

De tous biens playne

Roelkin (?= Rodolphus Agricola)
Baflo 1443/44 - Heidelberg 1485)

Duo

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Critical comment to Roelkin, De tous biens playne

I copied this work from R. Perales de la Cal, *Cancionero de la Catedral de Segovia*, edición facsimilar del Códice de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de Segovia, Segovia 1977. It is a very beautiful parchment bound edition. The editor alas made many errors in his introduction in transcribing Dutch, the most obvious being Roellrin, where the ms gives Roelkin beyond any doubt. Another, but 15th century, misreading of Roelkin is Bosfrin, occurring in Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense 2856, with the song *Et trop penser*.

This work has been included in two other manuscripts: 1. Perugia Biblioteca comunale augusta 1013, according to DIAMM, <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/ms-database/>, by Raulin. Francesca Grauso, staff member of Perugia library, kindly told me by e-mail in January 2015 that the Perugia manuscript does not give the name Raulin, and 2. Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Oddział Zbiorów Muzycznych 2016, where DIAMM gives it as Roellrin; Bonda, cited below, p.487, says it is anonymous in this manuscript too.

You may find the Segovia cancionero in IMSLP.

The Segovia ms. contains three pieces by composer Roelkin, Dutch for Little Rudolph. Except the titles no text has been transmitted. But the composer's name and the words in two of the three titles, *Zart Reyne Vrucht* (Pure tender joy) and *Vrucht ende moet is* (in T and B: *es*) *gar da hin* (Joy and emotion are all gone) point to a region in the border between Western and Eastern middle Dutch.

All words are included in the standard dictionary of Middle Dutch, J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, Den Haag 1932. One of them is characterised as Eastern middle Dutch (*saert, tsaert, tzart*), and the online edition of the dictionary at <http://gtb.inl.nl/> even gives the phrase "*Eyn Jonckfrou reyn, kuesch ende zart*", a lady pure, chaste and tender. Other words occur in various spellings: the forms *da* and *hin*, for resp. *daar* and *heen* or *henen*; *gar* is evidently one of the variants of *gaer*. For *da* and *gar* German influence is mentioned. *Roelkin, vru(e)cht, ende, es/is* and *moet* cannot be German at all, and *reyn* and *zart* are both (middle) Dutch and German.

So I agree with the hypothetical ascription by J.W. Bonda: *De meerstemmige Nederlandse liederen van de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw* (Hilversum, 1996), 46, 112–15. He identified Roelkin as the Groningen humanist Rudolphus Agricola or Roelof Huusman (Baflo 1443 or 1444 – Heidelberg 1485). Baflo and Groningen spoke Eastern middle Dutch, with an increasing influence from Western forms, particularly in urban Groningen. Agricola studied in several Italian universities from about 1465 on, he was in Ferrara from 1475-1479, where he was organist at the ducal court. From 1479-1484 he was the city secretary of Groningen and so engaged in the building of the famous organ of Groningen's St. Martin's church. He played many other instruments as well. A century after his death his songs were yet well known in the city.

The unique presence in the manuscript of another composer from the Northern Netherlands, Petrus Elinck or Pieter Edelinck, fl. Delft ca. 1504-1506, may be one argument more for this identification. (His name is wrongly spelled as Eline in modern transcriptions).

There are three compositions by a composer Raulin in a Florentine manuscript (Magl. XIX 176. Late 1470's, copied in Florence). The identification of Roelkin and Raulin has been

proposed by Bonda, cited above. But manuscript evidence is lacking, so this remains hypothetical. I think an Italian on hearing “Roelkin” would have written: Rol(e)cchino and a Frenchman Raul(e)quin, and the missing k is hard to explain.

According to Fallows, *New Grove Online* s.v., this Raulin is probably not Ranlequin de Mol, another 15-th century Dutch composer, of whom one motet is known, *Ave decus virginum*, in four voices. If the n may be read as u, it would solve the k- problem. But Mol is situated in Brabant and not in the Northern part of the Netherlands, and: *Agricola Frisius*.

As to this piece: the ms. notates the diminution part on one staff with 10 lines, clefs F4 and C6, compass G – d”. The cantus firmus has a normal 5 lines staff, clef C4, compass d – e’. I applied one correction, system 9 note 16, last semiminima of the passagio, is a minima in the ms. I did not consult the other two manuscripts.

The passagio character points to a lute or, as there is hardly any chromaticism, a harp as intended instrument. Hayne van Gizeghem’s cantus firmus may be performed on every instrument. The piece may also be performed on a two manuals keyboard instrument, but I give a keyboard transcription for one manual too.

Arnold den Teuling, Assen (Netherlands) December 20th 2014, corrected February 1st 2015.