that the affinity between Machaut and the weekly Lady Mass at the *Roella* arose from the regular performance there of his very own tailor-made polyphonic setting of the ordinary. This proposal does indeed rest on evidence that is only circumstantial, but does seem commendably persuasive. All the necessary criteria are met, and certainly there appear to be no valid counter-arguments. Robertson has shown that the chants on which the isorhythmic movements of the Mass are based were known no less in Reims and its vicinity than elsewhere in Europe; that they were not uncommonly appropriated for use as the *cantus firmi* of polyphonic settings intended for use at Lady Mass; and that idiosyncratic variants in the chants used by Machaut, especially in the Kyrie and Sanctus, conform to those characteristic of Reims and its environs.<sup>100</sup> Certainly, the hypothesis that the weekly celebration of Lady Mass in the nave of Reims Cathedral regularly incorporated the performance of this work of Machaut's own creative genius does explain all three of the cardinal ingredients constituting our knowledge of these circumstances: the composer's evident personal affinity with and attachment to this particular celebration; the corresponding and corroborative perception of his former colleagues; and the need to make provision for participants possessing very particular skills.<sup>101</sup> It seems wholly reasonable, therefore, to corroborate the conclusions of prior scholars, albeit for very different but, it is hoped, better-founded reasons, in hypothesising both that this mass was regularly distinguished by the singing of polyphony, and that the polyphony sung at this mass was that of Machaut's own *Messe de Nostre Dame*.

materialised in 1400/1 it proved to yield an annual income considerably exceeding the sum required to fund these memorials, and the Prior and Chapter applied the rest to the employment of a professional Cantor to attend Lady Mass daily with a choir of four boys recruited from the priory's Almonry School: Roger Bowers, 'The Musicians of the Lady Chapel of Winchester Cathedral Priory, 1402–1539', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 45 (1994), pp. 210–37 at 216–20.

<sup>100</sup> Robertson, 'The Mass of Guillaume de Machaut', pp. 104–16; Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, pp. 260–9.

<sup>101</sup> The probability that the deacon at this mass was, like all those attending, always one of the cathedral's corps of twelve professional choirmen serves to explain why Machaut could set in polyphony the final versicle 'Ite missa est'. I am grateful to Daniel Leech-Wilkinson for pointing out to me this possibility.

Also, it now becomes possible to understand why the Machaut brothers wished their commemorative prayer to be recited at the beginning of the Lady Mass, instead of immediately prior to the prayer of consecration, which was the more usual position for such an observance. Mass begins with the rendering by the singers of the plainsong introit; during this, the celebrant makes his entry and, inaudibly (*sotto voce*), performs with his server the rites of preparation. Then the introit concludes, and as his first audible words, the priest turns to those attending and utters the Machaut memorial prayer:<sup>102</sup>

Inclina, domine, aurem tuam ad preces nostras quibus misericordiam tuam supplices deprecamur, ut animas famulorum tuorum Gullielmi de Mascaudio et Johannis fratris eius, nuper canonicorum huius ecclesie cathedralis, parentum et amicorum eorum *N* et *N*, quas de hoc seculo migrare iussisti, in pacis et lucis regione constituas et sanctorum tuorum iubeas esse consortes. Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum. Amen.

Turn thine ear, O Lord, to our prayers by which, as suppliants to thy mercy, we implore thee to establish within the realm of peace and light the souls of thy servants Guillaume de Machaut and Jean his brother, late canons of this cathedral church, and of their parents and of their friends *N*. and *N*., which you have summoned to migrate from this life, and direct that they be colleagues of thy saints. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And immediately, the cathedral rings to the sound of Kyrie eleison; the celebrant, that is, recites the prayer, and in Machaut's austere and arresting notes the singers take up his theme, adding to that of the priest their own petition that the Lord have mercy. That moment must have packed a punch leaving few spines untingled.

So it has now become possible to locate constructively Machaut's creation of the mass within his overall compositional biography. Jean de Vienne founded his Saturday Lady Mass at the altar by the *Roella* in 1341. For some twenty years it was celebrated as a mass sung probably to plainsong, by priest, assistants and choir drawn from the body of vicars choral; the priest was remunerated from Jean de Vienne's foundation, while the singers contributed for no reward other than their days of indulgence. At the end of the 1350s Machaut entered residence, and soon thereafter began the composition of his setting of the ordinary of the mass for the observance of this, the cathedral's most conspicuous celebration of Lady Mass. Appreciation that it was indeed only at the end of the 1350s that he

<sup>102</sup> A charter of foundation of 1411 gave its opening four words, from which the whole can be identified: see above, p. 42 and n. 95. The prayer concerned occurs in the form of Requiem Mass used at the month's-mind of the deceased.

entered residence renders possible the perception of his composition of the mass as coinciding with his decision to dwell within the precinct with the degree of assiduity necessary to become closely concerned with the observance of the cathedral's liturgy.<sup>103</sup> As was noted above, other than his mass, Machaut appears to have written no music for the liturgy; certainly the contents of the surviving portmanteau manuscripts of his works indicate that he wrote none for which he wished to be remembered. This apparent omission becomes readily explicable on the premise that he undertook residence at Reims only in old age and retirement after a working life spent entirely in the employment and entourages of members of the secular nobility.

It is clear that in general Machaut's clerical status weighed but lightly upon him, so that following completion of the mass he felt moved to write no more for the services of his church. And this consideration helps only to emphasise the manner in which the creation of his mass can now be appreciated simultaneously on two complementary planes. For his colleagues as fellow formal residentiaries of Reims it served as a bouquet, offered to acknowledge and mark his arrival and reception among them. For himself, in now the final phase of his life, it was a recognition of the contribution he could make to the welfare of his own immortal soul by means of the strategic aggrandisement of a pre-existing weekly Mass of the Blessed Virgin. This he offered as a gesture of dedication to the intercessory powers of St Mary, Notre Dame de l'Eglise, complementary to his long-standing dedication to the literary *Dame d'Amour*.

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<sup>103</sup> It may be noted that on taking up residence in Reims in about 1358 or 1359, Machaut gained access once more to singers professionally engaged in the ecclesiastical environment and tradition, allowing him scope to resume, after a very long break, the composition of Latin sacred motets (see Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut*, pp. 39–40). Further on changes detectable from c. 1360 onward in the character of Machaut's poetic output, now attributable to his change of circumstances from employment to retirement, see *ibid.*, p. 40.

APPENDIX

Jean de Vienne's Lady Mass Foundation, 1340/1

Announcement of foundation with advertisement of indulgence, promulgated 9 January 1340/1 by Jean de Vienne, archbishop of Reims, relating to his establishment in the cathedral church of Reims of a weekly celebration of Mass of the Blessed Virgin: Reims, Archives départementales de la Marne, MS 2 G 357, pièce 10 (punctuation and paragraphing added).

Universis et singulis christi fidelibus ad quos presentes littere pervenerint, Johannes miseratione divina Remensis Archiepiscopus sinceram in christo dilectionem cum animarum salute.

Ad omnium et singulorum fidelium noticiam volumus pervenire nos, ad laudem et honorem intemerate virginis gloriosissime dei genitricis marie pro fundacione missarum de ipsa beatissima virgine ad altare pulcre ymaginis iuxta introitum chori ecclesie nostre Remensis annuatim et perpetuo quolibet die sabbati sine defectu celebrandarum, contulisse redditus annuos et perpetuos decem librarum et octo solidorum parisiensium, percipiendarum super quadam domo sita in loco dicto a courtelancis cum eius appendiciis et pertinenciis per nos et auctoritate nostra amortizatis quantum ad decem libras de dicta summa, et super registro nostro Remensi quantum ad octo solidos de dicta totali summa, donec dicti octo solidi per nos prout deo auctore in brevi fieri speramus alibi fuerint securius seu firmiter assignati, distribuendarum iuxta ordinacionem a nobis deputatorum super hiis faciendam.

Et ut orthodoxe fidei sectatores frequencius confluant ad ipsam missam audiendam, quatenus senserint se spirituali remuneratione proinde premiari, nos de omnipotentis dei misericordia confisi omnibus et singulis vere penitentibus et confessis qui ad audiendas missas predictas convenient et in ipsarum celebracione devote intererunt, seu ad ulteriorem ac ampliolem ipsarum fundacionem de facultatibus sibi a deo prestitis aliquid competenter iuxta suarum exigenciam facultatum voluntarie obtulerint et pie erogaverint tocians quociens ibidem in quolibet die sabbati missam audient vel predicta modo predicto per eos fient, auctoritate nostra pontificali quadraginta dierum indulgentiam misericorditer impertimur.

In cuius rei testimonium sigillum nostrum presentibus litteris duximus apponendum. Datum anno domini millesimo CCC<sup>mo</sup> quadragesimo, die nona mensis Ianuarii.

**To** all and singular Christ's faithful to whom these present letters shall have come, John, by divine pity archbishop of Reims, [tenders] sincere love in Christ with salvation of souls.

**To** the notice of the faithful, all and singular, we wish to convey that, to the praise and honour of the most glorious virgin Mary, undefiled mother of God,

for the foundation of masses of the same most blessed virgin to be celebrated without fail on each Saturday throughout the year and perpetually at the altar of her beauteous image next the door of the choir of our church of Reims,

we have furnished annual perpetual rents of 10 livres and 8 sous of Paris, to be collected in respect of 10 livres of the said sum upon a certain house, with its appendages and dependencies, located in the said place at Courcelancy, amortised by us and by our authority,

and, in respect of 8 sous of the total sum aforesaid, [to be collected] upon our registry of Reims, until the said 8 sous shall have been more certainly and more surely assigned elsewhere, as we hope by us to be undertaken shortly, God so directing;

[these sums] to be distributed according to an ordinance of those by us deputed, to be made upon these presents.

**And** so that seekers of orthodox faith may the more frequently gather to hear the said mass, so that they may perceive themselves to be enriched thereby with spiritual reward,

we, assured of the mercy of almighty God, tenderly, by virtue of our archiepiscopal authority,

upon all and singular those who, truly penitent and confessed, [either] gather to hear the aforesaid masses and devoutly shall be present at the celebration thereof, or, for the further and more ample establishment of the same, shall willingly have offered and piously have contributed, from the skills bestowed upon them by God, something appropriate according to the dictates of their skills,

do bestow indulgence of forty days in respect of every occasion on whatsoever Saturday [either] they shall hear mass in that place, or the aforesaid things shall be done by them in the aforesaid manner.

**In** witness whereof we have caused our seal to be appended to the present letters. Given in the one thousand, three hundred and fortieth year of the Lord, on the ninth day of the month of January.