

Murmur Mori, Mirko Volpe: Bernart de Ventadorn

Sources:

Chansonnier provençal (Chansonnier La Vallière) R - folio 057v | 1301-1400

Musical Instruments:

Gittern, Frame Drum, Flute, Chant

Note:

Bernart de Ventadorn lived between 1130 and 1200. He was a Provençal poet and composer, probably the most famous troubadour of the classical age of troubadour poetry. For Dante he is "the troubadour of Love" and mentions him in his works, even placing him in the Heaven of his Comedy. The troubadour Uc de Saint Circ, who compiled numerous *vidas* of troubadours during the 13th century, claims that Bernart was the son of a baker from the castle of Ventadorn; while a satirical poem written by a younger contemporary, Peire d'Alvernha, indicates that he was the son of a servant, soldier or baker, and his mother was a servant or baker too.

Let's keep in mind that the *vidas* were written about 80 years later by extrapolating information from the poetic texts of the troubadours, so we must consider them partially reliable, but in any case they are the most precious testimonies we have and we must pay close attention to them.

From the evidence given in the poem "*Lo temps vai e ven e vire*", it seems that Bernart learned the art of singing and writing from his patron, Viscount Eble III of Ventadorn and composed his first poems for his wife Marguerite de Turenne, with whom he fell madly in love and was therefore forced to leave Château Ventadour.

Driven away, he traveled and finally arrived at the court of the most famous and powerful woman of his time: Eleanor of Aquitaine.

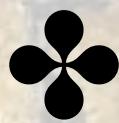
With her Bernart de Ventadorn went to England to the court of the Plantagenets and the evidence for these travels comes mainly from his own poems. Court rumors, which still survive today after almost a thousand years, claim that there was a love affair between him and the powerful and fascinating Queen Eleanor.

Whether this is true or whether it is a misunderstanding due to the way of singing the poet's courtly love towards his patron we will never be able to know for sure.

Bernart subsequently returned to Toulouse to the court of Raimon V Count of Toulouse. In his old age he went to the Dordogne, entered a monastery and most likely died there.

Of his forty-five poems, eighteen have the music intact: a truly fortunate circumstance for a secular composer of the 12th century, especially if we consider that the Albigensian Crusade contributed significantly to the loss of much troubadour material. Bernart is often considered the most important influence on the development of the *trouvère* tradition in northern France as he was well known there and his melodies widely disseminated and imitated.

Bernart's influence also extended to Latin literature: in 1215 the Bolognese professor Boncompagno wrote in his *Antiqua rhetorica* that "How much fame the name of Bernard de Ventadorn has, and with how much glory he made cansos and sweetly invented melodies, the world of Provenza recognizes this."



Lyrics:

Can l'erba fresch' e.lh folha par
E la flors boton' el verjan ,
E.l rossinhols autet e clar
Leva sa votz e mou so chan,
Joi ai de lui, e joi ai de la flor
E joi de me e de midons major!
Daus totas partz sui de joi claus e sens,
Mas sel es jois que totz autres jois vens.

Ai las com mor de cossirar
Que manhtas vetz en cossir tan :
Lairo m'en poirian portar,
Que re no sabria que.s fan .
Per Deu, Amors be.m trobas vensedor:
Ab paucs d'amics e ses autre senhor.
Car una vetz tan midons no destrens
Abans qu'eu fos del dezirer estens

Meravilh me com posc durar
Que no.lh demostre mo talan.
Can eu vei midons ni l'esgar,
Li seu bel olh tan be l'estan:
Per pauc me tenh car eu vas leis no cor.
Si feira eu, si no fos per paor,
C'anc no vi cors melhs talhatz ni depens
Ad ops d'amar sia tan greus ni lens .

Tan am midons e la tenh car,
E tan la dopt' e la reblan
C'anc de me no.lh auzei parlar,
Ni re no.lh quer ni re no.lh man.
Pero elh sap mo mal e ma dolor,
E can li plai, mi fai ben et onor,
E can li plai, eu m'en sofert ab mens,
Per so c'a leis no.n avenha blastens.

S'eu saubes la gen enchantar,
Mei enemic foran efan,
Que ja us no saubra triar
Ni dir re que.ns tornes a dan.
Adoncs sai eu que vira la gensor
E sos bels olhs e sa frescha color,
E baizera.lh la bocha en totz sens,
Si que d'un mes i paregra lo sens.

Be la volgra sola trobar,
Que dormis, o.n fezes semblan,
Per qu'e.lh embles un doutz baizar,
Pus no valh tan qu'eu lo.lh deman.
Per Deu, domna, pauc esplecham d'amor!
Vai s'en lo tems, e perdem lo melhor
Parlar degram ab cubertz entresens,
E, pus no.ns val arditz, valgues nos gens

Be deuri'om domna blasmar,
 Can trop vai son amic tarzan,
 Que lonja paraula d'amar
 Es grans enois e par d'enjan,
 C'amar pot om e far semblan alhor,
 E gen mentir lai on non a autor.
 Bona domna, ab sol c'amar mi dens,
 Ja per mentir eu no serai atens .

Messatger, vai, e no m'en prezes mens ,
 S'eu del anar vas midons sui temens .





Bernart de Ventadorn, MS cod. fr. 854



Bernart de Ventadorn, Chansonnier K