



Hai las! Je cuidoie avoir laisé en France

(RS 227b)

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Anonymous

I

Hai las! Je cuidoie avoir laissé en France
les maus d'amors e les dangiers morteus
4 q'eo hai sofert si loⁿgement tot seus,
mais je ne puis sofrir ma mescheance
c'or *m'en* trove a majors en Romenie
qi m'ont repris e mis en tel prison
dont li çartiers est plus fort d'un lion.

II

8 Char li lions, qi envers lui s'umilie,
ne li deigne feire riens si bien non.
Deus, qel exanple e qel recordoison
a ceus qi ont sor autrui segnorie!
12 Dame or aiez del lion remembrance
qi aus felons est fels e otrageus
et aus humels de bon aire e piteus.

III

Par Dieu, Amors, s'a ma dame n'oblie
16 le grant orgoil doⁿt elle ha tel foison,
a paine puis venir a garison!
Mais une riens me conforte et afie:
qe son cler vis e sa simple semblance
20 e si bel oil riant et amoreus
ne jugent pas qe li cuer soit crueus.

I

Alas! I thought to have left behind in France the
pains of love and the mortal dangers I have so long
suffered alone, but I cannot bear my ill luck, for
now I find myself even more ill-starred in the East
because they have seized hold of me once more and
put me in a prison whose gaoler is fiercer than a
lion.

II

For the lion deigns to do nothing but good to the
one who humbles himself before it. My God, what
an example and what a warning to those who have
power over others! Lady, now remember the lion
who is cruel and overbearing to the wicked but
kind and compassionate to the humble.

III

In God's name, Love, if my lady does not forget the
great pride which she has in such abundance, it
will be hard to me to attain salvation! But one thing
comforts and encourages me: that her bright face
and her candour and her beautiful, laughing, loving
eyes do not indicate that her heart is cruel.

Notes

- 3 *q'eo hai*: the form of the personal pronoun and the latinate graphy with *h* of *hai*, together with the conjunction *e* of v. 2, indicate the Franco-Venetian graphical-phonetic habits of the Italian scribe. The same can be said of *çartiers* v. 7, *char* v. 8 and *ha* v. 16.
- 5 *Romenie*: the ms. reading is unclear. I follow Roques' suggestion (1928, p. 514: «l'on doit lire au v. 5 *C'or m'ont trové Amors en Romenie*»). This generic geographical indication is found at the rhyme in another two crusade songs datable to the second third of the 13th c.: *Un serventés, plait de deduit et de joie* (Anon. (?), RS 1729, v. 33) and *Se j'ai lonc tans esté en Romenie* (Raoul de Soissons, RS 1204). On the broader sense to be ascribed to *Romenie*, which no longer indicates just the Latin empire of Constantinople but probably refers to all the Latin possessions in the East or even an important place of pilgrimage beyond the Alps unconnected with the geographical expression, compare Barbieri, introduction to RS 1204 and note to v. 1.
- m'en*: the preservation of the ms. reading *mo(n)t*, probably anticipating the following line, would need *trové* to be considered as a past participle rather than the first person present indicative, producing an extra syllable.
- 9 *feire*: a graphical-phonetic feature of the north-east, cf. Pope 1956, § 232 and § 1321.iv.
- 10 *exanple*: forms in *-an-* (cfr. v. 20 *riant*) can be understood as phonetic graphies adopted by the Italian scribe. The same can be said of the prenasal diphthong *-ain-* in 17 *paine*.
- 12 *lion ... qi aus felons est fels e otrageus et aus humels de bon aire e piteus*: the image of the lion strong towards the arrogant and clement towards the humble (see also vv. 7 and 8) is not otherwise found in the lyric tradition. Roques detects an admittedly faint hint of Oriental origin in a story from the Thousand and One Nights (Roques 1928, 514).
- 99 In the present case a further suggestion may be possible, offered by the *Vita S. Hugonis* of Gilo Parisiensis clericus, who also wrote the *Historia gestorum viae nostri temporis Ierosolymitanae*, on the first crusading expedition. The biography, composed between 1109 (Ugo's death) and c.1142 (Gilo's death), reports a description of Ugo on the part of the Cluniac monk Hildebrand, the future pope Gregory VII, in which is found the same echo of Virgil (*Parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*, *Aeneid* VI, 853) present in RS 227b: «Hinc Papa factus, blandum tyrannum eum vocitare solebat; cum saevis leonem, mitibus agnum se exhibuerat, haud ignarum parcere subiectis et castigare superbos» (cf. *Vita S. Hugonis abbatis cluniacensis*, 663-665: 663. Cf. also *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* 4015 and *PL* 159, 909-918). The same image is also recalled in the epitaph composed on the death of Richard the Lionheart referred to in the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris, II, 452: «A Chaluz cecidit rex regni cardo Ricardus, / His ferus, his humilis; his agnus, his leopardus».
- 16 *foison*: the feminine noun is also attested in the *Enanchet* 22.58 according to ms. Za's reading (ed. Morlino 2009).

Text

Anna Radaelli, 2014.

Mss.

(1) Za 139r-v (anonymous)

Versification and music

10a'bba'c'dd (MW 1439,1 = Frank 621); 3 *coblas doblas* (II and III) of 7 lines; rhyme a = - *ance* , - *ie* ; rhyme b = - *eus* , - *on* ; rhyme c = - *ie* , *ance* ; rhyme d = - *on* , *eus* ; crossed rhymes, *capfinida* I-II, *unicum* . The song has very probably lost its beginning, even though there is no blank space left in the manuscript for the possible addition of stanzas (see also Roques 1928, p. 513).

Previous editions

Roques 1928, 513-515 (dipl.).

Analysis of the manuscript tradition

The songbook Za is contained in the final quaternion of ms. Zagreb, Bibl. Métropolitaine MR 92 (folios 137r-144v), a small parchment codex, miscellaneous and composite, produced in the Veneto between the end of the 13th c. and the early 14th c. Its material features have led Lucilla Spetia to see it as «un codice adibito ad uso privato [...] nel quale sono confluiti per volontà di un singolo - amatore e forse anche committente - e in un arco di tempo non molto ampio, libretti di contenuto vario, la cui eterogeneità ben corrisponde agli interessi culturali dell'ambiente borghese, nel quale la silloge si è andata verosimilmente costituendo» (Spetia 1994 pp. 241 and 243; see also Brugnolo - Peron 1999, p. 552). The song is transmitted without attribution, as all the lyric texts of the songbook, and is included in four anonymous songs out of 25 compositions in the collection. Despite being an *unicum* , its presence in the sequence of texts common to Za and H has led Spetia to supposed that it was present in the original model of Za (Spetia 1994 e 1997, 109-110).

Historical context and dating

This is an unusual crusade song. It is not exactly a *chanson de départie*, since the poet declares that he is actually far from France; it could be defined as a song of courtly love from Outremer. The text offers no other element that could establish context and date, but, since the little collection of ms. Za can be placed between the end of the 12th and middle of the 13th centuries (the *terminus ante quem* being taken as 1253, the year of the death of Thibaut de Champagne of whom six songs are transcribed in it), it would seem justifiable to ascribe this song to the same chronological timeframe.