



## **L'autrier gaitay une nuit jusque(s) au jour**

**(RS 1990a)**

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**Published by: French Department, University of Warwick, 2014**

**Digital Edition:**

**<https://warwick.ac.uk/crusadelyrics/texts/of/1990a>**

## Philippe de Novare

*Une nuit avint que Phelippe de Nevaire ala oveques  
messire Anceau au gait; si entreoï paroles de ceaus  
qui estoient en une petite tour depecie, qui estoit  
demoree au dit chasteau, et sans tout ce savoit il  
leur covine. Tantost fist il une chanson qui dit ensy:*

I

L'autrier gaitay une nuit jusque(s) au jour,  
bien prés des murs, tout soul, sans autre gent.  
S'oï pleindre là sus en une tour  
4 les Candariens, qui sont mat et dolent.  
Bacet dist l'un a l'autre compaignon:  
«Aylas! fait il, Seignors, las, que feron?  
Traï nous a Renart, que Deu maudie  
8 et la fauce chartre de la Castrie  
que saens vint ains l'aube.»

II

Lors respondy uns autres: «Grant doulor  
et grant peine souffrom, et grans tormens:  
12 la nuit veiller, matin estre au labour,  
poy a manger, et povres vestimens;  
a la periere esteut que nous tirons;  
tous les ennuis et tous les maus avons.  
16 Se longuement devons avoir tel vie,  
je pry la mort qu'anuit tous nous ocie,  
avant que veigne l'aube!»

III

Aprés dist .i.: «En lermes et en plours  
20 seront pour nous et amis et parens;  
tous y morons, car leur trabucheur  
nous fait nos fours (saens) trabucher si dedens,  
murs et petreaus et creneaus et maisons.  
24 S'on nous assaut, coment nous defendrons?  
Car nostre gent est d'armes desgarnie.  
Li mur ne nous garentiroit or mie:  
fuions nous ent ains l'aube!».

*One night it happened that Philippe de Novare  
accompanied Sir Ansel on the watch and then  
overheard the words of some men who were  
standing in a small ruined tower, which had  
remained in place in the said castle, but even  
without this he knew what was their state of mind.  
At once he composed a song that goes like this:*

I

The other day I was on the night watch until  
daybreak very close to the wall, alone, without  
company. I heard the men in Kantara, who are sad  
and sorrowful, lamenting high up there in a tower.  
One companion whispered to the other: 'Alas, Sir!'  
he said, 'whatever shall we do? Renard has  
betrayed us, God curse him, along with the false  
letter sent from Castrie which is arriving here  
before dawn!».

II

Another man then responded: 'We are suffering  
great grief and great pain, and great torments:  
watching at night, toiling during the day, with little  
food and poor garments; we have to pull on the  
petrary; we have all the discomforts, and all the  
sufferings. If we have to lead this life for much  
longer I pray death will kill us all this very night,  
before the dawn arrives.'

III

And then one said, 'Friends and kin will be weeping  
and in tears for us: all of us will die here, for their  
trebuchet makes our ovens collapse right here  
inside, our walls and ramparts, crenellations and  
houses. If we are attacked, how shall we defend  
ourselves? For our people are unequipped with  
armour. The walls would not be able to save us  
now: let us flee before dawn!

## IV

- <sup>28</sup> «Abatu est le molin et le four;  
d'atendre plus ne seroit pas grans sens.  
Traï nous ont les baus de Deudamor,  
et ont menti vers nous leur sairement.  
<sup>32</sup> Toly nous ont le roy en traïson,  
et covenant fu que nous l'avriom.  
Puis nous firent combatre a Nicossie,  
pour eaus sauver et nous tolir la vie.  
<sup>36</sup> Ja ne voient il l'aube!».

## V

- «Trop nous tarde le secors de Pascor;  
fait est de nous, si com je cuit et pens.  
Mal veïmes onques l'empereor;  
<sup>40</sup> merci crier nous covendra par tens.»  
«Voire – dist il – se nous la trovions;  
mais je cuit bien que nous y faudrions;  
por ce vaut meaus le fuÿr en Turquie.  
<sup>44</sup> Mais cil de hors gaitent par establie  
toute nuit jusqu'a l'aube».

## VI

- Quant Gauvain vit sa gent en tel error,  
mout li chanja son cuer et son porpens.  
<sup>48</sup> En souspirant leur a dit: «Beau seignors,  
ne puis trover .j. message saens  
quy ose aler là ou nous vodrions.  
[ . . . . . ]  
<sup>52</sup> Encor est tel, en Chipre ou en Surie,  
quin pesera se nous perdions la vie?».  
Et a tant parut l'aube.

## IV

The mill and the oven are already ruined; it would not make much sense to wait for longer. The bailiffs of Dieudamour have betrayed us, and have broken their oath to us. They have treacherously robbed us of the king, and it was promised that we should have him. Then they made us fight at Nicosia to save them and to rob us of our life. May they never see the dawn!

## V

Too late for us the Easter rescue: we are done for, as I believe and think! It was a disaster ever to set eyes on the emperor: soon we shall have to beg for mercy.' 'Indeed, said the other, if we were to find it, but I really think we shall not have it; therefore it is better to flee to Turkey. But those outside are keeping careful watch all night until dawn.'

## VI

When Gauvain saw his men in such confusion, his heart and thinking greatly changed. Sighing he said to them, 'My lords, I cannot find a messenger in here who dares to go where we would like. [ . . . . . ] Is there anyone still in Cyprus or in Syria who will grieve if we lose our life?' And then the dawn appeared.

## VII

Quant ensi ois leur plainte et leur clamour,  
56 si me revins au gait de nos sergens,  
et le contai a joie et baudour  
qu'en la Candare avoit duel et contens.  
Si me pria .j. de nos compaignons  
60 [. . . . .]  
Et je fis tel, la plainte fu oye.  
Quant elle fu parfaite et acomplye,  
par tout esclarsi l'aube.

## VII

When I thus heard their lament and their wailing, I  
returned to our sergeants' watch, and reported  
with joy and happiness that in Kantara there was  
sorrow and discord. One of my companions in arms  
begged me [. . . . .] And I did so in  
such a way that the lament was heard. When it was  
finished and completed dawn broke everywhere.

## Notes

Philippe de Novare continues to explore various literary forms, this time imitating the *alba*, a typical Occitan lyric sub-genre. Rossebastiano 1979 notes some elements in the text typical of this genre: the verse form, the use of the rhyme-word *aube*, the direct speech of the protagonists expressing their lament. However there is no sign of the fundamental theme of lovers obliged to part at the break of day. Rossebastiano (p. 423) rejects any parodic interpretation of the composition, but as elsewhere there are some examples here of parodic or at least satirical inversion of some characteristic features of the genre. The *gaita* (or watchman) of the Occitan *alba*, who normally warns the lovers of the coming dawn, is here not inside but outside the walls, and coincides with the author of the text ( *gaitay*, v. 1), who has every interest in not revealing his presence to those besieged in the castle. In addition, the speakers of the dialogue are not looking forward impatiently to the arrival of the day, as happens in the religious *alba* and in the medieval Latin examples of “military *alba*”, but – in conformity with the tradition of the love *alba* – fear its coming which coincides with the renewal of hostilities (Rossebastiano 1974, p. 421; Melani 1994, p. 49).

- 1 The final *s* of *jusques* in the ms. renders the line hypermetric since it prevents elision, but it is possible that at this time the *s* was no longer sounded and therefore no longer counted, yet remained as a feature of the spelling.
- 4 The Candariens are those who have taken refuge in the castle of La Candare (Kantara), one of the rock fortresses besieged by the Ibelins. The correction of ms. *candariers* is paleographically simple.
- 7-8 As usual Renart is the pseudonym attributed to Aimery Barlais. The author stresses on several occasions the treachery committed by the bailiffs (*Verse Letter* vv. 21-22; RS 184a vv. 21, 41, 48; RS 190a vv. 9-10 and 14), but no chronicle mentions this false letter from La Castrie and it is impossible to determine whether this concerns a real episode or a literary invention.
- 21-22 These lines refer to the episode recounted in § 52, 5, which attributes to Ansel of Brie’s initiative the construction of a huge trebuchet to attack Kantara (a description of the trebuchet can be found in Melani 1994, p. 289 n. 243). In § 55, 3 it is said that the trebuchet caused the almost total collapse of the fortress wall.
- 30 The bailiffs who have taken refuge in Dieudamour are Aimery Barlais, Amaury of Bethsan and Hugh of Gibelet.
- 32-33 Henry of Cyprus, born in 1218 and therefore only about eleven years old at this time, was still in the custody of the five bailiffs; his transfer to Dieudamour is mentioned in § 49, 27-29. There is no confirmation of the agreement anticipating his move to Kantara, but it probably concerns the same document mentioned in v. 8.
- 34-35 This reference to the conduct of the bailiffs, who did not hesitate to sacrifice their own men to save themselves, seems to confirm my interpretation of vv. 15-16 of song RS 190a. The coercion inflicted by the bailiffs on soldiers and civilians is signalled in § 49, 2, while the bailiffs’ flight is reported in § 49, 14.
- 37 The allusion to Easter confirms that the siege of the castles lasted beyond 7 April 1230, as already been stated.
- 46 This evidently refers to Gauvain of Chenichy, the only bailiff who fled to Kantara.

## Text

Luca Barbieri, 2014.



## Mss.

(2) Turin, Biblioteca Reale, Varia 433, f. 39v-40r (47v-48r); Paris, BnF, n.a. fr. 6680 (modern copy of the Turin ms. made by Carlo Perrin and checked by Gaston Raynaud against the original), f. 47v-48r. The graphy and readings of the Turin ms. are followed, apart from the correction of hypermetric lines (vv. 1, 22, 53) and a few minor scribal slips (vv. 4, 21, 53); the translation is that of Melani 1994 with a few modifications.

## Versification and music

10ababccd'd'6x' (MW 1229,2 = Frank 389); 7 *coblas unissonans* ; rhyme a = -o(u)r(s) ; rhyme b = -ent/ens ; rhyme c = -on(s) ; rhyme d = -ie ; rhyme x = refrain-rhyme-word *aube* ; identical rhyme *vie* in vv. 16, 35 and 53. A c rhyme is missing in stanzas vi and vii.

## Previous editions

Raynaud 1887, 65; Paris - Mas Latrie 1906, 693; Kohler 1913, 40; Rossebastiano 1979, 418; Melani 1994, 128.

## Analysis of the manuscript tradition

I follow the graphy and readings of the Turin ms., just correcting hypermetric lines (vv. 1, 22, 53) and a few minor scribal slips (vv. 4, 21, 53); the translation is that of Melani 1994 with a few modifications.

## Historical context and dating

After their victory against the imperial army at Nicosia on 14 July 1229, the Ibelins' men besieged the castles in which the five bailiffs had taken refuge; Philippe de Novare took active part in the siege of the castle of Dieudamour (see the historical introductions to the Verse Letter and the songs RS 183a and RS 190a. Philippe's chronicle twice (§§ 52, 5 and 53, 6) mentions that during the siege of the castles John of Ibelin also went to Kantara to check the development of operations. Philippe must have followed him, because outside Kantara, situated in the north-east part of the island, when he was accompanying Ansel of Brie during a nocturnal watch, he claims to have heard the dialogue between the besieged men which gave rise to the composition of the "alba". This would have been composed during the period of the siege just after the short song RS 190a, so also between the second half of July 1229 and May-June 1230.