



La *Cançon de la Crosada* (s. XIII) de Guillermo de Tudela. Traducción al inglés (II-LXV)

La *Cançó de la croada* (s. XIII) de Guillem de Tudela. Traducció anglesa (II-LXV)

A *Cançon de la Crosada* (s. XIII) de Guihem de Tudela. Tradução para o inglês (II-LXV)

The *Cançon de la Crosada* (13th century) by William of Tudela. An English Translation (II-LXV)

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Abstract: The *History of the Albigensian Crusade* is one of the most intriguing medieval Provençal texts. It represents the beginning of a persecuting society. We provide a translation.

Keywords: *History of the Albigensian Crusade* – Persecution – Inquisition.

Resumen: La *Cançon de la Crosada* es uno de los textos provenzales más interesantes. Representa el comienzo de lo que ha dado en denominarse mentalidad persecutoria. Aquí se ofrece una traducción al inglés del texto (tiradas I-LXV).

Palabras-clave: *Cançon de la Crosada* – Persecución – Inquisición.

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I. Breves notas sobre la *Cançon de la Crosada*

La *Cançon de la Crosada* (*Canso de crozada*, *Chanson de la croisade albigeoise*)² es un poema de gesta occitano compuesto por 9.582 versos alejandrinos, escrito entre 1212 y 1218. Narra los sucesos de la cruzada albigena entre marzo de 1208, cuando Inocencio III declara la cruzada, y junio de 1219, cuando el futuro rey Luis de Francia se apresta a asediar Tolosa. En ello forma grupo con las otras dos obras contemporáneas que nos relatan la cruzada: la *Historia Albigenensis* del cisterciense Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay, a favor de los albigenes y en parte con sus impresiones como testigo, y la *Chronica* del tolosano Guilhèm de Puèglauren, capellán de Raymond VII de Tolosa (Duvernoy, Sibly). Se compone de dos partes.

La primera, que adopta el punto de vista de los cruzados y termina de manera brusca en julio de 1213, es obra de Guillermo de Tudela (Guilhèm de Tudela), clérigo y profesor de teología establecido en Montalbán, y contiene 2.772 versos divididos en 131 cantos (*laisse*). Sabemos que se comenzó a escribir en 1210. La segunda, anónima, se compone de 6.810 versos divididos en 83 cantos, quizá obra de Gui de Cavalhon o del trovador Peire Cardenal. Adopta el punto de vista opuesto, favorable a los occitanos y a su *paratge*, y destaca por su relato de la batalla de Muret, el Concilio laterano de 1212, el asedio de Belcaire, la revuelta de Tolosa y la batalla de Basieja.

Los críticos han resaltado la pureza lingüística y calidad poética del segundo autor. La obra se conserva en un solo manuscrito (fr. 25425 de la Bibliothèque Nationale), escrito en Toulouse ca. 1275 y propiedad, sucesivamente, del cardenal Mazzarino, de Pierre Paul de Beaulieu (consejero de Luis XIV de Francia), del duque de Valière y la biblioteca real.

² Para ediciones de la obra ver Gaugaud, Guibali, Guébin; para estudios, Sibly, Synclaire, D'Heur, Guida, Linden.



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Imagen 1



El papa Inocencio III excomunica a los albigenses; comienzo de la cruzada contra los albigenses (*Les grandes chroniques de France*, British Library, Royal 16 G VI, fol. 374v) (ca. 1332-1350).

La *Cançon* tiene un papel muy relevante para ayudarnos a entender los sucesos relacionados con una conflagración que en realidad es de tipo imperial y que opone a la Francia del norte con la del sur, esta última relacionada con la Corona de Aragón. De hecho, aunque la excusa es la organización de una cruzada contra la herejía albigense, podemos afirmar sin ambages que los hechos religiosos se entremezclan con los políticos y económicos.

Si la cultura provenzal es conquistada por la franca del norte en función de un derecho de guerra que la *legítima* a partir de la batalla de Muret (1213) y el Tratado de Meux-París de 1229 entre Ramón VII de Tolosa y Luis IX de Francia, ello también significó un ataque al poder aragonés en el sur de Francia (Martines). Imperialismo y centralismo se dan la mano para acabar de paso con la heterodoxia religiosa, la herejía cátara o albigense, dando así origen por primera vez en Europa al concepto del hereje heterodoxo al que hay que aniquilar en aras de una paz que encuentra muy difícil la gestión de la diferencia.



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La *Cançon*, pues, a la par que documento literario de primer orden, editada por primera vez con traducción al francés contemporáneo y glosas y diccionario por Paul Meyer en 1875, es también una ventana abierta a un momento crucial para el subsiguiente devenir político europeo. En realidad, marca el momento en que la Edad Media dará paso a una primera modernidad temprana, cuando dominicos y franciscanos se inspiran en las barbas valdenses y los *puros* cátaros para predicar en el ambiente ciudadano de nuevo cuño del sur de Europa.

Se trata de predicar para convencer y convencer para convertir, dentro de un ambiente de cruzada y con el beneplácito, cuando no la instigación, del papado, representado por Inocencio III. Pero ello esconde una tendencia hacia el centralismo político y una relevancia de la ortodoxia, entendida como valor religioso y como nuevo valor en el florecimiento de las incipientes naciones.³

II. La *Cançon de la Crosada*. Versión inglesa (Tiradas II-LXV)

Laisse II

My lords, this *chanson* is modelled on that of Antioch and follows its metric structure and has the same melody (for those who know how to play that tune). You have all heard how this heresy became so strong (may God curse it!) that it took hold of the whole of Albigeois, Carcassonne and most of Lauragais. From Béziers to Bordeaux, all along the way, it has many believers and supporters (if I said more, I would not be lying). When the lord Pope and the other clergy saw this madness spreading more than before and increasing its numbers day by day, all of them sent out preachers into their dominions. The Cistercian Order took a leading role and sent out its men many times and the bishop of Osma arranged a meeting between himself and other legates with these Bulgars at Carcassone (attended by a large number of people). The king of Aragon and his nobles were there present, and he withdrew when he heard their case and discovered how heretical they were and sent a sealed

³ Ver Kurpiewski y especialmente Cortijo 2021 para un estudio concienzudo de la herejía cátara que pone en su contexto europeo y aragonés la *Cançon de la Crosada*. Para una versión catalana de la obra, ver Martines & Ensenyat. Existe una versión inglesa de Shirley.



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letter to Rome in Lombardy. God grant me his blessing, what can I say? They do not value a sermon more than a rotten apple, and for five years or who knows how many these lost souls persevered in their ways and refused to convert so that many were killed and many people died and still more will perish while the war lasts. It cannot be otherwise.

Laisse III

There was a Cistercian abbey called Poblet near Lerida and the abbot there was a good man. Because he was wise in the highest degree, he was elected abbot of another abbey, that of Granselve (where he was elected as abbot), and then, being dear to God, was elected abbot of Cîteaux. He in person together with others preached many times in the land of the heretics, urging them to convert; and the more he begged them, the more they scorned him and took him for a fool. Wretched misbelievers! He was the papal legate, with power to totally destroy them!

Laisse IV

The abbot of Cîteaux, so dear to God, called Brother A., led the preachers to go on foot and horseback to dispute with the evil and misbelieving heretics, engaging with them in vivid verbal debates, although they did not pay any heed and despised them all along. In the meantime, Peter of Castelnau comes towards the Rhône, in provence, riding his mule. He has excommunicated the count of Toulouse, for he supported the marauders who were pillaging the country. Thereupon an evil squire, to gain favor with the count in the future, came like a traitor behind the legate and wounded him with his sharp sword in the back and immediately fled on his galloping horse to his hometown of Belcaire, where his kinsmen resided. But, before he died, he raised his hands to heaven and in everyone's sight asked, and he did so God to forgive this wicked underling, and he did so at the time of the cockcrow. Then he died, just at the time of dawn. His soul departed towards God all powerful and was buried at Saint Gilles amidst many candles burning and many *Kyrie Eleison* sung.

Laisse V



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When news of this reached the pope, that his legate had ben killed, you must know he was not pleased. With an angry frame of mind, he grappled his chin and called on St James of Compostela and St Peter who lies in the chapel at Rome. When he finished his prayer, he put out the candle. Present were Brother A., the abbot of Cîteaux, and Master Milo, that fine Latinist, and the twelve cardinals sitting in a circle. Right then they made the decision that brought about so much misery by which many men were dead and their guts spilled out, and many great ladies and nice-looking girls were left without shelter or cover. It was ordered to destroy those who rebelled from beyond Montpellier to Bordeaux. This was told me by Master Pons of Mela, who received the order from the king who holds Tudela, lord of Pamplona and the castle of Estella, the best knight who ever rode a horse saddle. (This knows too well Miramelis, who the king of the heathen. The kings of Aragon and Castile were there too, side by side fighting and battling, and I intend to write a good new song about this deed on beautiful parchment).

Laisse VI

The abbot of Cîteaux, who remained sitting until then with his head bent forward, rose up and stood by a marble column, and said to the pope: “By St Martin, my lord, how useless talking too much about this is! Have your letters written in good Latin and say in them as you please. I will then set off and carry them throughout France, Lemousin, Poitou, Auvergne and Périgord. And proclaim also an indulgence all over the world and until Constantinople. Whoever does not take up the cross to fight shall drink no wine nor eat at a table day or night nor wear hemp nor linen nor be buried, if he dies, laying there like a dog”. Once he finished, all present agreed on all the advice given to them.

Laisse VII

When the abbot of Cîteaux, that honorable person (who was later archbishop of Narbonne, the best and most respected who ever wore the mitre there), had given them his advice, everyone remained silent, but the pope, looking rather irate, “My brother”, he said, “go to Carcasonne and to great Toulouse on the Garonne and lead



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the troops against those malfeasants. Forgive them their sins in the name of Jesus and preach to them in my name exhorting them to separate the heretics from the good people”. After that, he took leave at the hour of none and left the town and kicked the spurs. He was accompanied by the archbishop of Tarragona, and the bishops of Lerida and Barcelona and that of Magalona (near Montpellier) and from beyond the Spanish mountains that of Pamplona, and the bishops of Burgos and Tarazona. All together they went with the abbot.

Laisse VIII

As soon as he received his orders, the abbot took leave and rode to Cîteaux where the white monks wearing mitres had gathered for a general chapter on the feast of the Holy Cross, as it is their custom. In the presence of the whole congregation, he sang mass, and when he had finished, he preached to them and addressed them with a speech. Then he showed everyone the pope’s bull, that they must go here and there around the world, over the whole length of holy Christendom. Then people took up the cross in France and all over the kingdom, once they knew that they would be absolved of their sins. In all my life,⁴ I have never seen such an assemblage as that which gathered against the heretics and clog-wearers⁵. The duke of Burgundy took up the cross there, and the count of Nevers and many great lords. How much did they cost those crosses embroidered or made of silk which they wore on the right side of their chests, I shall not try to guess, nor tell you how they were armed, accoutred or mounted, nor their iron-clad and caparisoned horses with emblazoned coverings, for God has not made a clerk so well learned that could tell you the half of it or who could describe the priests and abbots that joined the army that gathered oin Béziers on the plains by the riverbank.

⁴ Literally, ‘ever since I was born’.

⁵ *Sabatatz* refers to the nickname given to the followers of Peter Waldo of Lyon (therefore Waldenses, Valdenses), known for wearing humble clogs-saldals.



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Laisse IX

When the count of Toulouse and the other barons and the viscount of Béziers heard news that the French were gathering in a crusading army, I do not believe they were pleased, rather they became rather irate, as the song says. The count Ramon showed up at a meeting that the clergy held at that time up country at Aubenas, where he knelt and made an act of contrition in the presence of the lord abbot and asked for his forgiveness. But he said he would not do anything for he had no power about it unless the pope and the cardinals that are with him did not offer him a favorable solution. I do not want to go on making a long discourse. The count went back spurring his horse and begged his nephew the viscount not to quarrel with him, but to defend themselves together avoid their destruction and the ruin of their country. The viscount did not say yes, on the contrary, he said no, so they depart on bad terms. Full of wrath, the count returned to Provence, to Arles and Avignon.

My lords, now the pace of my song starts picking up that started the year of the Encarnation of our lord Jesus Christ of 1210 after he came to this world, in May when the trees blossom. Master Guillaume began it while he was living at Mountauban; in fact, if he had the good luck and fortune, as happens to many a foolish minstrel or poor wretch, he would not lack a courteous lord that would give him a horse or a Breton palfrey that would take him for a pleasant ride on the plain, or rich clothes of silk, embroidered or of brocade. But we see regularly that the world is becoming a crucible to the point that wealthy men are evil who ought to be good and do not want to give away as much as a button. As for me, I do not ask them for anything worth the value of a bit of coal ashes from their hearths! May God confound them who made the heavens and the firmament, and his blessed mother Mary!

Laisse X

When the count of Toulouse, who was the lord of Belcaire, saw that his nephew the viscount was against him and that all his enemies were ready to attack him, he had no doubt that the crusaders were about to enter until the deepest part of his lands. He sent a message to the archbishop of Gascony, who was his friend, being



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sure that he would not refuse to go to Rome on embassy, and to the abbot of Condom, a clerk of noble family, and to Raymond of Rabastens, who was very generous, and to the prior of the Hospital, a good doctor; they would go to Rome and then to the emperor, and will speak to the pope, for they are eloquent, about reaching an agreement.

Laisse XI

The ambassadors departed at once and rode to Rome as fast as they could. I am not going to take long describing this. They made so many speeches and offered so many gifts that the count of Toulouse reached an agreement with the pope. I shall tell you how: as security, he will make seven of his strongest castles in his domains over to the pope as proof of his loyalty. The pope sent a most valiant clerk named Milo to whom the count should obey (he died at St Gilles before the end of the year). When the viscount of Béziers knew that this piece of news was true, that the count had made peace with the Church, it displeased him very much. He would have created a similar agreement if he had been able to, but the legate was not well disposed to it. The viscount summoned his troops from his whole fief, on horse and on foot, all those who were able to. Inside Carcassone he waits for the arrival of his hosts. Those who remained in Béziers were unlucky in extreme, for I doubt if as many fifty or a hundred escaped death by the sword.

Laisse XII

My lords, this army was assembled as you have heard in the song I am writing. The abbot of Cîteaux rode with it, and together with him the archbishops and many learned clerks, so that the line they form when they go from their encampment to a council or other gathering is longer than the entire army of Milan gathered together in one place. Next to the clergy rode the brave duke of Burgundy, his banner unfolded, with all his retinue, as well as the count of Nevers, his banner up high, the count of St Pol in charge of his many armed troops, and the count Peter of Auxerre with all his men, and the count William of Genevois, from his rich lands, and Sir Adhémar of Poitiers, whose land borders that of the count of Forez and is frequently attacked,



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with all his vassals from his lands, and Peter of Bermond from Anduze. From now until nightfall I could not tell you the names of those who came from Provence to the crusade nor all those who flocked to it, for no one could estimate their number, not to mention the horsemen brought by the French, which has not been counted yet.

Laisse XIII

The army was marvellous and large (let faith help me!): it included twenty thousand knights fully armed and more than two hundred thousand villeins and peasants, and I am not counting clergy and citizens; everybody from Auvergne (from close by or far away), from Burgundy, from France, from the Limousin, and also from the whole world, Gemans, Thiois, Poitevins, Gascons, Rouergats, Saintongeais. God never made a clerk who could write them all down, no matter how hard he tried, not in two months or three. There gathered all of Provence and so did Vienne; from the mountain passes of Lombardy to the valleys of Rodez, the crusaders came flocking for the pardon offered them was so great: their banners were raised in thick formation. They did not expect to find any opposition in the whole Carcassès, and expected to take Toulouse, but this village had made peace; they will take Caracasson, they said, and the Albigeois. By water, on boats, they transported their armour and victuals and other accoutrements. And the count of Toulouse hurried out to meet them, for he had promised to accompany them in the army.

Another crusading army arrived from the Agenais, although it was less large than the French one and had departed from their land a moth ago. In it was the count Guy, a courteous Auvergnat, the viscount of Turenne, very committed, the bishops of Limoges and Bazas, the good archbishop of Bordeaux, the bishops of Cahors and Agen, Bertrand of Cardaillac, and that of Gourdon and Ratier of Castelnou, with all the men of Quercy. They took Puylaroque, where they found no opposition, laid waste Gontaud and sacked Tonneins; but Casseneuil is strong and could not take it because it was well defended by its garrison composed of fast-moving Gascons and expert javelin throwers.



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Laisse XIV

The army sieged Casseneuil where there are many archers and many good knights under the orders of Seguin of Balenx. Even so, they would have taken it if count Guy had not prevented it, who had a lot of property there and therefore he fought with the archbishop. I do not know they withdrew nor what was their agreement. This host ordered the burning of many heretics and had many fair women thrown into the flames, for they refused to abjure however much they begged them to do so. And the bishop of Le Puy arrived there from Chacer. He received large sums of money from Caussade and from the Bourg. From the borough of St Antonin where he first arrived, he decided to go to army of Casseneuil, for he thought they were few in number and wanted to join them. A terrible blow was inflicted upon the inhabitants of Villemur: a lad told them that army was about to depart and had already raised the siege of Casseneuil. When they heard these news, they set fire to the village on Monday evening and then took leave by the moonlight. I shall tell you no more about this army but shall return to the other, which was at Montpellier. Count Raymond is guiding it and is rather helpful to them, for every day he rides ahead and shows them where to camp in the lands of his nephew, his sister's son, who fights relentlessly against him.

Laisse XV

The viscount of Béziers works incessantly day and night to prepare the defense of his lands, for he had great courage. For as far as the land extends, there is no better knight or of more worth or more generous, more courteous or genteel. He was the nephew of count Raymon, his sister's son. And he was a good catholic; of this I call to witness many clerk and many a canon who live in their cloisters. But because he was very young, he was very friendly with everyone, and the vassals of his lands were not intimidated by or fearful of him but played him with as if he were their equal. And all his knights and other vavassors kept the heretics in their castles and towers, which is why they were destroyed and killed in dishonor. The viscount himself died in great pain, in disgrace and despised because of this grievous error. I only saw him once, when the count of Toulouse married lady Eleanor, the best and fairest queen in



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Christian or heathen lands or as far as the land extends until Asia. All the good I could say of her or her praise would fall short of her worth and excellence.

I come back to my subject. When the viscount of Béziers heard the news, that the army had passed Montpellier and rode his precious horse and entered Béziers one morning at dawn before the daylight shone.

Laisse XVI

The citizens of the village, young and old alike, great and small heard that he had arrived and immediately hurried to meet him. He told them to defend themselves with strength and courage for they would be receiving help very soon. “I will take”, he said, “the road down to Carcassonne, for they have been waiting for me for a long time”. That said, he rode out of the town. The Jews of the village followed him and the other inhabitants remained doleful and distressed. The bishop of the village, who was an excellent man, came to Béziers and (upon dismounting) gathered all the people at the main church, a place rich in relics. Once they all were seated, he told them about the crusaders and how they had set off, and said that rather than being defeated, imprisoned or killed, or losing their goods and clothes, [they should surrender the village], and whatever their losses may be, it will be restored to them. If they do not wish to do so, without delay, they risk being stripped and put to the sword⁶ without delay.

Laisse XVII

When the bishop had finished his address and had told them what he ought to, he begged them to make an agreement with the clergy and the crusaders rather than being put to the sword. But you must know that most people did not like it and retorted that they would rather be drowned in the salt sea than take his advice to them; that the crusaders should get nothing from them, not even worth a penny, to make them change the way they ruled their town and village. They did not believe the

⁶ “A sword made of high-grade steel”, to be more precise.



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army could hold together, rather they would be dispersed in less than fifteen days, for it stretched out a league long and could barely be contained on the roads and footways. They thought that their city was so firmly based and encircled and enclosed by walls all around, that even after a month's siege it could not be stormed. As Solomon said to the wise Austria: "A fool's instruction often fails". When the bishop realized that the crusade had begun and they cared about his advice no more than of a peeled apple, he got on the mule he brought with him and joined the army still on the march. Those who went with him saved their lives and those who remained inside paid for it dearly. As soon as he could and without further delay, he reported back to the abbot of Cîteaux and the other lords who listened to him attentively. They considered them fools and ignorant, for they knew well that death, travails and pain were all in store for them.

Laisse XVIII

On the day of the feast of St Mary Magdalen, it happened that the abbot of Cîteaux brought his army and encamped it on the plain around Béziers. I believe that those who were inside were tormented and pained, for never the army of Menelaus, from whom Paris took Helena, pitched before the doors of Mycenae so many rich tents at night in the open air as the French did now, for (except the count of Brienne) there was no baron in France who did not do his tour of duty there for forty days. Thus, the men of Bézier received a bad gift with such advice, squirmishing frequently for a week. Listen now to what these peasants did, more foolish and stupid than a whale: waving white banners made of bad-quality cloth, they charged at the army shouting loudly, for they believed that they could frighten them as you do with birds in an oat field, shouting and yelling and waving pieces of clothing in the morning when the day is coming.

Laisse XIX

When the king of the rogues saw them attacking the French army amidst shouting and yelling, as well as kill and mutilate a French crusader that they dropped off a bridge, he called all the knaves together. And they shouted out: "Let's surround



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and attack them”. As soon as he spoke, each one got himself a club (I suppose that nothing else was available to them); there were more than fifteen thousand of barefoot beggars. Clad in shirts and pants, they begun to go around the village tearing down the walls, they went jumped into the moat to sap the foundations while others applied themselves to battering and smashing down the doors. When the inhabitants saw this, they were greatly terrified, and the crusaders shouted: “Everybody, to arms!”. What a melee you would have seen trying to get into the village! They forced the defenders to abandon the defense and these took their women and children into the church and rang the bells. They do not know where else to take refuge.

Laisse XX

The villagers saw the crusaders approaching and the king of the rogues lead his men, his knaves gushing forth from all parts of the moat, breaking down the ramparts and opening the gates, and the French army forming and getting ready for action. In their hearts they well knew that they could not hold. They take refuge hurriedly in the main church. The priests and the clergy put on their vestments for mass and rung the bells as for a funeral mass for the dead. In the end, the villagers could not prevent the rogues from entering the village, take hold of the houses they chose, and could have taken ten each if they wanted to. The rogues were in a frenzy and did fear death, they killed and massacred everyone they could find, taking and seizing everything of any value. If they can keep, they will be rich for a long time! But very soon they will be forced to let it go, for the French knights will claim all this for themselves though it was the rogues who took it.

Laisse XXI

The lords of France and those from around Paris, clergy and laymen, princes and marquises, all agreed that at every castle the army would approach, if they refused to surrender when required by this army, once it was taken they would be slaughtered and killed by the sword. And nobody could be found who would show resistance, for they would be so terrified of what they had witnessed. That is how Montréal and Fanjeaux were taken and the entire country. And I promise you, they would not have



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been stormed if it were not because of this. That is why they were defeated and massacred at Béziers, killing them all (it could not have been worse). They killed everyone who took refuge in the monastery, and neither cross nor altar nor crucifix could save them. These foolish and beggarly rogues killed also the clergy, women and children, I think nobody escaped. May God receive their souls, if He so wishes, in paradise! I do not believe anyone, since the time of the Saracens, ever decreed or performed such massacre. The rogues settled into the lodgings they took by force, where they found much wealth and riches, but when the French discovered this they almost went into a rage, drove them out with cudgels like dogs and brought inside their horses and mules, for power cannot be resisted.⁷

Laisse XXII

The king and his rogues believed they would enjoy the wealth they had taken and be rich forever. But when the barons took it all away from them, these thieving, dirty knaves all shouted out “Burn it, burn it!”, and brought torches as if for a funeral pyre. The town is set ablaze and terror spreads. The town burns everywhere. That is how Ralph of Cambrai burned a rich city near Douai and then his mother, lady Alice, scolded him so strongly that threatened to slap her in the face. When they felt the scorching heat, everyone drew back. The houses and all the palaces were burned, and also many bevors, helmets and cuisses made in Chartres, in Blaye or Edessa, and many rich clothes, for they had to be left. Also, the cathedral, built by Master Gervase, burned completely, and because of the hit it split in half and the two parts collapsed.

Laisse XXIII

My lords, marvelous and plentiful was the booty that the French and Normands captured at Béziers, and they would have been rich the rest of their lives but for the king of the rogues and his evil knaves who burned the village, with women and children, the elderly and the young, and the clergy vested and singing mass inside

⁷ Literarally, “might mows the meadows”, that is “nothing resists force”, “power cannot be resisted”.



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the church. Three days they remained in the green meadows and on the fourth day the knights and squires set off on the flat land without any opposition, with their banners flying high in the wind. On a Tuesday evening, just as the bells were ringing for vespers, they arrived at Carcassone, where the inhabitants were in grief for the death at Béziers that I just described for you. The viscount stood on the ramparts and roundwalk and looked at the army in awe, and called a council the knights and squires, those who are good at arms and the best soldiers and told them: “To horse, my barons, let us ride out there four hundred of us with the best horses in squirmish before it is dark and the sun has set, and we shall defeat those arrayed on the slopes”.

Laisse XXIV

“My lords”, said the viscount, “prepare yourselves, put on your armour, mount, and charge all together against the enemy army!” “By God”, said Peter Roger of Cabaret, “I advise you not to go out on a raid. It will suffice if you can defend your village, for the French, in the morning, after having had their meal, will approach and come under your moat with the intention of keeping access to the water you use for drinking, and this will be the cause of inflicting and receiving many blows”. All the most sensible men agreed with this advice. It was ordered that armed knights be on guard duty all around the village, a real stronghold that the emperor Charles, that great crowned king, besieged for more than seven years, as they say, and could never take it in winter or summer, and only when he lifted the siege the towers bowed to him and he took it upon returning. If the story does not lie, that was the truth, for he could not have taken it in any other way.

Laisse XXV

The viscount of Béziers was well guarded at night and next morning he rose at dawn. The lords of France, after eating, put on their armour throughout the army. The men of Carcassone also prepared for battle. Many were the blows given and received that day, and on both sides, many lay dead or bleeding. Many crusaders lay there dead and many are killed, and inside the village there are many dead and wounded. But the men in the army fought so hard that they were able to burn the



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firsat neighbourhoods and the whole village, and they have encircled them so well that have deprived them of the water of the river named Aude. They set up up mangonels and catapults that pounded the length and breath of the ramparts day and night. Listen now to the miracle God Our Lord did. The crossbowmen were on the towers and when they thought to be hitting the attacking army, not even half their arrows were reaching them, for the quarrel of their crossbows fell into the moat. I clearly heard and know it to be true that no ravens or vultures or other bad-omen birds flew over the army that whole summer. And also victuals were so abundant, that thrity loaves were given for a penny. The crusaders took salt from the salt pans and brought it here, and thus they compensated their losses, for what they lost on bread they made up on this. But be sure that nobody recovered his full expenses, rather everybody lost.

Laisse XXVI

It was during the month we call August that the entire army arrived at Caracassone. Soon arrived King Peter of Aragon with one hundred knights brought at his own expense. The crusaders werete having dinner, eating roast meat; when they saw them coming, no one remained in their place, rather princes and prelates went forward to meet him. He greeted them politely, and they replied with the same courtesy: “Feel yourself welcome”.

Laisse XXVII

In a meadow by the river near a leafy forest the count of Toulouse pitched his rich tent, and here my lord the king and his men from Catalonia and Aragon dismounted. When they had eaten and drunk, he mounted his palfrey, a bay with a long mane, and rode into town without any shield or weapons. He took three companions, the rest stayed behind. When the viscount saw him, he quicky run towards him together with his men, who were all joyous for they thought he would help them as they were his vassals, his loyal friends. And in fact they were, but the king had not come to bring help, for he had no power, strength nor might other than prayer, if he was to be heard. The viscount explained to him what happened in the massacre of Béziers, how he had lost, and his lands had been devastated and laid



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waste. The king listened to him and then said: “In the name of Jesus, my baron”, said the king, “you cannot blame me, for I have defended you with the condition that you drive out the heretics, and I had invited you whereas there have been in this village so many gatherings of that crazy sect”.

Laisse XXVIII

“Viscount”, said the king, “I feel sorry for you because you are in such pain and torment for a few fools and their folly. But now, all I can propose is an agreement, if we can attain it, with the French lords, for as God knows and I am also aware of, there is no hope for you in another battle with lance and shield. Their army is so large that I doubt very much whether you could hold out to the end. You have great faith in the strength of the village, but consider that it is full of many women and children, otherwise you could still feel fortunate. I feel indeed very sorry and sympathetic towards you; for the love I bear you and our friendship, there is nothing I will not do to help you, even at the risk of my honor”. The viscount retorted that it would better for himself and his barons to find an agreement.

Laisse XXIX

“My lord”, said the viscount, “you may do as you wish with the village and everything in it, for we all belong to you and before that we belonged to your father the king, who loved us dearly”. At these words, the king mounted his palfrey and returned to his army. He spoke to the Frenchmen and the abbot of Cîteaux, whose presence was required, since nothing could be done without his advice. The king told them what he and the viscount talked about in the village, and as much as he could entreated their favor and that of his barons. With all this said and done, in the end he could get nothing else other than that for his sake the crusaders would be willing to do this: they will allow the viscount and twelve men chosen by him to leave the village carrying whatever they have on them. The rest, they will dispose of it at will. The king said between his teeth: “That will happen when donkeys fly”. He came back to the village feeling greatly angry and irate, and explained what had happened to the viscount and his men. When he heard him, the viscount told him that he would rather take his own



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life or leave his men be skinned alive rather than abandon them. Never in all his days would he accept these terms nor abandon the worst of his vassals. He asked the king to go away and said he would defend himself inside Carcassonne for as long as he will be able to”. The king mounted his horse, feeling great grief at the way things turned out.

Laisse XXX

The king of Aragon went away very sad and with a heavy heart for having failed to save them. He returned to Aragon feeling irate and angry. The crusaders prepared to fill up the moats and ordered to tear down branches to make cats⁸. The commanders of the army walked around armed all day long and looked for the place where they could be attacked by unexpectedly. The bishop, the priors, the monks and abbots cried out: “To the pardon! Why are you delaying it?”. The viscount and his men took their positions on the walls and removed the feathered bolts from their crossbows. Many died on both sides. If so many people had not gathered there, for they had fled there from all over the land, they would not have been taken by siege or by assault in a whole year, for the towers were high and the walls crenellated. But they were cut off from the water and the wells were dry because of the great heat at the height of the summer. In all their days they never knew such suffering as it came from the stench of men who had become sick and of the many animals skinned inside that had been brought into the village from all over the county, and the loud cries everywhere of the women and children that packed the place, and the flies that were everywhere because of the heat. Less than eight days had passed since the king had returned, when the highest-ranking crusader suggested a parley. The viscount went out with a few of his men once he had obtained a safe-conduct.

Laisse XXXI

The viscount of Béziers went out for a parley and with him more than one hundred knights and the highest-ranking crusader had only thirty. “My lord”, said he

⁸ Wheeled protective shelters.



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to the viscount, “I am your kinsman. May Almighty God the Father help and assist me as much as I would desire an agreement with you and your benefit and that of your people. If you are expecting to have any relief soon, I certainly advise you to hold out; but you must well know that that will not happen. Make some sort of agreement with the pope and with the lords of the army, for I assure you that if they take you by force, you will meet out the same justice as they got at Béziers. Save your bodies, at least, from death and torment! Plenty of money you will have again, if you live long enough”. After listening to this, the viscount replied: “My lord, at your command and that of King Philip, lord of France, I would straighten everything with him, provided I could go into the army safely”. “Then I will take you there safely and bring you back here to your own people, I give you my loyal word”.

Laisse XXXII

The viscount of Béziers went out for the parley with one hundred knights, and the highest-ranking officer of the army just with his thirty. “My lord”, said the latter, “I am your own kin. May Almighty God the Father help me and assist me, for I truly desire to reach an agreement with you for your own benefit and that of your people”. With these words they reached the tent of the count of Nevers where the discussions were being held. Knights and squires were watching him from all over the place, as was reported by a mass priest; he agreed of his own will to offer himself as hostage. He acted like a real fool, that is my opinion, when he put himself into custody.

Laisse XXXIII

The viscount of Béziers was in the tent of the count of Nevers together with his nine-knight retinue (there were no better men in his household), watched attentively by the French and the Burgundians. Out came almost running all the citizens, knights, noblewomen and girls, no one remained in the village, not a single squire, boy, young and old, woman or girl. Almost naked, they rushed out in confusion wearing nothing but their shirts and breeches; they were not allowed to take even the value of a button. Some left for Toulouse, some to Aragon, others to Spain, up and down the land. The crusaders entered the village at will and occupied the



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hall, the towers and the keep. They pile all the valuables into one single heap. The numerous horses and mules they divide there as best they thought. The heralds run up and down the army shouting: “Come to the pardon. The abbot of Cîteaux wants to address you”. So then they all run there and gathered around him. The abbot climbed on top of the marble steps: “My lords”, he said, “listen to my words. Now you can see what miracles the king of heaven does for you, for nothing stands against you. I command you, for the love of God, not to keep anything of the village’s wealth worth even a piece of charcoal, for if you did, I would immediately excommunicate you. We shall give it to a powerful lord who will hold this country with God’s grace so that the evil heretics can never retake it”. All agreed once the abbot finished his speech.

Laisse XXXIV

Carcassonne was taken as you have heard and the inhabitants from all over the land fled everywhere. The army was stationed in Montréal and Fanjeaux and not one local man or child remained there. It was said that Peter of Aragon, a brave mercenary, took a large amount of money. Do not think that the abbot of Cîteaux forgot about this! He sang them a mass of the Holy Spirit and preached to them on the birth of Christ; then he said that he desired to have a good lord chosen now for the country conquered by the crusaders. He summoned the count of Nevers, but the count did not wish to remain nor stay there at all, nor did the count of St Pol who was chosen next. They said that for as long as they lived they had plenty of land in the kingdom of France, where their fathers were born, and did not care to disinherit someone. Everyone there though they would be disgraced if they accepted the honor that was being offered.

Laisse XXXV

There was in that deliberating council a rich lord who was noble and valiant, a dedicated fighter, wise and experienced, a good horseman, generous, honorable and honest, kind, frank, courteous and of good understanding. He had been stationed for a long time overseas, at Zara, fighting against...and elsewhere, lord of Montfort and



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its lands, he was count of Winchester, if the record is correct. They all agreed to ask him to take over the entire viscounty and all the other lands of the disbelievers. “My lord”, said to him the abbot, “in the name of God Almighty, accept the honor they offer you, for God and the pope will defend you, and after them we and everybody else will do the same, and we will help you all your life long”. “I will do so”, said the count, “with this condition, that the princes gathered here swear under oath that if I am in trouble they all come to help when I summon them”. “We will do so”, said all, “we give our loyal oath”. At this, he valiantly accepted this honor, the land and the country.

Laisse XXXVI

When the count of Montfort settled in the fief granted to him, that is Carcassone and its entire land, he became anxious and pensive for few of his friend wanted to stay with him and most of them dediced to return to Paris. The mountains are wild and the passes difficult and none of them wanted to be killed in the country. However, nine or ten (I ignore the exact number) of the greatest lords and authorities stayed: Simon remained, known as De Ciskey, Sir Robert of Picquigny, a Norman I believe, Sir William of Contres, constantly concerned with increasing his fame (So help me St Denis), Sir Guy the Marshal, strong and valiant, Robert of Forceville, Lambert of Crécy, Rainier of Chauderon, Ralph of Agis, Sir Pons of Beaumont, his cousin Sir John, and a great many others whose names I never learned. The viscount of Centonges and Sir Roger d’Andelys, Sir Roger des Essarts and Sir Hugh de Lacy stayed too. If I had been with them or have knowed them in person or had traveled with them troughout the country they conquered, this book would be the richer, I give you my word, and this song not much better.

Laisse XXXVII

Having established himself at Carcassonne, the count of Montfort, known as Simon, summoned his comrades at arms. He sent William of Contres, God be good to him!, into Biterrois, for there was no one among them more valiant or better able to defend a castle, a stronghold or a rich city. Indeed, if Portugal or the kingdom of



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Leon had been under his charge and rule (Christ bless me!), he would govern them better than those stupid fools their kings, whom I deem not worth a button. He sent Lambert of Crécy to Limoux and the other barons here and there to defend the land, wherever he thought best. The count of Montfort, the lion-hearted, remained at Carcassonne and kept the viscount in prison... [where] he died later of dysentery, and the wicked charlatans and those who ignore the truth about things said that he was killed by someone at night by treason. By Jesus Christ the King!, the count would never have consented to have him killed this way for anything in the world.

Laisse XXXVIII

As I told you before, the count of Toulouse, the princes and marquises, all begged the count of Montfort to accept the fief, the honor, the land, and he did so with the agreement that they would come to his help if he was in need, and he wanted them to make a promise under oath as a guarantee. The count of Toulouse sent for his son because his friends the lords of the army from the Paris region wanted to see him. Raymond of Ricaut brought him on a Thursday. The child was handsome and well brought up, for Geoffrey of Poitiers has taught him properly. The duke cannot fail fail to approve of him, as did his cousin, the coun of St Pol. The crusaders, pressed by the approach of winter, returned to Trias and Paris via Montpellier.

Laisse XXXIX

The great army dispersed, for it could not continue together any longer, but before they departed, messengers were sent to the big city of Toulouse to see if they wanted to settle the dispute. Many good knights were part of this embassy. The Toulousains replied that they would do whatever the pope of Rome decided, and they wanted to go [to him]. They could obtain nothing else and they returned by the main road and went with their army directly to Montpellier. The count of Toulouse went to make himself ready, for I believe he wants to go to Rome to talk with the pope and does not want to delay this, trusting to be there before the month of January. But first he sent his envoys, Raymond of Rabastens, recently back from there, and the abbot of St Audard, who had ill will, for he had been imprisoned for almost a year. A better



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abbot no one ever had in his retinue. These are to go before the pope to announce him the impending arrival of the count, and should be made certain of the count's determination.

Laisse XL

The valiant count of Toulouse was readying himself for the long journey he intended to make. First he would go to France to talk to his cousin and then to the emperor, if he could find him, and then to the pope. He wants to try all three of them. The abbot of Cîteaux said he should not go, that if he would trust him, he needn't go through this trouble nor face such great expense, that he could achieve as much just staying there with him: but count Raymond does not want to stay. I want to return now to the count of Montfort. He kept the viscount prisoner and had him well guarded and provided him generously with everything he needed. But no one can avoid what must happen. He fell ill of dysentery, I believe, so he had to die. But first he wished to receive communion. The bishop of Carcassonne had it properly performed and then he died before nightfall. The count of Montfort behaved like a courteous man and displayed publicly the body to the people so that they could all mourn him and pay their respects. You could have seen the people weeping with a loud voice! He then had the body buried after a funeral cortege. May God take care of his soul, if he will listen to prayers, for this was a great misfortune.

Laisse XLI

When the crusaders had returned to their lands, the count of Montfort remained in great distress. He had barely any companions after they had left. He reached an agreement with the count of Foix, who gave him his youngest son as a hostage. This agreement did not last long, for they broke later all its terms and then waged a harsh war with each other. Gerald of Pépieux behaved badly towards him, for he had signed peace with him and had reached an agreement, but then they parted over an unfortunate situation. It is true that his uncle was killed by a Frenchman, but the count of Montfort was very angry at this and buried him alive after throwing him in a hole. Nobody had ever been so punished for such a crime. But as the culprit was



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a Frenchman of high origin, Sir Gerald should have been sufficiently revenged. This event made him have a grievance with the count, who had given him many honors and was very familiar with him, yet he did not defy him nor took leave of him, but burned one of his castles, and if he had been there I believe he would have paid for it dearly. Bouchard held Saissac, which had been given to him. One day, he went out in arms with fifty of his men and encountered the men of Cabaret. There were at least ninety of them on horse and foot, and fourteen archers, who encircled, attacked and wounded them harshly. But our Frenchmen kept close ranks and were in good order, and were not scared by any shouting nor threats, so that there were many dead on both sides. In the end, only those who were with Bouchard were defeated (something which provoked pain and grief) and he himself was taken prisoner and taken away. As for those who died then, they are forgotten. May God receive their souls in his glorious heaven when the world comes to an end!

Laisse XLII

The count of Montfort was very irate at the capture of Bouchard and his companions. All throughout the winter he traveled everywhere, until the Lent season came, when leaves grew again and the crusade returned as it usually happens. The count went to Rome, as the song says, and so did the consuls of Toulouse, and incurred great expenses. First, they went to France and found the mighty King Philip very cheerful, although later he was in distress, angry at them because of emperor Otto. The countess of Champagne, a courteous and worthy lady, received them warmly, as did many other nobles. So too did the duke of Burgundy, who bestowed many gifts on them, and the count of Nevers was very friendly with them and was an excellent host.

Laisse XLIII

The pope of Rome and all the cardinals duly welcomed him as their natural lord. The pope presented him with a rich cloak and a ring of fine gold, whose precious stone alone was worth fifty marks of silver and also a horse. After that the two of them became cordial friends. He showed him Veronica's veil, which belonged



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to the pope, and when he touched the face on it, which seems like that of a man of flesh and blood, the pope absolved him of all his sins, for the two of them were so in agreement on that occasion.

Laisse XLIV

When the count of Toulouse had done what he intended, he took leave of the pope and departed at once, traveling by long stages until he left Lombardy for he was very afraid of contracting a disease. They stopped one day at Paris and saw the king, who was greatly displeased. The count left again and together with his retinue he entered Toulouse in his usual manner, with the citizens of the village displaying their great joy. At that time, he met for negotiations the count of Montfort near an abbey, in the presence of the abbot of Cîteaux and other clergy. I would have thought that they would make peace and determine never to fight each other in their lives, such was a love they showed each other. Certainly in a thousand years I would never have expected the abbot to enter Toulouse, no matter who would have told me so. They gave him the seigneurie of the Narbonne castle, and he and bishop Fouquet both shared lordship over it.

Laisse XLV

The abbot of Cîteaux entered Toulouse and the youths were on the streets were greatly astonished, and everybody, even the children. In the presence of the whole village the castle was handed over, such a fine castle, I think, as any ever saw in the land. Many documents were drafted, many briefs and sealed letters that the abbot sent as far as Mount Gibel. The king of Aragon came from Muret to meet him and they talked in a meadow at Portet without reaching any agreement worth a cheap buckle-ring.

Laisse XLVI

Fouquet of Marseille, bishop of Toulouse, who has no equal in goodness, and the abbot of Cîteaux held a counsel meeting. Both preached throughout the day to



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audiences who paid close attention, speaking against money lending and usury. They traveled non-stop all over the Agenais, the abbot riding even as far as St Bazeille. Nobody paid attention to anything of what they said rather they said contemptuously: “The bee buzzes round and round”. So that I myself (may God help me) cannot be surprised if they are destroyed, robbed, pillaged or punished by force.

Laisse XLVII

The citizens of Toulouse, those of the town and those of the suburbs, disputed constantly and in the end achieved no agreement worth an acorn or a rotten apple. Those who believed the heresy and are associated with them said that the bishop, the abbot and clergy deliberately made them engage with them in disputes so that in their folly the Toulousans would destroy each other, for if they held together, all the crusaders in the world could not overtake them. That is what they said to the count and his companions, that wicked, crazy lot who believed the heresy. They will see clearly (may God bless me) the advise given them by those whom God should curse. It will lead to their death and the destruction of the land, that will be assailed and ravaged by foreigners, for the French from France and those of Lombardy and the whole world hate them with fury worse than Saracens.

Laisse XLVIII

My lords, now in summertime, when winter fades away and the fair weather returns and hot days are back, the count of Montfort got ready for war. He laid siege to the castle of Minerve, which lies towards the coast, such was his plan. He set up his catapults and made Bad Neighbor the lady and queen of his other war machines, despite the high walls and the stone-built hall, made of mortar, sand, and lime. Many a good money they had cost and many morabetins.⁹ If the king of Morocco and his Saracens had surrounded the place all around, by St Catherine, they could not have done a damage worth an Angevin coin; but against the army of Christ, who sets the truth apart, neither stones nor bravery, nor high castles may avail.

⁹ Gold coins issued by Spanish Arab rulers.



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Laisse XLIX

The castle of Minerva is not in a plain but lies, so help me God, on top of a rock. There is no stronger castle from here to the Spanish passes, except Cabaret and Termes at the head of Cerdagne. William, lord of Minerve, settled down there with all his army and was resting and taking baths. But our Frenchmen and those from Champagne, from Maine, Anjou and Brittany, from Lorraine, Frisia and Germany drove them out by force before the grain came through. And there they burned many heretics, wicked sons of bitches, and many female fools who screamed in the middle of the flames. Nothing worth a chestnut was left to them. Then their bodies were thrown out and threw mud on them so that the stench of these foul things would not offend our foreign troops.

Laisse L

Once Minerva was taken, the count quickly left and went to Pennautier up in the Carcassès and sent for the countess to join him. She came there as soon as he sent his message. Nobody has ever met wiser woman (God and my faith may help me) in the far and wide world. She remained three days with the army, which was very large. Early on a Thursday morning he met in a palace with princes and barons, and a decision was taken to lay siege to Termes up in the Termenès, a marvellous castle. But before it is taken, many souls will leave their bodies and will die unconfessed, and the siege will cost many a mark and many a coin of Tours, and many horses and palfreys will be won, as well as other riches and much fine armour, by men of both sides to whom it has been promised or predestined.

Laisse LI

The count of Montfort entered the palace accompanied by the countess and all his lords, and they took their seats on a silk carpet. Robert of Mauvoisin had been summoned together with Sir Guy the Marshal, and they were side by side, as well as Sir William of Contres, more powerful or valiant than whom there was none in the whole viscounty, and he was born, as I was told, in Burgundy, two leagues from



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Nevers. Their advice was to siege the castle of Termes, and many other nobles supported it. The council broke up, it lasted a short time. Once they had had dinner, after a brief recess, they all together returned to council. The count of Montfort was very anxious about who will be in charge to defend Carcassonne, but in the end it was advised either Sir Lambert of Crécy, a wealthy and respected lord, or Sir Rainier of Chauderon. Both were chosen, but neither of them would remain even if they were granted a kingdom, for they saw that the country was acting in a wicked manner. Then William of Contres was begged to take on the task, and after thinking about it, he said he would do it. But the count of Montfort was very irate, and had he had someone else to put in charge, he would not have left him there, for there was no wiser person in the whole country nor a better knight, more reliable, courteous, valiant or loyal, so God bless me.

Laisse LII

After having listened and reflected, then William of Contres said as follows: “In the name of Jesus Christ and St Mary, I will stay inside, since all of you ask me so”. But the count of Montfort would not have wanted to leave him if he could have done otherwise, yet in the end, since nobody else would stay, reluctantly agreed. The lords of the army, the knights and the countess wanted this to be so. And the count of Montfort gave him as companions Crespi of Rochefort, a very courteous man, and Sir Simon the Saxon, may God bless him, Sir Guy, his brother, whose countenance showed his bravery, and many other noblemen who were in the army from Burgundy, France, and Normandy. At this point they separated and the count took leave and went to lay siege to Termes with all his large army. Sir William of Contres departed from him that same day in the meadows of Pennautier and reached Carcassonne before moonrise, before it was fully dark.

Laisse LIII

Then Williams of Contres left Pennautier and went to Carcassone as fast as he could ride, and entered just as people were getting up from dinner. The men of the village wanted to go to bed, the castle squires hurried to help him unarm. Upstairs,



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they lit a fire in the fireplace of the main hall, prepared plenty of beef and pork and other food for those who were to come. Then they had the beds made where they were going to sleep, for they would have to get up early at dawn in order to drive the mangonels and the other war engines that they will bring in carts down to the siege of Termes to attack the castle. This was ordered by the count. He begged them to send the siege engines and to guard the city, without doing anything else even if it need be; and to guard the engines for the following three days, and once they arrive there he will have them set up. Without any delay, sir William of Contres orders them taken out of the village onto the gravel and loaded onto horse-drawn carts, promptly and quickly.

Laisse LIV

Promptly and quickly went to Cabaret a spy from the army, and there told them that the count had sent wretched and miserable men to transport the siege engines, and they would not number more than three hundred between squires and people on foot. When they heard this, they rejoiced greatly. They left Cabaret by moonlight, captained by Sir Peter Roger, if the records are right, by William Cat, Raymond Mir and all their kinsmen. More than three hundred of them were there, and they did not wait for their companions, rather they galloped to Carcassonne as fast as they could. Sir William of Contres, that brave man, had the siege engines and carts equally guarded. And when they saw the knights galloping, they shouted out loud “To arms!”, and all said “Shame on any who does not fight well”. When William of Contres and his men heard this, he quietly told his knights to quickly hurry to arms. For if glorious Jesus, the Father Almighty and the blessed mother Mary willed it so, he would fight these men without any delay. I do not wish to make this story longer: neither Sir Peter Roger nor his men showed any fear, all of them dismounted their horses, destroyed in pieces the siege engines in the sight of all men and set a fire with straw and the fire blazed up. They would have been all burned at once if there had been a gush of air, but God did not want this.



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Laisse LV

When William of Contres heard this cry, “To arms!, knights”, he shouted at them. He had with him at least eighty sergeants, not counting the other knights. They had the doors opened in the name of Blessed Mary and attacked [Cabaret’s] men in the middle of the meadow. The others, when they saw them, did not despise them but went to face them as bold people. My God! What great shattered lances were there that day and what great blows struck on Pavia helmets! Sir William of Contres spurred his Hungarian horse, into the thickest of the melee, may God bless me, he charged full of rage and fury. He rode then into the river Aude, and there in the middle of the water he took part in the fight. He encountered there in his way one of Mir’s men, and struck him so hard on his flowered shield that his hauberk was not worthy than a rotten apple; he threw him in the water, and all they knights could see it. Then he struck on his side a wretched as he was fleeing and pierced him brandishing his sword, and then he struck another in the same attack. Crespi of Rochefort and Simon did not forget: there is no need of a road to those they hit. For a long time they attacked in this fashion so that Sir Peter Roger and his companions looked very glum. Not one of them but cursed him for what happened to them. Defeated they return with a great loss that day. Sir William of Contres gathered his people and entered the city where his garrison was. They were all very happy for having saved the siege engines and the whole army rejoiced at their victory.

Laisse LVI

When the count of Montfort, called Simon, had laid siege in front Termes and all around it and he had heard the had news, you must know that he was delighted that Sir William of Contres and his companions had saved the siege engines from destruction and even more for having saved the baron called Peter Roger, may God do him no good! For I think that if he would not be so joyous, even if he be given all the gold of Marcon, as he was of the account of Sir William of Contres about his victory. My God!, what a beautiful account was done by the young gentleman sent quickly by Sir William of Contres to escort the mandolins and war engines to the siege of Termes. He did so very well, without any lie. There were there many barons, many



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tents of rich silk, many silk tunics and rich doublets, many mailshirts and many beautiful banners, many an ashen haft, ensigns and pennons, many fine knights and many young noblement from Germany, Bavaria, Saxony and Frisia, from main, Anjou, Normandy and Brittany, from Lombardy and Longobardia, Provence and Gascony. The lord archbishop of Bordeaux was there and so was Sir Amanieu d'Albret and men from Langon. All those who were there did their forty-day duty, so that some came while others left. But Raymond, lord of Termes, did not considered them worth a button, for I do not believe that anyone had ever seen such a strong castle as his. There the crusaders spent Pentecost, Easter, and Ascension, and half the winter, as the song says. No one ever saw such numerous garrison as there was in this castle, with people coming from Aragon, Catalonia and Roussillon. Many encounters took place and shattered saddletrees, and many knights were killed, and many Brabanters, and many ensigns and many fine banners were lost and taken by force up there to their donjon against the crusaders' will, whether they wanted it or not. Mangonels and catapults were not considered worth a button. There is plenty of meat, fresh and cured, wine and water to drink, and bread galore. If Our Lord God had not sent them a scourge, as he did later when he sent them dysentery, they would have never been defeated.

Laisse LVII

My lords, would you be amenable to hearing how Termes was taken and how Jesus Christ displayed his great power? The [crusaders'] army kept the siege for nine months until they had no water supply for it dried up. They had plenty of wine for another two or three months, but nobody, I believe, can live without water. Then, may God and my faith help me, there was a heavy downpour and a great deluge from which an enormous calamity occurred to them. They made great provision of water in barrels and pails with which they kneaded and prepared their food. Such dysentery overtook them that they did not know where they were. They took a resolution, to flee before dying unconfessed. They assembled the ladies of the castle in the donjon, and when the dark night came and no one could see them, they left the castle without carrying other baggage than their money, I believe. At this point Raymond of Termes told them to wait, for he was going back into the castle and they should wait. As he



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was doing this, the French met him and took him to the presence of the count. The others, Catalans and Aragonese, fled to avoid being killed. But the count of Montfort behaved courteously: he took nothing from the ladies worth even a penny or a coin.

Laisse LVIII

When they knew throughout the land that Termes had fallen, all the strongest castles were abandoned. Thus Le Bézu was taken without having been sieged. The count's garrisons, who have left the castles, never thought that in their lives the crusaders would arrive that far. All-merciful God worked a great miracle there, for he made a fairer winter than no one had seen in summer. But I return to my subject, which I have postponed too long. When the count of Toulouse knew, for someone told him, that Termes had been taken, he went to St Gilles to a great assembly that clergy has convened with the abbot of Cîteaux and the other crusaders because Milo was dead, buried and under earth. The count brought with him my lord Guy Cap de Porc, the best legal expert in all Christendom, a nobleman also of the highest rank and so learned that the others in comparison are not worth a dice. He supports the count with his knowledge to such a degree that the others would put their eyes out before letting him speak. The abbot of Cîteaux stood up: "My lords", he told them, "you must know that the count of Toulouse has done me a great honor by yielding me his land, for which I am very grateful to him". Then they unfolded the sealed paper bulls from Rome that had been sent to the count of Toulouse. Why would I make a long story? The letters made such demands that count Raymond said that, when the reading was done, he could not pay it with the whole of his county. He set foot in his stirrup, distressed and irate and returned to his land, Toulouse, as fast as he could.

Laisse LIX

Then count Raymond attended another meeting that took place at Narbonne towards St Vicent's day. The king of Aragon was there as were many important people. They achieved nothing worth a sweet-brier. Then they went to another meeting, at Arles I believe. There they put down in writing their resolution which they gave to the count, who was waiting for them outside together with the king of



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Aragon, in the wind and bitter cold. The abbot handed him the document in the presence of everyone, together with Master Tecin, who accompanies him, the best and most knowledgeable of all clerks in the world, and the bishop of Uzès and a hundred other clerks. When the count had the document in his hands, he called his scribe discreetly, and when he heard it read slowly in its entirety, he called the king of Aragon, boiling with anger. “Come here, my lord king”, he said with a smile, “and listen to this document and the strange orders imposed by the legates and demand that I obey”. The king had it read out again, and when he heard it he said in a quiet voice: “Almighty Heavenly God, this must be amended”. All worried, he grasps the letter in his hand and does not give any answer, and then he leaves for Toulouse riding as fast as he can, and continues to Montauban, to Moissac and Agen all in one journey.

Laisse LX

The gallant count of Toulouse returned to the Toulousain and entered Toulouse and then Montauban, Moissac and Agen, holding the document in his hands. He had it read out throughout so that knights, citizens and priests who sing mass should know it. This is what the beginning of the document said: the count must keep the peace, and those who are with him, and dismiss the mercenaries that same evening or the next morning; he must restore the rights to the clergy, and reinstate to them the good they might demand back, expell from his administration all the deceitful Jews, and some selected heretical believers must be handed over within a year so that they do with them as they will please. They will not eat more than twice [per week] and will not wear rich clothes but coarse brown capes, which would last them longer. They must dismantle their castles and fortresses, the knights will not reside in towns¹⁰ but outside, in the country, like the other villeins. They will not exact unjust tolls on the roads, but only those sanctioned by ancient custom. They will give each year four Toulousain coins to the peace agents to be appointed in the land. All usurers must abandon usury and return at once any interest they had taken. If the

¹⁰ The text says “to be in a plain, flat surface”, therefore “to reside in towns”, as opposed to the rugged and rough nature of ploughing fields.



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count of Toulouse or the crusaders would raid their lands in the future, with prudence, and take something of theirs, they must no defend themselves. They must follow in everything the will of the king of France. The count must cross the sea and go to the river Jordan and stay down there as long as the monks should require, or the cardinals of Rome or those whom they should appoint. Then he must join the Order of the Temple or of St John. Once he has done this, they will return his castles to him. If he does not, they will persecute him everywhere to the point that he will retain nothing of his.

Laisse LXI

When the men of the land, the knights and citizens, heard the document read to them, they said they would rather all be dead or imprisoned than suffer such treatment or obey it, for then they would all be serfs, villeins or rustic laborers. The citizens of Moissac and Agen said they would rather flee by water to Bourdeaux than have Frenchmen or Barrois for their lords, or if so wished the count, they would go live with him in another land, wherever he would please. When the count heard this, he thanked them greatly. Then he had letters drawn up and sent them out to all his friends, up to the Albigeois, and there to Béarn and to the count of Comminges, and to the count of Foix and over there to the Carcassès. He begged Sir Savari of Mauléon to come help him and he promised to aid him, whether anyone else liked it or not, willingly and with courage.

Laisse LXII

At the beginning of Lent, when cold weather recedes and begins to approach the sweet time of Easter, the crusaders and the whole army began to move, summoned by our preachers. The bishop of Toulouse (may God grant him honor!) was received in the town as lord with a great procession as if he were an emperor. He lifted the interdiction, which made me believe that they had made peace for ever and gladly, but later I saw them fight furiously. The bishop went to France and preached there daily, and the princes, barons, counts and knights from there became crusaders.



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Laisse LXIII

The count Peter of Auxerre, Robert of Courtenay and the precentor of Paris, as the book says, arrived with a great army from the region of Paris and entered Carcassonne, in this region. Now hear what miracle Jesus performed there, as the book tells you and recounts to you. The men of Cabaret were greatly distressed because of this. And one morning, their lord, Peter Roger, went to see Sir Bouchard, his prisoner the room where he lays. “Bouchard”, he said, “You are, as I know, a man of great character, valiant and truthful, and you would never do anything that should not be done. If I set you free, I ignore whether I will find thanks or acknowledgment, but I will make the experiment”. “I have never committed treason nor will I ever commit one”. “Then”, said Peter Roger, “you are no longer a prisoner, and now I make over to you myself and my castle”. He sent for a master smith and had him released from his irons, had him given a comfortable bath and his hair cut, and in addition he offered him a beautiful robe and a bay palfrey, for he was not mocking him any longer. When Bouchard saw this, you must know that he was greatly delighted. He had never had such joy since the day his mother gave him birth.

Laisse LXIV

My lords, just as I have told you, the lord of Cabaret did not forget anything: he summoned a smith and had Sir Bouchard freed from his irons and clad him in rich and noble garments, and gave him a riding palfrey to mount (no one ever saw one more beautiful than that); and when he was properly dressed, he gave him three mounted young noblement to solace with and himself rode with him outside of the castle. But before they left and departed, he invested him with himself and the castle and did him full homage. Sir Bouchard in turn promised him and fully swore that on his part he would never betray him, and that when the matter is settled, no one would take him for a fool nor insult him for freeing him. And Sir Bouchard did not fail him, for he kept his promise in full.



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Laisse LXV

When the count of Montfort and the other barons, all of them, heard the news that Sir Bouchard was free and on his way, you need not ask whether they were happy. At once they all rushed to meet him. When they had kissed, they begged him to tell them whether he had given hostages, and he said no: “On the contrary, I have the castle under my command and I am totally free, in a manner you will hear now: My lord Peter Roger has given me the lordship of his whole castle, the one he was holding against us, and has established friendship and good entente with me. And I (God grant me his blessing!) have promised him that he will be better for it all his life long”. “Then”, said the count of Montfort, “we would feel insulted if our company were not better for him. None of you must have him ever too apart”. “Oh God”, said they all, “blessed Mary! What a noble deed he has done, what an act of courtesy! There is no a man in France (nor will there ever be) who could have done so.

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