



## **Li douz pensers et li douz sovenir**

**(RS 1469)**

Author:	<b>Thibaut de Champagne</b>
Version:	<b>English</b>
Principal Investigator:	<b>Linda Paterson</b>
Text Editor:	<b>Luca Barbieri</b>
English Translation:	<b>Linda Paterson</b>
Reviewer:	<b>Luca Barbieri</b>
Text Encoding:	<b>Steve Ranford/Mike Paterson</b>

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

**Digital Edition:**

**<https://warwick.ac.uk/crusadelyrics/texts/of/1469>**

## Thibaut de Champagne

I

Li douz pensers et li douz sovenir  
m'i font mon cuer esprendre de chanter  
et fine amor, qui ne m'i lait durer,  
4 qui fait les suens de joie maintenir  
et met es cuers la douce remembrance;  
por c'est amors de trop haute poissance,  
qui en esmai fait home resjoir  
8 ne pour doloir ne lait de li partir.

II

Sens et honor ne puet nuns maintenir  
s'il n'a en soi sentu les maux d'amer,  
n'en grant valor ne puet por riens monter,  
12 n'onques encor nel vit nuns avenir;  
por ce vos pri, d'amors douce senblance,  
c'on ne s'en doit partir por esmaiance,  
ne ja de moi nel verrez avenir,  
16 que tout parfaiz vuil en amors morir.

III

Dame, se je vos osasse proier  
mout me seroit ce cuit bien avenu,  
mais il n'a pas en moi tant de vertu  
20 que, devant vos, vos os bien avisier;  
ice me font et m'ocit et m'esmaie:  
vostre beauté fet a mon cuer tel plaie  
que de mes eulz seul ne me puis aidier  
24 dou resgarder, dont je ai desirrier.

IV

Quant me covient, dame, de vos loignier  
onques certes plus dolanz hons ne fu,  
et Dex feroit, ce croi, por moi vertu  
28 se je jamés vos pooie aprochier,  
que touz les biens et toz les max que j'aie  
ai je par vos, douce dame veraie,  
ne ja sanz vos nuns ne me puet aidier:  
32 non fera il, qu'il n'i avroit mestier.

I

Sweet thoughts and sweet memories inflame my heart with the desire to sing, and [also] True Love, which leaves me no peace, which maintains its followers in joy and instils sweet remembrance in hearts; so Love is of most high power, as it makes a man rejoice in suffering and does not let him abandon it despite his pain.

II

No-one can preserve wisdom and honour without having felt within him the pains of love, nor can he in any way rise to great worth, nor has anyone yet seen this happen. So I beg you, sweet image of love, that downheartedness should not separate us; and that you will not see this come from me, since I wish to die entirely perfect in love.

III

Lady, if I had dared to beseech you I think I might have been most fortunate, but there is in me not sufficient courage that I dare to look at you directly. This reduces me to nothing, kills and terrorises me; your beauty inflicts such a wound in my heart that my eyes are not enough to assist me in looking at you as I desire.

IV

When I had to part from you, my lady, there was certainly not a more sorrowful man than I, and God would, I think, perform a miracle for me if I were ever able to approach you, for all the good and bad things I have, I have from you, sweet true lady, and no-one but you can assist me: they would not do so, since it would be useless.

V

Ses granz beautez, dont nuns hons n'a pooir  
qu'il en deïst la cinquantisme part,  
li dit plaisant, li amoreus regart  
<sup>36</sup> me font sovent resjoïr et doloir:  
joie en atent, que mes cuers a ce bee,  
et la paors rest dedanz moi entree;  
<sup>40</sup> ensi m'estuet morir par estovoir  
en grant esmai, en joie et en voloir.

VI

Dame, de cui est ma granz desirree,  
saluz vos mant d'outre la mer salee  
com a celi ou je pans main et soir,  
<sup>44</sup> n'autres pansers ne me fait joie avoir.

V

Her great beauty, a fiftieth of which no-one has the  
power to describe, her delightful words, her loving  
glances make me often rejoice and suffer: I expect  
joy from her, for my heart aspires to this, but fear  
takes hold of me once more, so I am perforce  
compelled to die in great distress (*or* from  
privation), in joy and in longing.

VI

Lady, for whom is my great desire, I send you  
greetings from over the salt sea, as to the one of  
whom I think day and night, and no other thought  
gives me joy.

## Notes

The song exploits themes favoured by Thibaut de Champagne and in many cases developed on the basis of texts by his illustrious predecessor Gace Brulé (on his relations with Gace see for example Grossel 1987): the necessity for amorous suffering, the power of Love which brings at the same time joy and suffering, the lover's timidity, and the value of memory and recollection which ennoble the heart. The allusions to parting and separation, however, give a new and more 'historical' tone to these themes. The author deliberately moves between *topoi* typical of the courtly love song, in particular those focussing on the lover's timidity, and themes characteristic of songs of separation, more grounded in reality, thus creating a hymn to true love, the memory of which overcomes distance and allows the experience of joy even in sorrow. The (chivalric?) virtues are also obtained thanks to amorous suffering. The timid lover lacks the courage to declare himself, but nonetheless the full pain of love remains and cannot even be alleviated by the contemplation of the beloved (who is far away). So the *covient* of v. 25 may refer to the imminence of farewell or, more probably, take on the sense of a past tense (as it already did in RS 273, 37) and the allusion to the eyes which do not in themselves enable the lover to see can refer back to the power of thought and recollection evoked at the end of the first stanza. The final stanza also seems to play on the interrelation between reality and memory, but the envoi brings the song back to the sphere of distance.

The first stanza in particular is dedicated to the lexical field of memory, typical of Thibaut de Champagne (see for example Dolly-Cormier 1978, Zaganelli 1982; the introduction of Brahney 1989, especially pp. xviii-xix; Grossel 1994).

- 9-10 *sens et honor*. Virtues acquired through self-mastery «dans une résolution de toutes les antithèses existentielles, afin d'atteindre ainsi le *raffinement*» (Grossel 1994, p. 436). But in the context of this song they might also designate chivalric virtues which, as in Chrétien de Troyes' romances, are won and increased through loyalty in love's service and also through the suffering that flows from it.
- 20 Bédier and Wallensköld accept the reading *araignier* only found in R<sup>3</sup> because of the difficulty of explaining the sense of *aviser*; but this verb is also attested in the sense of 'to look, contemplate, turn one's gaze towards'; moreover the scribe of R tends to intervene to smoothe out linguistic and syntactic difficulties. The graphy *avisier* of T, the only one to respect the rhyme, has a few late attestations among Guillaume de Machaut, Christine de Pizan and Eustache Deschamps, but is also found in the *Prose Tristan* (ed. Curtis, I, i, 92 and I, i, 118), apparently with the same sense of 'to look, observe, scrutinise' that it appears to have in the present passage.
- 29-32 The conjunction *que* must have causal force (Ménard § 232) and *il* does not designate God, but repeats generically the preceding *nuns* (Wallensköld 1925, p. 64).
- 39 The expression *par estovoir* indicates constriction, coercion ('per forza'), but could also have the more precise sense of deprivation and lack.
- 42 This line contains the only reference to crusading, as Wallensköld emphasises; he does not even consider this text to be a true crusading song.

## Text

Luca Barbieri, 2014.

## Mss.

(9) K 21b-22b ( *li rois de Navarre* ), M<sup>t</sup> 64d-65a (anon.), O 70ac (anon.), R<sup>1</sup> 29v-30v ( *Monios* ), R<sup>3</sup> 79rv (anon.), T 8v-9r (anon., but *li rois de Navare* ), V 10c-11a (anon.), X 21d-22b ( *li rois de Navarre* ), a 5rv ( *li rois de Navare* ). All mss. insert this song into a corpus of texts attributed to Thibaut de Champagne, with the sole exception of R<sup>1</sup>, whose attribution cannot be considered reliable.

## Versification and music

10abbac'c'aa (MW 1410, 2 = Frank 549); the original model is the crusade song *S'onques nuns hons por dure departie* of Hugues de Berzé (RS 1126), of which however only the 'a' rhyme is feminine; 5 *coblas doblas* (2+2+1) with a 4-line *envoi* di (c'c'aa); a = -ir, -ier, -oir; b = -er, -u, -art; c = -ance; -aie; -ee; the identical rhyme-word *maintenir* in vv. 4 and 9 (but the two occurrences may have different nuances), *avenir* in vv. 12 and 15, *vertu* in vv. 19 and 27 *aidier* in vv. 23 and 31; lyric caesura in v. 26 and perhaps v. 17; melody in M<sup>t</sup> KVXR<sup>1</sup> R<sup>3</sup>, with M<sup>t</sup> KVX attesting the same melodic line and R<sup>1</sup> offering a variant of this; the melody of R<sup>3</sup> on the other hand is entirely independent (van der Werf 1979, II, p. 204; Tischler 1997, IX n° 835).

## Previous editions

La Ravallière 1742, II 139; Auguis 1824, II 9; Tarbé 1850, 40; Bartsch 1908, 187; Bédier-Aubry 1909, 199; Wallensköld 1925, 61; Brahney 1989, 76.

## Analysis of the manuscript tradition

The omission of v. 40 shows the usual grouping of mss. KOVX; the version of ms. R<sup>3</sup>, which lacks stanza V and the envoi, is fairly independent, but is basically linked to KOVX; mss. M<sup>t</sup> T as usual constitute the second branch of the tradition of Thibaut's *Liederbuch*; R<sup>1</sup> a, while sharing some readings with M<sup>t</sup> T (vv. 12 and 22), seem to draw on a different tradition predating the compilation of the *Liederbuch*, and it will be appropriate to accept their readings where the variants are indifferent, especially when they are also supported by T. Graphies have been taken from ms. O. The fact that the majority of the mss. present some irregular rhymes (especially in vv. 1 and 20) and some doubtful readings (vv. 25 and 33) convinced Bédier of the existence of a corrupt archetype, but in reality none of these cases seems conclusive.

## Historical context and dating

From the envoi it appears that the author is overseas; if this allusion is considered realistic and if it covers the whole text, essentially a song of separation, it must have been composed at the time of the 'Barons' crusade' in which Thibaut de Champagne took part, between September 1239 and the same month of 1240.