

The Song of Roland (Oxford Version), ca. 1100

§ 79

[...] Dist Oliver : ‘Sire cumpainz, ce crei,
de Sarrazins purum bataille avoir.’
Respont Rollant : ‘E Deus la nus otreit !
Ben devuns ci ester pur nostre rei :
pur sun seignor deit hom susfrir destreiz
e endurer e granz chalz e granz freiz,
si ’n deit hom perdre e del quir e del peil.
Or quart chascuns que granz colps i empleit,
male cançon de nus chantét ne seit !
Païen unt tort e chrestïens unt dreit.
Malvaise essample n’en sera ja de mei.

§ 83-86

Dist Oliver : ‘Païen unt grant esforz ;
de noz Franceis m’i semble avoir mult poi.
Cumpaign Rollant, kar sunez vostre corn,
si l’orrat Carles, si retournerat l’ost.’
Respunt Rollant : ‘Jo fereie que fols !
En dulce France en perdreie mun los.
[...] Ne placet Damnedeu
que mi parent pur mei seient blasmét
ne France dulce ja chëet en viltét !
Einz i ferrai de Durendal asez,
ma bone espee quë ai ceint al costét ;
tut en verrez le brant ensanglantét.
[...] Melz voeill murir qu’a huntage remaigne.
Pur bien ferir l’emperere nos aimet.’

§ 89

D’altre part est l’arcevesques Turpin :
sun cheval broche e muntet un lariz,
Franceis apelet, un sermun lur ad dit :
‘Seignurs baruns, Carles nus laissat ci ;
pur nostre rei devam nus ben murir.
Chrestientét aidez a sustenir !
Bataille avrez, vos en estes tuz fiz,
kar a voz oilz vëez les Sarrazins.
Clamez voz culpes, si preiez Deu mercit !
Asoldrai vos pur voz anmes guarir ;
se vos murez, esterez seinz martirs :
sieges avrez el greignor pareïs.’
Franceis descendent, a tere se sunt mis,
e l’arcevesque de Deu les beneïst :
par penitence les cumande a ferir.

§ 79

[...] Said Oliver: ‘My lord companion, I believe
we’ll have the chance to fight some Saracens!’
Roland replies: ‘May God grant it to us!
It’s our duty to be here for our king;
a man should suffer hardship for his lord,
and endure burning heat and bitter cold,
losing some of his skin and hair.
Let each man be sure to inflict great blows,
so that no shameful song may be sung of us!
Pagans are wrong and Christians are right.
No bad example shall be made of me.

§ 83-86

Said Oliver: ‘The pagans have a mighty host;
our Frenchmen seem to number just a few.
Roland, companion, blow your horn now.
Charles will hear it and the army will return.’
Roland replies: ‘I would be acting the fool!
I’d lose my reputation in sweet France.
[...] May God forbend
that my family should be blamed because of me,
or that sweet France should be dishonored!
Instead, I’ll strike time and again with Durendal,
my good sword that hangs by my side;
you’ll see the blade all bloody from it.
[...] I’d rather die than live on in shame.
The emperor loves us for striking great blows.’

§ 89

On the other side is Archbishop Turpin:
he spurs his horse and climbs a hillock,
calls to the French, and starts his sermon:
‘Lord barons, Charles left us here;
it is our duty to die for our lord.
Do your part to defend Christianity!
You’ll go into battle soon, you can be sure,
for you can see the Saracens with your own eyes.
Say your *mea culpas* and pray God for mercy!
I will absolve you for the salvation of your souls;
if you die, you will be holy martyrs:
you’ll have seats in paradise on high.’
The French dismount, get down on the ground,
and receive God’s blessing from the Archbishop:
their penance, he says, is to strike their foes.

Thibaut de Champagne (1201-1253), "Dame, ensint est..."

Dame, ensint est qu'il m'en covient aler
et departir de la douce contree
ou tant ai malx apris a endure.
Quant je vos lais, droiz est que je m'en hee.
Dex ! pour quoi fu la terre d'outremer,
qui tant amant avra fait dessevrer
dont puis ne fu l'amours reconfortee,
ne ne porent la joie remembrer?

Ja sanz amor ne porroie durer
tant par i truis fermement ma pansee;
ne mes fins cuers ne m'en lait retourner,
ainz sui a lui la ou il velt et bee.
Trop ai apris durement a amer,
por ce ne voi coment puisse durer
de joie avoir de la plus desirree
c'onques nuns hons osast merci crier.

Je ne voi pas, quant de li sui partiz,
que puisse avoir bien ne solaz ne joie,
car onques riens ne fis si a enviz
con vos lessier, se je jamés vos voie !
Trop par en sui dolanz et esbahiz ;
par maintes foiz m'en serai repantiz
quant j'onques vos aler en ceste voie,
et je recort voz debonaires diz.

Beau sire Dex, vers vos me sui guenchiz,
tot las por vos ce que je tant amoie :
li guierredons en doit estre floriz,
quant por vos per et mon cuer et ma joie.
De vos servir sui touz prez et garniz ;
a vos me rent, beau pere Jhesu Criz,
si bon seignor avoir je ne porroie :
cil qui vos sert ne puet estre traiz.

Bien doit mes cuers estre liez et dolanz :
dolanz de ce que je part de ma dame
et liez de ce que je sui desirranz
de servir Deu, qui est mes cuers et m'ame.
Iceste amors est trop fine et poissanz :
par la covient venir les plus saichanz ;
c'est li rubiz, l'esmeraude et la jame
qui touz garit des viez pechiez puanz.

Dame des ciels, granz roïne poissanz,
au grant besoing me soiez secorranz !
De vos amer puisse avoir droite flame !
Quant dame per, dame me soit aidanz.

Lady, I have no choice: I have to go
and depart from the sweet land
where I have learned to bear such suffering.
I hate myself, and rightly, for leaving you.
My God, why does the Holy Land exist,
which will have separated so many lovers
whose love has never since known solace
and who could not even remember joy?

I could not go on living without love,
so firmly are my thoughts fixed on it, and
my faithful heart won't let me turn from it;
rather, I belong to it and obey its will.
I have learned to love too deeply,
and thus I do not see how I could endure
without the joy of the most desired one
of whom a man ever dared to beg mercy.

Apart from her, I don't see how
I could ever feel pleasure, comfort or joy,
for I never did anything so unwillingly
as leave you, if I ever see you again!
It leaves me woeful and disconsolate;
I will repent time and again
of ever undertaking this voyage
when I recall to mind your gracious words.

Dear lord God, I have turned toward you,
abandoning for your sake what I so loved;
my reward must be rich,
since for you I lose my heart and my joy.
I am prepared and ready to serve you;
I yield to you, dear father Jesus Christ,
for I could have no better lord;
he who serves you could never be betrayed.

My heart is right to be both glad and sad:
sorrowful because I leave my lady
and glad because I am filled with desire
to serve God, who is my body and soul.
This love is very pure and powerful;
it is the path that befits the wisest;
it is the ruby, the emerald, the gem
that cures all men of vile, stinking sins.

Lady of heaven, great almighty queen,
succor me in my hour of need!
May I love you with a righteous fire!
I am losing my lady; Lady, help me now!