



Li departirs de la douce contree

(RS 499)

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Published by: French Department, University of Warwick, 2014

Digital Edition: <https://warwick.ac.uk/crusadelyrics/texts/of/499>

Chardon de Croisilles

I

Li departirs de la douce contree
ou la bele est m'a mis en grant tristor;
lessier m'estuet la riens qu'ai plus amee
4 por Damledieu servir, mon criator,
et neporquant tot remaing a Amor,
car tot li lez mon cuer et ma pensee:
8 se mes cors va servir Nostre Seignor
por ce n'ai pas fine amor oubliee.

II

Amors, ci a trop dure deseuvre
quant il m'estuet partir de la meillor
qui onques fust ne qui jamés soit nee;
12 tote a en li et biauté et valor,
nus ne s'en doit merveillier se j'en plor;
quant mes cors va fere sa destinee,
et mes fins cuers s'est ja mis el retor,
16 qui sanz fauser pense a ma dame et bee.

III

Dame, en qui est et ma mort et ma vie,
dolens me part de vos plus que ne di;
mon cuer avez pieça en vo baillie:
20 retenez le, ou vos m'avez traï.
Dex, ou irai? ferai je noise ou cri,
quant il m'estuet fere la departie
de mon fin cuer et lessier a celi
24 24 qui ainc du sien ne me lessa partie?

IV

Cil faus amant par droit Amors mercie
des biens q'il a, més je fail a merci;
en losengier et en fauser s'afie,
28 més je du tout en biau servir m'afi;
ma loiauté me tout, jel sai de fi,
la joie q'ai par reson deservie;
moult me poise que je onques la vi,
32 quant fine amor por li si me defie.

I

Departure from the sweet land where lives my
beauteous one has put me into great sadness; I am
constrained to leave the one I have loved the most
in order to serve the Lord God my creator, and yet I
belong completely to Love, since I leave it all my
heart and my thoughts: if my body goes to serve
Our Lord, I have not forgotten true love on this
account.

II

Love, this is too hard a parting, when I am forced
to leave the best lady who ever existed or who was
ever born; in her is all beauty and worth, and none
should marvel if I weep at this; when my body goes
to fulfil its destiny, see how my noble heart has
already begun its return journey, musing and
longing after my lady.

III

Lady, in whom is my death and my life, I depart
from you more grief-stricken than I say; henceforth
you have my heart in your power: keep it, or you
have betrayed me. God, where shall I go? Shall I
utter loud laments or cries when I am constrained
to divide myself from my noble heart and leave it
with the one who has never left me part of hers?

IV

Love justly thanks the false lover for the profit it
receives from him, but I obtain no pity; it trusts the
flatterer and the fraud, but I trust entirely to noble
service; my loyalty, I know this well, deprives me of
the joy which I have rightly deserved; it greatly
grieves me that I ever set eyes on her, when on her
account true love so defies me.

V

Douce dame, qui mes cuers pas n'oublie,
ne me vueilliez, por Dieu, metre en oubli!
Jamés nul jor ne ferai autre amie;
³⁶ pour Dieu vos pri, ne faites autre ami!
Més se je sai que vos gabez de mi,
ma mort n'ert pas entiere més demie;
ne ja de moi ne ferez anemi,
⁴⁰ se loiauté ne m'i est anemie.

VI

Au departir, douce dame, vos pri
que ja por riens que losengiers vos die
ne m'oubliez, et je tot autresi
⁴⁴ jamés vers vos ne ferai vilanie.

V

Sweet lady, whom my heart does not forget, for
God's sake please do not forget me! Never will I
ever seek another love; for God's sake, I beseech
you, do not seek another lover! But if I learn that
you are mocking me, I shall not die entirely, but
only half; however you will not make an enemy of
me if loyalty is not my enemy.

VI

At the moment of departure, sweet lady, I beg you,
whatever a flatterer may say to you, do not forget
me, and towards you I in turn will never behave
basely.

Notes

The text is a classic example of a *chanson de départie* and is formally elegant but entirely based on quotations drawn from the best examples of the genre, in particular RS 1125 (Conon de Béthune), RS 679 (Châtelain de Couci), RS 1126 (Hugues de Berzé), RS 795 (Gautier de Dargies) and RS 757 (Thibaut de Champagne). The dependence on models is also shown clearly by the imitation of the metrical shape from Conon's song, and the incipit which repeats in almost identical form v. 2 of Thibaut's RS 757.

- 3 The use of the verb *estuet* (see also vv. 10 and 22), which highlights the opposition between the unavoidable duty of participating in the crusade and the poet's desire, is typical of the Châtelain de Couci's crusade songs.
- 4 This line and v. 7, which point to the obligation of serving God, contain the only elements which allow us to link this song of departure to crusading.
- 15 The conjunction *et* here has a recapitulatory function, serving to highlight the main clause: see Ménard, § 195.
- 33 The relative pronoun is in all probability an emphatic direct object (*cui*), often represented graphically as *qui* (see Jensen, §§ 433 and 435).
- 38 The sense of this expression is not very clear and Bédier, who *inter alia* adopts NT's variant *ne* for *més*, does not attempt to translate. Given the context the line may be associated with the idea of the death of the heart, which is found similarly expressed in Hugues de Berzé (RS 1126, 9-16): *Li reveoirs m'a mis en la folie, / dont je m'iere gardeis mainte saison, / d'aler a li; or ai quis' ochoison / dont je morai et se je vif, ma vie / vaudra bien mort, car cil qui ait apris / estre anvoisiés et chantans et jolis / a aseis pis, cant sa joie est faillie, / que s'il moroit tout a une foïe* and in the Châtelain de Couci (RS 679, 6-8): *et sachiez bien, Amours, seürement, / s'ainc nuls morut pour avoir cuer dolent, / donc n'iert par moi maiz meüs vers ne laiz.*

Text

Luca Barbieri, 2014.

Mss.

(5). K 253b (*chardon*), N 124b (*chardon de rains*), P 112b (*Chardons*), T 42r (*Robers de blois*), X 171ab (*chardon*).

Versification and music

10a'ba'bba'ba' (MW 902,9 = Frank 302); 5 *coblas doblas/ternas* (2+3) with a four-line *envoi* (ba'ba'); rhyme a = -ee , -ie ; rhyme b = -or , -i ; a very common metrical shape adopted by Conon de Béthune in his famous crusade song RS 1125 (whose first stanza uses the rhymes -ie and -or also found in Chardon's text) and imitated in other texts linked to the crusade such as Richard de Fournival's RS 1020a and Huon d'Oisi's RS 1030 (but only with m. rhymes).

Previous editions

Buchon 1840, 425; Tarbé 1850, 29; Paris 1855, 57; Suchier 1907, 144; Bédier-Aubry 1909, 209; Cremonesi 1955, 134; Toja 1974, 278; Dijkstra 1995a, 208.


Analysis of the manuscript tradition

The tradition is virtually unanimous and there are few, insignificant, variants. Only the omission of v. 36 unites in error KNPX against T, which in turn lacks stanza IV, recorded by the other mss. The envoi is preserved only in NP. The absence of significant variants and the lack of st. IV and the envoi in T prioritise the reading of one of the KNPX group. Among these the best choice is ms. P, traditionally more conservative and less inclined to normalisation than the rest of that family, as well as being the only one apart from N to transmit the complete text. The internal coherence of the small corpus of lyrics assigned to Chardon de Croisilles excludes T's sole attribution to Robert de Blois.

Historical context and dating

Chardon de Croisilles or de Reims (the attribution given in N for RS 499) may be a lord from Artois in the first half of the 13th c. (but there exists another Croisilles in Normandy, Calvados), the author of four love songs and two *jeux-partis*, with perhaps a third written in Occitan (see Radaelli 2007, pp. 236-240). There is no trace of him beyond his poetic production and there is therefore no historical certainty that he took part in a crusade. His texts were initially dated to the time of the Third Crusade because of the mention of Count Erard of Brienne who died in Acre in 1191, but were redated by Suchier in 1907, who found some acrostichs in them showing a link between Chardon and Thibaut de Champagne and his *entourage*. The Erard of Brienne mentioned in RS 397 (vv. 33-34) must therefore be the lord of Ramerupt who died in 1243 and the *Montroial* of v. 37 of the same song must be the fortress of Navarre where Thibaut stayed during part of 1237, while the empress of Constantinople mentioned in the song RS 1035 must be Mary, daughter of John of Brienne and wife of Baldwin of Courtenay who became emperor after the death of his father-in-law in 1237. In the *jeux-partis* Chardon names other people close to the King of Navarre, such as Count Henry of Bar, his brother-in-law Reynald III of Choiseul, and a certain Jean d'Archies who may be the otherwise unknown Gilles of Archies named in the *Continuation Rothelin* and taken prisoner in Gaza (*Cont. Roth.*, pp. 539 and 546; compare the form *Johan d'Arsur* in *Eracles*, p. 414). The acrostichs in RS 397 and RS 736 (*Marguerite* and *roïne*) indicate that the lady celebrated by Chardon is likely to be Margaret of Bourbon, wife of Thibaut de Champagne. In favour of Suchier's view that Chardon de Croisilles is the same person as Chardon de Reims is the link between the present text, a song of departure on crusade, and RS 1035, a song of separation which makes no explicit reference to crusading but addresses Mary of Brienne from Constantinople (vv. 36-37). Confirmation of Suchier's proposed dating lies in the presence in our text of numerous allusions to the works of Thibaut de Champagne, in particular to song RS 757. Given the poet's indications of his imminent departure on crusade (vv. 4 and 7), this song can only refer to the crusade of Thibaut de Champagne, and its composition must date from 1239, during the months preceding the crusaders' departure from Marseille.

Chardon de Croisilles o de Reims (attribuzione di RS 499 in N) sarebbe un signore artesiano della prima metà del XIII secolo (ma esiste un altro Croisilles in Normandia, Calvados), autore di quattro canzoni d'amore e di due *jeux-partis*, più forse un terzo scritto in lingua occitanica (si veda Radaelli 2007, pp. 236-240). Di lui non resta traccia al di fuori della sua produzione poetica e non vi è dunque alcuna certezza storica sul fatto che abbia partecipato a una crociata. I suoi testi, inizialmente riferiti al tempo della terza crociata a causa della menzione di Erardo di Brienne, identificato con il conte morto ad Acri nel 1191, sono stati ridatati da Suchier 1907, che vi ha reperito alcuni acrostici determinando così il legame di Chardon con Thibaut de Champagne e il suo *entourage*. Perciò l'Erardo di Brienne menzionato nella canzone RS 397 (vv. 33-34) sarà il signore di Ramerupt morto nel 1243 e il *Montroial* citato al v. 37 della stessa canzone sarà la fortezza di Navarra dove Thibaut soggiornò per qualche tempo nel 1237; l'imperatrice di Costantinopoli evocata nella canzone RS 1035 sarà invece Maria, figlia di Giovanni di Brienne e sposa di Baldovino di Courtenay, che diventerà imperatore dopo la morte del



suocero nel 1237. Nei *jeux-partis*, Chardon nomina altri personaggi vicini al re di Navarra, come il conte Enrico di Bar, suo cognato Rinaldo III di Choiseul e un certo Jean d'Archies che sarà forse da identificare con l'altrimenti ignoto Gilles d'Archies nominato nella *Continuation Rothelin* e fatto prigioniero a Gaza (*Cont. Roth.*, pp. 539 e 546; si veda la forma *Johan d'Arsur* in *Eracles* p. 414). Dagli acrostici inseriti nei testi RS 397 e RS 736 (*Marguerite* e *roïne*) si scopre che la dama cantata da Chardon sarebbe Margherita di Bourbon, sposa di Thibaut de Champagne. A favore dell'identità asserita da Suchier tra Chardon de Croisilles e Chardon de Reims parla il legame esistente tra il nostro testo RS 499, canzone di partenza per la crociata, e RS 1035, canzone di lontananza priva di riferimenti espliciti alla crociata, ma indirizzata a Maria di Brienne da Costantinopoli (vv. 36-37). Una conferma della datazione proposta da Suchier sta nella presenza nel nostro testo di numerosi riferimenti all'opera di Thibaut de Champagne, in particolare alla canzone RS 757. Visti gli accenni dell'autore alla sua prossima partenza per la crociata (vv. 4 e 7), questa canzone non può che riferirsi alla spedizione guidata da Thibaut de Champagne, e la sua composizione dovrà risalire al 1239, nei mesi precedenti la partenza dei crociati da Marsiglia.