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*THE ORIGINS OF THE HERALD OF ARMS IN LITERATURE AND THE EARLIEST WAR SONGS OF BERTRAN DE BORN (1181-1183)*

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**Resum**

Quand on voit la représentation que Chrétien de Troyes ou l'*Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* donnent du héraut d'armes, on ne songe guère qu'il puisse exister des rapports entre ces marginaux et le seigneur-troubadour Bertran de Born.

Or, dans ses premières chansons de guerre, celui-ci exerce pourtant une fonction assez semblable puisque le comte de Toulouse et l'héritier du roi d'Angleterre lui demandent de se faire leur porte-parole pour convoquer d'éventuels alliés aux combats qui se préparent. Le poète-soldat n'omet aucun argument pour convaincre ceux-ci, expose la situation avec lucidité et fait bien ressortir l'intérêt et la gloire qu'ils y trouveront.

Toutefois, outre que le rang du seigneur d'Hautefort ne le place pas dans une position de totale dépendance, son état d'esprit est bien loin de toute servilité : la conscience qu'il a de sa valeur morale et littéraire le pousse à obéir avant tout à une idéologie aristocratique fondée sur la chanson de geste et il s'arroge le droit de critiquer tout seigneur, tout roi même, qui manquerait à ses règles, même quitte à le payer bien cher.

**Paraules clau:** héraut d'armes, troubadour, aristocratie, guerre.

**Abstract**

The depictions of the herald of arms that Chrétien de Troyes or the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* provide do not seem to suggest any kind of relationship between these non-conformists and the lord troubadour Bertran de Born.

Yet, in his earliest songs of war, he performs a somewhat similar function when the Count of Toulouse and the heir of the King of England ask him to be their spokesman to call upon their potential allies for the combats ahead. The poet-soldier spares no argument to convince them, explains the situation with clarity and brings out the interest and the glory they will find in it.

At any rate, besides the fact that the rank of the lord of Hautefort does not place him in a position of total dependence, his state of mind is far away from any kind of servility: his awareness of his moral and literary value prompts him to embrace an aristocratic ideology based on the *chanson de geste* above all things, and he claims for himself the right to criticize any lord, even any king, who neglects its rules, even if he pays for it dearly.

**Key words:** Herald of arms, Troubadour, aristocracy, war.

In Chrétien de Troyes's *Chevalier de la Charrete*, the character who suddenly appears during the episode of the tournament of Nohauz, “a tant ez vos un garnemant,/ un hyraut d’armes, an chemise,/ qui an la taverna avoit mise/ sa cote avoec sa chauceüre,/ et vint nuz piez grant aleüre,/ desafublez contre le vant” (ROQUES 1967),<sup>1</sup> is all the more curious taking into account that, assuming that the novel was composed in 1177, this is the first literary mention of the herald of arms (MÉNARD 1971).

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine that the figure that would often act as the arbiter of nobility in later centuries appeared for the first time with the clownish demeanour of a tavern regular who had probably lost his clothes gambling. Nevertheless, a characteristic element of his future functions can be already identified here. When the *garnemant*, in haste, maybe caused by his lack of clothes, which he left at the tavern, or by the pursuit of other scoundrels, sees the monochromatic shield of Lancelot, his professional curiosity outweighs his fear of danger, because such a shield is exceptional, for it is somewhat anonymous: “l’escu troba a l’uis devant,/ si l’esgarda; mes ne pot estre/ qu’il coneüst lui ne son mestre,/ ne set qui porter le devoit”.<sup>2</sup> In fact, one of the tasks of the herald of arms is precisely to recognize the arms of a knight in order to announce his identity to the audience of the tournament.

In that same sphere, it is easier to trace the first occurrence of a *rei d’armas* in the work of the troubadour Bertran de Born. The particularly harsh *sirventes* against King Alfons of Aragon, accused by the seigneur-poet of Hautefort of a betrayal that prompted the taking of his fortress, can be dated to 1184. That composition includes a verse that recounts an, at best, dubious anecdote that Bertran undoubtedly learnt from his friend, the Catalan troubadour Guillem de Berguedà:

Peire Joglar saup mal pagar,  
 Que·l prestet deniers e cavaus,  
 Que la vella que Fons-Ebraus  
 Atent lo fes tot pesseiar;  
 Qu’anc l’entreseings fags ab benda  
 De la jupa del rei d’armar  
 Que·l baillet, no li puoc guizar  
 C’om ab coutels tot no·l fenda (GOUIRAN 1985).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ROQUES 1967: ll. 5536-5541: “Voici que survint un vaurien, un héraut d’armes, en chemise, qui avait laissé à la taverna sa tunique et ses chaussures et venait, à toute allure, à pieds nus, sans manteau, exposé au vent.” [Here came a rascal, a herald of arms, in his shirt, who had left his tunic and shoes at the tavern and arrived, at a furious pace, barefooted, without a mantle, exposed to the wind.]

<sup>2</sup> ROQUES 1967: ll. 5542-5545: “il trouva le bouclier devant la porte; il le regarda, mais il lui fut impossible de le reconnaître ni de savoir qui était son propriétaire et il ignore qui devait le porter.” [he found the shield in front of the door; he looked at it, but he was unable to recognize or know who was the owner, and he ignored who was to hold it]

<sup>3</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: n° 24, vv. 41-48: “[Alphonse] a mal su payer Peire Joglar qui lui avait prêté de l’argent et des chevaux, car la vieille que Fontevraud attend l’a fait mettre en pièces; en effet, le signe que le roi lui avait donné, fait d’une bande de la jupe du roi d’armes, n’a pu lui éviter d’être tout tailladé à coups de couteau.” [Badly did Alfons manage to pay Peire Joglar, who had lent him money and horses, as the old woman who is at Fontevraud had him quartered; indeed, the token that the king had given him, made out of a band from the skirt of the king of arms, did not protect him from being stabbed with knives.]

Bearing in mind that the herald of arms wore a tabard, a long and thick garment emblazoned with the arms of his lord on the front, the back and the sleeves, which turned him into a living symbol of his arms and honour, King Alfons could not provide a better safe conduct than this band; hence the dishonour when it was so ineffective.

The passage evinces a clear difference between the herald of arms of Chrétien and the Aragonese king of arms of Bertran. The latter clearly belongs to the court and its hierarchical system, which is obviously not the case for the caricatural figure of the former. It may be objected that this king of arms could suggest the early appearance of an actual position in the court of Aragon, but the Limousine author talks about it in a completely neutral way, as if it was something well known to the public.

These two literary examples—although the *sirventes* is much less literary than the novel, for it would have had no credibility if it did not comply with plausibility, or even truth—suggest that the first mention of these functions can not be traced back further than the third quarter of the twelfth century. This does not imply that the role played by these characters was not fulfilled before. In practice, the role could well have preceded the function.

My goal here is to examine whether, to some extent, Bertran de Born oriented the Occitan *sirventes*, which already existed in the generation prior to troubadours, towards a perspective that had much to do with the existing or emergent figure of the herald of arms.

A well-known task of the heralds of arms was announcing everywhere that a tournament or battle would be held on a specified date, which provided young lords with an opportunity to win glory, to say nothing of the profit involved in such events. The first war composition of the lord of Hautefort announces a battle where the main protagonists were to be the Count of Toulouse, Raimon V, and King Alfons II of Aragon. The rivalry between the two major southern lords lasted for so long that it does not allow us to pinpoint the date of Bertran de Born's *chansso*,<sup>4</sup> although a number of historical allusions seem to suggest the year 1181. In that year, Adémar de Murviel, a supporter of Raimon, killed Ramon Berenguer, brother and lieutenant in Provence of Alfons, whose reaction was violent. He took and destroyed the castle of Murviel, and then entered the county of Toulouse where he laid waste to several fortresses before setting his camp under the very walls of the city. However, soon after, he moved to Aquitaine to meet his ally Henri II Plantagenet. It is important to take into consideration that, despite the ardour with which the poet composed a song of war to engage men into an imminent combat, nothing ensured that the battle

<sup>4</sup> GOURAN 1985: “dès que nous abordons des chants de guerre proprement dits comme les pièces 9 et 12, il faut remarquer que l’auteur n’emploie pas le mot *sirventes*: il parle de *chanson* (40.3) et de *chantar* (28.1), ce qui ne saurait évidemment être déterminant, mais ne manque pas de troubler.” [when we discuss songs of war proper, such as pieces 9 and 12, it should be noted that the author does not use the word *sirventes*: he uses the words *chanson* (40.3) and *chantar* (28.1), which despite not being significant, is somewhat troubling.]

would ultimately take place. Although Bertran calls King Alfons II *rei vencut* in advance, it might end up being empty bragging.

It should also be noted that the alliance between the Angevin and the Catalan, turned them into potential enemies of the Aquitanian barons, the most unruly vassals of the king of England, as the following years would painfully prove.

Lo coms m'a mandat e mogut	I
Per N'Araimon Luc d'Esparo	
Q'ieu fassa per lui tal chansso	
On sion trencat mil escut,	
Elm et ausberc et alcoto,	5
E perpoing falsat e romput.	

Et er l'ops que sia atendut,	II
Pois comtar mi fai sa razo,	
E que ges non diga de no,	
Depois que m'o a covengut;	10
Que blastimarant m'en Gasco,	
Car de lor mi tenc per tengut. <sup>5</sup>	

The troubadour informs his audience, in a very prosaic manner, I dare say, that the Count of Toulouse sent to him the Gascon lord Raimon Luc Esparron to commission a song capable of triggering the fights, turning him into a real Tyrtaeus, the author of the paeans that supposedly led the Spartans to victory.

Modesty is not the strong suit of Bertran de Born, and that is his lesser flaw. Unlike the authors of *cançons*, the most popular genre of troubadour poetry, he does not feel the need to explain the reasons that make him the best poet; but that a lord as powerful as the Count of Toulouse, with such a high rank and great wealth that he is on a par with many kings, dispatches a lord of his court to address an average Limousin castellan to ask him for a song, is the most obvious proof of his worth. Moreover, even if the text does not bother to point it out, how many authors are there whose songs would bring about "that a thousand shields, helmets, coats of mail and gambesons are broken, and that jerkins are pierced and torn"? And this view is not just an idle boast, because it is precisely due to his ability that the Count has sent his messenger. The circle is so complete that the troubadour prefers the future perfect over the future simple, which renders actions more

<sup>5</sup> "Le comte m'a fait savoir et command  par Raimon Luc d'Esparron que je fasse pour lui une chanson telle que soient rompus mille  cus, heaumes, hauberts et hoquetons et trou s et d chir s les pourpoints.

Et il faudra qu'on lui pr te attention, puisqu'il me fait exposer ses motifs, et que je ne refuse pas, puisqu'il a fait cette convention avec moi. Sinon, les Gascons m'en bl meront, et je me consid re comme oblig  envers eux."

[The count has let me know and requested through Raimon Luc Esparron that I compose a song for him so that a thousand shields, helmets, coats of mail and gambesons are broken, and that jerkins are pierced and torn.

And attention must be paid, for he makes me state his reasons, and I do not refuse, since he has made this agreement with me. Otherwise, the Gascons will blame me, and I consider myself bound to them.]

realistic. He even uses the past tense, for he is convinced (or at least he pretends to be) of the inevitable defeat of the Catalans and the Aragonese led by their king. For starters, he had lost Tarascon, that is, the region of Provence, and he had already been defeated, despite the number of great lords among his allies, who are carefully listed by the poet, like a herald of arms would do.

The names of those who support the Count of Toulouse are not provided: is it not enough to proclaim that the greatest lords, the barons and the most honoured and famous companions of the world came running to the call of Bertran? It is not without reason that Bertran recalls their motivations to do so and puts them on the same level: some respond to the feudal summons, but all of them had also other motives for obedience, the lure of personal gain and the thirst for glory. Maybe the poet, who was described as a “barón feudal de mediana condición” [average feudal baron] (RIQUER 1971) by Martí de Riquer, and some years later included himself among these:

[...] .xxx. tal gerrier:  
 Chascus ha capa traucada.  
 Tuich seignor e parsonier,  
 Per cor de gerra mesclada,  
 C'anc no·n cobrem dinairada  
 Anz qand a als colps mestier,  
 Ant lor coreilla prestada,<sup>6</sup>

had in mind the *jovents*, landless and penniless young noblemen who made their living from war and tourneys.

All of this is imbued with an aristocratic flare of cheerful and untroubled destruction, over which the lord of Hautefort literally gloats in the envois that conclude the composition.

A Tolosa, part Montagut,		III
Fermara·l coms son gomfano		
El prat comtal, costa·l Peiro;	15	
E qand aura son trap tendut,		
E nos lotjarem de viro		
Tant que tres nuoitz i jairem nut.		

E seran i ab nos vengut		IV
Las poestatz e li baro	20	
E li plus honrat compaigno		
Del mon e li plus mentaugut;		
Que per aver, que per somo,		
Que per pretz s'i serant mogut.		

<sup>6</sup> GOURAN 1985: no. 20, ll. 15-21: “Nous sommes trente guerriers de ce genre: chacun a une cape trouée – tous, seigneurs et coseigneurs – à cause de notre passion pour engager le combat, car cela ne nous a jamais rapporté la valeur d’un denier; mais, chaque fois qu’il a fallu en venir aux coups, ils ont revendiqué leur part.” [We are thirty warriors of the following kind: each one has a torn mantle—both the seigneurs and the coseigneurs—because of our passion to engage in combat, for this has never yielded a single penny; but every time that it was necessary to come to blows, they claimed their share.]

E desse que serem vengut, Mesclar s'a·l torneis pel cambo E·ll Catalan e·ll d'Arago Tombaran soven e menut, Que no·ls sostenran lor arso, Tant grans colps los ferrem nos drut.	25	V
E non pot esser remasut Contra·l cel non volon tronco E que cendat e cisclato E samit non sion romput, Cordas e tendas e paisso E trap e pavaillon tendut,	35	VI
Lo reis q'a Tarascon perdut E·l seigner de Mon-Albeo, Rotgiers e·l fills Bernart Otho E lo coms Peire lor n'aiut E·l coms de Fois ab Bernardo E·N Sans, fraire del rei vencut.	40	VII
De lai, pensson de garnizo, Que de sai lor er atendum.		E
Totz temps vuoill que li aut baro Sion entre lor irascut. <sup>7</sup>	45	E'

<sup>7</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: no. 9, ll. 13-46: "À Toulouse, au-delà de Montaigu, le comte plantera son gonfalon dans le Pré-Comtal, à côté du Peyrou; et quand il aura dressé sa tente, nous nous installerons tout autour, si nombreux que nous devrons y coucher trois nuits sur la terre nue.

Et là seront venus avec nous les grands et les barons et les compagnons les plus honorés et les plus célèbres du monde; ils y seront venus, qui pour le gain, qui pour la convocation, qui pour la gloire.

Et dès que nous serons arrivés, le combat s'engagera sur le terrain, et les Catalans et les Aragonais tomberont souvent et en grand nombre, car leurs arçons ne les soutiendront pas, si grands seront les coups dont nous les frapperons avec rudesse.

Et rien ne peut empêcher que des éclats de lance ne volent vers le ciel et que ne soient déchirés les vêtements de cendal, de siglaton et de samit, et détruits cordes, tentes, piquets et pavillons dressés,

ni que le roi qui a perdu Tarascon et le seigneur de Montauberon, Roger et le fils de Bernard Atho et le comte Pierre ne leur viennent en aide, ainsi que le comte de Foix avec Bernard et Sancho, le frère du roi vaincu.

Là-bas, qu'ils songent à s'équiper, car ici, on leur prêtera attention.

Je veux que les hauts barons soient toujours irrités les uns contre les autres."

[In Toulouse, beyond Montaigu, the Count will plant his gonfalon at the Pré-Comtal, next to Peyrou; and when he pitches his tent, we will settle all around, so many that we will have to sleep on the bare ground for three nights.

And there will come with us the great lords, and the barons, and the most honoured and famous companions of the world; they will come, some for gain, some for the summons, some for glory.

And as soon as we arrive, the battle will break out on the ground, and the Catalans and Aragonese will often fall in large numbers because their stirrups will not support them, so great will be the blows we will harshly deal them.

And nothing can prevent the splinters of the lances from flying to the sky, nor the garments of sendal, siglaton, and samit from being torn, or the ropes, tents, poles, and pavilions from being destroyed.

Neither the king who lost Tarascon, nor the lord of Montauberon, Roger, or the son of Bernard Atho and Count Peter will come to their aid, and neither will the Count of Foix with Bernard and Sancho, the brother of the defeated king.

Let them equip themselves over there, for we will be waiting for them here.

I hope that the high barons are always irritated with each other.]

If the battle for which the poetic services of Bertran were required did not take place in the end, this situation was largely rectified a few years later, and the war that had been aborted broke out eventually, providing the poet with the means to exercise his talent. But in order to address some of the *sirventes* that made him famous, it is necessary to supply some historical context.

In the early eighties of the twelfth century, there were pronounced rivalries between the heirs of Henry II of England. His eldest son, called the Young Henry, already crowned twice by then, paradoxically found himself in a position of inferiority with respect to his younger brothers. His mother Eleanor had endowed Richard the territories of Aquitaine, and Geoffroy became Count of Brittany through marriage when he was still a child. While it would be wrong to say that their father gave them free rein in their domains, the fate of the Young King was even worse: he did not own anything, since all the lands that were to be his one day, were by then under the rule of his father, who was very little inclined to give up any ounce of power. Moreover, the prince received, or should have received, a pension he deemed quite insufficient for his expensive needs and the largesse that procured him the interested praises of many troubadours.

Encouraged by the barons of Aquitaine, who resented the harsh government of Richard, the Young King, tired of always complaining in vain, rebelled. However, he probably lacked the strength of character needed to push his advantage. When his father, with Richard and Geoffrey, surrounded Talairan laying siege to the Puy-Saint-Front in the region of the Périgord, and summoned his eldest, he resisted and lingered in Limoges with other conspirators for a long time. Yet he dared not oppose the pressure of his father, and finally accepted, to the chagrin of the Aquitanian barons, to be reconciled with Richard, before he recovered and fled to France. The *sirventes* was undoubtedly composed in this period.

One can only suspect the disappointment and rage of the Aquitanian barons, abandoned in dire straits. It was not so much that they were left to their own devices, for the Young Henry could not contribute anything besides his tournament team, but the defection of the Young King deprived their movement of any feudal justification and, therefore, of the support of allies from outside of the domains of the Plantagenets.

I do not know if the lord of Hautefort was instructed to express their fury in the *sirventes*, *Pois Ventadorns e Comborns ab Segur*. Its wording suggests that he took care of it without being pushed to do so. In addition, unlike the Count of Toulouse, the Aquitanian barons were his peers, more or less, in the common misfortune.

Pois Ventadorns e Comborns ab Segur                    I  
E Torena e Monfortz ab Gordo  
Ant faich acort ab Peiregos e jur,  
E li borzes si claven de viro,

M'es bel q'ieu chant e que m'en entremeta 5  
 D'un sirventes per lor assegurar;  
 Q'ieu non vuoill ges sia mia Toleta,  
 Per q'ieu segur non i pogues estar.

Ha! Puoig-Guillem e Clarenz e Graignol II  
 E Saint-Estier, mout avetz grand honor, 10  
 Et eu meteus, qui conoisser la m vol,  
 Et a sobrier Engolesmes, maior  
 D'En Charretier que guerpis la charreta;  
 Non a deniers ni no n pren ses paor;  
 Per qu'ab honor pretz mais pouca terreta 15  
 Q'un gran empier tener ab desonor.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas in the first text we can only find the names of the opponents in order to better entice all those who would want to take their share of glory, this time, on the contrary, the poet lists as many allies as possible, as if the names of all these seigneuries would sound a real alarm. In the first two stanzas, we are dealing with an effective poem, whose effectiveness is only increased through the use of parallelisms. In both cases, Bertran starts by listing all the fine names that Aquitaine has provided, and the fiefdoms of all their allies, who come to cover themselves with glory, and, finally he concludes enunciating gnomic forms, a sort of proverbs. Between these two extremes, switching the topic from one *cobla* to the next one, he includes in this list his own name, and carefully excludes those he deems unworthy of sharing in the glory of war.

The surprising list of conspirators practically hands the king of England the names of his enemies, or, and this is the more likely option, burns the bridges for these seigneurs, forcing them to pursue the path to glory—willingly or unwillingly—by pointing at them the sword of his *sirventes*. On the front row we find the viscounts of Limousin, the seigneurs of the Périgord and, occupying an outstanding position, Talairan de Périgueux, who bore the bulk of the effort. Next, in response to the war tocsin of aristocratic names, Bertran needs only one line to create the war atmosphere: “E li borzes si claven de viro.” The bourgeois—ridiculous cowards in the eyes of the *milites*—who

<sup>8</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: no. 20, ll. 1-16: “Puisque Ventadour, et Comborn, et Ségur, et Turenne, et Monfort, et Gourdon, se sont entendus et liés par serment avec Périgueux, et que les bourgeois s'enferment à la ronde, il me plaît de chanter et d'entreprendre un sirventés pour leur donner de l'assurance; car je ne voudrais certes pas posséder Tolède, si je ne pouvais y demeurer en sûreté.

Ah! Puy-Guilhem, et Clérans, et Grignols, et Saint-Astier, vous avez une bien grande gloire, et moi-même également, si l'on veut me la reconnaître, et, au-dessus de tous, Angoulême; plus grande que le seigneur Charretier qui abandonne la charrette; il n'a pas d'argent et n'en prend pas sans crainte; aussi fais-je plus de cas du pouvoir exercé avec honneur sur une petite terre que de celui qu'on exerce honteusement sur un grand empire.”

[After Ventadour, and Comborn, and Ségur, and Turenne, and Monfort, and Gourdon have reached an agreement and bound themselves by oath to Périgueux, and the bourgeois have locked themselves up all around, I would like to sing and set about composing a *sirventes* to give them confidence; because I certainly would not want to have Toledo, if I could not remain there safely.

Ah! Puy-Guilhem, and Clérans, and Grignols and Saint-Astier, you have achieved great glory, and myself too, if you would recognize it, and above all, Angoulême; greater than that of the lord Carter who abandons his cart; he has no money, and does not take any without fear; I also have more respect for the power exercised with honour on a small territory than for that exercised shamefully on a large empire.]

are eager to hide when the times become epic, are reminiscent of the fact that war is the time when, as our poet claims elsewhere “... sera rics q̄i toldra volontiers,”<sup>9</sup> as if in the heart of the lord, of the *joven*, there was never much distance between the thief and the epic hero.

The main proposition, which occupies the second half of the stanza, is entirely devoted to the troubadour himself. He presents himself not as the writer that complies with the request of a great feudal lord or a king, but as someone who simply acts on his free will (“m’es bel”), which only reflects an aristocratic morality. He is not at the disposal of others, it is others who need the poet to give them confidence through a *sirventes* (a technical term that did not appear in *Lo coms m’a mandat*, as if the term implied a satire that would not have made sense in the war between Toulouse and Aragon).

It is not until the final maxim that Bertran becomes the central topic, placed at the centre of the moral of the story. Rather than sticking to the formulas or actions of epic heroes, the troubadour turns his own opinion into the rule by which he expects others to abide, and he does it by multiplying the “ieu” and other marks of the first person. How could a troubadour who is not also a lord of importance and recognized value afford such a formulation?

At first, it seems that the second stanza uses the same process of accumulation as the first one, but in fact, there are some variations. The list of seigneurs can also be found here, although this time around it includes more noblemen from the Périgord than Limousines, but what appeared only as a presentation of allies, becomes now an honour roll whose first place is accorded to the seigneurs of Angoulême, whom Richard attempted to deny the legacy of their brother. Again, the place the words occupy is significant. In fact, the troubadour lord, whose high esteem for himself as a poet we have just witnessed, finds a way to slip his name into the roll of honour between four seigneurs from the Périgord and the Angoumoisins. Moreover, the periphrasis that is supposed to nuance such pride with a little modesty, “Ah! Puy-Guilhem, et Clérans, et Grignols, et Saint-Astier, vous avez une bien grande gloire, et moi-même également, si l’on veut bien me la reconnaître”, in fact only emphasizes his merits further. In the first stanza, Bertran puts himself forward as the author; in the second one, he appears as a seigneur who acts according to what is to be expected of him, that is to say, proving his qualities as a “bellator.” However, Bertran has the wisdom of not placing himself at the top, but somehow blends into the list, where a real trumpet blast draws attention to the lords of Angoulême, whose name is highlighted by the enjambment “maior,” which combines with the following line to form what I would like to call the alexandrine of shame.

In fact, Bertran de Born, a good reader of Chrétien de Troyes (LEFÈVRE 1970)<sup>10</sup> and, more specifically, of the *Chevalier de la Charrete*, whose publication has been traced back to 1181, marks for the occasion the deceptive English royal prince with the fatal *senhal* of “En Charretier,”

<sup>9</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: no. 32, l. 24: “Celui-ci sera riche qui pillera de bon cœur.” [Only those who rob gladly will be rich there]

<sup>10</sup> LEFÈVRE 1970: 605, see also l. 57: “Per la costuma tener de S’abrils e foillas e flors”, a reminiscence of *Érec et Énide*.

“Sire Charretier,” or worse, “Monsieur le Charretier,” which intends to explain the relative subordinate “que guerpis la charreta” before the comment:

Non a deniers ni no-n pren ses paor.  
Per qu’ab honor pretz mais pauca terreta  
Q’un gran empier tener ab desonor!

According to the gloss of the author on the *razon* of this *sirventes*, “He [Richard] had taken away the income from carts (the Young King levied a tax on these carts, as his father had granted him).”<sup>11</sup> A comment was hardly sufficient—even if it would be an almost miraculous event that the tax mentioned by the *razon* corresponded to a historical reality!—and not all the public were specialists in contemporary French literature, as the seigneur of Hautefort was. It would be better to refer to the gloss that Bertran himself provides in *D’un sirventes no-m cal far loignor ganda*, a *sirventes* from the same period and on the same subject: “Que malvatz fai, car aissi viu a renda/ de liurazon a comte et a garanda,” that is to say, that a king worthy of the name depends only on himself.<sup>12</sup>

However, the thought of the troubadour is not obvious. The readers of Chr tien de Troyes know that riding on the cart, Lancelot is far from dishonouring himself, even if this was supposed to represent the worst shame in the eyes of the people who lived in the time of Arthur. Chr tien takes great care to specify it: “Les charrettes en ce temps-l  tenaient lieu de nos pilories” [Carts in that time took the place of our pillories] (FRAPPIER 1969). It must be understood that the Young King had the courage, like Lancelot, to face a situation that seemed shameful to external witnesses, but for those who knew, a new kind of *entendenz*, somehow proved his courage and merit. It could be said that for those who did not share the heroic-epic worldview of Bertran de Born, the attitude of the Young King towards his father was nothing less than a model of loyalty. Let us remember that at the death of the prince, if the author of the *Histoire de Guillaume le Mar chal* does not hesitate to write that Henry the Younger “le fist puis si bien en sa vie/ qu’il raviva chevalerie/ qui a cel tens ert pres de morte”, ll. 2639-41 (MEYER 1891), the chronicler William Newburgh is severe enough to compare him to Absalom, to say that he died too soon considering his age, but too late bearing in mind his actions, and to explain the displays of sorrow following his death with the terrible biblical adage: “Stultorum infinitus est numerus”, [the number of imbeciles is countless]. It is also interesting to note that Dante would evoke Absalom in relation to Beltramo dal Bornio in his *Divina commedia*.

<sup>11</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: 183: “el avia toltas las rendas de las caretas (de las quals caretas lo reis joves prendia certa causa, si com lo paire l’o avia donat” [Il [Richard] lui avait enlev  les revenus des charrettes (le Jeune Roi pr levait sur ces charrettes une taxe, ainsi que son p re le lui avait accord )]. The author resumes his argument several lines below: “En Richartz l’avie toltas las rendas de las caretas.”

<sup>12</sup> Thus, after this war, Bertran would accuse Alfons of Aragon, who had provided support to Henry II, of “esser soudadiers logaditz” [hire himself as a mercenary] (GOUIRAN 1985: no. 23, l. 9), which *sirventes* 24, ll. 61-4 specifies “E reis que loger atenda/ De seignor, bel deu affanar./ Et el venc sai per gazaigar/ Mais qe per outra fazenda”, [And when a king depends on a seigneur for his wage, he will have to go out of his way to earn it. Now he has come here to make money more than for anything else].

Bertran confirmed his accusation of lack of firmness in a *sirventes* composed during that same period with the structure of a love song, in the fashion of Giraut de Bornelh. Despite exploring other avenues, his condemnation was no less severe. This time, he put forward not the praise of the vassals who are braver than their lord, but a clear and uncompromising account of the situation. To his great disadvantage, the Young Henry was compared to epic heroes, and the place names listed in litanies do not represent the allies he had abandoned, but the cities and estates over which he would not rule due to his lack of willpower.

D'un sirventes no·m cal far loignor ganda, tal talan ai que·l diga e qe l'espanda, car n'ai razon tant novella e tant granda del Joven Rei q'a fenit sa demanda son frair Richart, pois sos paire·l comanda, tant es forsatz!	5	I
Pois N'Aenrics terra non ten ni manda, sia reis dels malvatz!		
Que malvatz fai, car aissi viu a renda de liurazon a comte et a garanda. Reis coronatz que d'autrui pren liuranda mal sembla Arnaut lo marques de Belanda, ni·l pro Guillem que conquis Tor Mirmanda, tant fon presatz!	10	II
Pos en Peitau lor ment e lor truanda, no·i er mais tant amatz.	15	
Ja per dormir non er de Coberlanda reis dels Engles ni conqerra Yrlanda ni tenra Angieus ni Monsaurel ni Canda ni de Peiteus non aura la miranda; ni sera ducs de la terra normanda ni coms palatz ni de Bordels ni dels Gascos part Landa seigner ni de Basatz.	20	III
Conseill vuoill dar el son de N'Alamanda lai a·N Richart, si tot no lo·m demanda: ja per son frair mais sos homes non blanda. Nonca·is fai el, anz asetga e·ls aranda, tol lor chastels e derroca et abranda devas totz latz.	25 30	IV
E·l reis tornei lai ab cels de Garlanda e l'autre, sos coignatz!		
Lo coms Jaufres, cui es Bresilianda, volgra fos primiers natz, car es cortes, e fos en sa comanda regesmes e duchatz. <sup>13</sup>	35	E E'

<sup>13</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: no. 11: "Je ne me soucie pas de tarder davantage à faire un sirventés, tant j'ai envie de le dire et

In fact, when Henry II felt there was danger in leaving his eldest to plot at the court of France, he multiplied the promises and the prodigal son returned. However, nothing changed, except that he now found a more receptive audience next to his brother in Brittany. Henry II wanted that Richard and Geoffrey paid homage to his eldest, and whereas Geoffroy complied, Richard flatly refused. He was the lord of the territories of his mother, as his brother would rule over those of his father one day. The King again imposed his will, but when Richard submitted, it was the turn of the Young Henry to refuse. He then revealed to his father the treaties he had agreed upon with the Aquitanians. What followed is unclear: according to chroniclers, the king wanted to reach a general peace treaty, which involved the signatures of the Aquitanian barons. Geoffroy, who was a good advocate, volunteered to persuade them to come. Once he was there, he stirred the hornet's nest, and his older brother soon joined him. Such naiveness does not seem to match what is known of Henry II, but what is certain is that, when he himself stood before Limoges, a volley of arrows greeted him.

And Bertrand resumed his service. He vigorously composed a piece for which he did not use the word *sirventes* but the more general verb *chantar*, which did not prevent him from carefully structuring his composition, which consists of *coblas quaternas*, that is to say, three sets of four

de le divulguer, car j'en ai un motif inou  et extraordinaire: le Jeune Roi a renonc    ses revendications contre son fr re Richard, parce que son p re le lui ordonne, en voil  une contrainte! Puisque sire Henri ne tient ni ne gouverne de terre, qu'il soit le roi des m diocres!

Il agit comme un m diocre en ne vivant comme il fait que de ce qu'on lui livre, compt  et mesur . Un roi couronn  qui re oit sa subsistance d'autrui ne ressemble gu re   Hernaut, le marquis de Beaulande, ni au preux Guilhem qui conquiert la Tour Mirande, quelle en fut la gloire! Puisqu'en Poitou il ment et trompe le monde, on ne l'y aimera plus autant.

Ce n'est pas en dormant qu'il deviendra le roi des Anglais du Cumberland, qu'il conquerra l'Irlande, qu'il poss dera Angers, Montsoreau et Cand s, qu'il aura la tour de guet de Poitiers; et il ne sera pas duc du pays normand ni comte palatin de Bordeaux ni des Gascons au-del  des Landes ni seigneur de Bazas.

Je veux donner conseil, sur l'air de "N'Alamanda"   Richard, l -bas, m me s'il ne me le demande pas: qu'il ne m nage plus ses vassaux   cause de son fr re. Il n'en fait absolument rien: il assi ge, rogne leurs biens, leur prend leurs ch teaux, abat et incendie de tous c t s. Et que le roi aille jouter l -bas avec ceux de Garlande et l'autre, son beau-fr re! Je voudrais que f t l'ain  le comte Geoffroy   qui appartient Broc liande, car il est courtois, et que f t en son pouvoir le royaume comme le duch ".

[I do not wish to delay further the composition of a *sirventes*, for I want to say and spread it, because I have an incredible and extraordinary reason: the Young King renounced his claims against his brother Richard because his father told him to, and here is coercion! Since King Henry does not own nor rules any territory, but he is the king of the mediocre!

He acts as a mediocre man for living how he does, from what is handed over to him, counted and measured. A crowned king who receives his livelihood from others hardly resembles Hernaut, the Marquis of Beaulande, or the fearless Guilhem, who conquered the Tour Mirande. That was glory! After he lies and deceives in Poitou, he will not be loved so much.

It's not sleeping that he will become the king of the English of Cumberland, that he will conquer Ireland, that he will possess Angers, Montsoreau and Cand s, that he will seize the watchtower of Poitiers; and he will not be the Duke of Normandy, nor the Count Palatine of Bordeaux and the Gascons beyond Landes, nor seigneur of Bazas.

I want to give Richard over there advice, to the tune of "N'Alamanda," even if he does not ask for it: that he no longer spares his vassals because of his brother. He did absolutely nothing: he besieges, cuts back their properties, seizes their castles, slaughters and burns all around. And that the king goes jousting over there with the men of Garland and the other, his brother-in-law!

I wish that Count Geoffroy, who owns Broc liande, was the eldest, because he is courteous, and that both the duchy and the kingdom were under his rule.]

stanzas; an extremely rare strophic plan. Again, he claims that he is composing it after a request, but the first line is sufficient to convey the essence of the message, as the one he calls “lo reis” is actually the Young King. It is only later that he specifies the term “joven rei,” because in his eyes, Henry II is no longer anything more than “lo reis annat,” the old king, mercilessly put to the retirement imposed by his age, whose sons the troubadour pretends to blame for disturbing his rest.

Bertran did not hesitate to say that Alfons of Aragon had lost Tarascon even before the battle. Here too, he is ahead of his time, which runs too slow for his liking. According to the impatient poet, the Young King already occupies the throne, while his father deserves the rest that England—much less hectic than Aquitaine!— will offer him.

But, turning back to the role of the herald of arms that Bertran de Born seems to assume in this case—even more so than in the case of Toulouse, in my opinion—it should be noted that, once again, the role of the herald is primarily to recruit fighters. Therefore, our troubadour begins establishing an inventory. Bertran understood that the war he was advocating would not be trivial. He sings, “a l’auzen del mon menassat,” and the prize of the fight is clearly the succession of Henry II, which obviously does not only concern his vassals and children, but also many others. Does he not state that the battlefield will move and the combat will pit Normans, French and Flemish against each other?

Moreover, although Bertran clearly chose a side, it is interesting to see that blame holds very little importance in this text. If the envois celebrate the glory of Geoffrey of Brittany and the Young King, Richard Lion Heart, their enemy, receives many compliments. Not only was it him who had given tactical lessons to his older brother, but the troubadour also compares him to a wildboar, while correcting the image by stating that his fury will not mislead him.

The only important figure Bertran considers useful to lecture is the king of France. Even though the lord of Hautefort, avid reader of epic poems, recalls the traditional military superiority of the French in the *chansons de geste*, he reproaches Philippe of France for not having sufficient concern for his glory and “étamer sa conduite alors qu’elle aurait plus de prix s’il la dorait” [timplating his conduct, when it would have more value if he gilded it].

Ieu chan, que·l reys m’ en a preguat,	I
A l’auzen del mon menassat	
De l’afar d’aquesta guerra,	
D’aquest juec que vey entaulat;	
E sabrem, quant l’auran joguat,	5
Dels quals dels filhs er la terra.	

Tost l'agra·l Reys Joves matat, Si·l coms no·l n'agues essenhat, Mas aissi·ls clau e·ls enserra Qu'Enguolmes a per fort cobrat      10 E tot Centonge deliurat Tro lai part Finibus-Terra.	II
Si·l coms pot far sa voluntat, Que no·l vendon cyst afiat, Ni del tot si dezenferra.      15 Qu'anc cynglar no vim pus irat Quan l'an brocat ni l'an cassat Qu'elh er; mai sos cors non l'erra.	III
De mossenhor lo rey annat, Conosc que an siey filh peccat,      20 Que del sojorn d'Anglaterra L'an ahoras dos ans lunhat. De totz lo·n tenh per enguanat Mai quan de Johan=ses=Terra.	IV
Li Guizan si son acordat      25 Entre·lhs e ves lui revelat. Quon aissilh de Lombardia Mai volon esser be menat Per rey que per comte forssat; D'aitan lur trac guarentia.      30	V
Aquest juec tenc per guazanhat Deves nos e per envidat, Que dels pezos de Valia Avem l'escachier desliurat, Que tug n'aneron esfredat      35 Ses comjat q'us non prendia.	VI
En Lemozi fon comensat, Mas de lai lur er afinat. Qu'entre Fransa e Normandia, Ves Giortz e ves Nuoumercat,      40 Vuelh qu'en aujon cridar "Arrat!" E "Monjoy!" e "Deus aïa!"	VII
Lo sen venserem ab foudat, Nos, Lemosin, et envezat, Que volem qu'om do e ria;      45 Que·l Norman en son enuiat E dizon, si·s n'eron tornat, Q'uns mais d'elhs sai non venria.	VIII

Lo rey tenc per mal cosselhat De Fransa, e per piegz guizat; Quar vey que sos fagz estanha Que li valrion mais daurat; E si no val a son conhat; Sens e pretz tem que·l sofranha.	50	IX
Frances, si quon es abdurat Sobre totz e li plus prezat, Paresca q'us non remanha Companh que·l reys aia mandat; Que ja mais no seretz honrat Si non etz en la mesclanha.	55 60	X
Lo dux de Berguonh'a mandat Qu'el nos ajudar'a l'estat Ab lo secors de Campanha, On venran tal cinc cen armat Que, quant tug serem aiustat, Non er Peitieux no s'en planha.	65	XI
Reys qui per son dreg si combat A mielhs dreg en sa eretat. E quar conquerec Espanha Karles, n'a hom tos tempz parlat. Qu'ab treball et ab larguetat Conquier reys pretz e·l guazanha.	70	XII
Senh'En Rassa, aquest comtat Vos cresca·l reys ab Bretanha!		E
Lo Reys Joves s'a pretz donat De Burcx troqu'en Alamanha. <sup>14</sup>	75	E'

<sup>14</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: no. 12: "Je chante, car le roi m'en a prié, devant le monde que menace cet état de guerre, sur la partie que je vois disposée sur le tablier; et nous saurons, quand ils l'auront jouée, desquels des fils sera la terre. Le Jeune Roi l'aurait rapidement fait mat, si le comte Richard n'avait pas été son maître, mais il l'enferme et le cerne si bien qu'il a pris de force l'Angoumois et délivré toute la Saintonge jusqu'au Finistère et au-delà. Si le comte peut agir à sa guise, si les alliés que voici ne le vendent pas, il n'est pas pour autant complètement hors des fers. Nous n'avons jamais vu sanglier plus furieux, quand on l'a blessé ou chassé, qu'il ne le sera; mais jamais sa course ne l'égare.

Je reconnais que les fils de monseigneur le vieux roi ont péché, car cela fait maintenant deux ans qu'ils l'ont tenu éloigné de sa retraite d'Angleterre. À mon avis, tous le trompent dans cette affaire, à l'exception de Jean sans Terre. Les Aquitains se sont entendus et se sont soulevés contre lui à la façon des Lombards. Ils préférèrent être bien traités par un roi plutôt que malmenés par un comte; je peux me porter garant pour eux que tel sera le cas.

Selon moi, cette partie est gagnée de notre côté et reconduite, car nous avons débarrassé l'échiquier des pions de la Vallée; de fait, tous sont partis terrifiés sans qu'un seul ait pris congé.

Tout a commencé en Limousin, mais cela se terminera ailleurs. Car entre la France et la Normandie, près de Gisors et de Neufmarché, je veux qu'on entende crier: "Arras!", "Montjoie!" et "Dieu aide!"

Le bon sens, c'est avec la folie que nous, les Limousins, nous le vaincrons, et cela, pleins d'entrain, car nous voulons qu'on soit libéral et gai; et cela pèse aux Normands: ils disent que s'ils n'y étaient pas ramenés, aucun d'eux ne viendrait jamais ici.

À mon avis, le roi de France est mal conseillé et encore plus mal dirigé: je le vois étamer sa conduite alors qu'elle aurait plus de prix s'il la devait; et s'il n'aide pas son beau-frère, je crains que le bon sens et le mérite ne lui fassent défaut.

In fact, it is perhaps here that Bertran de Born most differs from the earliest heralds of arms: what guides him is not the concern for a reward, as in the case of the *hirauzel* of the *Histoire de Guillaume le Mar chal*.<sup>15</sup> It is not that Bertran has no interest in the matter, for we have seen him speaking of his poverty and he later will say, “Mas non ai ges Lezinan ni Rancom/ Q’ieu puosca loing osteiar ses aver”,<sup>16</sup> which is very similar to a request, but it could also refer to the duty of generosity that the powerful only practiced reluctantly, and usually when the necessities of war forced them to. In my opinion, the lord of Hautefort is less concerned with personal interest than with his desire to impose a personal ideology, essentially based on the *chanson de geste*—as stanza XII of his long song of war shows—and that may even lead him to send terrible admonishments to the great lords, at the risk of paying dearly for it. However, at the end of his career, our troubadour, who had remain perfectly loyal to King Richard while so many of his

Fran ais, comme vous  tes plus braves que tous et les plus valeureux, il faut montrer que ne reste en arri re aucun compagnon que le roi ait appel ; car vous ne serez jamais honor s si vous ne participez pas   la m l e.

Le duc de Bourgogne a fait savoir qu’il nous aidera cet  t  avec le secours de la Champagne; ainsi viendront cinq cents hommes d’armes tels que, lorsque nous serons tous r unis, Poitiers ne pourra pas ne pas s’en plaindre.

Roi qui lutte pour d fendre son droit en a meilleur droit sur son patrimoine. Et, parce que l’Espagne a  t  conquise par Charles, on a toujours parl  de lui. Car ce sont les peines et les largesses qui permettent   un roi de conqu rir et de gagner la gloire.

Seigneur Rassa, puisse le roi vous offrir ce comt  en plus de la Bretagne!

Le Jeune Roi s’est acquis de la gloire de Burgos jusqu’en Allemagne.”

[I sing because the king has asked me to, to the world threatened by this state of war, about the game that I see placed on the board; and we will know, once they have played, which son will own the land.

The Young King would have quickly achieved checkmate, if Count Richard were not his master, but he contained and surrounded him so well that he seized the Angoumois and liberated all the Saintonge to Finist re and beyond.

If the count can act at will, if his allies do not sell him, he is not completely out of irons. We have never seen a more furious wildboar, when injured or hunted, than him; but never has his course led him astray.

I acknowledge that the sons of mylord the old king have sinned, because they have kept him away from his retirement in England for two years now. I believe that all of them did wrong in this case, with the exception of John Lackland. The Aquitanians have come to an agreement and have rebelled against him in the way of the Lombards. They prefer to be treated well by a king rather than abused by a count; I can vouch for them that this will be the case.

To me, this game is won on our side and renewed, because we have cleared the chessboard of the pawns of the Valley; in fact, all of them have fled terrified without none of them taking off.

It all started in Limousin, but this will end elsewhere. Because between France and Normandy, near Gisors and Neufmarch , I want to hear the hails: “Arras!”, “Montjoie!” and “God help!”

It is with madness that we, the Limousines, shall overcome common sense, and that, full of energy, because we want everybody to be liberal and merry; and that bothers the Normans: they say that were they not forced back, none of them would ever come here.

In my opinion, the king of France is ill advised and even more misguided: I see him tinplating his conduct, when it would have more value if he gilded it; and if it does not help his brother-in-law, I fear that common sense and merit will fail him. French, as you are braver than the most courageous, you must show that no companion the king has called is left behind; because you will never be honoured if you do not join the fray.

The Duke of Burgundy has announced that he will help us this summer rescuing the Champagne; five hundred men-at-arms will then come, so that when we are all together, Poitiers will not have reason to complain.

The king who fights to defend his right has more rights over his estate. And because Spain was conquered by Charles, his name was always remembered. For these are the penalties and largesse that allow a king to conquer and win glory. Seigneur Rassa, the King can offer you this county in addition to Brittany!

The Young King has achieved glory from Burgos to Germany.]

<sup>15</sup> MEYER 1891: ll. 3485-90: “Lors commensa un[s] chantereals/ Qui ert hirauz d’armes nov[e]jals,/ Echanta novele chanson:/ Ne sai qui louot ne que non,/ Mais el refreit out: Mareschal,/ Kar me donez un boen cheval!”.

<sup>16</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: no. 28, ll. 13-14: “mais je ne poss de ni Lusignan ni Rancon pour pouvoir aller faire la guerre au loin sans argent.” [but I do not own Lusignan nor Rancon in order to go off to war without money]

vassals betrayed him during his captivity in Germany, concludes a welcome *sirventes* to celebrate the return of the king with this stanza:<sup>17</sup>

Bo·m sap l'usatges q'a·l leos  
 Q'a ren vencuda non es maus,  
 Mas contr'orgoill es orgoillos.  
 E·l reis non a baros aitaus,  
 Anz, qan vezon que sos affars es mendre,  
 Poigna chascus cossi·l puosca mesprendre.  
 E no·us cujetz qu'eu fassa motz a vendre,  
 Mas per ric bar deu hom tot jorn contendre<sup>18</sup>

One almost smiles seeing that it was not without some shame that the rebel belligerent of old now supported the most powerful and felt compelled to deny in advance the potential accusation of composing “motz a vendre.”

If Bertran de Born held the position of herald of arms in the songs of war of his early career, which included detailed appeals to combat to show the hesitant how it was in their best interest to participate in the next battle, his compositions always had an epic background that seemed the very justification of feudal nobility. In addition, we must remember that, alongside his necessary political skills and his constant concern for the aristocratic duty, he never lost sight of the importance of the poetic form and, thus, contributed to the glory of the *sirventes*.

We might conclude that the difference is significant between the lord of Hautefort and the heralds of arms, as the examples drawn from Chrétien de Troyes and the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* show, but did this distance really hold? This question arises upon reading what Michel Stanesco wrote about the herald of arms:

“Il participe de très près à la vie chevaleresque, et cela dès le XII<sup>e</sup> siècle; il devint un familier des princes, constitua la principale source d'information des chroniqueurs, fut lui-même écrivain. Plus qu'un gardien de la tradition chevaleresque, ne fut-il pas l'expression vivante d'une certaine vision du monde?” (STANESCO 1988: 184).<sup>19</sup>

Is it not likely that he was thinking of Bertran de Born?

<sup>17</sup> GOUIRAN 1985: no. 36, stanza V.

<sup>18</sup> “I like the ways of the lion: seeing the defeated, he is not cruel, but competes with the arrogant in pride. And the King has no barons of this kind; on the contrary, when they see him in difficulty, each one strives to harm him. And do not believe that I compose for money, but everyone must always fight for a powerful baron.”

<sup>19</sup> “He participates in the chivalric lifestyle from early on—from the twelfth century onwards; he became a familiar of princes, constituted the main source of information for chroniclers, and was a writer himself. More than a guardian of the chivalric tradition, was he not the living expression of a certain worldview?”

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