



## **Oies, seigneur, pereceus par oiseuses**

**(RS 1020a)**

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## Anonymous

I

Oiés, seigneur, pereceus par oiseuses  
qui demourés soufraiseus de tous biens,  
4 souviegne vous de la mort angoiseuse  
que li fiex Dieu souffri au premerain!  
Il fu liés en l'estache au lien  
et fu batus d'escorgies noueuses,  
8 nous savons bien qu'il fu en la crois mis  
pour nous geter des paines dolereuses.

II

Hé, cuers faillis, mauvaise chars honteuse,  
avés vous dont de morir grant paour?  
Souviegne vous de la mort dolereuse  
12 ki ert sans fins et tous jours iert poiours!  
Racordons nous a nostre Creator  
qui nous vient qerre a grant ciere joieuse,  
et dit: 'Ça, tuit li boin et li meillour  
16 k'en paradis a mout grant place oiseuse!'

III

Au pesme jour coureçous et plain d'ire  
que li fieus Dieu venra fiers et iriés,  
et mousterra ses plaies a delivre  
20 en ses costés, en ses mains, en ses piés  
qu'il ot pour nous et fendus et perciés,  
n'i avra saint qui ost un seul mot dire.  
Li plus hardis vauroit estre croisiés  
24 tant douteront son mautalent et s'ire!

IV

Outre la mer, en cele sainte ter<re>  
ou Dieus fu nés et ou fu mors et vis,  
devons aler nostre iretage qerre,  
28 car a grant tort en fu pour nous hors mis.  
Ki n'i venra, il n'ert pas ses amis  
car il n'i a pais ne trieves ne terme  
Dieus nous i laist si aler et venir  
32 k'en paradis puissons aler sans guerre!

I

Listen, Lords, idling in indolence, you who  
procrastinate, lacking all good qualities, remember  
the painful death which the Son of God first  
suffered! He was fettered to the stake and lashed  
with knotted whips; we well know that He was set  
upon the cross to free us from grievous pains.

II

Ah, faint-hearts, shameful wicked creatures, do you  
then feel great fear of death? Call to mind the  
painful death which will be everlasting and will be  
ever worse! Let us be reconciled with our Creator  
who will come and seek us, most joyfully welcoming  
us and saying: 'Come here, all you good and best  
people, there is plenty of free space in Paradise!'

III

On the dread dark day of wrath, when the Son of  
God will come, terrible and wrathful, and will  
openly reveal the wounds in his side, in his hands,  
in his feet, pierced and nailed for us, then there will  
be no saint who dares to utter a single word. The  
bravest will wish he had taken the cross, so much  
will they fear his fury and his ire!

IV

Overseas, in that holy land where God was born  
and where he died and lived again, we should go to  
claim our inheritance, for He was most wrongly  
expelled from there on our account. Anyone who  
does not go will not be His friend, for there is no  
peace, nor truce, nor respite there. God let us so go  
there and return that we may enter Paradise  
without war!

## Notes

The author (a *clericus*?) draws on the repertory of homiletic topoi to construct a call to the crusade destined for a vague public of *seigneur* ('*pereceus par oiseuses*') and *cuers faillis* ('*mauvaise chars honteuse*') which is demonstrating inertia and apathy in the face of the appeal. The case against Richart de Fournival's authorship has been set out in the two reviews of the edition of Zarifopol 1904, firstly in Jeanroy 1904, 428: 'Cette pièce, où il y a plusieurs assonances, ne doit pas être de Richart; la différence de style pourrait s'expliquer à la rigueur par la différence des sujets'; and then Steffens 1906, col. 116: 'Die Zweifel des Hrsg. an der Verfasserschaft dieses Kreuzliedes scheinen nicht eben stark zu sein. Aber alle Strophen sprechen gegen eine solche Richart's, der doch die Form so sicher beherrscht und den Reim sonst so elegant meistert, denn Str. I hat Assonanz und ungenauen Reim, II u. IV Assonanz, III zweimaliges Vorkommen des gleichen Wortes im Reime'. Subsequently other publications support this view: Bédier 1909, 206 and Dijkstra 1995a, who writes of an 'auteur français anonyme'. The most recent editor, Lepage 1981, 23, includes it among the 'chansons douteuses', weighing up the manuscript attribution against the differences between the text and the 'bloc assez homogène des chansons typiquement "courtoises" [...]. Il va de soi, cependant, que cette diversité d'inspiration ne saurait militer contre l'attribution à Richard de Fournival [voir ses oeuvres en prose]; elle peut tout aussi bien expliquer que ces chansons fassent partie de séries ou de petits groupes différents de textes dans le ms. a. La vérité est qu'on ne saurait s'appuyer sur de tels arguments pour authentifier une chanson avec quelque rigueur [...]. Faut-il donc rejeter la chanson? Mais à qui l'attribuer alors?'. This is echoed by Guida 1992, 126-27, who is inclined to assign it to Richart, arguing that although some defects of rhyme and particularly the stylistic difference with respect to Richart's 'exquisitely courtly' songs have cast doubt on his authorship, the crusade song's religious inspiration and echoes of Latin church canticles weigh in favour ascribing it to Richard, who was a canon of Amiens. Most recently, Crespo 2002, 50 rejects the attribution, for reasons of language, style and versification.

Noteworthy is the use of structural parallels, typical of religious rhetoric, in the first two stanzas, which might also be partly considered as *coblas doblas* (at least in the 'a' rhyme-assonance), just as the *coblas* in RS 6 and RS 499 are *doblas*. See for example the the forceful apostrophe in first line of stanzas I and II: 1 *Oiés, seigneur*, 9 *Hé, cuers faillis*; a declaration or a provocative question in the second lines: 2 *qui demourés soufraitous de tous biens*, 10 *avés vous dont de morir grant paour?*; and in the third lines, the call to remembrance (known as the *memento* of the lenten liturgical rite: 3 *souviagne vous de la mort angoiseuse / que li fiex Dieu soufri au premerain!*, 11-12 *Souviagne vous de la mort dolereuse / ki ert sans fins et tous jours iert poïours!*

- 1 Bédier 1909, 298 was the first to demonstrate that the trouvère is modelling his composition in particular on Conon de Béthune RS 1125, stanza III (17-24: *Dex ! tant avom esté preu par huiseuse! / Or i parra qui a certes iert preus, / s'irom vengier la honte dolereuse / dont chascuns doit estre iriez et honteus, / car a no tanz est perduz li sains lieus / u Dieus soufri pour nous mort angoisseuse; / s'or i laissom nos anemis morteus, / a touz jours mais iert no vie honteuse*). He suggested that v. 1 was a corruption of Conon's v. 17: 'c'est peut-être la même leçon, *preu par oiseuse*, qu'il conviendrait de reconnaître ici; *pereceus par oiseuse* en serait une déformation'.
- 4 *au premerain*: for the sense, cf. FEW primarius. Bédier 1909 follows Zarifopol 1904 in correcting the ms. reading *au premerain* to *au premerien*, saying: 'signifie-t-il "au temps jadis"? Le sens n'est-il pas plutôt "d'abord", la mort pleine d'angoisse que Dieu souffrit le premier, par opposition aux croisés à qui il demande, maintenant, de s'exposer, eux aussi, et en retour, au martyre?'. - *li fiex Dieus*: see also v. 18 *li fiex Dieu*; for the absolute construction, see Foulet 1919, § 20.

- 7 Apart from the mainly assonanced structure of the text, the -is ending of v. 7 is the only really irregular rhyme. Bédier 1909, in order to re-establish a rhyme or assonance here, corrects to *Et en la crois fu mis, ce savons bien*, which he himself admits is going rather far, but he says he cannot find a simpler solution. The temptation to follow this has been resisted above all by the fact that it would disrupt the structure of decasyllables with caesura *a minore* governing the rhythm of the entire composition. Because of this, in his edition of the melodic structure of stanza I Aubry has left the structure of the text unaltered. Neither Lepage 1981 nor Guida 1992, 334 intervenes either, Guida commenting that even if Bédier's emendation improves the text it does not seem advisable to adopt it given that the whole text is studded with irregularities.
- 9 *chars honteuse*: cfr. TL II, 254 'Wesen, Natur'; the commonest phrase is the antonymous *char hardie*.
- 16 *paradis*: compare v. 32. For the allusion to Paradise compare Thibaut de Champagne, *Seignor, sachiez, qui or ne s'an ira*, RS 6, note to v. 4. The threat of being deprived of paradise is a typical preaching theme often found in crusade songs: see for example Conon de Béthune, RS 1125, ed. Bédier-Aubry 1909, III, 15 and Guillem de Mur, BdT 226.2, 7-8: *que Jhesu Crist en tan bon luec los meta / en paradis quon li siey martir so*, and the refrain of the oldest Old French crusade song, *Chevalier, mult estes guariz* (Bédier-Aubry, I). See also, for the closeness of the theme, vv. 8-11 of RS 1576 (Bédier-Aubry, XIII) and for the reference to Paradise, the beginning of RS 1582 (Bédier-Aubry XXVII) and RS 1022 (Bédier-Aubry XXIX), 16.
- 17 *au pesme jour*: for the echo of the Latin sequence of the *dies irae*, see Payen 1965. – *coureçous et plein d'ire [...] fiers et iriés*: synonymous dittologies of epic origin: compare *Chanson de Roland* (ed. Segre 2003), 2164 *Païen s'en fuient curuçus e irez*.
- 19 *a delivre*: for this adverbial expression, compare TL 1340: 'frei, ungehindert, unbedingt', and DÉCT, *Lexique*, s.v. *delivre*: 'Librement, facilement, sans obstacle'.
- 26 *ou Dieus fu nes et ou fu mors et vis*: compare Thibaut de Champagne *Seignor, sachiez, qui or ne s'an ira* (RS 6), v. 2 and the note.
- 27 *devons aler nostre iretaje qerre*: this appeal and particularly this motif seem to echo a *sermo vulgaris* (a sermon addressed to both clergy and laity) of Jacques de Vitry: *Obsecro igitur vos, fratres, per misericordiam Ihesu Christi et per aspersionem sanguinis Crucifixi quatenus non solum Domino, qui privatus est hereditate sua, tanquam fideles vasalli et homines ligii succurratis, sed vobismetipsis subveniatis nec tantam gratiam in vacuum recipiatis. Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis. Levate signum crucis salutifere, confortamini et nolite stare, sed currite ad bravium vocationis superne et vocanti vos per predicationem respondeatis per obedientiam Domino Nostro Ihesu Christo, cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen* (ed. Schneyer 1969-1990, III, 216, no. 414, § 47).

## Text

Anna Radaelli, 2015.

## Ms.

(1). a 121v-122r ( *maistre ricars* ).

## Versification and music

10a'ba'bba'ba' ( MW 902,12 = Frank 302); 4 *coblas singulares* ; rhyme a = - *euses* (but also - *euse* ), - *euse* (but also - *ouse* ), - *ire* (but also - *ivre* ), - *erre* (but also - *erme* ); rhyme b = - *en* (but also - *ens* , - *ain* , - *is* ), - *our* (but also - *ours* , - *or* ), - *es* , - *is* (but also - *ir* ); elision at the caesura: v. 14. There are



numerous irreparable irregularities at the rhyme (see Lepage 1981, 121: 'les corriger conduirait à refaire la chanson' and Crespo 2002, 48: 'rime insanabilmente imperfetta e assonanze'), consisting mainly of tonic assonances, some written with what could be described as a phonetic graphy: - *euse* :- *ouse* , - *ain* :- *en* , - *our* :- *or* . The only rhyme which can be called imperfect is that in - *is* in stanza I, in v. 7, which is where Bédier has intervened, restoring the rhyme in - *en* by interverting the hemistiches (with some adjustment and strain). The versification is found in another 10 compositions, the particularly significant ones being two other crusade songs: Conon de Béthune RS 1125 (melody ABAB CDCD in O), most probably the model, and Chardon de Croisilles RS 499, as well as the parodic *sirventes* by Huon d'Oisi RS 1030 (mel. ABAB CDC'D'), closely linked to RS 1125, though built on all masculine decasyllables. It is interesting to observe how alliteration also contributes to the musicality of the text, along with the assonanced rhythm of the hemistiches, and the frequent repetitions both at the rhyme (1 *oiseuses* : 16 *oiseuse* ; 8 *dolereuses* : 11 *dolereuse* ; 7 : 28 *mis* ) and elsewhere (4, 18 *li fiex Dieu* ; 16, 32 *paradis* ; 17, 24 *ire* ; 27, 31, 32 *aler* ). These all produce a mnemonic, psalm-like effect, probably a sign that the text could have had a paraliturgical purpose. Melody ABAB CDCD (Tischler VII, 647,2).

## Previous editions


Zarifopol 1904, 50; Bédier-Aubry 1909, 295; Lepage 1981, 119.

## Analysis of the manuscript tradition

The text is transcribed into fascicle XX (cc. 120-127) of ms. BAV Reg. lat. 1490 (= a) devoted to songs to the Virgin ( *Che sont chançons de Nostre Dame* ), and is the only crusade song among the *chansons pieuses* , following *Mere au roi omnipotent* (RS 713), which is also attributed to *Maistres Ricars de Fournival* . The two texts were therefore transcribed separately from the corpus of RcFor's other lyrics which in ms. a are concentrated in folios 39r-43v. This is one of the reasons for which their attribution to this trouvère, especially that of this crusade song, is still *sub iudice* .

## Historical context and dating

No specific reference in the text allows us to pinpoint the date of this song. Bédier 1909, 296, argues that it seems quite late (cf. *poieurs pour pire* in v. 12). Guida 1992, 127 suggests it could belong to the lead-up either to Thibaut de Champagne's crusade in 1239 or to the Sixth Crusade led by Louis IX in 1248; Djikstra 1995, 57, n. 33, accepts the suggestion in Râkel 1973, 530-31 that it relates to Thibaut de Champagne's expedition, on the grounds that in vv. 28-32 the author seems to be referring to a truce between Christians and Muslims, and the truce in question could be the one concluded by Frederick II in 1229 for a period of 10 years, 5 months and 40 days. The poet suggests the truce has expired, which led Râkel to link the song to Thibaut's expedition: «Aux vers 28-32 l'auteur [...] semble faire allusion à une trêve entre chrétiens et musulmans. La trêve dont il est question pourrait être celle conclue par Frédéric II en 1229 pour une période de 10 ans, 5 mois et 40 jours. Le poète suggère que la trêve a expiré, ce qui a porté Râkel à associer la chanson [...] à l'expédition de Thibaut de Champagne qui eut lieu en 1239. Cette datation me paraît acceptable». Apart from the song's probable model, Conon de Béthune's *Ahi! Amors, com dure departie* (RS 1125), what seems to me particularly significant for the dating is the presence of Chardon de Croisilles' crusade song *Li departirs de la douce contree* (RS 499) in the chain of metrico-musical models. In addition Chardon's song begins with *coblas doblas*, in other words the first two stanzas use the same rhymes, which is partly the case for the rhyme-assonance in *Oiés, seigneur*. If we add to this the fact that vv. 25-26 (*Oltre la mer, en cele sainte terre / ou Dieus fu nés et ou fu mors et vis*) are a sort of calque on the incipit of RS 6 of Thibaut de Champagne ('*Seignor, sachiez, qui or ne s'an ira / en cele terre ou Diex fu mors et vis*'), we could



perhaps add weight to the hypothesis of Räkel who, making some other assumptions, dated the song to around 1239, and therefore date it to the second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. in the period when the need for a new expedition was being preached.