

Guilhem de Peitieu: a New English Translation of “Farai un vers, pos mi somelh”

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Brief Presentation

Guilhem de Peitieu, also known as Guilhelm d’Aquitania (1071-1127), is one of the first Occitan and most famous troubadours.² His texts have very well deserved the attention of scholars for decades and have been translated into English in some other occasions. However, in order to offer what I think is a more accurate new translation directly from the original Occitan text –not only in linguistic but also in cultural terms– of one of its most popular, and controversial compositions,³ especially if we think in gender terms, I thought it would be great to take advantage of the possibilities that new media, such as the internet, offer. Thanks to this, I hope this translation reaches a wider audience of both scholars and the public in general and helps young students –and their teachers– and scholars from around the world to get acquainted with a small piece of this exceptional troubadour and that new critical studies that come out from it.

Guilhem de Peitieu: “Farai un vers, pos mi somelh”

I

I Farai un vers, pos mi sonelh,
E-m vauc e m’estauc al solelh.
Donnas i a de mal conselh,
Et sai dir cals:

I

I’ll compose a verse, since I am weary,
yet continue forth, and stop again, under the
sun.
There are malevolent women,

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² See José Enrique Ruiz Doméneq, *La identitat de Guilhem de Peitieu* (Barcelona: Columna, 1999).

³ His texts can be read in *Les chansons de Guillaume IX, duc d’Aquitaine (1071-1127)*, ed. Alfred Jeanroy (Paris: H. Champion, 1913).

Cellas c'amor de cavalier tornon a
mals.

II

Donna no fai pechat mortal
Que ama cavalier leal;
Mas s'ama monge o clergal
Non es raizo:
Per dreg la deuri'hom cremar ab un
tezo.

III

En Alvernhe, part Lemozi,
M'en anei totz sols a tapi:
Trobei la moller d'En Guari
E d'En Bernart;
Saluderon mi sinplamentz per san
Launart

IV

La una-m diz en son latin:
"O, Deus vos salv, don pelerin;
Mout mi semblatz de belh aizin,
Mon escient;
Mas trop vezem anar pel mond de folla
gent.

V

Ar auzires qu'ai respondutz;
Anc no li diz ni ba ni butz,
Ni fer ni fust no ai mentagutz,
Mas sol aitan:
"Babariol, babariol, barbarian."

VI

So diz n'Agnes a n'Ermessen:
"Trobat avem que anam queren:
Sor, per amor Deu l'alberguem,
Que ben es mutz,
E ja per lui nostre conselh non er
saubutz."

VII

La una-m pres sotz son mantel
Et mes m'en la cambra, el fornèl:
Sapchatz qu'a mi fo bon e bel,

and I can tell you which ones:
those who take a knight's love amiss.

II

A woman commits no mortal sin
by loving a loyal knight.
But if she loves a monk or a priest
she does the unthinkable;
she should by rights be burned at the stake.

III

In Auvergne, past Limousin,
I wandered alone and under cover.
I met with the wife of Guarin
and of Bernard;
they greeted me pleasantly in the name of Saint
Leonard.

IV

One told me in her Latin:
"God save you, Sir Pilgrim!
You seem to be of noble stock,
by my account,
Although we see a lot of crazy fools in this
world.

V

Now heed my reply:
I said neither "aye" nor "nay,"
(nor did I mention iron or wood),
but merely: "Babariol, babariol, barbarian."

VI

Said Agnes to Ermesinda:
"We've found what we were looking for!
Sister, for the love of God, let's take him in,
for he is stone silent,
and though him none will come to know our
intentions."

VII

One of them took me under her robes
and led me into her chambers, close to the hearth.
Know that for me it was most lovely;

E-l foc fo bos,
Et eu calfei me volentiers als gros
carbos.

VIII

A manjar mi deron capos,
E sapchatz agui mais de dos,
Et no-i ac cog ni cogastros,
Mas sol nos tres;
E-l pans fo blancs e-l vins fo bos e-l
pebr'espes.

IX

“Sor, si aquest hom es ginhos
Ni laicha a parlar per nos,
Nos aportem nostre gat ros
De mantement,
Que-l fara parlar az estros, si de re-nz
ment.”

X

N'Agnes anet per l'enoios:
Et fo granz, et ag loncz guinhos:
Et eu, can lo vi entre nos,
Aig n'espavent,
Qu'a pauc no-n perdei la valor e
l'ardiment.

XI

Quant aguem begut e manjat,
Eu mi despoillei per lor grat;
Detras m'aporteron lo gat
Mal e felon:
La una-l tira del costat tro al tallon.

XII

Per la coa de mantenen
Tira-l gat, et el escoisen:
Plajas mi feron mais de cen
Aquella vetz
Mas eu no-m mogra ges enquers qi
m'ausizetz.

XIII

Pos diz N'Agnes a N'Ermessen:

the fire was hot,
and I warmed myself gratefully by those fat
embers.

VIII

To eat, they gave me fowl,
and know that there were more than two.
And there was neither cook nor scullery boy;
it was just the three of us,
and the bread was fine, the wine, good, and the
pepper, abundant.

IX

“Sister, if this man is playing dumb
and renounces speech for our sake,
let us bring in our red cat,
quickly now;
it will make him speak right up if he deceives
us at all.”

X

Agnes went to fetch the vexing beast,
and it was very large and had long whiskers.
As for me, when I first saw it,
I became so afraid
that I almost lost heart, and ardor.

XI

When we had drunk and eaten,
I stripped myself bare at their behest.
Behind me, they placed the cat,
nasty and traitorous,
and one of them dragged it from my rib cage
down to my heels.

XII

Abruptly then, she pulled the cat by the tail,
and it scratched me;
more than a hundred wounds they caused me
that time.
But I wouldn't have moved even had they
killed me.

XIII

Then Agnes said to Ermesinda:

“Mutz es, que ben es conoissen.
Sor, del banh nos apareillem
E del sojorn.”
.xli. jorn estei az aquel torn.

XIV

Tant las fotei com auziretz:
Cen e quatre vint et ueit vetz,
Q'a pauc no-i rompei mos corretz
E mos arnes;
E no-us pues dir los malaveg tan
gran m'en pres.

XV

Monet, tu m'iras al mati,
Mo vers porteras el borsi
Dreg a la molher d'en Guari
E d'en Bernat,
E diguas lor que per m'amor aucizo-l cat.

He's clearly dumb.
Sister, let's prepare ourselves for a bath,
and then bed.”
Eight days or more I spent in that inferno.

XIV

As you will hear, I fucked them hard,
one hundred and eighty-eight times,
and they nearly broke my bridle
and my harness;
I can't begin to tell you how ill I became.

XV

Monet, you will go in the morning,
bringing my verse with you in your bag.
Take it straight to the wives of Guarin
and Bernardo,
and tell them, for the love of all that is holy, to
kill that cat.

Works cited

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