



Seignor, sachiez, qui or ne s'an ira

(RS 6)

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Thibaut de Champagne

I

Seignor, sachiez, qui or ne s'an ira
en cele terre ou Diex fu mors et vis
et qui la croiz d'outremer ne penra
4 a painnes mais ira en paradis.
Qui a en soi pitié ne remembrance,
au Haut Seignor doit querre sa vanjance
et delivrer sa terre et son païs.

II

8 Tuit li mauvais demorront par deça
qui n'ainment Dieu, bien ne honor ne pris;
et chascuns dit: «ma fame que fera?»
«je ne lairoie a nul fuer mes amis».
12 Cil sont cheoit en trop fole atendance,
qu'il n'est amis fors que Cil, sanz doutance,
qui por nos fu en la vraie croiz mis.

III

Or s'an iront cil vaillant bachelier
16 qui ainment Dieu et l'onour de cest mont,
qui sagement vuelent a Dieu aler;
et li morveus, li cendreus demorront:
avugle sont, de ce ne dout je mie.
20 Qui .i. secors ne fait Dieu en sa vie
et por si po pert la gloire del mont.

IV

Diex se lascia por nos en croiz pener
et nos dira au jor ou tuit vanront:
24 «Vos qui ma croiz m'aidastes a porter,
vos en irez là ou mi angle sont:
là me verroiz et ma mere Marie;
et vos par cui je n'oi onques aïe
28 descendrez tuit en anfer le parfont».

I

Lords, know this: whoever will not now go to that
land where God died and rose again, and whoever
will not take the cross to Outremer will find it hard
ever to go to heaven. Whoever has pity and good
remembrance in his heart must seek to avenge the
Highest Lord and liberate His land and His country.

II

All the base men who do not love God, goodness or
honour or reputation, will remain here; and each
says: "What will my wife do?", "There is no way I
would leave my friends". These are embroiled in
vain preoccupations, since there is certainly no
true friend apart from the one who was placed
upon the true cross for us.

III

Soon those valiant young men who love God and
the honour of this world, who wisely wish to
proceed towards God, will set out on their way; and
the snotty-nosed faint-hearts and the lechers will
stay behind: they are blind, I have no doubt about
it. Whoever does not aid God at least once in his
lifetime, and at so little cost, loses the glory of the
world.

IV

God allowed himself to suffer pain upon the cross
and will say to us on the day when all come
together: "You who helped me carry my cross, you
will go to where my angels are; and you from whom
I had no help will all descend into the depths of
hell".

V

Chascuns cuide demorer touz haitiez
et que jamais ne doie mal avoir;
ainsi les tient Anemis et pechiez
³² que il n'ont sens, hardement ne pooir.
Biax sire Diex, ostez leur tel pensee,
et nos metez en la vostre contree
si saintement que vos puissons veoir.

VI

³⁶ Douce Dame, roïne coronee
priez por nos, vierge bone eüree,
et puis après ne nos puet mescheoir.

V

Each imagines he can live without a care in the world and that he will never have anything to worry about; the Enemy and sin have such a hold on them that they have no discernment, will or energy. Good Lord God, take this illusion away from them and place us in your realm in such a holy way that we may see Your face.

VI

Sweet Lady, crowned queen, pray for us, blessed Virgin, and then no harm can befall us.

Notes

- 1 The end of the first line shows that this text has many similarities with the song *Oiés, seigneur, pereceus par oiseuses* (RS 1022) attributed to Richard de Fournival, and with their probable common model, Conon de Béthune's famous crusade song *Ahi! Amors, com dure departie* (RS 1125).

According to Dijkstra 1995a, p. 120, Thibaut is addressing the *bellatores*, respecting the directives of pope Alexander III which tend to restrict the crusade exclusively to armed knights.
- 2 *ou Diex fu mors et vis*: Wallensköld considers the expression as an *hysteron proteron*, whereas according to Guida 1992, followed by Sánchez Palomino 2005, the syntax follows the natural order and the participle *vis* is to be understood as a reference to the resurrection. In both verbs there may even be a passive nuance, which would highlight on the one hand the culpable action of Jesus's executioners (by extension, according to contemporary Christian interpretation, the whole of the human race) and on the other the salvific power of God the Father. In any case we are dealing with a current expression, virtually a set phrase, perhaps drawn from the preachers' repertory; see for example Guillem Figueira *BdT* 217.7, 24 (and the theological digression of vv. 25-32, which seems to confirm the possible passive interpretation of the verbs).
- 3 *croiz d'outremer*: this technical term conveys perfectly the Latin expression *crux transmarina* introduced into preaching to distinguish expeditions to the Holy Land from European crusades against Spanish Muslims or Christian heretics. The expression was used for the first time on the occasion of the Albigensian crusade, perhaps by the German monk and preacher Caesar of Heisterbach (see for example *Dialogus miraculorum* I, 6).
- 5-7 The expression *querre vengeance* is well attested and requires the dative to designate the victim of a crime (*TL* XI, 178, 34-39), but here the interpretation is complicated by the presence of the possessive *sa* which looks as if it ought to refer to God Himself. The translation therefore takes account of the ambivalence by which the crusade ought to avenge God and at the same time bring about *His* vengeance. Guida rightly recalls that these lines also express the vassal's duty to his lord: that of avenging his death and defending his lands.
- 10-11 The religious vein and the propagandistic tone of this text derive also from the rapid recourse to direct speech in these two lines. Rather than drawing on the classic motif of the internal monologue developed as a debate between service of God and service of the lady (as in other texts of Thibaut's and his model Conon de Béthune), the trouvère dramatises the objections of the man who hesitates: feelings and interests put a brake on departure. The thought here is not with the *trouvère's* courtly lady, but, more realistically, with his wife. The understandable concern over losing what is most dear makes men cautious about armed expeditions to the Holy Land. Thibaut seems to be the only poet to express so vividly and directly the possible objections to going, replicating this same pace of dialogue, even if it is expanded, in stanza III of RS 1152, in which Thibaut turns directly to Philippe de Nanteuil to remind him that paradise can only be conquered at the cost of harsh suffering (see Dijkstra 1995a, p. 120 n. 167).
- 16 The line is virtually identical to v. 9, whose symmetry highlights the contrast between the choice of the one leaving and that of the one staying behind, and specifies simultaneously the spiritual and worldly value of participating in the crusade. See the commentary of Guida 1992 to vv. 15-17.

- 18 The first lines of this stanza can be related to vv. 30-32 (38-40) of Conon de Béthune's RS 1125, which present the same situation but through the much more effective and maliciously oblique one of the lady called upon to choose between chaste and noble faithfulness to worthy crusading knights and the sinful and degrading company of the cowards who have refused to set off. The substantival adjectives *morveus* and *cendreus* seem to pick up Conon's *lasches* and *mauvais*. Literally the adjective *cendreus* means "having the colour and consistency of ash" (TL II, 108, 48ff.), while *morveus* means "snotty". So it may be that the pair of adjectives is to be understood in a realistic and pejorative literal sense. See however the more metaphorical interpretation proposed by Bédier, followed by numerous other critics (Wallensköld, Sánchez Palomino) and by Guida who links these expressions to the colourful compound forms of Marcabru in his famous *Pax in nomine Domini* (in particular *bufa-tizo* and *crup-en-cami*; see the commentary of Gaunt-Harvey-Paterson 2000 to Marcabru *BdT* 293.35, 46-48); see also Giraut de Borneil *BdT* 242.10, 33 (ed. Kolsen): *malvatz crup-en-cendres*. This is also a case of picking up and developing content already expressed in v. 8 of the preceding stanza.
- 21 The conjunction *et* is para-hypotactic and introduces the main clause, as already noted by Wallensköld and then Guida; this has an intensifying force and introduces an exclamatory nuance (Ménard § 195, pp. 184-185). This particular use of the conjunction probably misled Bédier into thinking it was necessary to correct v. 19.
- 23 This evidently refers to the Day of Judgment, and the direct speech of the following lines recalls the Gospel passage of Matt. 25, 31-46.
- 26 The figure of the Virgin Mary is not very often found in French crusade songs, with the exception of RS 1659, 15-16, even though the archetypes of crusade preaching appear in St Bernard, whose marial devotion and hymns to the Virgin are well known. The figure of the mother of Christ is in any case an important element of the religious texts of Thibaut de Champagne (see Grossel 2000). Note the elliptical construction of the verb typical of the Middle Ages (Ménard, § 204).
- 29 The indefinite *chascuns* introduces two propositions dependent on *cuide*, the first in the infinitive and the second in the subjunctive; this kind of syntactic *variatio* is a distinctive feature of medieval language. For *cuidier* followed by the infinitive in the sense of "think, intend" see Jensen, § 653.
- 30 On the use of periphrases with *devoir* to express the idea of the future through the subjunctive see Wallensköld's note (also Ménard, § 137).
- 33 See Hughes de Berzé RS 37a, 14. According to Dijkstra 1995a, pp. 121-122 Thibaut's call to the change of mentality necessary for participation in the crusade becomes explicit in the song RS 1152, 10-14.
- 34-35 The *contree* should probably be understood here as a metaphor for paradise (so already in Wallensköld), in view of the adverb *saintement* accompanying it and the prospective possibility of seeing God face to face. This metaphorical usage however seems rarely attested, and the *contree* in crusade songs is more often the land of origin of the crusading knight, where the lady dwells.
- 37 On the particular morphological use of the adjective *bon* with adverbial force see the notes of Wallensköld and Guida (also Ménard, § 123).

Text

Luca Barbieri, 2014.

Mss.

(8). K 1b-2b (*li rois de Navarre*), M^t 13cd (anon.), N 1c-2a (*li rois de Navarre*), O 127bc (anon.), S 316bc (anon.), T 2v (anon.), V 1cd (anon.), X 8cd (*li rois de Navarre*).

Versification and music

10ababc'c'b (MW 1159,1 = Frank 361); 5 *coblas doblas* (2+2+1) with a 3-line *envoi* (c'c'b); rhyme a = -a , -er , -ez ; rhyme b = -is , -ont , -oir ; rhyme c = -ance , -ie , -ee ; identical; rhyme *mont* in vv. 16 and 22; feminine caesura with elision in vv. 2 and 11; lyric caesura in vv. 29 and 36; melody in KM^t NOVX, with very few variants (van der Werf 1979, II, p. 3; Tischler 1997, I n° 5).

Previous editions

La Ravallière 1742, II 132; Leroux de Lincy 1841, i 125; Tarbé 1850, 124; Meyer 1877, II 370; Clédat 1892, 223; Bartsch-Horning 1895, 384; Bédier-Aubry 1909, 169; Riemann 1909-1910, 575; Wallensköld 1925, 183; Wagner 1949, 158; Pauphilet 1952, 898; Cremonesi 1955, 200; Gennrich 1955, I 9; Toja 1966, 421; Mary 1967, I 360; Picot 1975, II 64; Baumgartner 1983, 252; Brahney 1989, 226; Guida 1992, 106; Rosenberg-Tischler 1995, 360; Dijkstra 1995a, 204; Sánchez Palomino 2005, 172. La Ravallière 1742, II 132; Leroux de Lincy 1841, I 125; Tarbé 1850, 124; Meyer 1877, II 370; Clédat 1892, 223; Bartsch-Horning 1895, 384; Bédier-Aubry 1909, 169; Riemann 1909-1910, 575; Wallensköld 1925, 183; Wagner 1949, 158; Pauphilet 1952, 898; Cremonesi 1955, 200; Gennrich 1955, I 9; Toja 1966, 421; Mary 1967, I 360; Picot 1975, II 64; Baumgartner 1983, 252; Brahney 1989, 226; Guida 1992, 106; Rosenberg-Tischler 1995, 360; Dijkstra 1995a, 204; Sánchez Palomino 2005, 172.

Analysis of the manuscript tradition

The tradition of the text is virtually uniform, with few variants and little stemmatic significance. All the songbooks transmitting the text are witnesses of Thibaut's *Liederbuch* , with the sole exception of S which here is characterised by its visibly sloppy readings rather than *difficiliores* variants. In M^t , T and V the song forms part of Thibaut de Champagne's corpus; in O, where the texts are ordered alphabetically, it is the first text under the letter S, a position traditionally reserved for Thibaut, followed by two other texts; in ms. S it is found in the centre of a series of some thirty songs attributable to the king of Navarre. The attribution can therefore be considered unanimous. Ms. base S.

Historical context and dating

No specific historical allusion allow us to date this song, which has traditionally been assigned to the period preceding Thibaut's departure on the only expedition to the Holy Land in which he took part. The crusade, preached at the end of 1234, only took place some years later and the crusaders embarked at Marseille in August 1239. All critics have agreed that the song must have been composed between these two dates, some scholars going back as far as 1230 when Thibaut first pledged to go to the Holy Land (see for example Dijkstra 1995a, p. 119). According to Guida 1992, p. 104 the song suggest the feeling of imminent departure. Since it has often been pointed out how this text draws on typical preaching vocabulary and motifs, however, the idea that it may go back to the time of Thibaut first taking the cross should not be ruled out, namely in 1235 when the enthusiasm aroused by the preachers made the pope strive to dissuade the crusaders from leaving prematurely.