



**HAL**  
open science

## The Vlachs and the troubadour. Brief analysis of three poems by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras

Vladimir Agrigoroaei

► **To cite this version:**

Vladimir Agrigoroaei. The Vlachs and the troubadour. Brief analysis of three poems by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras. *Revue des études sud-est européennes / Journal of South-East European studies*, 2009, XLVII, pp.55-74. halshs-00794738

**HAL Id: halshs-00794738**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00794738v1>**

Submitted on 26 Feb 2013

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



The Vlachs, mistranslated as *Walachians* in Linskill's edition,<sup>3</sup> are the natural allies of the Greeks, together with the Cumans, the Russians, the Turks, the "Pagans", and the Persians. In the next stanza one will find Babylon and Cairo as references to the targets of the crusader vengeance, so that both the Vlachs and their allies prove to live in a mythical land, even though their appearance in the poem is due to the immediate menace they posed to the armies of the Fourth Crusade. Găzdaru dated the poem in the summer of 1204<sup>4</sup> and believed that "the Wallachian army included Cuman mercenaries", linking the joint presence of the two ethnic names through the pro-Cuman orientation of the early Assens.<sup>5</sup> He does not speculate however the presence of the Russians in the same fragment.

When analyzing the fragment, Linskill speaks of Walachians as "inhabitants of the Danube basin", of the Cumans as "primitive, warlike people of apparently Turkish stock who had settled in Moldavia and Macedonia", and believes that "the two peoples are frequently coupled by the chroniclers". He also considers that the mention of the *Ros* (Russians) in this context, though historically unjustified, is a poetic amplification of the list of European enemies of the Latin Empire, suggested by the geographical proximity of the Russians to the Cumans (as well as by the need of the rhyme).<sup>6</sup> I will not focus on the correction of the few and subtle geographic or ethnic mistakes, for, if such matters are complicated to the philologist, they are rather obvious to the historian's eye. One should pay attention only to Linskill's hypothesis on the relation between the Vlachs and the Cumans and to his interpretation of the Russian presence in the fragment. In fact, as one will read later on, the rhyme could have not dictated the Russian presence, since the Greeks (*Grifos*, rhyming with *Ros*) have another name in Raimbaut's works (*Grezeis*). The troubadour could have envisaged a parallelism; two verses contain two lists, each list having three terms. In fact, the *Grifos* bring against the crusaders both the North and the East. From the North one sees the arrival of the Vlachian army, followed by the Cumans, and the Russians. From the East comes the army of the Turks, followed by the Pagans, and the Persians. Thus, the Vlachs are the chief Northern enemies, as known from the chronicles of the Fourth Crusade, just as the Turks, the chief enemies from the East, are known from the chronicles of the previous three crusades. I believe that the mention of the Russians is not for the sake of rhyme, but for that of symmetry.

Among the other names mentioned in Raimbaut de Vaqueiras' poems one finds Arthurian erotic themes: *Tristans* (XVII, 55) and *Yzeus* (XVII, 56); followed by classical references either to the story of Troy, or to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

<sup>3</sup> We tend to employ different ethnic names for the Balkan Romanic population and for the future inhabitants of Walachia. Since Joseph Linskill was a philologist and not a historian, such distinctions might have been unknown to him.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. Linskill, *The Poems of the Troubadour Raimbaut de Vaqueiras*, La Haye, Mouton, 1964, p. 225, who dates it June-July 1204.

<sup>5</sup> D. Găzdaru, art.cit., pp. (22-23) 106-107.

<sup>6</sup> J. Linskill, ed.cit., pp. 231-232.

*Troia* (XVIII, 74, 135) or *Pyramus & Tisbe* (X, 12). Such names are the immediate consequence of the courtly love rhetoric and they cannot be linked to the appearance of the Vlachs. However, various other ethnic names can link to them, among which one should count: *Breto* (II, 47); *Genoes* (III, 14; IV, 17); *Grezeis* (XXII, 55) or *Grifo(s)* (XX, 38; *Epic Letter* II, 31); *Guasco* (*Epic Letter* II, 49); *Mauris* (XIX, 64); *Paian* (XX, 37); and *Turc(s)* (XIX, 28, 42; XX, 37, 52, 61; XXII, 82, 88). The mentioning of Bretons and Gascons belongs to a catalogue of allies, fighting together for the conquest of Constantinople.<sup>7</sup> That of the Greeks, the Turks, the Pagans, and the Moors, supplemented by the Russians, the Vlachs, and the Cumans in the first poem I have mentioned, refers to a general enemy, neither Muslim nor Pagan, but Oriental altogether. However, all these data are vague. These enemies appear in many literary texts of Western Europe and the fact that the Vlachs are listed among them proves only the crusaders' hostility towards them.

The second citation discussed here belongs to another poem and is much more interesting, since it mentions only the Vlachs and their local allies, in a limited context, in the text of a poem written during the summer of 1205:<sup>8</sup>

*Pero no-m comanda valors,  
si be-m sui iratz ni enics,  
q'ieu don gaug a mos enemics  
tan q'en perda pretz ni lauzors,  
q'ancar puosc dan e pro tener,  
e sai d'irat joios parer  
sai entre-ls Latins e-ls Grezeis;  
e-l marques, aue espaza-m seis,  
gerreia Blacs e Drogoiz,  
et anc pois lo mons fon bastitz  
nuilla gens non fetz tant d'esfortz  
cum nos, cui Dieus a gent estortz.<sup>9</sup>*

Thus, one might point out that the discourse has changed in the time passed between the redaction of the two poems. The image of the Vlachs shifted from a general menace (allied with the Greeks) to a neighbouring enemy, whose hatred

<sup>7</sup> The *Epic letter* lists:

*E vos pensetz de far defensio e.l coms de Flandres; e Frances e Breto et Alaman, Lombart e Berguonho et Espanhol, Proensal e Guasco.*

<sup>8</sup> D. Găzdaru, art.cit., p. (24) 108, who thinks it is the last poem written by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras; cf. J. Linskill, ed.cit., p. 242, who dates it June-July 1205.

<sup>9</sup> "Yet, though I am troubled and vexed, Valour does not command me so to gladden my enemies as to forsake glory and honour, for I can still do harm and good, and change my countenance from sad to gay, here among the Latins and the Greeks; and the Marquis, who girded me with the sword, is warring against the Wallachians and Drogo bites, and never since the world was made has any people accomplished such feats as we, whom God has graciously delivered". See ANNEXE 1 for the exact bibliographical references.

had immediate consequences not on the Crusade rhetoric, but on the country occupied by Raimbaut's master. The Vlachs are not linked with the general crusade *topoi*, but with a real historical event: the Balkan wars waged by Boniface de Montferrat. The fragment has been analyzed by Găzdaru in his article, where he clearly states that the *Drogobites* should be interpreted as Vlachs, due to the fact that they inhabited a Vlach region in the Balkans and of their alliance.<sup>10</sup> However, the sources he used in his analysis speak of the *Drogobites* as of a Slavic ethnic group.<sup>11</sup> When confronting these theories with Linskill's commentary on the poem, one finds out that the editor has no idea what decision to make. He used both the sources cited and Găzdaru's interpretation, and reached no clear conclusion.<sup>12</sup> In fact, we should correct Găzdaru's theory and determine a Slavic origin of the *Drogoiz*, consequently shifting the false synonymical binome<sup>13</sup> to a real alliance of the early XIII<sup>th</sup> century.

Next, Găzdaru mentions a fragment of Raimbaut's *Epic Letter*, one of the most famous works of the Provençal literature, which he dates in spring 1205,<sup>14</sup> and where he identifies the hidden presence of Johanitsa, the Assen king, as *rey*.<sup>15</sup>

*Maynt fort castel e mainta fort ciutat,  
maint bel palaitz ai ab vos azeguat,  
emperador e rey et amirat  
e-l sevasto Lasquar e-l proestat  
el Peitr' assis, e maint' outra postat.*<sup>16</sup>

Nonetheless, even though Găzdaru argued that while reading this fragment one should bear in mind two Crusader campaigns into Thracia: one led by Boniface of Montferrat in 1203 in order to help the young Alexios IV against his uncle, Alexios III; and the second one, in July 1204, led by the same Boniface against Baldwin of Flanders, who might have extended his dominion too much into the Kingdom of Thessalonika,<sup>17</sup> the identification of the word *rey* as a hidden hint to

<sup>10</sup> D. Găzdaru, art.cit., pp. (24–25) 108–109.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. (25) 109. Găzdaru cites a fragment of the *Acta Sanctorum* where he has found: *Scavorum gens, numero infinito ex Drogobitis, Sagodariis, Belegezetis, Boeonitis, Berzitis reliquisque.*

<sup>12</sup> J. Linskill, ed.cit., p. 250.

<sup>13</sup> The “synonymical binome” is a figure of speech used mainly by French translators (and writers) in the Middle Ages; one introduced a new word in the language by glossing it with a second one, more common, either using comparisons or copulatives (similarly to the Latin hendiad). Such a practice could have been used by Raimbaut in case he would have written *Drogoiz e Blacs*. However, the word order and the rare use of this figure of speech in the Provençal literature is a supplementary proof that the troubadour did not gloss the *Drogoiz*, but used them as real enemies, allied to the Vlachs.

<sup>14</sup> J. Linskill, ed.cit., p. 303, favors the same dating.

<sup>15</sup> D. Găzdaru, art.cit., pp. (23–24) 107–108.

<sup>16</sup> “Many a fortified castle and city, many a splendid palace have I razed with you, and besieged emperor, king and commander and the august Lascaris and the prostrator in the Petron, and many another mighty one”. See ANNEXE 1 for the exact bibliographical references.

<sup>17</sup> D. Găzdaru, art.cit., p. (23) 107.

Johanitsa Assen, king of the Bulgarians and the Vlachs, is merely a speculation. Găzdaru followed Schultz-Gora, who had previously favoured the same interpretation,<sup>18</sup> but ignored the synonymical list (*emperador – rey – amirat*) which is followed by otherwise clearly identified figures or toponyms, such as Constantine or Theodor Laskaris (*sevasto Lasquar*) and the Petrion district of Constantinople (*Peitr'assis*).<sup>19</sup> All in all, since the Linskill edition was published after his article, Găzdaru was not aware of the problems posed by the manuscript tradition and by the various readings of the fragment, which do not easily allow further speculations. Thus, no matter what *emperador*, *rey* and *amirat* are hiding (were they hiding any hidden references at all!) no one can favour their identification with a famous leader from the time of the Fourth Crusade. Even though various other hypotheses favoured by Schultz-Gora or Crescini envisaged vague hints to Alexios V Murzuphlos or even to John Stirion (see *amirat*),<sup>20</sup> the general context of the fragment does not point towards the north of the Rodope Mountains, into the land of Johanitsa, but towards the Bosphorus and mainly around Constantinople. I therefore disagree with Găzdaru's conclusion and reject the fragment, since it does not refer to Johanitsa or to the Vlachs.<sup>21</sup>

\*

Even though the two citations I have already analyzed and identified as references to the Balkan Vlachs do not bear much historical value, their testimony is priceless from a cultural point of view. One should know more about the context to which they belong and this brief analysis should pass perhaps to the presentation of Raimbaut de Vaqueiras' life and times. It was previously supposed that he could have been born between 1155–1160,<sup>22</sup> and one knows only that he was a troubadour from Vaqueiras / Vaqueirad (Vaucluse), in the principality of Orange, who could have joined as a court poet in the late 1170s or the early 1180s the entourage of the marquis Boniface of Montferrat, whom he describes in his Epic Letter as *valen marques, senher de Monferrat*. Unfortunately, the exploits of the marquis mentioned there include many references to love stories, marriages, and knightly courageous adventures,<sup>23</sup> his Italian campaigns, and the attack and conquest of Constantinople, but no details concerning his wars with the Vlachs. Raimbaut might have also been a soldier, since he tells his readers that he protected Boniface with his shield in the battle of Messina, when the marquis took part in Emperor Henry VI's invasion of Sicily; the troubadour claimed however that he obtained his knighthood due to his songs. Moreover, he could have fallen in love

<sup>18</sup> O. Schultz-Gora, *Le epistole de Trovatore...*, Firenze, 1898, pp. 136–137 ; *apud* D. Găzdaru, art.cit., p. (23) 107.

<sup>19</sup> J. Linskill, ed.cit., p. 321.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> The entire text of the poem is reproduced in ANNEXE I.

<sup>22</sup> O. Schultz-Gora, ed.cit., p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Boniface's rescue of Jacobina de Ventimiglia from her uncle Otto.

with Beatrice, the daughter of Boniface, whom he named *Bel Cavalher* in his poems, and during the service for the marquis he fought in the war against the communes of Asti and Alessandria (Italy) as mentioned in the *Epic Letter*. Later, after Boniface's Italian failure in 1202 and Raimbaut's return to Provence, he returned to his master in 1203 and took part in the Fourth Crusade. In 1204-1205 he accompanied Boniface to Thessaloniki after his master failed to be elected emperor, and he followed him in his expedition throughout Greece. One could presume that Raimbaut de Vaqueiras died by the side of his master Boniface on September the 4<sup>th</sup> 1207 in an ambush laid by the armies of Tsar Kaloyan.<sup>24</sup> This hypothesis is suggested by the fact that he composed no *planh* (lament) in his master's memory. Still, two other hypotheses suggest that Raimbaut could have simply lacked interest for the poetic matters after his master's death, and he could have been involved either in the Latin Empire's affairs, or he could have returned to Provence.<sup>25</sup> The data already presented cannot substantiate any hypothesis concerning his connection to the Balkan Vlachs.

Even the *vida* of the troubadour, in its common version, tells us that *Raembautz de Vaqueiras si fo fillz d'un paubre cavailler de Proensa, del castel de Vaqueiras, que avia nom Peirors...* After a brief description of the troubadour's relation to Boniface of Montferrat, one finds out that *E quant lo marques passet en Romania, el lo mena ab se e fetz lo cavalier. Et det li gran terra e gran renda el regisme de Salonic. E lai el mori.*<sup>26</sup> From the later interpolations one reads only about Raimbaut's love for the marquis' daughter following troubadour rhetoric with no detailed references,<sup>27</sup> and no historical details are given. As for the literary approach, most of Raimbaut's works were lyrical. He has been attributed 33 songs, out of which only 8 were with accompanying melodies. He used a variety of styles (*cansos*, *tensos*, *descort*, and *albas*), and *Kalenda Maia*, one of his poems, is considered to be one of the finest troubadour songs. Only one of his works, the *Epic Letter*, the one mentioning the false hint to Johanitsa, has an important historical value, since it refers to the career of Boniface de Montferrat and to the politics of the Latin Empire in its earliest years. The rest of his works provide bits and pieces of a large puzzle one cannot assemble properly.

In the end, no one can easily put into words which was Raimbaut's true relation to the Vlachs he mentions twice in his poems. They must have been enemies, but did he meet them in battle? When looking at the previous references concerning the Latin-speaking peoples of the East, one finds that their first appearance in Western sources occurs at the end of the eleventh or at the beginning of the twelfth century, when the Walachians or the Vlachs are mentioned in the *Chanson de Roland* among the contingents of the Saracen army. They were the

<sup>24</sup> J. Linskill, ed.cit., pp. 4-37.

<sup>25</sup> O. Schultz-Gora, ed.cit., p. 19; W.T. Pattison, *Life and Works of the Troubadour Raimbaut d'Orange*, Minneapolis, 1952, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> J. Linskill, ed.cit., p. 67.

<sup>27</sup> Linskill, ed.cit., pp. 68-69.

---

*Blos*, allied with the *Nubles*, and neighbours of other Eastern ‘fairy-tale’ nations. Byzantine, Russian, and even Scandinavian sources mention the Vlachs much earlier, but the Western ones tend to neglect them, either due to a lack of interest, or to a lack of geographical data. The Vlachs inhabiting the lands south of the Danube appear out of a sudden in the texts of the Fourth Crusade, in the works of Geoffrey of Villehardouin, Robert de Clari, and Henri de Valenciennes or even in those of Philippe Mousket. The ones to the North are mentioned in the second part of the thirteenth century, consequently to the appearance of Hungarian Latin sources. In this general context, Raimbaut’s mentioning of the Vlachs belongs to the sudden emergence of the interest for the Vlachs due to the Fourth Crusade. Consequently, the two (out of three) poems I have discussed in the present article do not provide the historian with new data, with new perspectives, or with more clues to the interpretation of the early history of the Romanians. They mention the Vlachs as enemies of the Latin Empire, and the importance of this source lies only in their early time of its redaction.



**Annexe 1**  
**The Three Poems**

RAIMBAUT DE VAQUEIRAS, *CONSEIL DON A L'EMPERADOR*  
(392, 9a; edited and translated by Linskill 1964, pp. 225-228)

Manuscript:

**Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Càmpori γ. N. 8. 4 ; 11, 12, 13 ; diplomatically edited by Bertoni,**  
*Il canzoniere provenzale di Bernart Amoros (Complemento Càmpori),* Friburg, 1911

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Conseil don a l'emperador<br/>pois per conseil fai totz sos plais,<br/>e non faria meins ni mais<br/>mas tant con sei conseillador<br/>5     li volun far dir 'e faire :<br/>e-il conseil, s'el vol esser pros,<br/>qe don, sens conseil, derenan ;<br/>e, ses conseil ab sos baros,<br/>creza-l conseil del plus prezan,<br/>10     q'aissi 's conseils d'empeaire.</p> | <p>I offer a counsel to the Emperor, since he conducts all his affairs by council, and would not do nor more nor less than his councillors would have him say and do. And I counsel him, if he aims at excellence, to give henceforth without counsel; and, without consulting the barons' council, let him hearken to the counsel of the worthiest man, for such is a counsel befitting an Emperor.</p>                                       |
| <p>Pueis eu li conseil sa honor,<br/>creza m'en, si-n vol, o s'en lais ;<br/>e se-l senescal no-s n'irais<br/>ni Coine del cosseil major,<br/>15     eu serai bos cosseillaire,<br/>e darai conseil a els dos,<br/>qant lur segnor consseillaran,<br/>qe-il cosseillen de far rics dos ;<br/>mas no sai s'amos m'en creiran,<br/>20     ni eu no-ls en forzi gaire.</p>     | <p>Since I counsel what will bring him honour, let him hear me, if he would, or let him give no thought to it. And if the Seneschal and Conon of the Grand Council be not wroth, I shall be a good counsellor, and shall counsel them both, when they counsel their suzerain, to counsel him to bestow such rich gifts; but I know not if these two will hearken to me, nor do I in the least compel them to do so.</p>                        |
| <p>E si no-s meillur' en la flor,<br/>lo frugz poiri' esser malvais ;<br/>e gart se q'al seu tort non bais,<br/>qe pujatz es en grant honor,<br/>25     et es bels e de bon aire ;<br/>e se vol creire mos sermos,<br/>ja no-i aura anta ni dan,<br/>anz sera granz honors e pros,<br/>car se pert cels c'ab lui estan,<br/>30     tart venran de son repaire.</p>          | <p>And if there be no improvement in the blossom, the fruit might well be rotten; and let him beware lest he decline, to his own hurt, for he has risen to great honour, and he is a goodly person and of a noble lineage. And if he would heed my words, then indeed there will be no shame and no hurt, but there will be great honour and profit, for if he abandons those who stand with him, men will be slow to become his servants.</p> |
| <p>E non tema freg ni calor,<br/>ni-s baign ni sojorn em palais,<br/>qe al col a cargat tal fais<br/>qe, s'el non es de gran valor,<br/>35     greu lo poira a cap traire ;<br/>qe li Blac e-il Coman e-il Ros<br/>e-il Turc e-il Paian e-il Persan<br/>seran contra lui ab Grifos ;<br/>e si per pretz non trai ofan,<br/>40     tot qant a faig pot desfaire</p>          | <p>And let him not fear cold or heat, nor linger in palatial ease, for he has placed on his neck a burden of such weight that, if he be not of great valour, it will be hard for him to bear it to the end. For the Wallachians and the Cumans and the Russians and the Turks and the Pagans and the Persians will be against him, with all the Greeks; and if he does not endure toil for glory's sake, he may undo all he has done.</p>      |

- Q'el e nos em tuig pecchador  
dels mostiers ars e del palais,  
on vei pecar los clerics e-ls lais ;  
e se-l sepulchre non secor,  
45 serem vas Dieu plus pechaire,  
q'en pechat tornara-l perdos,  
e se-l conqis no 'stai enan ;  
mas s'el es larcs ni coratjos,  
ben leu pot anar osteian  
50 a Babiloni' e al Caire.*
- For he and we alike bear guilt for the burning of the churches and the palaces, wherein I see both clerics and laymen sin; and if he does not succour the Holy Sepulchre and if the conquest does not advance, then our guilt before God will be greater still, for the pardon will turn to sin. But if he be liberal and brave, he will lead his battalions to Babylonia and Cairo with the greatest ease.
- Tota sa forz' e sa vigor  
taign qe mostr' als Turcs part Roais,  
qe tuit li soudan e-il alcais  
e-il amirail e-il almassor  
55 n'esperan lansar e traire ;  
et er n'encolpatz Nevelos,  
e-ls doz' electors blasmaran,  
se-l sepulchr' es mais en preizos ;  
e-l dux n'er apellatz d'enjan  
60 si-l vol del socors estraire.*
- All his power and strength must he display to the Turks beyond Roais (Edessa), for all the sultans and the cadis and the emirs and the caliphs are hoping to wield lances and hurl missiles. And Névelon will be denounced, and the twelve electors will be blamed, if the Sepulchre remains in captivity; and the Doge will be accused of deception if he is minded to turn him aside from this succour.
- Al marescal voil retraire  
mon cosseil, q'es leials e bos ;  
mas lui, e Miles de Burban,  
blasmarai se non es fort pros  
65 .....  
e lares e francs l'empeaire.*
- I wish to make my counsel known to the Marshal, for he is loyal and true. But I will blame him, and Milon of Brabant, if the Emperor be not most valiant and liberal and noble.

RAIMBAUT DE VAQUEIRAS, *NO M'AGRAD' IVERNS NI PASCORS*  
(392, 9a; edited and translated by Linskill 1964, pp. 241-246)

Manuscripts, diplomatic editions and other details:

**Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana 5232;**

diplomatically edited by Pakscher, De Lollis, *Studi di filologia romanza*, III, pp. 1-670;

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 1592 ;**

the same text variant appears in:

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 12474 ;**

**Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, R 71;** diplomatically edited by Bertoni, *Il canzoniere provenzale della Biblioteca Ambrosiana R 71*, Dresden, 1912;

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 856 ;**

**Modena, Biblioteca Estense, a, R, 4, 4, ff. 152-211;**

**Modena, Biblioteca Estense, a, R, 4, 4, ff. 243-260;** diplomatically edited by Teulié, Rossi, *AdM*, XIII-XIV;

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 854;**

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 12473;**

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 12474;**

**Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek, cod. Phillips 1910;** diplomatically edited by Pillet, *Archiv* 101;

**Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. XLI, cod. 42** (includes a *razo*); diplomatically edited by Stengel, *Archiv* 49.

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 22543** (includes the musical setting);

**Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 269**; diplomatically edited by Shepard, *The Oxford Provençal Chansonnier*, Princeton-Paris, 1927;

**Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, 146**;

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 15211**;

**Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. XLI, cod. 43**; diplomatically edited by Grützmacher, *Archiv* 35.

- |           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| <p>5</p>  | <p><i>No m'agrad' iverns ni pascors<br/>ni clairs temps ni fuoills de garrics,<br/>car mos enans mi par destrics<br/>e totz mos majer gauz dolors,<br/>e son maltrag tuit miei lezer<br/>e desesperat miei esper ;<br/>e si-m sol amors e dompneis<br/>tener gai plus que l'aiga-l peis !<br/>10 E pois d'amor me sui patitz<br/>cum hom issillatz e faiditz,<br/>tot' outra vida-m sembla mortz<br/>e totz autre jois desconortz.</i></p>                         | <p>Neither winter nor spring delights me, nor sunny days<br/>nor leaf of (kermes-)oak, for my advancement seems<br/>to me loss, and my greatest joy sorrow, and all my<br/>pleasures are sufferings, and my hopes are turned to<br/>despair ; yet love and service of my lady were wont to<br/>keep me happier than a fish in water ! And since I<br/>have parted from love, like one ruined and banished,<br/>every other (way of) life seems death to me, and every<br/>other joy desolation.</p>  |
| <p>15</p> | <p><i>Pois d'amor m'es faillida-il flors<br/>e-l dolz fruitz e-l grans<br/>l'espics,<br/>don gauzi' ab plazens prezics<br/>e pretz m'en sobrav' et honors<br/>e-n sabi' entre-ls pros caber,<br/>era-m fai d'aut en bas cazer ;<br/>20 e si no-m sembles fols esfreis,<br/>anc flama plus tost non s'esteis<br/>q'ieu for' esteins e relinquitz<br/>e perdutz en faitz et en digz<br/>lo jorn qe-m venc lo desconortz<br/>que non merma, cum qe-m refortz.</i></p> | <p>Since the flower of love is denied to me, and the<br/>sweet fruit and the grain and the ear, in which I<br/>rejoiced with pleasant discourse, and by which I had<br/>glory and honour in abundance, and could take my<br/>place among the valiant, now am I fallen low from<br/>the summit ; and did it not seem to me a foolish<br/>fear, no flame ever failed more quickly than I would<br/>have failed and been forlorn and lost in words and<br/>deeds the day there came to me the desolation that<br/>no striving of mine may diminish.</p> |
| <p>25</p> | <p><i>Bels armatz e bos feridors,<br/>setges e calabres e pics,<br/>e traucar murs nous et antics,<br/>e vensser bataillas e tors<br/>vei et aug ; e non puosc aver<br/>30 ren qe-m puosc' ad amor valer !<br/>E vauc cercan ab rics arneis<br/>gerras e coitas e torneis,<br/>don sui conqueren enriquitz;<br/>e pois jois d'amor m'es faillitz,<br/>35 totz lo mons no-m parri' us ortz,<br/>ni mos chans no m'es mais confortz.</i></p>                         | <p>Fine warriors and stout fighters, sieges, catapults<br/>and pikes, and walls old and new pierced, and<br/>battalions and towers overwhelmed I see and hear ;<br/>yet can I gain naught to avail me in my love ! And,<br/>in rich armour clad, I seek out wars and frays and<br/>combats and am enriched by conquest; yet since the<br/>joy of love is refused to me, the whole world (if I<br/>possessed it) would seem less than a garden to me,<br/>and my song no more consoles me.</p>  |

- 40 *Doncs, qe-m val conquistiz ni ricors ?  
 qu'eu ja-m tenia per plus rics  
 qand er' amatz e fis amics,  
 e-m paissi' ab n'Engles amors ;  
 n'amava mais un sol plazer  
 que sai gran terr' e grana ver,  
 45 c'ades on plus mos poders creis  
 ai major ir' ab mi mezeis,  
 pois mos Bels Cavalliers grazitz  
 e jois m'es loignatz e fugitz,  
 don mais no-m naissera conortz,  
 per q'es majer l'ir' e plus fortz.*
- 50 *Pero no-m comanda valors,  
 si be-m sui iratz ni enics,  
 q'ieu don gaug a mos enemics  
 tan q'en perda pretz ni lauzors,  
 q'ancar puosc dan e pro tener,  
 e sai d'irat joios parer  
 55 sai entre-ls Latins e-ls Grezeis ;  
 e-l marques, aue espaza-m seis,  
 gerreia Blacs e Drogoiz,  
 et anc pois lo mons fon bastitz  
 nuilla gens non fetz tant d'esfortz  
 60 cum nos, cui Dieus a gent estortz.*
- 65 *Lo marques n'es honratz e sors  
 e-l Campanes e-l coms Enricx,  
 Sicar, Montos e Salanicx  
 e Constantinople socors,  
 quar gent sabon camp retenir,  
 e pot hom ben proar en ver :  
 qu'anc mais nulha gent non ateis  
 aitan gran honor, apareys.  
 70 Per bos vassals, valens, arditz,  
 es nostr' emperis conqueritz,  
 e Dieus trameta nos esfortz  
 coissi:s tray' a cap nostra sortz !*
- 75 *Anc Alixandres non fetz cors  
 ni Carles ni-l reis Lodoics  
 tan honrat, ni-l pros n'Aimerics  
 ni Rotlans ab sos poignadors  
 non saubron tan gen conquerer  
 tan ric emperi per poder  
 cum nos, don poja nostra leis;  
 80 q'emperadors e ducs e reis  
 avem faitz, e chastels garnitz  
 prop dels Turcs e dels Arabitz,*
- What then do conquest and riches profit me? For I held myself richer when, a faithful lover, I was loved, and had my fill of love beside my lord Engles; one single gracious gesture then charmed me more than here great lands and great possessions, for ever as my power grows, so the displeasure in my heart is greater, since my well-beloved Fair-Knight and joy have withdrawn and fled from me, wherefore no more will comfort come to me, and so my spleen is greater and more burdensome.
- Yet, though I am troubled and vexed, Valour does not command me so to gladden my enemies as to forsake glory and honour, for I can still do harm and good, and change my countenance from sad to gay, here among the Latins and the Greeks; and the Marquis, who girded me with the sword, is warring against the Wallachians and Drogobites, and never since the world was made has any people accomplished such feats as we, whom God has graciously delivered.
- The Marquis is thereby honoured and exalted, so too the man of Champagne and Count Henry, and Sicar, Modon, Salonika and Constantinople relieved, for (these men) well know how to be masters of the field, and this indeed can easily be shown : that never yet did any people attain such glory is apparent. By fine warriors, valiant and intrepid, has our empire been won, and may God send us (fresh) forces whereby our destiny may be fulfilled!
- Never did Alexandre or Charlemagne or King Louis lead such a glorious expedition, nor could the valiant lord Aimeri or Roland with his warriors win by might, in such a noble fashion, such a powerful empire as we have won, whereby our Faith is in the ascendant; for we have created emperors and dukes and kings, and have manned strongholds near the Turks and Arabs, and opened up the roads and ports from Brindisi to St. George's Straits (Bosphorus).

*et ubertz los camins e-ls portz  
de Branditz tro al Bratz Sain Jorz.*

85 *Per nos er Domas envazitz  
e Jerusalem conqueritz  
e-l regnes de Suri' estortz,  
que-ls Turcx o trobon en lur sortz.*

By us will Damascus be assaulted, and Jerusalem conquered, and the kingdom of Syria liberated, for the Turks find this in their prophecies.

90 *Los pellegris perjurs, fraiditz,  
qi nos an sai en camp geqitz,  
qi los manten e cortz es tortz,  
que chascuns val mens vius que mortz.*

He does wrong who maintains in courts those Crusaders, perjured and perfidious, who have deserted us here on the battlefield, for each one is worth less alive than dead.

95 *Belhs dous Engles, francx et arditz,  
cortes, essenhatz, essernitz,  
vos etz de totz mos gauz conortz,  
e quar viiu ses vos, fatz esfortz.*

Fair, gentle *Engles*, noble and bold, courteous, well-bred and distinguished, you are the inspiration of all my joys, and in living without you I perform a feat.

RAIMBAUT DE VAQUEIRAS, *VALEN MARQUES, SENHER DE MONFERRAT (= THE EPIC LETTER)*  
(edited and translated by Linskill 1964, pp. 303–312)

Manuscripts, diplomatic editions and other details:

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 856;**

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 1749** (lacks the *laisse III*);

**Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale, Conv. Sopp. F, 4, 776** (lacks the *laisse III*); diplomatically edited by Savj-Lopez, *Studi di filologia romanza*, V, pp. 341.

**Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f.fr. 22543;**

**Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, 146.**

I

*Valen marques, senher de Monferrat,  
a Dieu grazisc quar vos a tant onrat  
que mais avetz conques e mes e dat  
5 c'om ses corona de la crestiantat ;  
e laus en Dieu quar tan m'a enansat  
que bon senhor ai molt en vos trobat,  
que m'avetz gent noyrit et adobat,  
e fait gran be e de bas aut pojat,  
10 e de nien fait cavalier prezat,  
grazit en cort e per donas lauzat.  
Et ieu ai vos servit de voluntat,  
de bona fe, de bon cor e de grat,  
que mon poder vos n'ai ben tot mostrat ;  
et ai ab vos fait maint cortes barat,  
15 qu'en maint bel luec ay ab vos dompneyat ;  
et ai ab vos per guerra cavalguat,  
et ab armas perdut e guazanhat,  
e pres maynt colp et ab vos n'ai donat,  
20 e gen fugit et ab vos encaussat,*

I

Valiant Marquis, Lord of Montferrat, I thank God that He has granted you such honour that you have conquered and dispensed and bestowed more than any uncrowned man in Christendom ; and I praise God that He has so advanced me that I have found in you a most generous lord. For you have graciously maintained and equipped me, and shown me great kindness, and from lowly state raised me on high, and from naught made me a knight of repute, welcome at court and prased by the ladies. I in return have served you willingly and truly and with glad heart, and to the utmost of my power. I have devised with you so many a courtly stratagem, and with you given service to ladies on may a fine occasion. With you I have ridden to war and, in armour clad, have lost and won, and taken and given with you many a blow, and skilfully fled and pursued with you, and,

vensen l'encaus, et en fugen tornat,  
 e sui cazutz et ai en derrocat.  
 Et ai en ga e sus en pon jostat,  
 e part barreiras ab vos esperonat,  
 25 et envazit barbacan' e fossat,  
 e sus en guarda et en aut luec anat,  
 vensen grans coytas ; et ai vos ajudat  
 a conquerre emperi e regnat  
 e-l sevaso Lasquar e-l proestat  
 30 el Peitr' assis, e maint' outra postat.  
 Et encausse ab vos a Filopat  
 l'emperador, qu'avetz dezeretat,  
 de Romania, e l'autre coronat.  
 35 E si per vos no suy en gran rictat,  
 no semblara qu'ab vos aia estat  
 ni servit tan cum vos ai repropchat,  
 e vos sabetz qu'ieu dic del tot vertat,  
 40 senher marques.

## II

Senher marques, ja no-m diretz de no,  
 que vertatz es, e vos sabetz ben quo  
 me tinc ab vos a ley de vassalh bo,  
 5 quant assalhis a Cart entr' Ast e No,  
 que quatre cens cavaliers a tenso  
 vos encausavon, feren ad espero,  
 que no-s tengron ab vos detz companho,  
 quan vos tornetz e feris de rando :  
 10 pueys vos dupteron mais que grua falco.  
 Et ieu torney al mager ops que-y fo,  
 que ieu e vos levem gen del sablo  
 n'Albert marques, qu'era jos de l'arso.  
 Et ai estat per vos en greu preyzo  
 15 per vostra guerra, e n'ai part Recaldo  
 fait maint assaut et ars maynta maizo,  
 e fait maint colp ab vos part Caranso.  
 Et a Messina vos cobri del blizo ;  
 en la batalha vos vinc en tal sazo  
 20 que-us ferion pel pietz e pel mento  
 dartz e cairels, sagetas e lanso,  
 lansas e brans e coutels e fausso.  
 E quan prezes Randas e Paterno,  
 Rochel' e Terme e Lentin et Aido,  
 25 Plass' e Palerma e Calatagiro,  
 fui als premiers, sotz vostre gonfayno.  
 E quant anetz per crozar a Saisso,  
 ieu non avia en cor, Dieus m'o perdo,

checking the pursuit, turned during flight (to  
 renew the combat), and have fallen from the  
 saddle and unseated others. I have fought in fords  
 and high up on bridges, and with you spurred  
 on past barriers, and attacked barbicans and  
 moats, and scaled fortified heights, triumphant  
 amid great perils. I have helped you to conquer  
 empire and kingdom and these lands and islands  
 and a duchy, and to capture kings, princes and  
 principalities, and to vanquish many an armed  
 knight. Many a fortified castle and city, many a  
 splendid palace have I razed with you, and  
 besieged emperor, king and commander and  
 the august Lascaris and the prostrator in the  
 Petrion, and many another mighty one. With  
 you I pursued to the Philopatation the Emperor of  
 Romania, whom you stripped of his  
 inheritance, placing the crown on another's  
 head. If then through you I do not possess great  
 riches, it will not seem that I have been by your  
 side nor served you as I have set forth. Yet you  
 know that I speak but the truth, my Lord  
 Marquis.

## II

My Lord Marquis, you will not gainsay me, for  
 it is true, and you know full well how I stayed  
 by your side like a true warrior when you  
 attacked at Quarto, between Asti and Annone;  
 four hundred horsemen were pursuing you,  
 outvying each other and spurring their steeds,  
 and by your side there were barely ten  
 companions, when you turned and struck with  
 violence: they feared you then more than the  
 crane fears the falcon. And I turned to the most  
 pressing need there was, and you and I  
 skilfully raised from the ground the Lord  
 Marquis Albert, who had fallen from the  
 saddle. For you, fighting in your war, I have  
 suffered dire captivity, and by Ricaldone have  
 made many a raid and burnt many a dwelling,  
 and along with you have struck many a blow  
 by Caranzano. At Messina I covered you with  
 the shield; amid the fray I came to you at the  
 moment when darts and bolts, arrows and  
 javelins, lances and swords and daggers and  
 falchions were striking you on breast and face.  
 And when you captured Randazzo and Paterno,  
 Roccella and Termini and Lentini and Aidone,  
 Piazza and Palermo and Caltagirone, I was there,  
 beneath your standard, in the forefront. When  
 you went to Soissons to take the cross, I had no

que passes mar, mas per vostre resso  
 levey la crotz e pris confessio ;  
 30 e era pres lo fort castel Babo,  
 e no m'avion res forfait li Grifo.  
 Pueys vinc ab vos guerreyar part Monço ;  
 entorn Blaquerna, sotz vostre pabalho,  
 estei armatz, a ley de Bramanso,  
 35 d'elm e d'ausberc e de gros guambaizo ;  
 e-m combatey sotz la tor el Peiro,  
 e-i fui nafratz d'outra la guarnizo.  
 E estey tan armatz pres del donjo  
 tro qu'en cassem l'emperador felho,  
 40 selh que destruyt son frair' a trassio.  
 Quan vi'l gran fum e la flam' e'l carbo,  
 e'l mur traucat en man luec ses bonso,  
 issi el camp per combatr' a bando  
 ab tan grans gens, ses tota falhizo,  
 45 c'az un de nos eron cen per razo.  
 E vos pensetz de far defensio  
 e'l coms de Flandres; e Frances e Breto  
 et Alaman, Lombart e Berguonho  
 et Espanhol, Proensal e Guasco,  
 50 tug fom renguat, cavalier e pezo.  
 E l'empeaire, ab lo cor al talo,  
 esperonet e sei vil companho  
 plus d'una legua; pueys volgron li gloto.  
 Nos fom austor et ylh foro aigro,  
 55 e cassem los si cum lops fai mouto.  
 E l'empeaire fugic s'en a lairo,  
 e laisset nos palays Bocaleo  
 e sa filha ab la clara faisso.  
 E franc vassalh quan ser a senhor bo,  
 60 pretz l'en reman et a-n bon guizado :  
 per qu'ieu n'esper de vos esmend' e do,  
 senher marques.

## III

Senher marques, no-us vuelh totz remembrar  
 los joves fagz qu'en prim prezem a far,  
 que paor ai tornes a malestar  
 5 a nos que-ls autres deuriam chastiar ;  
 e non per tan bel ero-l fag tan clar  
 que en macip no-y pogr'om melhurar ;  
 car prim punh es de jove ric triar  
 si vol gran pretz mantener o laissar,  
 10 cum vos, senher, que volguetz tant aussar  
 vostra valor ades al comensar  
 que vos e mi fezetz per tot lauzar,  
 vos cum senher e mi cum bacallar.  
 E quar es greu perdr' e dezamparar,  
 15 senher, amic, qu'om deu tener en car,  
 vuelh retraire, e l'amor refrescar,  
 lo fag que fem de Saldina de Mar,

mind (may God forgive me) to cross the sea,  
 but for the sake of your glory I took the cross  
 and made confession; yet I was near the fortified  
 castle of Babon, and the Greeks had done me  
 no wrong. I came then to wage war by your side  
 beyond Modon; by the Blachernae, beneath  
 your banner, I stood armed, like a Brabantine,  
 with helm and hauberk and stout gambeson,  
 and I fought beneath the tower in the Petron,  
 and there was wounded beneath my armour.  
 And long stood I armed near the castle, until  
 we drove out the felon Emperor, he who undid  
 his brother in treacherous fashion. When he  
 saw the great smoke and the flames and the  
 embers, and the wall breached in many a place  
 without the battering-ram, he came out into the  
 field purposing fierce battle, with him so great  
 a host that, without a doubt, there were  
 perforce one hundred of them to each of us.  
 And you looked to the defence, and the Count  
 of Flanders also; and Frenchmen and Bretons,  
 and Germans, Lombards and Burgundians, and  
 Spaniards, Provençals and Gascons, we all  
 stood arrayed, horsemen and footmen. And the  
 Emperor, with his heart in his heels, spurred  
 forward, with his contemptible companions,  
 for more than a mile; then the wretches turned.  
 We were hawks and they were herons, and we  
 chased them as the wolf chases the sheep. And  
 the Emperor fled thence like a thief, and left us  
 the Bucoleon palace and his daughter of the  
 fair countenance. Now when a vassal serves a  
 generous lord, he acquires merit thereby and  
 receives a full reward: hence I await from you  
 a recompensing gift, my Lord Marquis.

## III

My Lord Marquis, I do not wish to recall you  
 all the youthful exploits that we set out to  
 accomplish in the beginning, for I fear it would be  
 unbecoming to us, who must teach the others ;  
 and yet these exploits were so splendid that in a  
 young man they could not be bettered. For it is of  
 the first importance for a young nobleman to  
 choose whether he wishes to win great glory or to  
 renounce it, as you chose, my lord, who right  
 from the outset desired to raise your worth to  
 such great heights that you made both yourself  
 and me honoured everywhere, you as lord and  
 me as a novice in arms. But since it is a  
 grievous thing, my lord, to abandon and  
 forsake a friend, whom one should cherish, I  
 want to revive our friendship by relating the

20 *quan la levem al marques, al sopar,  
 a Malespina de sul plus aut logar,  
 e la donetz a Ponset d'Aguilar,  
 que muria el liet per lieys amar.  
 E membre vos d'Aimonet lo jocglar,  
 quant a Montaut venc las novas comtar  
 que Jacobina ne volian menar  
 25 en Serdenha mal son grat maridar.  
 E vos prezes un pauc a sospirar,  
 e membret vos cum vos det un baizar  
 al comchat penre, quan vos preguet tan car  
 30 que de son oncle la volcsetz amparar,  
 que la volia a tort dezeretar.  
 E vos mandetz cinq escudiers muntar,  
 de tot lo mielhs que vos saupes triar,  
 e cavalguem la nueg apres sopar,  
 35 vos e Guiot et Hugonet del Far  
 e Bertaldo, que gent nos saup guidar,  
 e mi meteys, que no mi vuell deixar,  
 que la levey al port, a l'embarcar.  
 E-l crit se leva per terra e per mar,  
 40 e segon nos pezo e cavalariar :  
 grans fo l'encaus, e nos pessem d'anar,  
 e cujem lor a totz gent escapar,  
 tro silh de Pisa nos vengron assautar.  
 E quan nos vim devant nos traversar  
 45 tan cavalier, tan estreg cavalgar,  
 e tant ausberc e tan belh elme clar,  
 tan golfaino contra-l ven baneyar,  
 rescozem nos entr' Albeng' e-l Finar;  
 aqui auzim vas manhtas partz sonar  
 50 manh corn, manh gralle, manh ta senha cridar:  
 s'aguem paor, no-us o cal demandar.  
 Dos jorns estem ses beur' e ses manjar;  
 quant venc al terz que no-n cugem anar,  
 55 nos encontrem el pas de Belhestar  
 dotze lairos, que-y eron per raubar,  
 e no-i poguem cosselh penre ni dar,  
 quar a caval no-i podi' hom brocar.  
 Ei ieu a pe anei-m ab els mesclar,  
 60 e fui nafratz ab lansa pel colar,  
 mas ye-n nafriey tres o quatre, so-m par,  
 si que a totz fi las testas virar ;  
 e Bertaldo et Hugonet del Far  
 viro-m nafrat e vengro-m ajudar;  
 65 e quan fom trey, fem lo pas desliurar  
 dels lairos, si que vos poguetz passar  
 seguramen, e deuria-us membrar.  
 Pueys nos dirnem ab gaug, ses pro manjar,  
 70 d'un pan tot sol ses beur' e ses lavar.  
 E-l ser venguem ab n'Eyssi al Pueg-clar,  
 que-ns fés tal gaug e tant nos volc onrar  
 que sa filha n'Aiglet' ab lo vis clar,  
 se-u sufrissetz, fera ab vos colgar.*

deed we performed together for Saldina de Mar, when we rescued her from the Marquis, at supper-time, at Malaspina, on his highest retreat, and you gave her to Ponset of Aguilar, who through love for her lay dying in his bed. Remember too when the poet Aimonet came to Montaldo to bring the news that they were preparing to take Jacobina away to Sardinia, there to be married against her will. You gave a gentle sigh, and you remembered how she gave you a kiss on taking leave of you, when she begged you so dearly to protect her against her uncle, who sought unjustly to deprive her of her inheritance. And you ordered five squires, the best you could select, to mount horse, and after supper we rode off during the night, you and Guiot and Hugonet del Far and Bertaldo, who knew how to guide us so skilfully, and I myself, for I do not wish to leave myself out, since it was I who carried her off from the harbour at the moment of embarkation. The alarm was raised on land and sea, and footmen and horsemen followed in our wake: great was the pursuit, and we prepared to depart, and we believed we should cleverly escape them all, when along came the men of Pisa, intending to attack us. When we saw ahead so many horsemen, athwart our path, riding in close order, so many hauberks and fine, glittering helmets, so many banners streaming in the wind, we concealed ourselves between Albenga and Finale; there we heard on many sides the blowing of many a horn and clarion and the shouting of many a war-cry: there is no need for you to ask if we were afraid. For two days we remained without food or drink; and when the third day came and we resolved to break out, we encountered in the pass of Belhestar twelve thieves, assembled there for the purpose of robbing, and we were in a quandary, for in that place one could not attack on horseback. And I went forward on foot to engage them, and was wounded by a lance through the collar, but I in turn wounded three or four of them, I think, so that I made them all turn; and Bertaldo and Hugonet del Far, seeing me hurt, came to my help, and when we were three we cleared the pass of the robbers, so that you could pass in safety, and this you must recall. Then we were gladly a frugal midday meal of bread alone, without drinking or washing. That evening we reached Pueg-clar the dwelling of Sir Aicio, who received us so joyfully and desired so much to honour us that, had you suffered it, he



- 75 *Vos al mati cum senher e ric bar  
volgues l'oste fort be guazardonar,  
qu'Anselmet fes Jacobin' espozar,  
e fetz li tot lo comtat recobrar  
de Ventamilha, que devia tornar*
- 80 *a Jacobina per la mort de son frar,  
mal grat de l'oncle que la'n cuget gitar ;  
pueyssas volgues Aigleta maridar,  
e detz la Gui del Montelh-Azemar.  
E s'ieu volia retraire ni comtar*
- 85 *los ondratz faitz, seynher, que-us ai vistz far,  
poiria nos az amdos enujar,  
a me del dire, a vos de l'escotar.  
Mais cent piuzellas vos ai vist maridar  
a coms, marques, a baros d'aut afar,  
que foran laissas e no saupran que far,  
c'anc ab una jovens no-us fetz peccary.  
Cent cavaziers vos ai vistz heretar,  
et autres cent destruyr' et yssilhar,*
- 95 *los bols levar e-ls fals e-ls mals baissar;  
anc lauzengier no vos poc azautar.  
Tanta veuza, tant orfe cosselhar  
e tant mesqui vos ai vist ajudar  
qu'en paradis vos deurian menar,  
si per merce nuls hom hi deu intrar ;  
quar anc nuls hom, dignes de merceyar,  
si la-us preyet, no-i laisset fadiar,  
et ab merce voletz tostemp renhar.  
E qui vol dir per vertat ni comtar,*
- 105 *Aleyxandres vos laisset son donar  
et ardimen Rotlan e-lh dotze par  
e-l pros Berart domney e gent parlar.  
En vostra cort renhon tug benestar:  
dar e dompney, belh vestir, gent armar,  
110 trompas e joc e viulas e chantar,  
e anc no-us plac nulh portier al manjar.  
Et ieu, senher, puese mi d'aitan vanar  
qu'en vostra cort ai saubut gent estar,  
dar e servir e sufrir e celar,  
115 et anc no-y fi ad home son pezar ;  
ni no pot dir nuls hom ni repropchar  
qu'anc en guerra-m volgues de vos lunhar,  
ni temses mort per vostr' onor aussar,  
ni nulh bo fait vos volgues destrigar.  
E pus, senher, sai tan de vostr' afar,  
per tres dels autres mi devetz de be far,  
et es razos, qu'en mi podetz trobar  
testimoni, cavalier e jocglar,  
senher marques.*
- would have offered his daughter, the lady Aigleta of the fair countenance, to lie with you. The next morning, you, as lord and a powerful baron, desired to reward your host richly, and you gave Jacobina in marriage to Anselmet, and you recovered for her the entire county of Ventimiglia, which was to come to Jacobina through her brother's death, in despite of her uncle who thought to cast her out; then you wished to find a husband for Aigleta, and you gave her to Gui of Montélimar. And if, my lord, I attempt to tell and relate the honourable deeds which I have seen you perform, it might well weary both of us, me in telling and you in the listening. But this only will I say, I have seen you give in marriage to counts, marquises and lords of high estate a hundred maidens, who would have otherwise remained hapless and not known how they would fare, and yet not with any did youth lead you to err. I have seen you enrich a hundred knights, and destroy and ruin a hundred others, exalt the good and cast down the false and the wicked; nor could flatterer ever find favour with you. I have seen you give aid to so many widows and so many orphans, and succour so many of the unfortunate that they should lead you into paradise, if any man may enter there through compassion; for never did any man worthy of compassion await it in vain if he but begged it of you, and it is your wish always to rule with compassion. And should one wish to tell and relate truly, Alexander left to you his generosity, and Roland and the twelve peers their daring, and the gallant Berart lady-service and graceful discourse. In your court reign all good usages: munificence and service of ladies, elegant raiment, handsome armour, trumpets and diversions and viols and song, and at the hour of dining it has never pleased you to see a keeper at the door. I for my part may make this boast, my lord, that in your court I have known how to deport myself in seemly fashion, to give and serve and to be patient and discreet, and never have I given any man cause to grieve; nor can any man say in reproach that I have ever wished to leave your side in war or shunned death if I could increase your glory thereby, or that I ever wished to dissuade you from a noble need. And since, my lord, I know so much of your affairs, you must reward me as for three of the others, and this is just, for in me you may find a witness, a knight and a poet, my Lord Marquis.