



A daring book : *Le Recueil des plus excellents ballets de ce temps* (Toussaint du Bray, 1612)

In 1610, the King of France, Henri IV, is assassinated on the streets of Paris by François Ravallac. The political, social, and religious climate in France, which had been relatively calm since the signing of the Edict of Nantes and the end of the Wars of Religion, suddenly becomes more uncertain and unsettling. This is because Henri IV's successor, who is only nine years old, is too young to reign. Consequently, the late King's wife, Marie de Médicis, takes on the responsibility of transitioning the power until the young Louis XIII reaches adulthood. In this grim context, which brings about new uncertainties, Toussaint du Bray, a renowned Parisian bookseller, publishes in 1612 the anthology that will be the focus of this article: *Le Recueil des plus excellents ballets de ce temps*¹. It is a joyful and spirited anthology, as specified by Toussaint du Bray in the reader's note that he places at the beginning of the work: "*Je t'ai préparé un petit recueil de ballets pour te faire rire pendant ces jours gras, si tu as le cœur porté à la danse*"² ("I have prepared a little collection of ballets for you to enjoy during these festive days, if your heart is inclined towards dance.")

¹ *Le Recueil des plus excellents ballets de ce temps*, 1612.

² *Le Recueil des plus excellents ballets de ce temps*, 1612: 1-2.

RECEUIL
DES PLUS EXCELLENS
BALLETTS DE CE TEMPS.

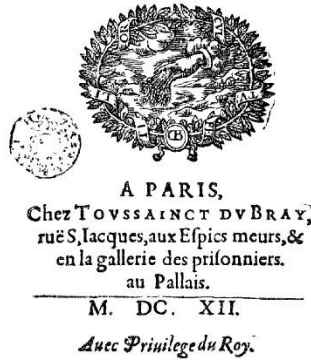


Figure 1 The title page of the anthology (source : Gallica).

But what then is a ‘ballet’? Since the second half of the 16th century, masquerades or ballets have been performed at the court. These are total spectacles that combine poetry, music, dance, the art of sets and costumes, as well as grand machinery. In fact, these performances can be seen as the ancestors of opera, which emerged in Italy in the early 17th century. Furthermore, we can rely on the definition provided by the musicologist Georgie Durosoir. For her, ballets “essentially provide to see and hear: to see rich and even extravagant costumes, movements of large groups more or less choreographed; to hear instrumental music [...], vocal music [...]. [The] discourse [is] in representation [...] because speech, in the ballet, is merely an introduction to the ‘seeing’ and ‘hearing.’”³ According to Georgie Durosoir, it is indeed the performance and spectacle that are crucial in ballet. Toussaint du Bray’s venture appears to contradict this conception, as he decides to publish a collection of texts borrowed from ballets of his time. In other words, he literally extracts the text from the circumstances, from the spectacular reality that gave it birth and, according to Georgie Durosoir, constitutes the entire interest of ballets. This is done to draw the reader’s attention solely to the text. In the work he publishes, Toussaint du Bray includes no sheet music, no engravings depicting costumes or sets. He opts for a complete concealment of the visual and auditory aspects, guiding the reader to concentrate solely on the verses composed for these ballets. Furthermore, we cannot say that his anthology has any documentary function because Toussaint du Bray does not give any particular information about the events (not even the date !) for which the ballets have been written.

How does Toussaint du Bray’s approach constitute an extremely strong gesture that decisively contributes to the emergence of a true editorial genre? While attempting to address this question, I will also seek to assess in this article the political significance of the selection of ballets made by the Parisian bookseller.

³ Durosoir, 2000: 77–88. This is the original quote I translated: Les ballets “donnent essentiellement à voir et à entendre : voir de riches et même d’extravagants costumes, des déplacements de vastes groupes plus ou moins chorégraphiés ; entendre des musiques instrumentales [...], des musiques vocales [...]. [Le] discours [y est] en représentation [...] car la parole, dans le ballet, est simplement une introduction au ‘voir’ et à ‘l’entendre’”.

1. The editorial landscape of the early 17th century, a landscape dominated by poetic anthologies

Firstly, I would like to examine the fundamental role of poetic anthologies from the late 16th century into the early decades of the 17th century. This will allow us to more easily highlight the uniqueness of this book-object that emerged from du Bray's presses in 1612.

With the end of civil wars, marked by the signing of the Edict of Nantes in 1598, the last years of the 16th century witness a clear resurgence in editorial activity. Four French booksellers then specialize in the publication of poetic anthologies: Raphaël du Petit Val, a bookseller from Rouen, Antoine du Breuil, Mathieu Guillemot, and Toussaint du Bray, all three based in Paris. As Miriam Speyer emphasizes in the work derived from her thesis, these four booksellers will have a completely new approach to poetic anthologies :

Le recueil collectif est loin d'être une invention du XVII^e siècle. Mais les façons de le concevoir changent à la fin des Guerres de religion. C'est dans la manière de choisir et d'assembler les pièces que réside la plus grande différence entre les recueils parus au cours du XVI^e siècle et l'essor de l'édition collective qui débutera à la toute fin du XVI^e siècle à Rouen, chez Raphaël du Petit Val⁴

The anthology is far from being an invention of the 17th century. However, the ways of conceiving it change at the end of the Wars of Religion. The greatest difference between the collections published during the 16th century and the rise of collective publishing, which began at the very end of the 16th century in Rouen with Raphaël du Petit Val, lies in the manner of selecting and assembling the pieces.

Indeed, Miriam Speyer refers here to the publication in 1597 by Raphaël du Petit Val in Rouen of two poetic anthologies (*Diverses Poësies nouvelles* and *Recueil de diverses poësies*). This dual publication will mark "the starting point of a new development in collective poetic collections at the beginning of the 17th century"⁵. It marks a significant change because Raphaël du Petit Val's first anthology offers "new" poems. Miriam Speyer emphasizes this, stating, "This is a radical change compared to collective editions of the previous century"⁶ which generally compiled more or less old poetic successes. The focus now is on publishing fashionable poetic forms, composed by authors often still alive (like Jean de Sponde) or even by beginners entering the poetic scene. Unlike the anthologies of the previous century, the collective poetic collections of the early 17th century reflect contemporary production. They even become the preferred publishing space for young authors who, in the second half of the 16th century, would start by publishing occasional pamphlets before assembling their own individual collections. Here, we observe a radical shift in the use of poetic anthologies :

Les recueils fonctionnent comme des ancêtres du périodique littéraire, puisqu'ils permettent de lancer de nouveaux auteurs et d'informer le public des poètes à la mode, ce qui en fait également un moyen de la formation du goût du lecteur⁷

The collections function as ancestors of literary periodicals, as they enable the introduction of new authors and inform the public about fashionable poets. This also makes them a means of shaping the reader's taste.

The anthological production is really abundant during the first twenty years of the 17th century. Fourteen different general poetic collections are published in Paris. Additionally, there are

⁴ Speyer, 2021: 41.

⁵ Speyer, 2021: 48. This is the original quote : "le coup d'envoi d'un nouvel essor du recueil poétique collectif au début du XVII^e siècle".

⁶ Speyer, 2021: 48. "C'est là un changement radical par rapport à l'édition collective du siècle précédent".

⁷ Speyer, 2021: 50.

around half a dozen compilations published in the provinces, notably in Rouen⁸. In the period of interest, poetic anthologies play a fundamental role: they serve as a central medium in the dissemination and promotion of contemporary poetry (Sponde, Du Perron, Malherbe).

2. The turning point of 1609: the triumph of Toussaint du Bray and his anthology, *Le*

Nouveau Recueil des plus beaux vers de ce temps

It is in this editorial market that Toussaint du Bray, a Parisian bookseller, definitively establishes himself in 1609 with the publication of his *Nouveau Recueil des plus beaux vers de ce temps* which imposes a new model of anthology.

What are its characteristics?

- The poetic anthology introduces a new format: in-8.
- It starts to function like a literary periodical, disseminating and promoting novelties.
- It presents itself as a succession of small collections by various authors: notable names include Bertaut, Audiguier, Avity, Des Yveteaux, Du Perron, Honoré d'Urfé, Forget de la Picardière, R. de L'Espine, Jean de Lingendes, Malherbe, Motin, Rosset.

Miriam Speyer also noted that anonymous pieces had almost disappeared, that common titles were inserted to recall the name of the section's author, along with a "Fin" (End) mention and a series of blank pages at the end of sections. The format is also larger, and the presentation is more spacious⁹.

Through a comparison of the practices of Toussaint du Bray and another bookseller, Mathieu Guillemot, Anne-Marie Garcia was able to highlight the specificities of du Bray's collections: "The comparison [of Guillemot and du Bray] reveals [...] the radical opposition between two editorial practices, especially in the collection of sources and the attribution of texts: Du Bray indeed ensures the reliability of sources through controlled origins [...]. This resulted in a radical modification of the overall organization: with all texts attributed and anonymous and occasional rhyme writers excluded, the collections became more anthologies of poets than anthologies of poems."¹⁰ Undoubtedly galvanized buoyed by this success, Toussaint du Bray publishes in 1612 the first and likely the only true anthology of ballets in the history of French literature.

3. 1612, publication of the first and only true anthology of ballets in the history of French literature

This is a bold and surprising undertaking because, at that time, poetry composed for ballets was considered of lesser value compared to stanzas or sonnets designed for reading rather than for a performance. Until then, these types of verses had a very limited place in pre-existing poetic anthologies: they only appeared in the anthologies of Mathieu Guillemot and the Bonfons brothers, published in Paris in 1599. In the collections of the Bonfons, *Fleurs des plus excellans poètes de ce temps* (1599 and 1601), which reflect a general trend, the verses associated with

⁸ Speyer, 2021: 241.

⁹ Speyer, 2021: 90.

¹⁰ Garcia, 2009: 124–125 : "Le rapprochement [de Guillemot et de du Bray] met au jour [...] l'opposition radicale entre deux pratiques éditoriales, en particulier pour la collecte des sources et l'attribution des textes : Du Bray garantit en effet la fiabilité des sources par une origine contrôlée [...]. En a découlé une modification radicale de l'organisation de l'ensemble : tous les textes étant attribués, les anonymes et rimeurs occasionnels étant écartés, les recueils deviennent plus des anthologies de poètes que des anthologies de poèmes".

ballets and identifiable as such represent only about 3% of the pieces contained in collective collections of that time. For comparison, the same collections contain about 25% stanzas and even 27% sonnets¹¹. Therefore, my initial observation is that poetry designed for ballets had very little presence in anthologies existing prior to Toussaint du Bray's, which is, however, explicitly devoted to this genre.

The first ballet to be printed came off the presses of Le Roy and Ballard in 1582 but constitutes a literary rarity in French history. It is the *Ballet Comique de la Reine* by Balthazar de Beaujoyeux¹². This work compiles all the texts performed in October 1581 during the presentation of this spectacle, which took place amid the celebrations of the marriage of one of King Henri III's favorites, the Duke of Joyeuse. In addition to the texts, the engravings depicting costumes and sets allowed readers to have a complete understanding of this first "ballet" in book form. This endeavor remained unique. From 1593¹³ onward, librettos for ballets are sometimes published, but without engravings or sheet music. Nevertheless, these booklets retain a documentary ambition from the *Ballet Comique de la Reine*: notable spectators are named, dates are provided, and the setting is described. The perspective adopted by these booklets (still relatively rare in 1612!) is much more historiographical than literary. In this case, publication serves as a commemorative purpose and aims to inscribe the event in history rather than capturing the readers' attention with the texts. In comparison, when Toussaint du Bray selects verses composed for ballets, he completely detaches them from the circumstances of the spectacles for which they were written. The adopted perspective is no longer historiographical – he does not intend to celebrate a particular political event or shape the memory of a court celebration. Instead, the focus is squarely on the text alone, similar to what he had already done in the anthology he published in 1609.

How is this anthology of ballets, in any case, in continuity with du Bray's major anthology of 1609? Firstly, the format is the same. Toussaint du Bray indeed adopts the in-8 format that he established in 1609 with the success of his *Nouveau Recueil des plus beaux vers de ce temps*. With the exception of the last piece in the anthology (precisely, *Le Ballet Comique de la Reine* from 1582, a point to which I will return), the ballets that I managed to identify and from which the texts are drawn are contemporary. It is not easy at all to identify these events because the book does not provide any contextual clue (this is what makes Toussaint du Bray's anthology significantly different from most ballet librettos printed before 1612). However, I have been able to identify several of them. For example, the ninth ballet is the "Ballet de la foire Saint-Germain," performed in 1607 on the occasion of the annual Saint-Germain-des-Prés fair, a district that is now in the heart of Paris. This identification was made possible thanks to the existence of a festive account, published in 1607, which includes the text of this ballet: *Mascarades et jeu du prix à la course du Sarazin, faist ce karesme prenant en la presence de sa Majesté*, Paris, Guill. Marette, 1607, in-8. The eighth ballet, titled in the anthology "Ballet de Msgr le duc de Vendôme," is none other than the ballet of Alcine, performed in January 1610 at the Louvre and then at the Arsenal to celebrate the marriage of César de Vendôme, the natural son of Henri IV and Gabrielle d'Estrées, to Françoise de Lorraine, Duchess of Mercoeur. This prestigious marriage had taken place the previous year and had allowed Henri IV to marry his illegitimate son to the wealthiest woman in Europe. The circumstances and performance dates of the other ballets remain inaccessible, although for the first one (the "Ballet de l'amour désarmé"), I found in music collections published by Gabriel Bataille in 1613 six airs that come

¹¹ All these statistics are derived from the database that catalogues all the pieces contained in collective poetry collections published between 1597 and 1671. This database was developed by Miriam Speyer. It will be available online soon.

¹² *Balet comique de la Royne, faict aux nopces de Monsieur le Duc de Joyeuse & madamoyselle de Vaudemont sa sœur. Par Baltasar de Beaujoyeux, valet de chambre du Roy, & de la Royne sa mere*, 1582.

¹³ *Ballets représentés à Tours devant le Roi à la venue de Madame*, 1593.

from this ballet (since Gabriel Bataille did not publish them earlier, we can assume that the ballet dates from the early 1610s). As for the third ballet (the “Ballet du courtisan”), it was published in a small in-16 format booklet by Toussaint du Bray himself in 1612, the same year as his anthology¹⁴.

What are the major disruptions introduced by this anthology into the editorial practice of Toussaint du Bray? First and foremost, there is a significant disruption regarding authorship: the anthology of ballets does not attribute any names to the authors, whereas the poetic anthology of 1609, on the contrary, presented itself as a vast enterprise for promoting authors! How can this be explained? Poets of that time do not claim the authorship of ballet verses. The preparation of a ballet, a total spectacle, involves collective work that is not, at that time, a place for claiming authorship and individual authority. The fact that poetry is not composed directly for the book but first has to submit to the necessities of performance (collaboration with musicians, choreographers, and artists designing sets and costumes), and therefore to a very high degree of constraint in terms of content and form (it is, indeed, strophic poetry that is easier to set to music), likely imposes such constraints on the poet that he may not recognize himself in the creation and may not deem it necessary to claim paternity of his verses. For example, in 1627, Tristan L’Hermite still does not sign the verses he composes for a ballet conceived in the entourage of Gaston d’Orléans¹⁵.

The second major break from the 1609 anthology is that, while contemporary ballets are the majority, the collection ends very strangely with the *Ballet Comique de la Reine*, performed, as I mentioned, in 1581 at the court of Henri III and published the following year! This ballet is reproduced in its entirety by Toussaint du Bray, but it is devoid of all engravings, all sheet music, as well as the preliminary pieces that recalled the circumstances of the performance (the marriage of the Duke of Joyeuse). The choice to conclude the anthology with the first ballet in history is, therefore, a very unique gesture on the part of Toussaint du Bray. It is thus appropriate to question its significance. By placing the first ballet in the history of French performances at the end of the collection, du Bray makes it not only a *terminus a quo* but surely also a *terminus ad quem*! Perhaps, for him, it is about providing a new model to the poets of his time, bringing it once again to their attention, and reinvigorating it. This ballet, as well as the one directly preceding it in the anthology, constitutes an allegorical ballet with political significance and impact. In both cases, an enchantress, Circe in the *Ballet Comique de la Reine*, Alcina in the ballet that bears her name, threatens the beautiful balance of the world with her magic (they indeed transform men into animals or objects): only the intervention or even just the presence of the royal person can stop the harmful magic of these creatures that disturb the order of the world.

4. So, what might be the intentions of Toussaint du Bray?

In a politically uncertain and unsettling context, the bookseller may be inviting poets to turn away from the inevitably more subversive, carnivalesque inspiration of the grotesque ballet which is fashionable in the 1610s¹⁶. Instead, he encourages them to produce verses and participate in performances that exalt the royal person and the power of their mere presence, contributing to the proper order of the kingdom and the universe. Indeed, Henri IV has just been

¹⁴ The dedicatory epistle of this ballet is addressed to “Monsieur” who was away for a few days at the time of the performance of this ballet. The show appears to be extremely contemporary with the publication and dates back to the carnival season of 1612. See *Le Ballet du courtisan et des matrones*, Paris, Toussaint du Bray, 1612.

¹⁵ *Vers du Ballet de Monsieur Frère du Roi*, 1627. The booklet is reproduced in its entirety in Volume III of the *Œuvres complètes* by Tristan L’Hermite, 2002: 602–615.

¹⁶ For more information on the difference between grotesque ballets and allegorical ballets, see Lionetto, 2021.

assassinated, and Louis XIII, due to his young age, cannot govern (he is 11 years old in 1612). Therefore, Marie de Médicis is serving as regent. To conclude his anthology with a ballet titled *Ballet Comique de la Reine*, in which Queen Louise, wife of Henri III, had danced herself, might be, for Toussaint du Bray in 1612, a way to promote such grand allegorical spectacles and call for the writing and multiplication of such performances in support of royal power. Obviously, in 1612 and given that the circumstances of 1581 are entirely erased, reading the title *Ballet Comique de la Reine* can directly refer to Marie de Médicis. There could be something almost prescriptive in the revival of this ballet, as if the printer-bookseller wished to encourage poets of his time to support the challenged monarchy through the writing of such entertainments.

Furthermore, from a literary historical perspective, the entire organization of the anthology contributes, in my opinion, to establishing a canon. Note that each ballet includes, as you progress through the anthology, an increasing number of texts: while the editor gives us only one excerpt for the first ballet (three sextains of alexandrines forming a narrative), the selected passages get longer as you advance through the work, eventually constituting the entirety of the ballet for “Le ballet du courtisan,” which Toussaint du Bray had also published independently, as well as the three last ones, the ballet of Alcine, the Ballet de la foire Saint-Germain and the Ballet Comique de la Reine¹⁷. The selection process being guided, if we believe the title, by the search for “the most excellent” ballet texts, the reader can only deduce that some ballets are of such quality that they deserve to be cited in their entirety. Thus, the cited ballets would have something exemplary and could serve as models for writing. Concluding the collection with the famous *Ballet Comique de la Reine*, the first printed ballet, which was, in 1582 a luxurious work associating copperplate engravings, musical notation, descriptive prose, and versified parts, also contributes to giving brilliance to the entire anthology (even if Toussaint du Bray removed all the images and the music and kept only the text in his anthology). Furthermore, using the term “ballet” for these texts, following the model of the *Ballet Comique de la Reine* placed at the end, by repeating this word in running title and in the table of contents, confirms the existence of a true editorial genre. Indeed, in previous general anthologies, you more regularly found titles like “Vers pour tel ballet” (“Verses for such ballet”). Here, the text alone, stripped of music and detached from performance, takes the name “ballet.” Toussaint du Bray’s approach seems almost archaeological: he offers contemporary ballets and concludes his collection with the princeps ballet, the one that inaugurated a tradition that the printer-bookseller undoubtedly hopes will be long and rich. Thus, his anthology turns towards the origins of the editorial genre that he contributes to creating and promoting, but to better prescribe to contemporary poets to endow it with posterity.

5. Conclusion

Toussaint du Bray’s anthology of ballets contributes to the creation of a genuine editorial genre. The ballet is no longer conceived only as a spectacular or musical reality but rather as a new literary genre perfectly centered on the text! Indeed, music and dance disappear and the entire collection highlights only the texts which are disconnected from the initial performance. The anthology is constructed according to the principle of gradation: the texts become progressively longer, a length synonymous with the increasing prestige of the cited texts. Concluding the collection with the ballet of Alcine, the ballet de la foire Saint-Germain and the *Ballet Comique de la Reine* gives more value to contemporary ballets, that is to say the ballet of Alcine and the ballet de la foire Saint-Germain, because they are presented almost on the

¹⁷ See the appendice. The collection has two different types of textes : extracts and whole texts.

same level as the famous *Ballet Comique de la Reine*, which marked the reign of Henri III and the history of French spectacles. The *Ballet Comique de la Reine*, both the endpoint and the high point of the anthology, presents itself as both an origin and the horizon of the history of French ballet: its presence in the collection gives significant dignity to the contemporary ballets that precede it. Furthermore, the printer-bookseller offers it as a model of writing for poets who wish to engage in the composition of new ballets.

The emerging canon includes two veins: one grotesque, the other allegorical and more directly political and serious. The organization of the anthology (which places Beaujoyeux's ballet at the end) seems to confer a superior value to the latter, a vein more conducive to supporting a weakened royal power when the sovereign is too young to rule alone. In fact, and it is unclear to what extent Toussaint du Bray is responsible for this evolution, with the rise of Louis XIII to power and the increasing assertion of his monarchical authority, the allegorical ballet gradually overshadowed the grotesque ballet completely from the royal scene. This carnivalesque inspiration only reappears in ballets composed for princely courts from the late 1620s onward.

Appendice :

Detailed description of all the ballets contained in du Bray's anthology :

1) Ballet de l'Amour désarmé dansé devant Msgr le Grand

- 3 sizains of alexandrines
- Sylvan setting. Love disarmed addresses Vulcan to ask him to forge new weapons.

Other texts extracted from this ballet are found in a musical print. They correspond to six airs :
. "Puisqu'en notre tendre jeunesse" (Second song) in *Airs de différents auteurs mis en tablature de luth* by Gabriel Bataille, IV, Paris, Pierre Ballard, 1613, sheet music for voice and tablature, f. 34v–35.

. "Comme fins oiseleurs nous avons tant chassé" (Third song), *ibid.*, f. 36v–37.

. "Nous qui vivons en liberté" (Fourth song), *ibid.*, f. 37v–38.

. "Quittons ces forests" (Fifth song), *ibid.*, f. 38v–39.

. "Ces pipeurs s'en vont" (last song), *ibid.*, f. 39v–40.

. "Je n'aime plus dedans les bois" ("récit"), *ibid.*, f. 34v–35.

These other texts indicate that nymphs and birdcatchers capture Cupid in their nets and disarm him. But Cupid is finally set free.

2) Ballet des suppléeurs

- 4 sizains of alexandrines.
- The "suppléeurs" pay, on behalf of the King, "le bon des bons" (the best of the best) to Ladies poorly paid by their husbands, implying sexual dissatisfaction.
- Choral speech (a "we" expresses itself).

3) Ballet du courtisan

- Includes a dedicatory epistle to "Monsieur" absent from the court several days at the time of the performance of this ballet.
- A tailor comes on stage demanding his payment (he speaks in 5 octosyllabic lines). The tailor's bill is then transcribed (it is called "ses parties"). Then enters the character of the commissioner. All the creditors of the courtier come on stage and express themselves one after the other and present their bills : the tavern keeper (la "boisselière"), the perfumer, the palace laundress (la "lingère du palais"), the palace haberdasher, the reseller and the merchant. Then two sergeants, the commissioner, the courtier, and his wife speak. All of this is called "bouffonnerie" (p. 25). After this, the ballet begins with the challenge of determining whether the love of women or the love of men is stronger. Victory of the love of women.
- On the same title page: "Ballet du courtisan et des matrones"
- Note: Booklet from 1612 distributed by Toussaint du Bray under the title "Ballet du courtisan," in-16° format.

4) Mascarade des matrones

- It begins with a narrative of the goddess Lucina for the Matrons (4 hexains of octosyllabic verses)
- Presentation of the subject of the grand ballet for the children that Lucina has transformed into men (4 quatrains of octosyllabic verses)
- "Pour les matrones" (25 quatrains of octosyllabic verses)
- The true account of the ballet of the matrons, by Lucina. To the ladies (7 hexains of octosyllabic verses)

- Dance of the children and of the midwives
- Second account by Lucina (5 cinquains of octosyllabic verses).

5) **Ballet des singes**

- It consists only of a narrative told by a woman who was guiding and assisting them in stealing from a sleeping haberdasher (4 hexains of octosyllabic verses).

6) **Ballet des secrétaires de Saint Innocent**

- “To the ladies” (4 hexains of octosyllabic verses).
- A ballet featuring the secretaries of the cemetery district of Saints-Innocents, called “écrivains des charniers”

7) **Pour le Ballet des gentilhommes champêtres habillés à l’antique**

- 5 hexains of octosyllabic verses
- Influence of *L’Astrée* by Honoré d’Urfé, of which the first two parts were published in 1607 and 1610 (the gentlemen are in rural attire), but the text concludes with a suggestive proposition.

8) **Ballet de Msgr le duc de Vendôme dit ballet d’Alcine**

- This ballet was performed in the grand hall of the Royal Palace of the Louvre and then at the Arsenal on January 17 and 18, 1610. The ballet concluded the six months of splendid festivities surrounding the marriage of the young César de Vendôme, the natural son of Henri IV and Gabrielle d’Estrées, who was at that time fifteen and a half years old, to Françoise de Lorraine, Duchess of Mercoeur, on July 6, 1609, at Fontainebleau.
- The plot is extracted from *Orlando Furioso* (1532) by Ariosto. The scene is set in the Middle Ages, during the time of Charlemagne. Alcina, a sorceress, enamored with twelve young wandering knights, unable to make them love her, enchants them in a palace, making it invisible in the midst of a great forest. These knights can only be freed by the sight of the greatest king on all the earth.
- Prologue: Sir Gobemagne, consultant of the Monkey Island, enters the stage followed by a procession of Moorish slaves, singers, and dancers, and a procession of 12 violins disguised as green monkeys.
- First Entry: Alcine makes the transformed knights dance as large towers, windmills, and other objects and constructions.
- The rest of the performance consists of ballets mimicking battles and geometric ballets:
- The 12 knights transformed into 12 nymphs dance while forming the name of Alcine (they create the first letter, hold the figure for a beat, form the second letter, and so on).
- During the grand final ballet, the knights dance while writing “the old alphabet of the Druids found in an ancient monument.” Each hieroglyph is supposed to describe a virtue or moral value, such as powerful love, ambitious desire, virtuous purpose, immortal renown, greatness of courage, pleasant effort, proven constancy, known truth, happy destiny, loved by all, crown of glory, and supreme power.
- This ballet was published in Paris by Jean de Heuqueville in 1610 (in-8 format).
- The airs were composed by Pierre Guédron, the Superintendent of Music. Some of them have been preserved, including:
 - “Où sont nos palais dorés, Sont-ils des flammes dévorés,” found in the collection *Airs de différents auteurs mis en tablature de luth* by Gabriel Bataille (Paris: Ballard, 1611 puis 1614), and the collections of *Airs de cour à 4 & 5 parties* by Guédron (Paris: Ballard, 1612 and 1613).

“Noires fureurs, ombres sans corps, L’effroy des vivans & des morts,” included in the collections of *Airs de différents auteurs mis en tablature de luth* by Gabriel Bataille (Paris: Ballard, 1611 and 1614), *Airs de cour à 4 & 5 parties* by Guédron (Ballard, 1613).

- “Rien ne s’oppose à mes loix, Je suis l’effroy de ces bois,” included in the collections of *Airs de cour à 4 & 5 parties* (Paris: Ballard, 1612 and 1613), and *Airs de différents auteurs mis en tablature de luth* by Gabriel Bataille (Paris: Ballard, 1614).

9) Ballet de la foire Saint-Germain

- This ballet is believed to have been performed in 1606¹⁸.
- A portion of this ballet was published in the collection *Recueil des Mascarades et jeu du prix à la course du Sarazin, faict ce karesme prenant en la presence de sa Majesté* (Paris: Marette, 1607, in-8).

10) Ballet comique de la Reine

- This ballet, the first which is printed using the word “ballet” in the title, was performed in October 1581 in the Petit-Bourbon hall at the Louvre in Paris on the occasion of the Duke of Joyeuse’s marriage. Through the union of poetry, music, and dance, the goal was to neutralize the enchantress Circe, who was causing trouble at the court. The queen herself was among the dancers.
- *Balet comique de la Royne, faict aux nopces de Monsieur le Duc de Joyeuse & madamoyselle de Vaudemont sa sœur. Par Baltasar de Beaujoyeux, valet de chambre du Roy, & de la Royne sa mere*, (Paris: Le Roy & Ballard, 1582).

¹⁸ Godart de Beauchamps, 1735: 23.

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