



"Underneath my forehead I carry your beautiful image" | "Jus lo front port vostra bella semblança"

Text Information

Author | Jordi di Sant Jordi

Language | Catalan

Period | 15th Century

Genre | Canço

Source | Zaragoza, Biblioteca de la Universidad de Zaragoza, MS 210, fol. 98v-99r

Collection | Gender, Sex and Sensuality: Writings on Women, Men and Desire

URL | <http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/underneath-my-forehead-i-carry-your-beautiful-image>

Transcription, translation and introduction by Albert Lloret.

Introduction to the Text

This poem was composed ca. 1410-1424 by Valencian author Jordi de Sant Jordi, a son of a Muslim convert and valet of the chamber of king of the Crown of Aragon, Alfonso the Magnanimous (1396-1458). It is believed to have been dedicated to the widowed Queen Margarida de Prades (1387-1429). The poem is written in a Catalan with Occitan traits. It is in versos estramps, blank verses ending in unique, sonorous, words that are also known as rims fènix. Some of these rhyme words come from the famous sestina by Occitan troubadour Arnaut Daniel. Versos estramps in fact seem to be an evolution or an innovative version of the traditional sestina.

This love poem features a sustained and multifaceted praise of the lady with attention to both her physical and moral beauty as well as a declaration of the steadfast love of the lyric voice. A dense, object-oriented imagery pervades each stanza. The text is considered the most remarkable love song of the trobar ric tradition in medieval Catalan poetry.

Introduction to the Source

This poem is a unicum copied in Zaragoza, Biblioteca de la Universidad de Zaragoza, MS 210, fol. 98v-99r (the *Cançonier de Saragossa*). The manuscript has been digitized here. It contains a compilation of Catalan verse dating to 1461-1462. It is the oldest known manuscript to transmit Ausiàs March's poetry, and an important witness to the transmission of the poetry of several other authors, including Pere Torroella and Lleonard de Sors.

About this Edition

I have punctuated the text, regularized i/j, u/v, and segmented enclitics following modern conventions. I have only made two corrections to obvious copying errors, both accepted in modern editions: *jusmetets* (correcting **iustametz*) and *fonch* (correcting **fonchs*).

Further Reading

Martí de Riquer and Lola Badia, eds. *Les poesies de Jordi de Sant Jordi*. València: Tres i Quatre, 1984.

- *This is the canonical edition and commentary of Sant Jordi's works.*

Jordi de Sant Jordi. *Poesies*. Ed. Aniello Fratta. Barcelona: Barcino, 2005.

- *This edition makes important textual contributions and advances a debated Italianizing interpretation of Sant Jordi's poetry.*

Jaume Torró. "El cançonier de Saragossa." *Translatar i transferir: La transmissió dels textos i el saber* (1200-1500). Ed. Anna Alberni, Lola Badia i Lluís Cabré. Santa Coloma de Queralt: Obrador Edèndum, 2010. 379-415.

- *This is the most up-to-date study of the songbook containing Sant Jordi's poem.*

José María Micó. "Translating Medieval Catalan Poetry Today: Jordi de Sant Jordi and Ausiàs March." *Translation Review* 87 (2013): 18-29.

- *Reflections on translating Sant Jordi's poetry into Spanish.*

Arthur Terry. "Jordi de Sant Jordi and the Ethics of Chivalry." *Three Fifteenth-Century Valencian Poets*. London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, 2000. 24-38.

- *Short introduction to Sant Jordi's work in English. It contains a reading of the poem.*



Han Yu. "Memorial on the Bones of the Buddha | 論佛骨表". Trans. Geoff Humble. *Global Medieval Sourcebook*. 2021. sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/memorial_bones_buddha/.

Albert Lloret. "The Space in the Poem (Jordi de Sant Jordi, IX & XIV)." *Revealing New Perspectives: Hommages to Stephen G. Nichols from his Colleagues, Friends and Students*. Eds. Kevin Brownlee and Marina Brownlee. New York: Peter Lang, 2021.

- *Study of space in two poems by Sant Jordi.*



"Underneath my forehead I carry your beautiful image" | "Jus lo front port vostra bella semblança"

Jus lo front port vostra bella semblança,
de que mon cors nit e jorn fa gran festa;
que, remiran la molt bella figura,
de vostre ffaç m'es romassa l'empremta,
que ja per mort no se'n partra la forma,
ans, quant seray del tot fores d'est segle,
cels qui lo cors portaran al sepulcre,
sobre me faç, veuran lo vostre signe.

Si com l'infants quant mira lo retaula
e, contemplant la pintur-ab himatges,
ab son net cor, no lo'n poden gens partre
(tant ha plasser de l'aur qui ll'environa),
atressi-m pren devan l'amoros sercle
de vostre cors, que de tants bens s'anrama,
que, mentre-l vey, mas que Deu lo contemple;
tant hay de joy per amor qui-m penetre.

Aixi-m te pres e liatz en son carçre
amors ardents, com si-stes en hun coffre,
tancat jus claus, e tot mon cors fos dintre,
on no pusques mover per null encontre.
Car tant es grans l'amor que us ay, e ferme,
que lo meu cor no-s part punt per angoxa,
bella, de vos, ans es ·say ferm com torres
e sol amar a vos, blanxa colomba.

Bella sens par, ab la pressensa noble,
vostre bel cors bell fech Deu sobre totes,
gays e donos, lluu pus que fina pedre,
amoros, bels, plus penetrans que stella;
d'on, quan vos vey ab les autres en flota,
les jusmetets si com fay lo carvoncles,
que de virtuts les finas pedres passa:
vos etz sus ley com l'estors sus l'esmirle.

Underneath my forehead I carry your beautiful image,
That's why I celebrate you, night and day;
For, by looking at your beautiful figure,
A trace of your face has remained in me.
5 Its shape won't go away when I die,
Instead, when I will have entirely left this earthly life,
Those who will bring my body to the tomb
Will find your sign on my face.

Like the little kid who watches the altarpiece
10 And contemplates the painting and its images
With a pure heart, and doesn't want to separate from it
(So much does he enjoy the gold that surrounds it),
That's how I feel when I'm in front of the love circle
Of your figure, for it's embellished with so many qualities
15 That, while I'm watching it, I contemplate it better than God;
This love that penetrates me brings me so much joy.

That's how he has me, captive and tied up, in his jail,
This ardent Love, as if I were inside a chest,
Locked in, all of me inside,
20 Without a chance to break out.
So big is my love for you, and so steadfast,
That my heart won't move away, not one bit, out of anguish,
From you, beautiful one, but will rather be strong as a tower
And will only love you, white dove.

25 Unmatched beauty of noble presence,
God made your pretty body superior to any other,
Gay and gentle, brighter than a gemstone,
Loving, beautiful, more penetrating than a star;
For, when I spot you among other people,
30 You subdue them as does the carbuncle,
Which surpasses the qualities of any gemstone;
You are above them like the goshawk is above the merlin.



L'amor que us hay en totes les part[s] m'ascle
 quan non amech pus coralment nuls homens;
 tan fort·amor, com cesta que·l cor m'obre,
 ne fonch* jamays en nul cors d'hom ne arme.
 Mas suy torbats que no fonch Aristotills,
 d'amor, qui m'art e mos sinch senys desferme.
 Co·l monjos bos que no·s part de la setla,
 no·s part mon cors da vos, tant com dits d'ungle. 40

Ho, cors donos, net de frau e delicte,
 prenets de me pietats, bela dona,
 e no suffrats quez aman-vos peresca,
 pus qu·eu vos am may que nulls homs afferme,
 per que us suppley a vos, qu·etz le bells arbres 45
 de tots bos fruyts, hon valors grans pren s'ombre,
 que·m retenyats en vostra valent cambre,
 pus vostre suy e seray tant com visque.

Mos richs balays, cert, vos portats le timbre
 sus quantes son e·l mundenal registre,
 car tots jorns naix en vos cors, e revida,
 bondats, virtuts, mes qu·en Pantasilea.

My love for you is splintering every part of me
 For no one has ever loved so sincerely;
 35 Such a strong love, like this one that opens my heart,
 Has never been in anyone's body or soul.
 I am more upset than Aristotle ever was
 For love, which burns me and unleashes my five senses.
 Like the good monk who does not leave his cell,
 My heart does not move away from you, like the finger from the
 nail.

Oh, gentle lady, clean of deceit and offenses,
 Have pity on me, beautiful lady,
 And don't allow that I die by loving you,
 For I love you more than anyone could affirm;
 45 That is why I beg you—since you are the handsome tree
 Of all good fruits, where the high Worth rest on its shade—
 To keep me in your prized chamber,
 For I am yours, and so will I be for as long as I live.

My prized spinel, you certainly wear the crown
 50 Over all women in the worldly registry
 For every day are born in you, and revive,
 Goodness and virtue, more than they ever did in Penthesilea.

Critical Notes

Transcription

Line 30 Correcting *iustametz*.

Line 36 Correcting *fonchs*.