

Pastoral Song and the Marian Body: Discursive Iconoclasm in Sixteenth-Century Paris

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Abstract

Amid the religious antagonisms of sixteenth-century Paris, the traditional French pastoral song reemerged from the obscurity of the fourteenth century, achieving a renewed popularity in the tumultuous capital. These bawdy pastoral songs—replete with Marian allusions—borrowed from, and engaged with, the Catholic language of body metaphor and could be heard to degrade the Marian body, stripping the image of her power at the same time that Protestant raids on Catholic churches were desecrating likenesses of the Holy Virgin and smashing the symbols of Catholic idolatry. These ostensibly secular songs were not incidental to religious turmoil, but, rather, provided a method of engagement. This examination argues that the sixteenth-century French pastoral song must be understood as a discursive form of iconoclasm, which underwrote, and gave meaning to, acts of iconoclasm in the physical realm. Moreover, it was the performance of such songs that allowed Protestants to temporarily claim space in a Catholic capital that intransigently refused to make room for them.

Genre is fluid and evolving, and shows that changing generic parameters are, at least in part, a set of historically specific responses to changing social and ideological conditions.¹

In the sixteenth century, Paris was both an epicenter of culture and a crucible for the deeply divisive, Reformation-era antagonisms that would erupt, by 1562, into the brutal violence of the French Wars of Religion. During this time, the traditional French pastoral song re-emerged from the obscurity of the fourteenth century, becoming, for a time, a fixture in the Parisian soundscape, challenging the musical hegemony of the courtly love song. The re-invigorated *chanson rustique* was not incidental to the climate of religious factionalism; rather, it provided a method of

¹ Geri L. Smith, *The Medieval French Pastourelle Tradition: Poetic Motivations and Generic Transformations* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 244.

engagement. The sixteenth-century division between secular and sacred culture was blurry, to say the least; so indistinct were the two musical registers that sacred and secular melodies could often be played together without the slightest dissonance. Biblical allusions likewise crossed the porous boundary between secular and sacred. Allusions to the Virgin Mary routinely found their way into secular songs of the period—pastoral and courtly—incidentally providing the raw discursive material for Protestant dissent.²

While courtly songs reified Marian virtue, pastoral chansons could be heard to subvert it. The former genre described the chaste, reverent love of an unattainable noblewoman. Pierre Certon's "*Vivre ne puis content sans ma maistresse*," published in 1538, twice in 1540 and again in 1544, is a popular example: "Vivre ne puis content sans ma maistresse,...Languit me fait son amour en tristesse/...souhaite pour avoir fruit de l'amour commencée./Mais en chantant, respond sur ma requeste: 'Contentez vous, amy, de la pensée!'" ("I cannot live without my mistress...I languish in sadness for her love...I wish to reap the fruit of this budding love./But in singing she answers my plea: 'Content yourself, my friend, with the thought!'.")³ The bawdy pastoral song, in contrast, featured the assignations of a lusty, pliable shepherdess, as is discernible in Jacob Clemens popular chanson "*Au joly boys je rencontray m'amy*"—published several times over in the decades following 1529. The risqué lyrical verse—"Au joly boys je rencontray m'amy./Quant elle m'aperceut elle fut resjouye./Elle m'a dit tout bas en soubriant: 'Baisez moy tant, tant,/Fringuex moy tant, tant,/Je seray vostre amy.'" ("In the pretty woods I met my sweetheart, and she rejoiced to see me. Softly she whispered with a smile: 'Kiss me some more, frig me some more, I will be your beloved.'")—became a Parisian favorite.⁴ Contrast in treatment of the Marian figure—identified most frequently through biblical associations with nature and shepherding—is stark. Significantly, the pastoral song's seemingly blasphemous degradation of the Marian body discursively stripped the image of its power at the same time that Protestant raids on Catholic churches were desecrating likenesses of the Holy Virgin and smashing symbols of Catholic idolatry.

² The confessional challenge to Catholicism remained largely inchoate for most of the period under study (roughly 1520-1560). Less Lutherans, strictly speaking, and more "sacramentarians," religious dissidents in France would, by mid-century, come under the sway of Calvin and Geneva. As such, it will be useful to use the aggregating term "Protestant" for the purposes of this discussion. When confessional peculiarities demand attention in light of their impact on the argument, Protestant denominations will be addressed in unambiguous terms.

³ Jane Bernstein, *French Chansons of the Sixteenth Century* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985), 26. Mistress in this context is understood as a term of deference, not a synonym for "lover." Primary source translations throughout are attributable to the editors of the chanson collections, alterations are bracketed; all future secondary source translations are the author's own unless otherwise noted.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

This study examines the role of the pastoral song in sixteenth-century Paris and what it meant for those who made it popular and filled the urban spaces with its melodies. In doing so, it bridges the analytical gap between musicology and Renaissance history, a frequently under-investigated interdisciplinary space within which the historical contextualization of music yields new understandings of culture, politics, and society in the late-Renaissance city. I aim to demonstrate likewise that the political use-value of songs in France had roots much earlier than historians had initially suspected. Robert Darnton argued in 2000 that late-eighteenth-century Parisians manipulated popular songs to craft subversive satires, heaping opprobrium upon the dissolute monarchy and the corrupt authorities of the Old Regime.⁵ The songs were but one part of the important process of de-sacralization and delegitimation of the monarchy that created the space for dissent and revolution. The popularization and appropriation of sixteenth-century pastoral songs by Parisian Protestants should be read as a precursor to the melodious politicking of Darnton's eighteenth-century agitators. Due to the timing and locus of the pastoral song's resurgence, its aural and stylistic similarities to the courtly love song and the shared engagement with Marian metaphor of the two secular genres, these sixteenth-century bucolic melodies should be understood as a discursive form of iconoclasm, the performance of which allowed Protestants to both engage in a meaningful discourse of dissent and to temporally claim space in a Catholic capital which intransigently refused to make room for them.

The Music of Sixteenth-century Paris

The rich music scene of sixteenth-century Paris can be attributed to the combined efforts of François I, who ruled France from 1515 until his death in 1547, and Pierre Attaignant, the prolific printer who called the French capital home. Despite historian Frederic J. Baumgartner's claim that François I "was somewhat less interested in music" than his predecessors Charles VIII and Louis XII, there can be no doubt that the volume of printed music, its breadth, and its tone saw important changes during his reign.⁶ Part of this can be explained by the monarch's interest in arts and letters and his desire to establish Paris as an artistic center rivalling Venice. According to musicologist Isabelle Cazeaux, François I's interest in the cultural capital of French song may have gone beyond simple patronage. The works of François I—a poet in his own right—were set to music by contemporary composers

⁵ Robert Darnton, "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2000): 1-35.

⁶ Frederic J. Baumgartner, *France in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 113.

and an attribution of one of Attaignant's prints to "François" suggests that the king may have dabbled in composition as well.⁷ More importantly, his impact on French music of the period must be understood as a result of his expansion, in both size and importance, of the French court. In her study of the sixteenth-century court, Jeanice Brooks notes that membership in the assembly included all ranks of French society and was constantly in flux.⁸ While the court was rather peripatetic, most members, including court musicians, "did not serve the entire year in their positions, but alternated with others in periods of three months," facilitating a significant cultural exchange between the city, particularly Paris, and the court.⁹ As such, the repertory of Parisian printers was influenced as much by market demands as by personal connections with the wandering musicians of the royal assembly.¹⁰

While the printing press had made its appearance in Paris as early as 1470, the technology was not used significantly for the production of musical prints until it came under the aegis of Pierre Attaignant, who held the title of *Imprimeur du Roi en Musique* (the king's music printer) until his death in 1551. While many songs of the sixteenth century were derivative—either copied wholesale from one author to the next or with the lyrics set to a variation on the original tune—many of these initial works found their first expression in the songbooks, or *chansonniers*, of Pierre Attaignant. From 1520, when he became the first large-scale publisher to make use of the faster, cheaper, single-impression movable type for music printing, until his death, Attaignant published more than one hundred and fifty volumes of sacred and secular music, featuring over 1500 songs. Only Du Chemin came close to this volume of output, printing over one hundred *chansonniers* between 1549 and 1576.¹¹ For this reason, Attaignant's influence on Parisian music and the composition of his *chansonniers* as reflections of market demands must not be underestimated.

While the sheer volume of printed music changed during the second quarter of the sixteenth century, under the cultural patronage of François I and Pierre Attaignant, importantly, so too did its content. Cazeaux writes that "the subject-matter of chansons was, generally speaking, more varied and more cheerful in the sixteenth century than in the fifteenth." "Earlier music," she continues, "included its share of...crude songs; but the secular repertoire on the whole was courtly and often

⁷ Isabelle Cazeaux, *French Music in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 19.

⁸ Jeanice Brooks, *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 32.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹ Cazeaux, *French Music*, 116-17.

sad.”¹² While the courtly song remained a sixteenth-century fixture in the Parisian soundscape, “popular” songs increasingly carved out space in the repertoires of important printers.¹³ Musicologist Courtney S. Adams notes that Attaignant’s first six anthologies “show a preference for lament-style poems rather than the light, ‘popular’ ones,” though all subsequent collections, excepting one, show an increase in the proportion of “popular” selections.¹⁴ According to Adams, evidence from earlier prints suggests that Attaignant was not opposed to lighter texts and thus the paucity of such pieces in the first collections of this period is likely indicative of the scarcity of such compositions, which by 1530, began to take up more than a third of the printed space in his *chansonniers*.¹⁵

What accounts for the shift in the production of, and demand for, the bawdy, rustic songs that seemed to mock the melodies of reverent courtly love, whose musical hegemony had remained unchallenged for more than a century? French historian Pierre de Vaissière has argued that the sixteenth century “experienced the most intimate rapprochement between the common people and the upper classes that ever took place during the Old Regime” and it is this rapprochement, according to François Lesure, that might account for the “variety of chansons—courtly and vulgar—which one finds in the collections of the period.”¹⁶ While the collapsing of the distinction between high and low culture certainly provides insight into *how* the pastoral song was able to gain a foothold in sixteenth-century Parisian musical culture, it does little to explain *why* this long-dead, fourteenth-century musical tradition saw a popular resurgence.

The Resurgence of Pastoral Song

The historiography of French renaissance music does not want for theories regarding the meaning of pastoral song, though the differing contexts in which scholars have evaluated these sources have led to various interpretations of the songs symbolism and meanings. Importantly, the division of labour between the composers of sixteenth-century French songs and the poets whose lyrics they set to music has created a host of problems in establishing authorial authenticity for compositions of

¹² *Ibid.*, 209.

¹³ “Popular songs” for the purpose of this discussion will adhere to the range of categories of, and be interchangeable with, the “chanson rustique,” as outlined by Howard Brown. See footnote 17 for details.

¹⁴ Courtney S. Adams, “The Early Chanson Anthologies Published by Pierre Attaignant (1528-1530),” *The Journal of Musicology* 5, no. 4 (Autumn 1987): 528.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Cited in Cazeaux, *French Music*, 154.

the period.¹⁷ Perhaps owing to the difficulty in ascertaining authorship of most sixteenth-century chansons, as well as to the limited cultural meaning that can be derived from a poietic approach, most interpretations favour an esthetic approach to analysis. Musical semiologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez writes,

[t]he thematic material upon which a work is constructed may be intended by the composer to leave a trace in the work, but not necessarily be perceived by the “receiver” who may have other ideas about what constitutes the work’s themes... A symbolic form is not some “intermediary” in a process of “communication” that transmits the meaning intended by the author to an audience; it is instead the result of a complex process of creation (the poietic process) that has to do with the form as well as the content of the work...it is also the point of departure for a complex process of reception (the esthetic process) that reconstructs a ‘message.’¹⁸

Reception theories, such as Nattiez’s, allow us to determine the manner by which an individual apprehends an object. Music, in this case, takes on meaning when it is placed within the individual’s matrix of lived experience.¹⁹ Meaning is therefore subjective—spatially and historically specific—allowing for a variety of interpretations, depending on the context in which the material is experienced and evaluated. The application of esthetic analysis, then, goes a long way toward exposing the root of scholarly discrepancies in meaning.

Developed with strict respect to the courtly context, interpretations of the sixteenth-century pastoral song by John Haines and Jeanice Brooks, while rich and nuanced in their own right, have limited resonance in explaining the song’s urban reception. In *Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères: The Changing Identity of Medieval Music*, Haines argues that the pastoral song was dusted off and trotted out by François I to “glorify the nation of France by recalling its historical prestige.”²⁰ According to Haines, under the patronage of François I and Henri II—who “adopted at court the words and ways of the old chivalry”—the romantic concept of the *antiquité française* became the impetus for the revival of the “rustic, naïve, simple”

¹⁷ Howard Brown, “The ‘Chanson Rustique’: Popular Elements in the 15th- and 16th -Century Chanson,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1959): 20. Brown defines the *chanson rustique* as a popular song in which love is the subject for satire or irony and/or in which it takes on a naïve and bucolic aspect. This covers a range of overlapping classifications such as love songs, narrative songs, *chansons de mal marids et malmarides* (songs about bad husbands and wives), satirical songs, political and historical songs, pastoral songs, and more.

¹⁸ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁰ John Haines, *Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères: The Changing Identity of Medieval Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76-7.

songs which recalled France's "legendary past."²¹ "By their very vernacular nature," Haines writes, "these songs are... explicitly connected with nationalistic causes."²² Haines's analysis, which attributes the song's meaning to the aims of the patron, veers toward a poietic analysis, and so, coupled with the courtly context, has little bearing on the study of the meaning and use of the sixteenth-century pastoral song in Paris.

Brooks's examination of sixteenth-century vernacular song considers the ways in which courtly and pastoral songs contributed to the "construction of courtly ideals and identities."²³ Brooks's esthetic analysis reveals that whatever the pastoral song's origins may have been, "when such songs were performed in courtly settings or polished and presented in polyphonic arrangement in prints of airs, they became representations of the rustic for courtly consumption: part of the courtly vision of the country, and equally importantly, of the court's understanding of its own operations."²⁴ While Brooks, like Haines, reads the sixteenth-century pastoral song as an allusion to a romanticized past, she importantly distinguishes her work through recognition of, and engagement with, the overt sexuality and power struggles that lay at the heart of these bawdy, rustic chansons. She writes that songs of the *vie rustique* represented a "kind of nostalgia felt by members of the military nobility, who resented the subjection to princes and patrons that the court increasingly required." The songs offered noblemen "both an unchallenged status most could not enjoy at court and the power to engage in sex with social inferiors without the ceremony or subjection demanded by court women."²⁵

Sexuality and power are critical to understanding the meaning of the sixteenth-century, French pastoral song in any context. Historian William Powell Jones writes that the "erotic element in the Old French pastourelle was emphasized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."²⁶ That this heightened eroticism provided a departure from the original thirteenth- and fourteenth-century troubadour and trouvère songs, on which sixteenth-century pastorals were based, demands attention. Geri L. Smith's analysis of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century

²¹ *Ibid.*, 76-7, 272.

²² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²³ Brooks, *Courtly Song*, 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 342. Polyphonic music refers to music written for several voices as opposed to monophonic music, which was written with only one singer—typically a tenor—in mind. "Airs" refer to *air de cours*, popular court songs, which had previously circulated in French music prints as *chansons* or *voix de ville* (literally, voice of the city; urban songs that traditionally circulated through oral tradition).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 367.

²⁶ Nancy A. Jones, "The Rape of the Rural Muse: Wordsworth's 'The Solitary Reaper' as a Version of Pastourelle," in *Rape and Representation*, eds., Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 186.

pastourelles, precursors to the sixteenth-century pastoral songs in rhythm, theme and lyric, proves particularly useful here. She writes that “while the *pastourelle* certainly is not to be read as a realistic representation of specific social categories and conditions, the fact is that texts are a reflection of the cultural contexts that engender them, a forum for the affirmation, preservation, and promotion of ideologies. They reflect social anxieties as well.”²⁷ Smith views the *pastourelle* in the context of the social and economic restructuring of thirteenth-century France and Western Europe. Urban merchants and artisan guilds were shifting the locus of power away from the landed aristocracy; rural estates were becoming increasingly fragmented and near-constant warfare had forestalled the continuation of many noble bloodlines. Identifying power as the *pastourelle*’s central theme, Smith argues that such lyrical forms “may reflect anxieties in a world marked by profoundly changing social conditions. The emerging moneyed classes were reconfiguring the very definition of power in ways that no shepherd ever could.”²⁸ Two centuries after it had fallen out of favor, the pastoral lyrical form—a microcosm of power relations and social anxieties—re-emerged on the Parisian music scene as religious tensions in the capital were reaching their boiling point. It is in this context that the sixteenth-century pastoral song, a discursive challenge to the courtly love song, derives meaning.

Marian Metaphor and the Courtly-Pastoral Dichotomy

The inversion and subversion of courtly conventions is central to the pastoral lyrical form. For this reason, Geri L. Smith asserts that it “can and should be read as a counterpoint to courtly forms.”²⁹ The most compelling aspect of the conventional dialogue between these contrapuntal musical forms is their shared engagement with Marian metaphor, representing the sixteenth-century melding of the secular and religious and attesting to the resonance of allegory in the early modern imagination. Willem Elders writes that biblical allegories became the common possession of all Christians, so therefore

the religious significance of [late] mediaeval symbolism can hardly be exaggerated. With the whole world recognized as a revelation of God, and with visible objects on every side testifying to the unseen and spiritual, it was not easy for a person to forget religion altogether and to become wholly absorbed in material things. Reminders of the divine

²⁷ Smith, *The Medieval French Pastourelle Tradition*, 68.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-5, 17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

were everywhere.³⁰

Such allusions to the divine resounded particularly in sixteenth-century secular song, which was both thematically and aurally similar to contemporary Marian devotional songs. Sylvia Huot writes that it is “commonplace that the language of devotion to the Blessed Virgin is so similar to that used to express love and devotion to ladies of this world that at times the two registers can scarcely be distinguished.”³¹ The interplay between secular and religious song was so ubiquitous that, at times, the two collapsed into one another, made harmonious by composers of polyphonic arrangements. Rothenberg argues that, “Marian devotional songs and secular love songs often sounded together within individual compositions in sonic harmony that medieval and early Renaissance readers and listeners understood to be symbolic of a spiritual harmony between diverse materials.”³²

The spiritual harmony between sixteenth-century Marian devotional songs and secular courtly love songs is hardly contentious. “*Grace, vertu, bonté, beaulté, noblesse*,” a popular song from the sixteenth-century French musical canon, premiering in 1528, is indicative of the thematic and musical fluidity between sacred song and those of courtly love: “Grace, vertu, bonté, beaulté, noblesse/Sont à m’amy; point ne le fault celer./Trop my desplaist d’en ouyr mal parler;/Je hay celuy qui son honneur blesse.” (“Grace, virtue, goodness, beauty, nobility/my beloved possesses them all;/This should in no way be hidden./Much it displeases me to hear evil spoken of her;/I despise him who wounds her honor.”)³³ Roquelay’s verse—borrowed several times over for use in other sixteenth-century arrangements—is evocative, not just of the chaste, perennially unattainable object of affection so central to the courtly love song, but of the Holy Virgin, herself. According to Elder, Western literature of the period saw Mary as “the personification of grace and purity...symboliz[ing] therefore the nobility of woman.”³⁴ Claudin de Sermisy’s “*Il me suffit de tous mes maux*,” composed in 1546 and appropriated many times over for various vocal and instrumental arrangements, deals in similar allusions to the Virgin Mary: “Il me suffit de tous mes maux,/ puis qu’ilz m’ont livré à la mort./J’ay endured peine et travaux,/ tant de douleur et desconfort./Que voulez que je face pour ester en vostre grace?/De douleur mon Coeur si est mort s’il ne voit vostre face.” (“I have had enough of all my ills,/since they have almost been my

³⁰ Willem Elders, *Symbolic Scores: Studies in the Music of the Renaissance* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 2-3.

³¹ Cited in David J. Rothenberg, *The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.

³² *Ibid.*, 4.

³³ Bernstein, *French Chansons*, 50.

³⁴ Elders, *Symbolic Scores*, 151.

death./I have endured pain and hardship,/so much suffering and grief./What shall I do to win your favor?/My heart languishes if I do not see your face.”³⁵ Such songs of reverent, pure love—while they “look[ed] and act[ed] like chansons rustiques” due to a sixteenth-century “vogue for borrowed melodies”—stood in stark contrast to the irreverent pastoral songs of lowly shepherdesses and their bucolic assignations.³⁶

While Marian metaphor is perhaps most readily apparent in sixteenth-century courtly love songs, its dialogue with the pastoral chanson—owing to their musical similarity and the combative inversion of conventions—demands a similar reading of the latter form. Rothenberg writes that while courtly songs were “easily transformed into devotional song,” by contemporary, French peoples, “[pastoral] song required more interpretive latitude.”³⁷ The link that would have resonated most with sixteenth-century listeners would have been pastoral allusions to the Old Testament Song of Songs, which had become part of the liturgy of Mary’s Assumption as early as the thirteenth-century.³⁸ Casual references to the Song of Songs in the third book of Rabelais’s *Gargantua and Pantagruel*—published in 1546—testify to the ubiquity of the text in sixteenth-century France.³⁹ Elders writes similarly that, while “in Christian tradition the [Song of Songs]...was also explained as a poetic depiction of the relation between Christ and his bride, the Church...[late] Medieval liturgy saw the bride of the Song of Songs as a symbolic representation of the Virgin Mary.”⁴⁰ Passage 6:10-12 of the Song of Songs ensconces the Holy Virgin in the natural, bucolic setting that is replicated in pastoral songs of the sixteenth century: “I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valleys, and to look if the vineyard had flourished, and the pomegranates budded. Return, return, O Sulamitess: return, return that we may behold thee.”⁴¹ According to Elder, the poet of the Song of Songs “describes the bride as a sweet-smelling, enclosed garden...the *Hortus conclusus* was adopted as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception.”⁴² Guillaume Boni’s “*Ha, bel accueil*” seems to mimic the scene of the Song of Songs but inverts its purity:

Ha, bel accueil, que ta douce parole/Vint traîtrement ma jeunesse offenser,/Quand au premier tu la menas danser/Dans le verger l’amoureuse carolle./Amour adonc, me mit à

³⁵ Bernstein, *French Chansons*, 104.

³⁶ Brown, “The ‘Chanson Rustique’”, 23-4.

³⁷ Rothenberg, *The Flower of Paradise*, 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁹ François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. M.A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 403, 407.

⁴⁰ Elders, *Symbolic Scores*, 160.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁴² *Ibid.*

son école, Ayant pour maître un peu sage penser,/Qui sans séjour me mena commencer/Le chapelet de la danse plus folle./Depuis cinq ans dedans ce beau verger, Je vais ballant avec faux danger,/Sous la chanson d'Allégez-moi, Madame./Le tabourin se nomme fol plaisir,/La flûte erreur, le rebec vain désir,/El les cinq pas la perte de mon âme. (O Bel Accueil, how your sweet words/treacherously came to abuse my youth/when at the start you took me off to dance/the amorous carol in the orchard./Love then did place me in his school, with wicked thought as my master./Who without ado led me away to start/the rosary of the wildest dance./For five years now in this lovely orchard I have been dancing away without concern/to the tune of Allegez-moy madame./The little drum is called now 'mad pleasure',/the flute 'error', the rebec 'vain desire',/and the *cinqupace* 'the loss of my soul.')⁴³

The reference to the widely-popular song, "*Allegez-moy madame*," to which Boni refers in text, clarifies any ambiguity as to the type of activity for which the composer requires the cover of the *Hortus conclusus*: "Allégez moy douce plaisant brunette,/Dessoubz la boudinette,/Allégez moy de toutes mes douleurs./Vostre beaulté me tient en amourette,/Dessoubz la boudinette." ("Relieve me, sweet laughing brunette/Beneath the belly-button/Relieve me of all my sadness./Your beauty keeps me ready for love,/Below the belly-button...")⁴⁴ Moreover, Boni's reference to a *chapelet*, or rosary, serves to further elicit biblical connections—in this case—in both the sixteenth-century and modern imaginations.

Marian allusions to the Song of Songs proliferate in sixteenth-century pastoral chansons; the purity of the Marian figure is seemingly inverted and she is at once stripped of her virtue and her power. Elder writes:

Another Marian metaphor [which appeared in sixteenth-century devotionals] is derived from the Song of Songs 6:9...Renaissance artists often used the sun and moon as attributes of the Queen of Heaven since the Woman of the book of Revelation (12:1) is said to be standing on the moon and clothed in the sun.⁴⁵

Several other nature elements factor strongly into Marian metaphors from the Song of Songs, and appear in both secular and religious chansons. The text of Jacobus Clemens non Papa's sixteenth-century Marian devotional "*Ego Flos campi*" was derivative of the Song of Songs (2:2-2; 4:15) and referred to Mary as "the flower of the field" and "the lily among thorns."⁴⁶ A 1567 composition, "*Mignonne, allons voir si la*

⁴³ *French Chansons*, ed., Frank Dobbins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 262-266.

⁴⁴ "Allégez moy," *The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Text Archive*, accessed March 29, 2014, http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=52688

⁴⁵ Elders, *Symbolic Scores*, 161.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 159.

Rose," by Guillaume Costeley—formally reprinted at least five times from 1570-1581—incorporates both the floral and celestial motifs:

Mignonne, allons voir si la rose,/Qui ce matin avait disclose/Sa robe de pourpre au soleil,/ N'a point perdu cette vesprée /Les plis de sa robe pourprée /Et son teint au vôtre pareil./Las! voyez comme en peu d'espace,/Mignonne, elle a, dessus la place,/Las! Las! ses beautés laissé cheoir!/Ô vraiment marâtre nature,/Puisqu'une telle fleur ne dure,/Que du matin jusques au soir!/Or donc, écoutez-moi, Mignonne,/Tandis que votre âge fleuronne/En sa plus verte nouveauté,/Cueillez, cueillez votre jeunesse:/Comme à cette fleur la vieillesse/Fera ternir votre beauté. (Sweet one, let us see if the rose/which this morning had opened up/its crimson robe unto the sun/has not now this same evening lost/the weaving of its purple garb/and its complexion so like yours./Alas! see how in such short time,/sweet one, she has upon the ground/alas! alas! her beauty shed./O truly harsh Mother Nature,/since such a flower can only last/from morning until evening./Believe me now, my sweet one,/in bloom of your youth,/in its most verdant freshness,/pluck it, pluck it while you may,/for, as with this flower, old age/will soon tarnish your great beauty.)⁴⁷

Reliably, one witnesses the seizure of young virtue in an idyllic, natural milieu. Howard Brown writes of these bawdy *chansons rustiques* that, "the scene is set again and again in the woods or in a garden, where 'l'amoureux' or 'le gallant' finds his beloved making flower garlands or guarding her sheep."⁴⁸

Pastoral songs that predominantly feature shepherdesses are particularly adept at eliciting Marian allusions that are derivative of both the themes of the Song of Songs and foundational Christian allegory. As early as the thirteenth century, Rothenberg writes that "composers saw in the love between shepherds and shepherdesses of pastoral poetry a colorful and amusing allegory for the love between Christ and Mary, a love that was celebrated with especially vivid language and imagery from the Old Testament Song of Songs in the liturgy of Mary's Assumption."⁴⁹ Pastoral allegories abound in the Bible itself; beginning, "The Lord is my shepherd," Psalm 23:1 is perhaps the most notable passage to utilize shepherding as an allusion to the divine, but the allegory appears repeatedly throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament.⁵⁰ Importantly, pastoral images would likely have been particularly evocative for Protestants. Donald Kelley argues "the Augustinian 'congregation of the faithful'...was the model of reformation; and so...the dominant

⁴⁷ *French Chansons*, ed., Dobbins 220-223.

⁴⁸ Brown, "The 'Chanson Rustique'", 19.

⁴⁹ Rothenberg, *The Flower of Paradise*, 8.

⁵⁰ Including John 10:11, 1 Peter 2:25, Revelation 7:17, Genesis 49:24, Psalm 78:52 and 80:1, Isaiah 40:11, Jeremiah 31:10, and Ezekiel 34:11 and 34:15.

image became that of shepherd and flock.⁵¹ Two songs from 1543, the first authored by Thomas Crecquillon, the second by an unknown composer, feature the lusty shepherds and shepherdesses which frequently obtained in French pastoral songs of the sixteenth century:

Un gai berger priait une bergère/En lui faisant du jeu d'aimer requête/'Allez' dit elle 'et vous tirez arrière/votre parler je trouve deshonnête/Ne pensez pas que ferais tel défaut,/Par quoi cessez faire telle prière,/Car n'avez pas la lance qu'il me faut.' (A jolly shepherd asked a shepherdess/if she would join him in the game of love./'Be off', she said, 'and get out of here,/your suggestion I find quite unseemly./Don't think that I could stoop to such a thing,/therefore give up all this pleading;/in any case, you have not the lance I need.')⁵²

Le bergier et la bergère/Sont à l'ombre d'ung buisson./Ils sont si pres l'ung de l'autre/Qu'à grant peine les voit on./La dame a dict à son mignon:/'Reprenons nostre allaine,/Le loup emporte nos moutons, mon compaignon,/Pour dieu saulvez la laine!' (The shepherd and shepherdess/are now lying in the shade of a tree./They are so close to each other/that you can scarcely distinguish them./The lady says to her sweetheart:/'Quick let's catch our breath/the wolf is carrying our sheep away, my dearest,/for God's sake you must save the wool!')⁵³

That the feminine stock characters of such scenes were frequently named Marion only added to their facility in eliciting biblical connections. Jean Mouton's "*En venant de Lyon*" highlights the manner in which pastoral songs could be heard as inverting Marian virtue: "En venant de Lyon, bon, bon, bon, bon/Trouvai en un buisson Robin et Marion./Il lui levait son pelison, bon, bon, bon, bon./Mais je ne sais qu'ils font./Robin a dit à Marion, bon, bon, bon, bon/'Voici bien garde mouton.'" ("When coming from Lyons, bong, bong, bong, bong,/I spied in a thicket Robin and Marion./He lifted up her long dress, bong, bong, bong, bong./But I don't know what they are doing./Robin said to Marion, bong, bong, bong, bong/'This is how to tend sheep.'")⁵⁴

Arguably, the presence of perceived Marian metaphor in French pastoral songs of the sixteenth century brought them in dialogue with courtly love songs of the period, serving as a thematic counterpoint by inverting and profaning the virtuous Marian body, which the latter form revered. Contemporary French

⁵¹ Donald R. Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 96.

⁵² *French Chansons*, ed., Dobbins 158-161.

⁵³ Bernstein, *French Chansons*, 116.

⁵⁴ *French Chansons*, ed., Dobbins 18-9. "Sheep" was also the composer's name.

Christian culture would have been well attuned to Marian allusions to Old Testament Song of Songs and to pastoral biblical allegory, on which the *chanson rustique* relied for its contrapuntal potency. Such allusions were heightened by the aural similarity of secular and religious tunes. If, as I argue, such songs could be interpreted and deployed as challenges to Marian divinity and the sanctity of Catholic iconography, it would not be the first time that criticism of the Church had been expressed through the medium of secular song. Jane Bernstein argues that the lecherous monk, represented here in an anticlerical epigram by Clément Marot and set to music by Pierre Certon, was “a favorite character of the fabliau and other popular literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.” Famed French composer Clément Janequin also composed a *chanson* upon the epigram—enjoying several settings and reprints between 1538 and 1551, the song was indeed popular fare.⁵⁵

Frère Thibault, sejourné gros et gras,/Tiroit de nuyt une garse en chemise/Par le treillis de sa chambre, ou les bras/Elle passa, puis la teste y a mise,/Et puis le seing, mais elle fut bien prise,/Car le fussier y passer ne peult onc./'Par la mort bieu,' c edict le moyne adonc,/'Il ne m'en chault de bras, tetin ne teste;/Passez le cul, ou vous retirez donc,/Je ne sçauroys sans luy vous faie feste.' (Idle Brother Thibault, fat and well-oiled,/was hauling a wench in her smock/through the bars of his chamber-window; when arms/head, bosom and all had passed,/she got quite stuck at her backside./'For God's sake,' said the monk/'What the hell's the use of head, arms and tits?/Put your ass through, or get out/For without it, I can't delight you.')

While the *raison d'être* of such anticlerical songs was undoubtedly to censure the Catholic Church, the same cannot necessarily be said of pastoral songs of the period. Rather, it was the esthetic process, drawing upon traces of Marian allusion and Catholic body language that gave the songs their discursive power amidst the religious turmoil of sixteenth-century Paris.

French Iconoclasm and Language of the Body

Religious tensions in Paris had been growing steadily since the city's introduction to Luther's theses. Consequently, François I, “uncompromisingly hostile to Lutheranism,” partnered with Parlement and the Sorbonne to produce an *arrêt*—or executive order—seizing joint control of the Parisian book trade. The royal response was swift and decisive. R.J. Knecht writes: “a more eloquent testimony of Luther's

⁵⁵ Bernstein, *French Chansons*, 30-1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

success in the French capital could not have been given.”⁵⁷ The rise of Protestantism in the Catholic capital, and its repression, led to the type of religious dissent that would challenge Catholicism on its own terms—through a shared engagement with body metaphor. Reformation preachers emphasized the need to eliminate Catholic intercessors—such as priests, saints and the Holy Virgin—that prevented direct communion with Christ. As a result, religious imagery, deemed heretical by the urban Protestant faction, was routinely removed, defaced, and destroyed during the course of the French Reformation. Historian Christin Olivier writes that French iconoclasm in the years 1520 to 1560 should be understood “comme mode spécifique d’activisme politique et religieux,” a symbolic revolution in which, “la sélectivité des mutilations atteste...de la familiarité symbolique des iconoclastes avec l’image.” (“as a specific method of political and religious activism,” a symbolic revolution in which, “the selectiveness of desecrations attests to the familiarity of the iconoclasts with the symbolism of the imagery.”)⁵⁸ Iconoclasts readily proved their fluency in the language of Catholic body metaphor. Statues of the Virgin Mary were routinely vandalized, hitting urban Catholics—who from the sixteenth century began focusing their devotions “specifically upon the adoration of the Virgin”—right where it hurt.⁵⁹ Catholics responded in kind, with their own, lavish displays of body metaphor.

Particularly in the years 1520 to 1560, an unceasing dialectic of Catholic and Protestant body metaphor played out in the streets of Paris. In May 1528, the desecration of a Marian figure affixed to a wall in the *rue aux Juifs* led to the organization of several processions in her name, two of which were attended by François I, the second restoring the Holy Virgin to her post. The new statue was also subsequently vandalized and replaced. Historian Barbara B. Diefendorf writes that, religious processions, “reinforcing the lessons of the Mass about the meaning and importance of the Eucharist[,]...ritually enacted a vision in which civic, monarchical and Catholic symbols merged; the body social, the body politic and the body of Christ were so closely intertwined as to be inseparable.”⁶⁰ Steeped in the power of Catholic body language, processions—engaging with a contemporary increase in Eucharistic devotion, the “conformity and correspondence” of Mass to Christ’s passion and the feasts of Corpus Christi, which “reinforced the doctrine of the real

⁵⁷ R.J. Knecht, *Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 142.

⁵⁸ Olivier Christin, “L’Iconoclasme Huguenot: ‘Praxis Pietatis’ et Geste Révolutionnaire,” *Ethnologie française* 24, No. 2, (April-June 1994): 216, 222.

⁵⁹ Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe 1500-1700* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 104.

⁶⁰ Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 48.

presence”—became an important tool in the Catholic arsenal against Parisian iconoclasts.⁶¹

By the 1534 Affair of the Placards, both processions and sectarian violence were becoming a mainstay of Parisian urban culture. The posting of broadsheets entitled “Articles véritables sur les horribles, grands et importables abus de la Messe papalle” (Genuine articles on the horrific, great and insupportable abuses of the Papal Mass) ignited a hysteria that led Parlement to declare a general procession and initiate an exhaustive search for the culprits. Following the Affair, six Protestants convicted of heresy were burned at two sites near the processional route in a type of Foucauldian retribution.⁶² The king, calling for the purge of the social body “in such manner that if one of the arms of my body was infected with this corruption, I would cut it off, and if my children were tainted with it, I would myself offer them in sacrifice,” rent the clash of bodies from the realm of the metaphoric to that of the corporeal.

Throughout the years following the Affair of the Placards, both the symbolic and real struggle between Catholic and Protestant bodies began to escalate. In September 1557, hundreds of men and women gathered clandestinely in the *rue Saint-Jacques* for Protestant worship. Arrested under the charge of holding an illicit meeting, they were defamed and assaulted for the duration of their arduous route to the Châtelet. Such acts of violence soon multiplied and, alongside formal Catholic processions, sought to challenge the increasingly aggressive iconoclasm of urban Protestants. According to Christin, “Violence catholique et violence protestante sont donc antithétiques....À la sacralité de la violence catholique se serait opposée une violence désacralisée de la part des protestants.” He continues: “Il y a bien une adoption progressive de l’iconoclisme par le calvinisme français autour des années 1550. La violence catholique n’est pas étrangère à ce processus: un peu partout, de petites bandes armées se mettent en embuscade auprès d’images placées dans les rues et attaquent tous les passants qui oublient ou refusent de les saluer.” (“Catholic and Protestant violence were thus antithetical.” He continues: “To the sacrality of Catholic violence, there was an oppositional, de-sacralizing violence on the part of Protestants; there is a progressive adoption of iconoclasm by French Calvinists in the 1550s. Catholic violence is not estranged from this process: everywhere, small bands of armed men wait in ambush after images are placed in the streets and attack

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 31-33.

⁶² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 47-8. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault argues that pre-Enlightenment “crime attacks the sovereign: it attacks him personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign; it attacks him physically, since the force of the law is the force of the prince.” Punishment thus requires the sovereign to “take revenge for an affront to his very person.”

passers-by who forget or refuse to hail them.”)⁶³

Processions continued to be an integral part of the clash of bodies and body metaphor on both sides of the Parisian confessional struggle. Of at least four processions during the 1550s, three were responses to attacks on images of the Virgin Mary. The pattern established at this time, Diefendorf argues, “continued into the religious wars, when sacrileges against the host became a characteristic form of religious violence and the expiatory processions an obligatory response.”⁶⁴ The symbolism of the procession was so significant that Protestants responded with their own *processions de dérision*. During the 1562 *sacs des églises de Lyon*, Calvinist soldiers entered the homes of clergy, vandalized, and removed images of Catholic veneration and paraded them through the streets.

With the rise of iconoclasm, the French Reformation took on “une impulsion et une coloration nouvelles”—blasphemy. Christin writes that “l’iconoclisme protestant est constitué de gestes soutenus par un discours qui en rend compte et qui leur donne sens.” (“Protestant iconoclasm was constituted of actions supported by a discourse which made them comprehensible and gave them meaning.”)⁶⁵ Blasphemy in the physical realm, expressed through the desecration of Marian and Eucharistic idols, derived meaning and support from the pervasive presence of blasphemy in contemporary Protestant discourse. Beyond the rhetoric of preachers who stressed the elimination of Catholic idols—barring intimate communion between Christ and the Christian—blasphemous discourse was fed and perpetuated by “les processions de dérision, les plaisanteries blasphématoires, [and] les simulacres de liturgie.”⁶⁶ To this list of blasphemous jokes and mock processions, I would venture to add the sixteenth-century French pastoral song. The form’s lyrical profaning of the Marian body was consistent with contemporary iconoclastic practices and, moreover, formed a part of the web of discourse that reinforced them. Christin argues that Protestant iconoclasm was a symbolic revolution, which sought the seizure of political power and the appropriation of urban spaces.⁶⁷ Trading in metaphor and allegory, the popularization, and performance of pastoral song had its own role to play in the symbolic revolution, which consumed sixteenth-century Parisians of both creeds.

⁶³ Christin, “L’Iconoclisme Huguenot,” 220.

⁶⁴ Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 48.

⁶⁵ Christin, “L’Iconoclisme Huguenot,” 218.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁶⁷ Oliver Christin, *Une Révolution Symbolique: L’Iconoclisme Huguenot et La Reconstruction Catholique, Protestantisme et Images* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991).

Performance and Space in the Capital

The pastoral song as discursive iconoclasm served two functions in sixteenth-century Paris. First, it provided a rejoinder to courtly love songs and the Catholic cult of Marian worship in the public sphere and second, the performative nature of song allowed Protestants, if only temporarily, to carve out space in the urban landscape of the Catholic capital. Brown writes of the *chanson rustique* that, "one cannot really explain the genesis of a style, but merely understand that it developed consistently."⁶⁸ The discursive power of the pastoral song lay not in its origins, but in the subjective meaning and the use-value attributed to the form by those who popularized it. For Parisian Protestants, the bawdy songs, which could be heard to blaspheme the Marian figure, functioned as Rabelaisian rhetoric—"exploit[ing] the scandalous potential of language...in order to create a text that [was] laughable....open[ing] up a space of personal and collective enjoyment and reflection."⁶⁹ The concept of text as event figures prominently in situating the pastoral *chanson* in the public sphere where it challenged secular and religious expressions of Marian devotion. For Protestants—indeed all sixteenth-century Parisians—the prominence of religious struggle in the urban landscape, coupled with the growing regularity of acts of iconoclasm and their processional rejoinders would inevitably have come to bear on interpretations of pastoral song. Nevertheless, it may seem surprising—particularly as inchoate mid-sixteenth-century Protestantism cohered into seemingly rigid Calvinism—that such lascivious lyrics would have been pressed into service by what was an otherwise conservative movement, whose leadership put significant stock in the spiritual power of song. This apparent incongruence deserves brief treatment here.

Though largely under the ideological sway of Calvin and Geneva, French Protestantism in the mid-sixteenth century was—by force of conditions on the ground—on a relatively loose leash. Indeed, it was not until 1557 that Nicolas de Gallars came from Geneva to direct the first reformed church of Paris and it took the 1560 tumult of Amboise to produce a cohesive French-Calvinist identity under the "Huguenot" moniker.⁷⁰ Thus, official doctrine was often hampered by distance, social conditions, and confessional incoherence within France, leaving space for the

⁶⁸ Brown, "The 'Chanson Rustique'," 24.

⁶⁹ Antónia Szabari, *Less Rightly Said: Scandals and Readers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 13-4.

⁷⁰ Luc Racaut, *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion*, (Hants: Ashgate, 2002), 68. The tumult of Amboise was a failed Protestant coup in which the attempted seizure of young King François II, the Duke of Guise and his brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, resulted in the deaths of more than a thousand Protestant conspirators.

unsanctioned behaviors that resulted in reactionary bouts of iconoclasm and lewd polemic. Luc Racaut argues that, despite “Genevan distaste for crude and inflammatory polemic,” French Protestants often engaged with the sexualized imagery that became standard fare in the Catholic propaganda war within the kingdom.⁷¹ He explains that, in the latter half of the century, there is a noticeable difference between the polemic which was produced in Geneva, and that produced within France. Although the council turned a blind eye once in a while, adversarial and personal responses to Catholic polemic were not usually encouraged, yet virulent Protestant defenses often followed the original Catholic texts closely.⁷²

In the face of Catholic propaganda, which frequently charged them with participation in orgies and other sexual misdeeds, French Protestants regularly responded in kind, employing the sexually libelous rhetoric of their enemies.⁷³ Moreover, while Calvin himself was arguably quite reserved, those in his ranks seemed to suffer no qualms about the judicious use of foul language and misogynistic epithets in their battle against Catholicism. While not unreasonable, the idea that French Protestants, and Calvinists in particular, would have demurred from exploiting the sexually charged content of the pastoral chanson for ideological ends pales in the face of contemporary evidence. Viewed by Protestants of a sacramentarian persuasion as a debased religion, “idolatrous...[and] materialistic to the point of obscenity,” Catholicism, its “idols,” and its adherents merited not reverence but vituperation.⁷⁴ By the 1560s, with tensions in France bursting at the seams, Calvinists pulled no punches. Confessional defector François Baudouin was vilified as a “hermaphrodite” by his former peers, the Queen mother, Catherine de Medici, was reviled as the “whore” and the Cardinal of Lorraine was derided as the man from whom “so many husbands [demanded] the virtue of their wives.”⁷⁵ The prospect of reasonable reform in a Catholic-dominated government was likened, in the 1560 pamphlet *La Manière d'appaiser les troubles*, to “expecting drunkenness to be reformed by tavern-keepers, usury by bankers or prostitution by whores.”⁷⁶ These were hardly accidental associations. Théodore de Bèze, Calvin’s confessional successor, equated simony with prostitution, describing Catholicism as “Our Holy Mother Whore the Roman Church,” while Calvinist Gui de Brès referred to the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 79.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 78. Kate Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 127.

⁷⁴ Donald R. Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 19.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 86, 247, 266.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 270.

heresy of the Anabaptists in the following terms: “a whore will always defend her virtue more vigorously than an honest woman.”⁷⁷ Most important, is the considerable evidence that such derision was put into verse for public consumption.

By the mid-1570s, Calvinists had developed a great facility for manipulating popular chansons to their own ideological ends. Central to this process of appropriation and reinterpretation was the figure of Clément Marot. Marot was an early sympathizer to the Protestant cause who, before his death in 1544, collaborated with Théodore de Bèze to translate the Psalms into French. Yet, many of his poems—set into popular polyphonic arrangements before 1550—featured “frank sexuality, abandoned chastity, and drunken abandon...[and] include[ed] peasant lovers, ill-suited couples and errant clergy.”⁷⁸ In many cases, influential Calvinist preachers such as Simon Goulart and Jean Pasquier kept the tunes of such songs but manipulated their lyrics. This exercise in *contrafacta* served the purpose of, in the words of Pasquier, “repurgeant ces tresgracieux et plaisans accords de tant de villenies et ordures, dont ilz estoient tous souillez.” (“purging these very graceful and pleasant chords of such evils and filth with which they have been soiled.”)⁷⁹ On other occasions, immodest songs were incorporated into Calvinist *chansonniers* with minor changes, in effect, transforming their sexual overtones into a moral message. Though, perhaps most interestingly, some of the popular chansons featuring Marot’s elicit verses made it into Calvinist songbooks completely unaltered; “Monsieur l’Abbé,” the story of a drunken priest, is but one example.⁸⁰ While bawdy pastoral chansons were regularly incorporated into *contrafacta chansonniers*, graphic songs were also invented wholesale. A 1574 verse, attributed to Calvinist Nicolas Barnaud, easily disabuses one of the notion that those of his sect eschewed lewd and vituperative song: “My father was a devil in dis-Guise/Assuming the habit of a priest,/A deadly monster professing all vice,/Stirring up trouble, a terrible beast,/Coupling with that high born whore,/Descended from the buggers of Italy,/Nursed by the milk of a horrible fury.”⁸¹ Indeed, such lyrics—transcribed following the St. Bartholomew’s massacre and an intense escalation of confessional hostilities—render the anti-Marian blasphemy of the pastoral song quite tame in comparison.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 75. Racaut, *Hatred in Print*, 34.

⁷⁸ Richard Freedman, *The Chansons of Orlando di Lasso and Their Protestant Listeners: Music, Piety and Print in Sixteenth-Century France* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 54-56.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 10, 218.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 56. The lecherous monk was a favorite of Marot’s themes; see the previously cited chanson *Frere Thibault, sejourne gros et gras*, a Certon composition of one of Marot’s anticlerical epigrams.

⁸¹ Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology*, 287. Featured in the pamphlet *Reveille-Matin*, following the St. Bartholomew’s massacre.

With an understanding that Protestants readily employed lewd or vituperative verse in the context of religious struggle, it is useful to examine the extent of its exploitation in the service of urban occupation. Catharine Randall has argued that, "Calvinist ideology...was to re-determine space by occupying it," and there is significant evidence, both within France and without, that singing was frequently deployed to such ends.⁸² Kelley writes that, "the high morale of Parisian Protestants was demonstrated...vocally during the spring of 1558, when one section of the university grounds...became the scene of regular gathering at which psalms...were sung by growing numbers of people, perhaps up to 10,000."⁸³ He notes the emergence of these "new evangelicals...whose practices of psalm-singing, marching and 'going to sermon,' exhibited a...tendency to public disorder."⁸⁴ While the contentious use of psalms is well documented, there is also significant evidence that popular and political chansons were belligerently deployed in urban spaces.⁸⁵

Popular songs, widely available prior to the vernacular psalm books and Protestant contrafacta *chansonniers*, lent themselves to the kind of impromptu, informal deployment that likewise characterized the unsanctioned, spontaneous iconoclasm of mid-sixteenth-century Paris. Many polyphonic chansons of the sixteenth century were built upon common monophonic melodies, which, in multi-part harmonies, were carried by either the tenor or the superius. Several of Clément Marot's verses were composed in this fashion and included in Attaignant's collections of "chansons tant rustiques que musicales."⁸⁶ The ease with which such chansons could be broken down into single-part melodies and sung informally added to their practicality and public utility. Alexander Fisher writes of musical confrontation in sixteenth-century Augsburg:

[a]t least a few cases suggest that polemical songs against the Catholics were not simply to be consumed in private, but were also used as weapons in public religious controversies. Jonas Losch was accused...of singing an 'offensive song about he Pope and the Jesuits' on the street...[and] the city accused the weaver Jakob Hötsch of committing a similar act: he sang at least two songs loudly in public...Both cases suggest the significant role of singing

⁸² Cited in Freedman, *The Chansons of Orlando di Lasso*, 15.

⁸³ Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology*, 94.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Racaut, *Hatred in Print*, and Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, have treated, richly and at length, the Protestant use of psalms.

⁸⁶ Brown, "The 'Chanson Rustique'," 20, 23; *Chanson musicale* refers to chansons in the elevated, courtly register.

in the formation of confessional identity, and its occasional usefulness in public confrontations.⁸⁷

Surveying the combative Parisian soundscape, Kelley likewise contends, “popular enthusiasm for evangelical religion burst forth in...scandalous musical forms. As early as 1525 the Parlement of Paris heard complaints about disrespectful chansons, but there was no way to stop the chorus of musical defiance...[which included] vulgar and sometimes offensive songs.”⁸⁸ The backlash of such offences frequently included censorship, such as the 1560 ban on the singing of psalms and other “impious songs” in Valenciennes, which had seemingly threatened public order the previous day.⁸⁹ Importantly, the link between the public singing of such songs and civic tumult is made time and again.

If, as I contend, pastoral chansons functioned as a form of discursive iconoclasm—underwriting physical violence and vandalism while also performatively projecting a challenge to Catholicism into urban spaces—it is likely that they did so under two conditions. First, I would suggest that the implementation of such songs by French Protestants was informal and unsanctioned by religious authorities, likely adopted for reasons of expediency and accessibility. These songs would have been performed both prior to, and later in conjunction with, the more formal canon of Calvinist psalms and *contrafacta* chansons that became part of the Protestant arsenal, largely after 1550. The familiarity of Protestants with such popular songs is hardly in doubt. Many of the songs that formed the basis for Calvinist *contrafacta* of the 1570s were in circulation prior to 1550 and notations in Goulart’s *chansonniers* refer to the “Parisian” songbooks in a manner that assumes a significant degree of familiarity on the part of his readers with the original texts.⁹⁰ Secondly, it is likely that the iconoclastic use of pastoral chansons preceded the employment of the increasingly bitter, directly confrontational verses that marked the Wars of Religion and the aftermath of the St. Bartholomew’s massacre. Indeed, it seems that the majority of pastoral chansons—excluding those incorporated into Calvinist *contrafacta* *chansonniers*—were printed and reprinted in the thirty years prior to the Wars. The relationship between song and violence suggests that, as hostilities escalated, increasingly polemical and vituperative verses would have been employed, reflecting, and sustaining these realities. At which time, the bawdy, anti-

⁸⁷ Alexander J. Fisher, *Music and Religious Identity in Counter-Reformation Augsburg, 1580-1630* (Hants: Ashgate, 2004), 67.

⁸⁸ Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology*, 98.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁹⁰ Freedman, *The Chansons of Orlando di Lasso*, 19, 176.

Marian iconoclasm of the pastoral song would have outlived its usefulness, ceding pride of place to less symbolic and more explicit denunciations.

Conclusion

I have argued that for sixteenth-century Protestants in a Catholic capital, the pastoral song—a discursive iconoclasm that seemed to defame the Marian body and underwrite the vandalism of Catholic icons in the physical realm—wielded both a rhetorical and spatial political utility. The songs, both aurally and metaphorically in dialogue with those of Marian devotion and the secular courtly love songs which mimicked them, could be—and likely were—adopted by Protestants as a method of protest and spatial occupation. That religious dissidents of the period appropriated street tunes and songs of Marian devotion for their own ends is not in doubt, attested to by the considerable body of Calvinist *contrafacta* and the prevalence of complaints against the singing of lewd and obscene songs. The inseparability of sacred and secular elements and the collapsing of high and low musical culture during the Renaissance allowed Parisian Protestants to attribute new, political meaning to an old lyrical form, the pastoral, which reemerged following the introduction of Luther's theses and rode a wave of popularity throughout the tumultuous decades of the sixteenth century.

If, through the esthetic process, one derives meaning that is historically and experientially specific, it is likely that urban Protestants would have understood the Marian allusions in pastoral song and pressed the apparent rhetorical inversion of Marian virtue into the service of what Olivier Christin calls the “symbolic revolution.”⁹¹ The popularity of this discursive profaning of the Marian body was consistent with mounting antagonisms between Protestant iconoclasm and restorative Catholic processions, all deeply engaged with, and operating through, the Catholic language of body metaphor. Kelley writes that there “is a behavioral continuum...between the verbal excesses of the early reformers—their vilification not only of pope and priest but also of Mary and the mass, not only of the corrupters of religion, that is, but also of its central symbols—and their civil violence.”⁹² I have suggested that the pastoral song, as heard, popularized, and performed by Parisian Protestants, was both an important thread in the tether between “verbal excesses” and “civil violence” and a method of intrusion into the Catholic spatial monopoly of the sixteenth-century city.

⁹¹ Christin, *Une Révolution Symbolique*.

⁹² Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology*, 343.

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