



## **Jerusalem se plaint et li païs**

**(RS 1576)**

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## Huon de Saint-Quentin

I

Jerusalem se plaint et li païs  
u Dameldiex souffri mort bonement,  
que deça mer a poi de ses amis  
4 ki de secors li facent mais nient.  
S'il sovenist cascun del jugement  
et del saint liu u il souffri torment  
quant il pardon fist de sa mort Longis,  
8 le descroisier fesissent mout envis;  
car ki pour Dieu prent le crois purement,  
il Le renie au jor que il le rent,  
et com Judas faura a paradis.

II

12 Nostre pastour gardent mal leur berbis  
quant pour deniers cascuns al leu les vent,  
mais li pechiés les a si tous souspris  
k'il ont mis Dieu en oubli pour l'argent.  
16 Que devenront li riche garniment  
k'il aquierent assés vilainement  
des faus loiers k'il ont des croisiés pris?  
Saichiés de voir k'il en seront repris,  
20 se loiautés et Dius et fois ne ment;  
retolu ont et Achre et Belleent  
ce que cascuns avoit a Diu pramis.

III

Ki osera jamais en nul sermon  
24 de Dieu parler em place n'em moustier,  
ne anoncier ne bien fait ne pardon,  
.....  
chose qui puist Nostre Segneur aidier  
28 a la terre conquerre et gaaignier  
u de son sanc paia no rāençon?  
Segneur prelat, ce n'est ne bel ne bon  
que son secors faites si detriier:  
32 vos avés fait, ce poet on tesmoignier,  
de Deu Rolant et de vos Guenelon.

I

Jerusalem laments, and the land where the Lord  
God suffered death most willingly, because this  
side of the sea it has few friends who offer it the  
slightest help. If each one remembered the  
judgment (the Last Judgment) and the holy place  
where He suffered torture when He forgave  
Longinus for His death, he would not readily  
renounce his crusading vow; for whoever takes the  
cross with full consent for God's sake denies Him  
on the day he gives it back, and like Judas will lose  
paradise.

II

Our shepherds take little care of their sheep when  
each of them sells them to the wolf for money, but  
sin has so taken hold of them that they have  
forgotten God for the sake of silver. What will  
become of the rich ornaments they acquire most  
shamefully with the fraudulent payment they have  
taken from the crusaders? Be well aware that they  
will be blamed for this, if loyalty and God and faith  
do not lie; they have stolen from Acre and  
Bethlehem what each [giver] had promised to God.

III

Who will dare to preach and speak of God any more  
in square or cloister, and announce benefits and  
indulgences, [*when no-one is disposed to perform*]  
anything which can assist Our Lord to conquer and  
win back the land where He paid our ransom with  
His blood? Lord prelates, it is neither good nor just  
that you so delay helping Him: you, this can  
certainly be said, have made Roland of God and  
Ganelon of yourselves.

En celui n'a mesure ne raison  
 ki se conoist, s'il n'aïe a vengier  
<sup>36</sup> ceuls ki pour Dieu sont dela em prison  
 et pour oster lor ames de dangier.  
 Puis c'on muert ci, on ne doit resoignier  
 paine n'anui, honte ne destorbier:  
<sup>40</sup> pour Dieu est tout quan c'on fait en son non,  
 ki en rendra cascun tel guerredon  
 que cuers d'ome nel poroit esprisier;  
 car paradis en ara de loier,  
<sup>44</sup> n'ainc pour si peu n'ot nus si riche don.

There is no wisdom nor intelligence in anyone who knows this without helping to avenge those who are over there in prison for God's sake, and to remove their souls from danger. Since one has to die here, one should not fear pain or torment, shame or harm: everything one does in His name is for God, who will give to each such a reward that the heart of man could not appreciate its worth; for he will receive paradise as a reward, and no-one has ever had such a rich gift for so little.

## Notes

The text belongs to the context of anticlerical polemics developed during the Albigensian Crusade and the Fifth Crusade whose failure was attributed to the irresponsible conduct of the papal legate Pelagius. Numerous Occitan texts bear witness to the diffusion of such polemics, but some Old French authors, especially from the northern regions, also show solidarity with their southern colleagues and attack the behaviour of the Church during the Albigensian and Egyptian events (Vatteroni 1999 and Barbieri 2013, pp. 311-317); see for example Thibaut de Champagne RS 273 and RS 640 (especially vv. 1-8 for the Albigensian Crusade and 9-16 for the Fifth). During the same period anticlerical invectives are also diffused outside the lyric, for example in the *Vie de sainte Léocade* of Gautier de Coinci (ed. Vilamo-Pentti; in particular, for the responsibility of the clergy for the defeat at Damietta, vv. 910-916: *Tant par sunt plain de couvoitise / et de tout penre si tres aigre / que le cras welent et le maigre / et les croustes et la miète, / bien i parut a Damiete: / li chardonnaus, li rouges diex / la nos toli, ce fu grant diex*), and in the *Besant de Dieu*, written in 1226-1227 by Guillaume le Clerc from Normandy. For the first two decades of the XIIIth c. see for example the *Bible* of Guiot de Provins and that of Hugues de Berzé. A very early example, composed during the reign of Henry II of England, is found in the *Livre des manières* of Étienne de Fougères. For Occitan texts see for example Peire Cardenal BdT 335.31, BdT 335.51 and BdT 335.54; Falquet de Romans BdT 156.11; Tomier and Palaizi BdT 442.1.

- 1-4 See the refrain of Maistre Renaut RS 886 (*Jerusalem plaint et ploure / lou secors, ke trop demoure*) and RS 1729, 19-23.
- 3 On the basis of the adverbial expression of place *deça mer*, Serper (followed by Guida) claimed that the author was in the East; in reality the lament over the disaffection regarding the Holy Land concerns the Europe as a whole, as is clear from the following lines. Moreover Huon uses expressions of place perfectly consistently and the text leaves no doubt: *dela* of v. 36 refers to the prisoners in Egypt (or the Holy Land) and *ci* in v. 38 to the fact that even if one stays at home one will have to die. Compare RS 1887, 19: *Rois, vos savez ke Deus ait poc d'amis*.
- 5-7 On the duty of repaying God's sacrifice for our salvation see note 19-20 to Conon de Béthune RS 1125 and note 11 to Thibaut de Champagne RS 273. For the characterisation of the Holy Land as the land of Christ's passion, here as in v. 2, see the note to the Châtelain d'Arras RS 140, 2. The reference in v. 5 may be to the Last Judgment (Bédier 1909) or to Jesus's trial in Jerusalem (Serper 1983, p. 83). The sequence of references to the passion seems to support Serper's view, but the theme of the Last Judgment is very common in crusade songs, and seems confirmed by the allusion to paradise in v. 11. For the Last Judgment see for example Conon de Béthune RS 1314, 20-24 (and note). It is interesting to observe that a text such as the *Brevis ordinacio de predicacione sancte Crucis* also brings together Christ's sacrifice and the mention of the Last Judgment (Röhrich 1879, pp. 20-21); this is a text written probably after 1216, and is a rare example of Fifth Crusade preaching in England (Flori 2012, p. 245).
- 7 This is a reference to the Roman centurion Longinus, who in the gospels pierced Christ's side to confirm his death (John 19, 34); the centurion's conversion was already indicated in the synoptic gospels (Matthew 27, 54; Mark 15, 39; Luke 23, 47). The name of Longinus is not found in Biblical sources, but is cited for the first time in the *Acts of Pilate* (II-IIIth c.) merged into the apochryphal gospel of Nicodemus. References to the repentance of the good thief and to that of Longinus are found in Pons de Capdoill BdT 375.2, 22-24: *nostre Seigneur, que ac franc chausimen / del bon lairon el felon fez dolen, / e perdonet Longis q'i's repentia*, and the earliest such example, indicated as the first case of indulgence, is found in a sermon of the Victorine fathers dating from 1214-1215 (see Bird 2004, p. 23). See also RS 167=904b, 22-23: *Deus ot pitié de Longis ke sa lance / li mist el cors, quant mercit li pria*.



- 8 On redeeming vows through money payment Huon de Saint-Quentin has a strongly negative opinion, expressed in greater detail in the *Complainte* 49-60. See the note to v. 18.
- 11 The threat of exclusion from paradise is also a typical preaching argument, often drawn on in crusade songs: see for example Conon de Béthune RS 1125, 15; Thibaut de Champagne RS 6, 4 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*. But see also the refrain of the oldest French crusade song (RS 1548a) as well as the beginning of RS 1582 and RS 1020a=1022, 16.
- 12-15 The image of shepherds turned wolves (or who abandon their sheep to the wolves, as here) is extremely widespread and probably developed from Matthew 7, 15 (but see also Matthew 10, 16 and Luke 10, 3); for numerous examples see Peron's note to Guillem Figueira BdT 217.2, 247-249 on the *Rialto* website ([www.rialto.unina.it](http://www.rialto.unina.it)). For a passage corresponding to these lines see also the second sermon of the Victorine fathers published by Bird 2004, p. 27: *Mittit ergo dominus prelatos, qui debent esse piscatores, et presbiteros, qui non curant de ouibus [...] Maledictus est miser sacerdos, qui recepit oblacionem usurarii, et excommunicatus est, quia communicat excommunicato*.
- 18 The author probably refers in general (vv. 8-10) to the phenomenon of the redemption or commutation of vows, sanctioned by the 1215 Lateran Council (see the constitution *Ad liberandam*, in *COD* II-1, pp. 576-77), on the basis of which a crusader could also fulfil his vow by paying someone else to go in his place or simply by paying a sum of money to finance the expedition. In particular (vv. 12-18), he censures clerical abuses in applying this practice, which he claims contribute to taking financial and human resources away from the Holy Land (vv. 21-22). Such criticisms, always referring to the time of the Fifth Crusade, are also found in the work and preaching of Robert de Courçon (his sermons have not been preserved but see a reference to the content of his preaching in Guillaume le Breton, *Gesta Philippi Augusti*, § 213), and these become more frequent later, in the work of Matthew Paris for example. For the accusation of greed see Conon de Béthune RS 1314, 25-29, where however this is directed against the lay lords. Huon de Saint-Quentin however seems to temper condemnation of the *descroisés* (v. 8) by attributing the principal blame to the clergy.
- 20 The verb in the singular refers to the three preceding nouns.
- 26 Bédier suggests a possible reconstruction: *quant nus ne vuet ne faire n'ensaier*.
- 30-31 On the topic of the tardiness in helping the Holy Land see the note to the refrain of RS 886 by Maistre Renaut (*Jerusalem plaint et ploure / lou secors, ke trop demoure*). Here too Huon de Saint-Quentin attributes responsibility for the delay to the clergy.
- 33 After the evocation of Judas in v. 11, the author uses another emblematic figure of the traitor, drawing on material from the *Chanson de Roland*.
- 40-44 The exaltation of the advantages of the crusade in virtually commercial terms, also present in RS 1967, 31-38, probably originates from the metaphor of the wise merchant elaborated by Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistle* 363 (ed. Leclercq-Rochais, VIII), p. 315: *Habes nunc, fortis miles, habes, vir bellicose, ubi dimices absque periculo, ubi et vincere gloria, et mori lucrum. Si prudens mercator es, si conquisitor huius saeculi, magnas quasdam tibi nundinas indico, vide ne te praetereant*; see also the notes to vv. 37-40 of Conon de Béthune RS 1125. For paradise understood as reward see Conon de Béthune RS 1125, 14-16; Thibaut de Champagne RS 757, 27; RS 1729, 8-9.

## Text

Luca Barbieri, 2016.

## Mss.

(3). C 96r (anonymous), M 81b ( *Hues de saint quentin* ), T 42v ( *Hues de saint quentin* ); M's text is mutilated because of the removal of a vignette; the attribution appears in the initial table of the songbook.

## Versification and music

10ababbbaabba (MW 961,1); 4 *coblas doblas capcaudadas* ; rhyme a: *-is* , *-on* ; rhyme b: *-ent* , *-ier* ; the metrical shape is a *unicum* in Old French lyric and there are no examples in troubadour lyric; paronymous rhymes in vv. 3-22 ( *amis-pramis* ), 14-18-19 ( *souspris-pris-repris* , also derivative), 25-41-44 ( *pardon-guerredon-don* ); *ment* in v. 20 constitutes a paronymous rhyme with numerous forms of the rich rhyme *-ment* in the first two stanzas (vv. 2, 5, 6, 9, 16, 17); lyric caesura in vv. 17, 28 and 42; feminine caesura with elision in v. 10; melody in MT, with the melodic scheme ABAB CDEFGHI (T 911).

## Previous editions


Jubinal 1838, 37; Michel 1839, 52; Buchon 1840, I, 425; Leroux de Lincy 1841-1842, I, 122; Wackernagel 1846, 34; Paris 1890a, 294; Bédier-Aubry 1909, 145; Serper 1983, 82; Guida 1992, 98; Dijkstra 1995a, 202.

## Analysis of the manuscript tradition

The absence of v. 26 unites the three witnesses and represents an archetype error; the absence of v. 19 unites mss. MT in error against C. MT's text is, as is often the case, generally better and is therefore used as base. Because of material gaps in M's text the more northern graphy of ms. T is followed, which probably respects the author's more closely. The main northern features are: *u* for *ou* (vv. 2, 6, 29), *cascun(s)* (vv. 5, 13, 22, 41), *liu* v. 6, *faura* v. 11, *Diu(s)* (vv. 20 and 22), *ara* v. 43; on the morphological level see *le* for *la* in vv. 9-10. T's reading is rejected each time it is opposed to the joint reading of C and M (v. 2 *doucement* , v. 4 *son cors* , v. 31 *qui* , v. 35 *k'il* and *vai a* ). In the absence of M, C's reading has been preferred in v. 14, where T presents an improbable syntactic alternative ( *mais que* ). Finally I complete v. 19 according to C's reading, the only manuscript to transmit it, and in v. 21 ( *recolu* ) correct the graphy of T, which often confuses *c* and *t* in conformity with the northern "scripta".

## Historical context and dating

Little or nothing is known of the life of Huon de Saint-Quentin. According to Guida, Huon is thought to have been born in the last decades of the XIIth c. in Picardy and to have belonged to a family of the petty bourgeoisie of which there is no documentary trace (Guida 1992, p. 96). The only chronological indications come from the *Complainte de Jérusalem contre Rome* (ed. Serper 1983, p. 87), whose attribution to Huon de Saint-Quentin was demonstrated by Paris 1890a. Between the *Complainte* and song RS 1576 there are many affinities and analogies which show that the two texts refer to the same events. However, it is only in the *Complainte* that we find explicit allusions to the loss of Damietta (8 September 1221), the Albigensian Crusade, John of Brienne and the pontifical legate Pelagius, which place this text in the context of the events of the Fifth Crusade. *Pace* Serper and Guida, there is no evidence that Huon participated directly in the expedition (Dijkstra 1995a, p. 112). Because of the reference to the prisoners (v. 36), the composition of the song has usually been dated to the months following the fall of Damietta, when in Europe the hostages' fate must have still been unknown



(September-November 1221). However, the absence of any reference to the loss of Damietta, the mention of key places in the Holy Land (v. 21) and the hortatory tone suggest instead the initial phase of the crusade, at the time of the reverses suffered by the Christians in Palestine (November-December 1217), before the arrival of the new contingents and the beginning of the campaign in Egypt. Moreover concern for the fate of captive Christians in the East was not confined to particular times such as those following the loss of Damietta. Yvonne Friedman has described how the foundation of the Trinitarian Order in 1198, and the subsequent establishment of other redemptionist orders, marked a turning-point in the ransom of prisoners, which proved an ongoing preoccupation. If there is much greater evidence of their activities in Reconquista Spain than in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem - a phenomenon which has puzzled historians -, in the East the older, powerful and established military orders appear to some extent to have taken on a redemptionist rôle (see Friedman 2002, pp. 187-211).