

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

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Abstract: The *Song of the Albigensian Crusade* by William of Tudela ca. 1213 narrates the events of the Albigensian Crusade from March 1208 to June 1219. The Crusade would represent a momentous event in French and European history for it signaled the defeat of the French south against the north and the end of Aragonese power in the Languedoc region. It also represented the beginning of a persecution mentality with the creation of the Inquisition. This article offers a translation into English of the text by William of Tudela.

Key Words: *Son of the Albigensian Crusade*, William of Tudela, Languedoc, Inquisition.

Resumen: La *Cançon de la Crosada* de Guillhem de Tudela de hacia 1213 narra los hechos de la cruzada albigense desde marzo de 1208 hasta junio de 1219. La cruzada representa un momento de especial significación en la historia francesa y europea, pues marca el momento en que la Francia del sur es derrotada por la del norte y el poder aragonés en el Languedoc se termina. También representa el comienzo de una mentalidad persecutoria con la creación de la Inquisición. Este artículo ofrece una traducción del texto al inglés.

Palabras clave: *Cançon de la Crosada*, Guillhem de Tudela, Languedoc, Inquisición.

I. Breves notas sobre la *Cançon de la Crosada* (LXVI-CXXXI)

La *Cançon de la Crosada* (*Canso de crozada*, *Chanson de la croisade albigeoise*)¹ es un poema de gesta escrito en occitano y compuesto por 9.582 versos alejandrinos. Se escribió entre 1212 y 1218. El poema relata los sucesos de la cruzada albigena entre marzo de 1208, momento en que Inocencio III declara la cruzada, y junio de 1219, cuando el futuro rey Luis de Francia se apresta a asediar Tolosa. Se compone de dos partes escritas por escritores diferentes. La primera, que se comenzó a escribir en 1210 nos ofrece el punto de vista de los cruzados y termina de manera brusca en julio de 1213: es obra de Guillermo de Tudela (Guilhèm de Tudela), clérigo y profesor de teología de Montalbán. Se componen de 2.772 versos divididos en 131 cantos (*laisses*). La segunda parte es anónima y tiene 6.810 versos divididos en 83 cantos. Se ha sugerido la autoría de Gui de Cavalhon o del trovador Peire Cardenal. Ofrece punto de vista opuesto a la primera parte, es decir, favorable a los occitanos y a su *paratge*. La obra se conserva en un solo manuscrito (fr. 25425 de la Bibliothèque Nationale) que fue escrito en Toulouse ca. 1275. El manuscrito pasó por diferentes manos (cardenal Mazzarino, Pierre Paul de Beaulieu, consejero de Luis XIV de Francia, duque de Valière) hasta llegar a la biblioteca real.

Desde el estudio pionero de Meyer de 1875, la *Cançon* ha interesado a la crítica por multitud de motivos. A mi entender,² representa el canto de cisne de una época medieval caracterizada por un *imperium* sobre el territorio francés dividido entre el norte y el sur, estando de por medio la corona aragonesa a quien los condes de Tolosa prestaban vasallaje. Tras la batalla de Muret y el Tratado de Meux-Paris (1213 y 1229 respectivamente), firmado entre Ramón VII y Luis IX, las cosas cambiarán de manera radical (Martines). El sur francés occitano como entidad política desaparece y la corona aragonesa concluye su influjo político-cultural en la región, salvo en los condados del Rosellón y Cerdaña.

En otro orden de cosas, la cruzada albigena que relata nuestra *Chanson* es de importancia trascendental para el devenir europeo y para el advenimiento de la modernidad. Los cátaros o albigenses defienden

¹ Para ediciones de la obra ver Gaugaud, Guibali, Guébin; para estudios, Sibly, Synclaire, D'Heur, Guida, Linden.

² Ver Kurpiewski y especialmente Cortijo, 2021 para un estudio concienzudo de la herejía cátara que pone en su contexto europeo y aragonés la *Cançon de la Crosada*. Para una versión catalana de la obra, ver Martines & Ensenyat. Existe una versión inglesa de Shirley.

una religión de tipo dualista, en último término emparentada con los bogomilos, que insiste en el acendramiento de la experiencia religiosa. Sus *perfecti*, en parte inspirados en los *barbas* valdenses, caminan por parejas y predicán desde el ejemplo de su humilde austeridad de vida. En primer término, su rápida extensión por el norte de Italia, sur de Francia y Aragón motiva la *predicación* de los dominicos y hasta la *humildad* de san Francisco, que, desde la ortodoxia, quieren enfrentarse a la difusión del movimiento albigense. En segundo término, y algo quizá más improtante si cabe, darán motivo a la creación de la Inquisición, lo que supone la erección del heterodoxo como *hereje* punible. Ello no es sino un adaptar a la esfera religiosa lo que en la política había representado la opción del centralismo unificador francés que elimina al otro provenzal en la constitución de un ideario nacional que encontrará fructificación plena con devenir de las décadas. A partir de ahora, oponerse a la ortodoxia merece una persecución incansable por parte de la ortodoxia centralizadora, algo que en último término explica la expulsión de los judíos de numerosos países, la de los moriscos en España, o hasta la intransigencia de las guerras de religión de los siglos XVI y XVII que culmina con la Guerra de los Treinta Años.

El relato de Guillermo de Tudela, que toma partido contra los albigenses en la primera parte de la *Cançon de la Crosada* entre las tiradas II y LXVV, da paso a un relato más favorable a la causa de los *herejes* y que ve en la batalla de Muret, el concillio laterano de 1212, el asedio de Belcaire, la revuelta de Tolosa y la batalla de Basieja ejemplos de la demasía francesa. En liza está la batalla entre la tolerancia y el fanatismo, como algunos han querido verlo, o quizá simplemente entre modelos políticos que ven en el centralismo uniforme y la diversidad dos modelos de estado igualmente válidos. Recordemos que el corolario de la revolución francesa, a pesar de lo predicado por los girondinos, será la constitución de una identidad nacional francesa fuerte a expensas de la diferencia, que queda condenada desde Napoléon. Recordemos asimismo que los Estados Unidos, otra *nación* cuya identidad se muestra como sólida, hace del nacionalismo y la ortodoxia (llamada allí *melting pot*) una bandera que pasa por el absoluto imperio de la bandera y el himno, ante los que no caben fisuras de ningún tipo. Por último, recordemos que la España de los Reyes Católicos también tendrá que decantarse, a partir de 1492, por dos modelos de integración de la minoría, que tradicionalmente han sido representados por Cisneros y Talavera (Cortijo 2021), haciendo que unificación política y religiosa

se dieran la mano de manera excluyente. El texto que aquí traducimos es crucial porque refleja un momento (siglos XII y XIII) y una ocasión (la *herejía* albigense y la lucha contra ella en cruzada) de transición en que vislumbramos una modernidad temprana en ciernes, donde precisamente el problema de la *diferencia*, la *otredad*, la *heterodoxia* y la nación serán cruciales en una andadura que todavía, como la modernidad misma, no ha concluido.

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The Song of the Albigensian Crusade by William of Tudela**Laisse LXVI**

Sir Bouchard showed great happiness all that night until dawn. And as soon as light appeared the next morning, the strongest part of the army entered Cabaret. There the terms of the agreement were announced and discussed. Bouchard spoke first in front of all of them and everyone around agreed. Count Simon's banner was raised on top of the tower.

Our crusaders occupied the castle, that's how Cabaret was then taken. Now let us see what a miracle it was, for if everybody ever born in the world surrounded and sieged that fortress, the defenders would think of them less than a peeled apple. But against the host of Christ, there is no castle or village that can stand, however strong its fortifications. Whoever opposes the crusaders is a real fool, who may rejoice at first but in the end is defeated.

Laisse LXVII

As soon as the castle of Cabaret had surrendered, the count of Monfort and the crusaders moved on towards Lavaur down in the Toulousain. They laid siege to it for a month and five weeks; they attacked it eagerly with siege engines and catapults. The village was very strong. If they had defended themselves appropriately, or if they had been aided quickly by Count Raymond, they would not have taken it as soon as they did, God be my witness! For provisioning was expensive, its purchase and transport, and the people of Toulouse, who were angered by this siege, prevented supplies from reaching them and did not allow arms nor lances nor shields to go through. But as the proverb says, they did not notice it until too late, for they closed the stable door after they had lost the horse. The crusaders fought with strength and courage against the besieged.

Laisse LXVIII

Lavaur was a village so strong that no one in any kingdom had ever seen a stronger in a flat country or one with better ramparts or deeper ditches. There were many knights inside, all well armed. Sir Aimery, brother of Lady Girauda (lady of Lavaur) was there; he had come inside after departing (without saying farewell) from the presence of the count of Montfort. The crusaders had taken from him Montréal

and Laurac and all his other lands, and he was angry: they had reduced his fief by two hundred knights. There was not a richer knight in all the Toulousain nor the rest of the county, nor a larger spender or of higher noble rank. In an evil hour he met the heretics and clog-wearers! I think such a great lord had never before been hanged in all Christendom (and with so many knights also hanged at his side). For only counting noblemen, one could count more than eighty (so a clerk told me). As for the townsfolk, as many as four hundred were gathered in a meadow and were burned in a pyre. In addition, they threw Lady Girauda into a well and covered her with stones, which was a sorrowful crime, for (truth be told) no one in this world would ever leave her presence without having been fed. This took place on Holy Cross day in May, in summertime, when Lavour was destroyed as I have told you.

The crusaders brought the cat close to the ditch and used their gear to dig so deeply that the garrison inside surrendered, and were forced and taken. Then there was so great a killing that I think it will be talked about until the end of the world. My lords, that should have been enough to convince the heretics, for (as I saw and heard) they suffered much for refusing to do what the clerks and crusaders commanded them to do. Yet in the end they will have to do so when they are plundered, just as these inhabitants of Lavour did, and they will find no grace with God or in this world.

Laisse LXIX

At the time when Lavour was conquered, the count of Foix took the field with his companions, and rode with him a number of Count Raymond's men who were helped (you must know this) by squires and boys. ...The Germans came spurring spurring hard, five thousand of them at least, as the song says. When they arrived at Montgey, the barons put on their armour and marched in ranks as if in a religious procession. But the lion-hearted Count of Foix and those who accompanied him did not talk with them but attacked them from everywhere. The Germans and Frisians fought well and long by a wood but in the end (you must know, I do not lie) they let themselves be defeated in a miserable way. Most of them died there without confession. The villeins and poor wretches killed them with stones, sticks and clubs. That is why Montgey was destroyed. The Lord of Glory may forgive my sins, but if they had hanged as thieves those villeins who killed and robbed the crusaders, I would have been delighted.

Laisse LXX

As I have already told you, when the villeins of the fief saw the Count of Foix, they all run to help him, and all of them reaped a good profit. But they paid dearly before the army left: a young nobleman escaped from there and went to the crusaders to tell them. When the French heard it, they thought they would go crazy. More than fourteen thousand of them ran to horse and as long as daylight lasted they rode without pausing. But the brave Count of Foix did not want to loiter; everyone thinks as best they can to take advantage of the situation. That night they slept at Montgiscard. With the plunder they have taken, they could live comfortably three months and fifteen days and even a whole year. The army knights, not being able to find them, returned sorrowful and irate and arrived at Lanta at the time for sleeping. When the other knights heard the news, they were greatly dismayed.

Laisse LXXI

When count Peter of Auxerre and the counts of Courtenay and Montfort could not do anything else and saw that the count of Foix got away in his escape, they returned to Lavaur where the army was staying. This village had been taken, as the book says. Four hundred heretics of evil nature were burned there at the stake in a big pyre. Sir Aimery was hanged with many other knights: eighty hanged there like thieves on the gibbets, some here, some there. In the midst of shouting, crying, and screaming Lady Girauda was taken and thrown in the well (as I know well). They buried her under stones, to the great dismay of those present. The other noble women were all set free by a courteous and kind Frenchman, a praiseworthy and loyal man. They took at the village many bay and sorrel warhorse, many rich iron armours that went to the crusaders, ample supplies of wheat and wine, clothes and rich garments, which pleased them very much.

Laisse LXXII

The count of Montfort owed this enormous and large booty to Raymond of Salvanhac, a wealthy merchant native of Cahors, a rich and opulent bourgeois, for it was he who financed the crusade lending money to the count. Then in payment he received cloth, wine, and wheat. The entire booty from Lavaur was given to him. Once they had taken this town, within a year the crusaders conquered the surrounding country as far as Montferrand.

Count Baldwin (who was brave and valiant) was inside. His courage equals that of Roland or Oliver. And if he had enough land, as many other princes do, he would conquer even more before his days are over. Count Raimond, his brother, had stationed him there to defend it. If the fortress had been as strong as its imposing-sounding name, the French or the Germans would never have taken it in all their days. Fourteen knights and countless others (I do not know how many) are with Count Baldwin, who is awaiting the siege of the proud French.

Laisse LXXIII

Count Baldwin is shut inside the castle. With him are a very valiant knight, called Peter, the viscount of Montclar, Pons of Toulouse, the red-haired; the fourth is Sir Hugh of Le Breil, who is very brave; the fifth, Sancho Espada, a very good knight; and Raymond of Périgord, who is very afraid, for he is one of the mercenaries and expects to die shortly. Outside, among the besiegers, is the count of Alos. If Jesus Christ, who is all powerful, does not intervene, they will be all dead or imprisoned before sunset, for the castle is weak, without arms and devoid of defense.

Laisse LXXIV

The knights of the army call out a gathering: that all together they must go to the war machines. When they did it, you would have seen not one hundred but more than then thousand, all together. They set up the catapults out there in the ravine, and the knights and squires began their attack. But Count Baldwin, who is brave and valiant, put up his best fight together with his knights. The crusaders burned the equipment of the besieged in a blazing fire, but the latter threw in more immediately. Almighty Jesus did a great miracle for them for they were not all taken in this first attack. The count of Montfort and many others were well disposed towards Count Baldwin. They were sorry for him on account of the good reports they heard of him, but they did not care a fig³ about the rest. The count of Chalon behaved with great courtesy by sending out a crusader who shouted out loud: "My lord Count Baldwin, come out in safety, for my lord the count is waiting outside for you. All the barons want an agreement with you."

I do not know how it could benefit me to make this story long. When he heard these words, the count came out, for he knows quite

³ The original says "a walnut."

well that there is no other defense left. He surrendered the castle to them when an agreement was settled, with all the victuals it contained, bread, wine, and grain. All the besieged came out with their arms and swore on the Holy Gospels that they would never in all their lives make war on crusaders or support the wicked misbelievers. Thereupon, the crusaders left the castle and returned to where they came from.

Laisse LXXV

The army moved back to where they came from and took Rabastens, Gaillac and Montégut as well as La Garda and Pyucelci, which all surrendered out of fear. Then came the men of St Antonin, without arms or shields, and made their arrangement with the crusaders in a sensible fashion. Laguépie and St Marcel submitted. The crusaders have thoroughly subdued the whole of the Albigeois and the bishop (who is a worthy and good man, so help me God) has reached a complete agreement with them.

But Count Baldwin, whom I mentioned to you, protected Bruniquel and forbade its inhabitants to set fire to it, as they wanted to do for fear of the crusaders, who were coming in full rage towards them, and as count Raymond of Toulouse would have been glad to do if the townspeople (sad and miserable as they were) had listened to him.

Laisse LXXVI

Valiant Count Raymond of Toulouse was in Bruniquel. Everyone wanted to escape from the castle but Count Baldwin told them in private to hand it over to him, that he would protect them, but he did not want to be subjected to his brother. At this the knights and squires exclaimed: "My lord, do you want Baldwin to be our protector?" "I shall do", responded he, "what you wish." Being all present, he released them there from their oaths, and they made their agreement with Count Baldwin, and rich and poor swore allegiance to him for the castle. Then the count went to the crusaders, who are well disposed towards him, and asked them to give him their assurances. They said they would do so, but with the condition that he should fight by them, and anything he would conquer with them would be his without any doubt. They all granted him everything, provided he would commit himself to helping them.

Laisse LXXVII

Good Count Baldwin took the road back once he had settled matters with the Count of Montfort, and went to Toulouse to talk to his brother. Raymond had never liked him very much nor had been willing to give what is due to a brother or honour him in his court. Baldwin asked him two or three times to promise on holy relics that he would fight with the crusaders, and that's all he could do. He took leave of Raymond, for he did not wish to stay there any longer and returned to the crusading army to keep the oath he had sworn. Despite everything, Baldwin would never have wanted to wage a hard war on Raymond if the latter had not ordered his castle of Bruniquel sacked in such wrongful manner.

At this time arrived the count of Bar and the count of Montfort went to meet him. They stopped at Montguiscard, where the count of Bar was, and returned to the army and sat down to dinner. Both wanted to ride to Toulouse the Great, for the Count of Bar wanted to besiege it. On a Thursday morning they broke camp and those who knew the way served as guides. They began to cross the ford across the river Hers. A messenger went to Toulouse to tell the news and Count Raymond and his men hurried to arms, as did the count of Comminges who had come to help them, and the count of Foix and the mercenaries from Navarre. There were five hundred knights, all of whom were armed; as for foot soldiers, those were countless. If you had been in the town and seen them all putting on their quilted jackets and lacing their helmets, throwing iron-armoured and emblazoned covers and on their horses, you would have said that they were getting ready to decimate four armies together. In fact, if they had had any courage or God had wished to help them, I do not believe the crusaders could have resisted or held out against them for a long time.

Laisse LXXVIII

At the bridge of Montaudran (after the crusaders crossed the river ford and on their way to the village) there happened an unusual encounter that was worth a battle (I give you my word), for I believe you could have seen on both sides more than a hundred and eighty dead, no less for sure. In the gardens outside Toulouse there was neither count nor king who did not ride with energy and they did such carnage that if I wanted to tell you the truth about it you would think I am exaggerating. Thirty-three villeins of the region died at the edge of a meadow by the barbican. Bertrand, Count Raymond's son, was taken there, I believe:

he paid them a thousand pounds and his whole armour, they got his horse, his arms and equipment, and everythign else he had.

Laisse LXXIX

My lords, fierce and astounding was the crusading army, terrible and proud. They crossed the river in force and headed for Toulouse. Neither fear nor anything else could prevent them from laying siege to the city on its most fortified side. There are more people inside than [the number of crusaders]. If only they were as strong! It is the flower and rose of all cities, but its inhabitants are not as brave and undaunted as the crusaders, as the story tells us and they prove it themselves.

Laisse LXXX

When the brave count of Bar opened the attack, together with the count of Chalon and all the other barons, they first brought with great effort the large boiled-leather shelters up to the ditch so that they could protect them from the arrows; then they brought brushwood and threw it into the water of the ditch. When those inside saw this, they became very concerned. They hurried to meet them and hit them so hardly that on both sides more than one hundred died and at least five hundred wounded all full of blood. The count of Comminges, to my knowledge, lost there a brave knight, Raymond At of Castillon, who was mourned by many: with such fierceness they fought on both sides!

While the crusader's army drew off without taking anything with them, as a matter of fact the good subjects of count Raymond,⁴ I am not going to lie to you, captured three of the big leather shelters. Knights and squires returned to their quarters, as also did those of Toulouse. The crusaders kept watch all night until dawn. They cut down all the wine vines and wheat, the trees and everything else that grows in the earth and piled it into a heap next to a trench. No doubt their intention was to fill up the ditches with it.

Laisse LXXXI

The crusading army lords, who are honorable and sage, were afraid that those inside Toulouse would inflict damage to them, and all day long the nobles are fully armed. Each one protects his quarters as best

⁴ Raimond Alphonse (*Anfons* in Provençal), count of Toulouse, therefore *Anfonsencs* his followeres ("Alphonsans"). We have translated *Alfonsenc* as "subjects of Count Raymond."

he can, for such is their habitual custom. Sir Hugh of Alfaro is inside (seneschal of the Agenais, a man of great courage and a very valiant knight), his brother Sir Peter Arcés (the best of his family lineage), and many good knights, fierce and harsh: each one arms himself privately in his own quarters. But the count of Toulouse almost went out of his mind with rage because they wanted to make a sortie and cause him harm, and he thought they wanted to to make him lose his inheritance and forbade them to go out.

Laisse LXXXII

On a Wednesday morning, I was told, the men of Toulouse would not endure this [any longer] and despite the count they opened the doors and attacked the crusaders on two fronts; they wanted to make a sortie just before terce. The crusaders had finished their dinner when they were attacked; but the count of Montfort had kept his armour and most of the crusaders had not taken off his hauberks, and at once ran to horse. There you would have seen so many blows struck on both sides, spears hitting helmets and making them ring, so many shields broken in pieces, cracked and shattered, that you would have thought it was the end of the world. The Toulousains killed Sir Eustace of Cayeaux (something regretted by many to tell the truth) when he (who had ridden far ahead) decided to turn and get back to his men.

Laisse LXXXIII

Very harsh was this combat (Christ, protect me!) when the Toulousains and Navarans charged into the crusading army. You would have seen the Germans shouting loudly; most of them yelled⁵ “Bar, Bar.” When crossing a small bridge, Sir Eustace of Cayeux was hit by an ash lance with a vair gonfanon with such blow that he could not get up; the priest could not arrive in time to give him the last rites and the absolution nor to confess him, although because he had been absolved only two days before, I believe that Jesus Christ will be willing to forgive him. When the French saw him, they all rushed to his help, but the wretched mercenaries began to retreat when they saw the crusaders coming towards them and pressing them. Well did they know in their hearts that they could not stand against them. What they have conquered, they can take easily with them. All they had done was kill

⁵ The original uses the vern “to yell” twice. We have preferred to use “to shout” and “to yell.”

a great lord, who made many cry for him because he was a rich lord of high nobility. His vassals had his body taken to his land where they would want to give him an honorable burial.

In the early morning, at daybreak, when the light begins to show, after they had spent fifteen days cutting down the vines, the crusaders began to take their pavilions and tents apart, for, in my opinion, they had decided to move. Food was very expensive and they could not procure it: one loaf of bread, for a simple meal, cost at least two coins. Other than beans and the fruit from the trees whenever they could find them, they would have nothing to eat. They began to march against the count of Foix and all went up to Auterive to cross the bridge. The wanted to spend the whole summer waging war on him, that's what they had at heart.

Laisse LXXXIV

When light showed up at dawn, the count of Montfort and most of the crusaders marched against the count of Foix. The count of Alos withdrew after having remained in the army for a long time. He wanted very much an agreement with Toulouse, but was prevented by the French (higher and lesser nobles), the bishops, the clergy and the preachers, who spoke about the heretics and their insane mistake. At Cassés they had found, hidden in a tower, at least ninety-four of these foul traitors, hidden away by those of Roqueville, who loved them dearly, despite their lord. I was told this by my lord Isarn, who was then prior of Vielmorès and of the entire fief.

After a long stay in the county of Foix where it did all the damage it could, devastating foodstuffs, wheat, and crops, the crusading army left when the hot weather began to subside, and the count of Montfort went to Rocamadour.

The abbot of Cîteaux was staying in the cloister at Cahors and did not leave it for fear. I doubt if he would have come out before Easter if the count had not fetched him.

Laisse LXXXV

The crusaders left, as I told you before, and the count of Montfort went on his way, going to Rocamadour as he had promised. The abbot of Cîteaux stayed inside Cahors, I was told, with noblemen of the region, and he begged and beseeched them to pledge their faith to the count of Montfort so that he should hold the region. And he had letters

dictated and written on parchment and sent them to all his friends in Provence. When the count moved on, the abbot left with him, accompanied also by valiant Count Baldwin. They slept at St Antonin (which they later devastated) and then went on to Gaillac.

Laisse LXXXVI

The count of Montfort returned and slept at St Antonin; thence by way of Gaillac he went to Lavaur, then to Carcassonne, beyond Laurac. The abbot of Cîteaux went to Albi and then up to Saissac. They are very concerned about the count of Toulouse because he is summoning his army from Toulouse, Agen, and Moissac, from his whole fief (as far away as he owns land). He also sends one hundred thousand crowns as payment to Sir Savari, for he must join him with all his cavalry all the way from Bergerac, where he is stationed.

Laisse LXXXVII

When the count of Toulouse heard the news, that the count of Montfort had dismissed his army, he summoned his forces from all over his land and ordered his friends and peers to prepare at once. The count of Comminges, lord of St Gaudens, and the count of Foix, with all his barons, and many other lords assembled there on a certain day. The seneschal of Agen, who is in charge of Penne, and all the mercenaries set off, as did those of Montauban (whom I do not dare forget) and those of Castelsarrasin (may God bless me).

On a Sunday morning, at the first light of dawn, they heard the news that Sir Savari was coming, which gave them great happiness and delight, although little did they know what the outcome would be!

Ah glorious God the Father and Mary, blessed Lady! Did anyone ever see before them such strong army, so well equipped, as that of Toulouse, nor such cavalry? When they were all formed out on the plain, you would have said that it was the entire army of Milan, Rome and Lombardy, and that of Pavia too.

Laisse LXXXVIII

My lords, the army of the count of Toulouse and of the city was very marvellous and great. Toulouse was part of it, and Moissac and Montauban, and Castelsarrasin and Isla Jordan and the whole Agenais, no one stayed behind; all the men of Comminges and the men of Foix are there, as do Savari and Mauléon (about which everyone rejoices),

as well as Gascons from Gascony and from Puigcerda. They are two hundred thousand when they stand arrayed in the field. Carts carrying wine and bread, as well as other supplies, are pulled hardly by the villeins. The buffaloes and oxen haul the catapults. They threaten the count and those who are with him; most of them call him "Traitor, son of a bitch." There inside Carcassonne they will besiege him by force and will skin him alive if they can catch him. They claim that they will take Montréal and Fanjeaux, and will ride at full speed into Montpellier, and on their way back they will conquer Lavour and the whole Albigeois.

Laisse LXXXIX

Great was the Toulousan army, God and my faith may help me, when the French knights left Carcassès. In it were mercenaries from Navarre and from the Aspe valley, more than one thousand mounted knights and fifty-three; Gascons, Quercinois and men from Agen. With raised banners they ride towards Lauragais, not expecting to find anyone alive all the way to Biterrois.

The count of Montfort quickly summoned all the French barons that he could reach. He sent for the viscount of Donges and my lord Bouchard, who was in Lavour, and for all the other, near and far; for Martin Algai too, and in Narbonne for Sir Aimery, ordering both to come. And come they all did; no one dared delay any longer the order given them.

Laisse XC

The count of Montfort summoned his barons. On a given day he was at Carcassonne, as the song says, and with him were at least three hundred of his companions who were good with arms and brave as lions. "My lords," he said to them, "hear my words. The count of Toulouse has summoned his vassals from all his lands and those of his friends. They number more than two hundred thousand, as I was told by a young nobleman who was sent to me by the warden of Limoux. They gather at Montferrand and near Avignonet and they intend to besiege me (so daring they are) wherever they can find me, downstream or upstream or anywhere. I want your counsel: what can you tell me, what do you advise me to do?"

Laisse XCI

When the count of Montfort had spoken, Sir Hugh of Lacy stood up. "My lord," he said, "since you ask for advice, let all who wish speak freely. If you trust me, there is nothing else to do. If you lock yourself up in Carcassonne and if the Toulousans follow you there, you will be besieged; if you go to Fanjeaux, also there you will find them. Thanks to their spies, they will track you down everywhere and you will be dishonored till the end of the world. If you want to believe me, in the weakest castle in all your lands, there you will wait for them; and if you receive any reinforcements, then attack them, for my heart tells me with certainty that you will defeat them."

"By my faith," said the count, "you give me good advice. Whatever happens, you will not lose, for I can see that you have advised me well." None of those present disagreed, on the contrary there all said unanimously out loud: "My lord, he gives good counsel, we beseech you to accept it." At this point they separated and each one went to their houses and inns and rested in bed till morning.

Laisse XCII

Next morning at daybreak, the count of Montfort woke up as well as all his troops. They leave for Castelnaudary, lances raised, where they will wait until the army of the count of Toulouse is cantoned.

On a Tuesday morning, after people had had dinner, the army arrived at Castelnaudary and encamped near there in a meadow, in a field half a league away. If you had seen the spectacle of such large gathering of foreigners, all shouting, you would have said that heaven and earth had met there. Oh God! How many tents were pitched there that day, with their golden ball and their eagle cast in metal!⁶ They set the trebuchet up on a roadway but could not find stones on any road or path that would not noisily shatter upon being fired. They brought three from a league away and with one they knocked down a tower; with another, they smashed the wall of a room; the third time the stone shattered, otherwise those inside would have paid dearly.

Laisse XCIII

The count of Montfort, as I told you, had settled in Castelnaudary, as everybody witnessed. Sir Bouchard and I do not know how many others were at Lavaur, as well as the son of its castellan, who was a

⁶ Each crowned by the ball and eagle, as the Roman legions.

good and valiant man. In total there were at least one hundred knights, brave good fighters. Martin Algai was there with only twenty men; they went stright to the count of Montfort at Castelnaudary. The bishop of Cahors was also there. They left Castres all together and went to Carcassonne, wherefrom came a large convoy of wine and grain, of baked bread and oats for those who were inside.

But the count of Foix left the Toulousain camp with all his men along a sunken path, and all the mercenaries were also there (not even one remained in camp, rather all of them accompanied him with great determination). As far as I know, there was no knight nor good valiant squire in the whole army who remained there, except Savari and his Norman barons who stayed with the count having a good time.

Bouchard arrived in good array in plain view of all and they arranged themselves as they saw that the count was. The count of Foix arrayed his army, which numbered four hundred at least, and even more they say, if the record does not lie. Bouchard's men, as far as I know, were fewer (dressed with their hauberks and helms), while the others numbered a good two thousand and had fast horses, hauberks or quilted jackets, or good shining helmets or good iron headgear, sharp lances, or good ashen spears or squashing maces.

Now hear how both engaged in battle with such ferocity as it was never heard of since Roland's time or since Charlemagne defeated Agolant and took Galiana, the daughter of King Braimant, in spite of Galafre, the courteous emir of the land of Spain.

Laisse XCIV

Across the plain, Frenchmen from Paris and those from Champagne rode in formation to Castelnaudary. But the count of Foix with all his men and the Spanish mercenaries blocked their way. They do not deem them worth a chesnut and tell each other: "Barons, nobody rest until all these foreigners are killed, then they will be in great fear in France and In Germany, in Poitou and Anjou and throughout Bretagne, and down in provence all the way to the Spanish mountain passes, and they will all learn their lesson."

Laisse XCV

When my lord Bouchard and his companions were on their way to Castelnaudary, a white falcon, moving from left to right took off and flew over them. Then Martin Algai said: "My lord, by St John, however

this turns out, in the end we shall win; you will hold the battlefield, as will also do those who are with you, but not before having great losses and receiving great harm." "What a good omen," said he, "that is not worth a glove to me. As long as we keep the field, we and those who will die shall be honored (provided there are dead people), and those who die like this will be saved. If we lose many men in battle, they will also lose there the best of their men."

Laisse XCVI

The count of Foix rides with his companions towards St Martin de Lasbordes, that was the name of the place. The lances are upright on the saddletrees and as they ride across the beautiful and long plain they shout "Toulouse!" The crossbowmen throw arrows and bolts and the noise they raised was such that you would have said that the sky and firmament were falling. When they lowered their lances the encounter was great. The Toulousains cried "Toulouse!" and the Gascons "Comminges!"; others cry "Foix!" and "Montfort!" and "Soissons!" A knight from the region, Gerald of Pépieux, who was with the count of Foix (one of the best of his men), was spurring his charger with his sharp spurs when he encountered in his way, by a forest, one of Bouchard's companions, a Breton; he struck him in the shield and pierced his the arm-guard, the quilted doublet and the hauberk, and drove his lance-point into the rear saddletree, and his pennon was red with blood. He fell dead without receiving confession. When the French saw this, they became very irate: like good vassals they raced to the rescue, angry as lions.

Laisse XCVII

Like true knights, the French spurred as hard as they could on the slope of a valley. My lord Bouchard held a silk pennon with a painted lion and rode a horse that, to tell you the truth, was worth more than a hundred pounds. There on the road to Montréal, as a solid group they attacked the mercenaries with their sharp swords and inflicted great harm on them, leaving dead one hundred men there who won't see another Christmas and won't be bothered by another Lent or carnival season. There, the son of the castellan who was in charge of Lavaur was mortally wounded by an arrow that went through the nasal and the eyehole of his helmet. He fell dead in front of the seneschal during this attack.

Laisse XCVIII

My lord Bouchard, as I have told you, rode full bridle on the road, and with him went the French and engaged the oncoming army through its thickest part. Each of his men cried "Monfort!" and he cried above the rest "Holy Mary, blessed lady!" On the other side was the count of Foix with all his knights. You could have seen there so many broken shields and shattered lances strewn on the meadow, the field full with them, getting caught in the feet. How many fine horses run free with no one holding them. Martin Algai and his men, whatever anyone tells you, fled this charge until the fight was won; then he said he was returning after pursuing the mercenaries. Thus each covered up their own wrongdoing and villainous behaviour. The bishop of Cahors and the civil population fled to Fanjeaux, a full league from there. It is no surprise to me that his companions behaved this way.

All the goods are taken by these mercenaries, God curse them, but doing this they just acted with great folly towards themselves, for they were pillaging just until the end of the battlefield and everyone fled with what they looted as soon as they could. The good ridign mule that belonged to Sir Nicholas, the mercenaries took that day together with his servant. But he escaped with the other clergy. I am very happy for him, may God bless me, for Master Nicholas is a great friend and comrade of mine.

Laisse XCIX

The French spur on softly at the walk, the helmets all facing the ground. Do not believe that they will flee or go back; they will not lack well-struck blows. The place is fair and broad, the field is level. On both sides they die, thin men and fat, as Master Nicholas told me. In great terror the Toulousain army see them fall, for they were beaten.

Laisse C

The count of Montfort, who was in Castelnaudary while the others fought with strength and courage, ordered those of his men who had come with him to hurry to arms, telling them that their comrades who had gone out and my lord Bouchard had lost the convoy. He is well aware that if they are defeated he would lose all his land and castle and would be held there as a prisoner and sieged, and would never leave except in defeat. As soon as he could he went out, fully armed, with

lance and shield. The foot soldiers inside would defend the castle until the count and his men returned.

Laisse CI

The count of Montfort and those in the castle with him rode to battle with banners flying. The men who remained inside shut the doors; if need be, they would defend themselves well. When the men of the Toulousain army saw them, they were dismayed. They well knew that for the most part, they will be defeated: that's what the mercenaries achieved by looting the battlefield. Our French lords cried altogether "Montfort!" and "Holy Mary, help us!"

Laisse CII

The count of Montfort hastened to strike hard and spurred ahead, his drawn sword in his hand, and rode into battle along the trodden way followed by his men, who came quickly right after him. All he could reach, he killed, he took, he slew. The miserable mercenaries and the misbelievers were so terrified when they saw them coming that they knew not how to defend themselves. Except the count of Foix, whose shield was split, who struck so many blows that his sword was notched. Roger Bernard, his son, broke through the melee and so did the knight Sir Porada, who was carrying a heavy mace, and Sir Isarn of Puylaurens, who was full of strength. They and the other banished knights, who are there plucking the crane, have struck so many blows that many men have fallen. If the others had done as much, the battle would not have been lost so quickly nor the people defeated as they were, in my opinion.

Laisse CIII

My lords, the battle and the combat have lasted long enough. On both sides, I tell you the truth, there are many dead, be it friends or enemies. The castellan of Lavour lost there his three sons, better than any a king or count had, in my opinion. The Toulousain army, which was in a meadow below Castelnaudary, wished to retreat, such was their anxiety. Savari shouted aloud: "My lords, stay calm, nobody move or fold his tent, otherwise you will be dead or defeated immediately." "Ah, Lord God of glory, by your most holy law, keep us from shame" (every man says to himself), "let us not be dishonored."

Laisse CIV

When the count of Toulouse heard the news, that the count of Foix and his men were defeated, then they all thought that they had been betrayed. They wrung their hands and said to each other: "Blessed Lady Mary, who ever heard of such incredible thing? I assure you that we outnumbered them ten to one." Raymond of Ricaud was so terrified that he fled to Montferrand in the sight of all. Then, after a while, when he knew that the count of Montfort had not attacked his men, he came back again; but he never disarmed nor undressed or went to bed that night, or closed his eyes, to tell you the truth, or slept that day or the next.

Laisse CV

My lords, now listen (and may God bless you!) what the count of Montfort did after this combat. When that was over and the battle won, both he and Sir Bouchard cried out loud: "My barons, push forward, for their army has been defeated." Then all together they launched a strong attack; they assaulted the Toulousain army that was in their tents and pavillions. If it had not been for the palisades and ditches they made, all the gold of Pavia would been of no avail. When the French knight could not get through, they were puzzled and thought they were as good as dead and betrayed. They told each other that it would be a folly not to go back for they had done enough that day. Before disarming, our French troops returned to pillage the field by moonlight. No one could describe the enormous wealth they took there which will make them rich for the rest of their lives.

Laisse CVI

The count of Montfort went back into Castelnaudary, rejoicing and happy about the result of the battle. In the morning, at dawn, after the French had entered, the Toulousain ordered their men to arm and quietly folded their tents and clothing and loaded everything onto the carts. They left the trebuchet exposed to the rain and wind. I do not think they would have taken it with them for one hundred thousand marks of silver. The men of Puylaurens were greatly dismayed, because they have broken their oaths. Some five hundred of them were the first to go immediately to Count Simon at Lavaur to make peace. They were also the first defectors, that is how obedient were they to that insane error.

Laisse CVII

The count of Toulouse, son of Lady Constance, left with his army. The French knights, you must be clear about this, did not pursue him at all that day, for they had hit them enough already with sword and lance. The inhabitants of Rabastens, trusting in these wicked heretics and their crazy beliefs, now defected, for they are sure without a doubt the crusaders would never come back because they had been defeated (that is what they think). The same thought the inhabitants of the region who shared the hopes of these I have been telling you about.

Laisse CVIII

As you have heard, the men of Toulouse left angry, worried and upset. They announced everywhere that the French had been defeated and the count of Montfort had fled by night. They told such lies that Rabastens and Gaillac surrendered. And Count Baldwin, Jesus guard and guide him!, was at Montégut with Martinet the Bold. Sudden messages arrived from Gaillac that the warden of Lagrave had been killed, and that they should go to the castle before it could be garrisoned and that the citizens of Gaillac have been accomplices to this. As soon as there was some light and with opposition from nobody, they saddled up and went fast and quick to Lagrave.

Laisse CIX

When the men of Gaillac and Sir Doat Alaman saw the banners blowing in the wind, they all rejoiced enormously, for they thought Count Raymond was leading his troops because they saw the Raymond cross. When they realized it was the other cross, they were sad and doleful. They saw the banner of Sir Martin of Olite floating down the Tarn towards the village by Agout. When our troops saw it, they received much joy. They garrisoned the castle, what else can I tell you! Pons of Beaumont, the warden, died at cockcrow. The crusaders returned to Montégut one evening at sunset, and Count Baldwin went at once to Bruniquel. He had lost Salvagnac, where there was good wheat, what made him very angry.

Laisse CX

The Toulousain troops returned very soon and valiant Count Raymond came to Rabastens with all his knights. Then they went up

all the way to Gaillac. He reconquered it all: La Garda and Puycelci, a place he liked vey much, St Marcel and Laguépie, he traversed all of them. Then he took Parisot after besieging it, the inhabitants os St Antonin returned to him, and Montégut surrendered before the month was over. Except Bruniquel, he reconquered all of them. They were brough to believe (by my faith in God) that the count of Montfort had been driven off the battlefield and had fled to his native place and that no crusaders (in all their lives) would ever return to their land because most of them had been killed.

But before hald a year was passed everything changed quickly, for the count of Montfort brought in Frenchmen. Then, at Touelles, which surrendered to him, he killed all the villains he found there. Next he crossed the Tarn, not by a ford but by the bridge at Albi. Then he took Cahuzac in two days and aftert that he sent to Bruniquel for Count Baldwin (for he was there), who was glad to come to him with his cavalry.

Laisse CXI

They stayed at Cahuzac for eight days because there was plenty of food in the town. This happened during the feast of the Epiphany, when winter is the harsest throughout. They laid siege to St Marcel and committed a great folly, without accomplishing there anything worth a rotten apple, but plenty of expenses, may God bless me! If the count who held Montauban had wanted to, it would have been a miracle if he did not destroy them; but he and his men were so afraid of Sir Alan of Roucy and Sir Peter of Livron, may Jesus bless them, that they did not attempt any attack.

On Easter eve, before daybreak, the crusaders left and this large cavalry force went to Albi because they were short on food and could not get more supplies. They were in this situation for a month and a half. Then arrived the large troops and companies of crusaders from Germany and Lombardy, as well as knights from Auvergne and Slavonia. One after another these forces took to the road. They saw them coming when they were less than a league and a half away.

Laisse CXII

The crusading army was awesome, as you have heard. All over the country men began to flee. They had to abandon Montferrand and Les Cassés. I believe all of them went to great Toulouse: no one who could

defend himself stayed in the country. The crusaders began to gather up at the bridge of Albi. They could not prevent them from gathering as they pleased at neither Rabastens nor Gaillac, that is why they fled, for a man must save himself. The men of St Antolin hurried to resit with Sir Adhémar Jordan, but when he left no one there could be happy about it. May God bless me, never have I seen so many castles captured and abandoned with so little fighting. The crusaders quickly established themselves in La Garda and Puycelci. You would not have found a man who would dare to go to sleep, they all fled by night.

Laisse CXIII

There was great noise and bustle in the crusading host. They destroyed and razed, I believe, St Marcel, and they all took quarters in St Antonin. I do not think you would have had the time to boil an egg before they took the place that same night. At least twenty-eight citizens of the village were killed or drowned, and ten of them were able to escape. All men and women fled into the church but they were all stripped and left naked. The clergy were also robbed, and the army wrecks and servants caused them much distress.

Laisse CXIV

St Antonin was taken, as the song says. They put Sir Adhémar-Jourdain in prison, and so did they with Viscount Sir Pons and I do not know how many others. May the Lord God of glory never forgive me my sins, if while the fight was taking place the clergy did not sing the *Sanctus Spiritus* in a great procession, and did it so loudly that you would have heard it half a league away. I do not know what else to tell you or why make a long story about it. One day, the army, the count of Montfort and the other barons set spurs to the horses and Count Baldwin was left there to garrison St Antonin together with his companions. But first they went to take possession of Montcuq and its main tower. The army continued marching and passed Tournon and entered the Agenais with God's blessing. Arnold of Montaigu and the other Gascons knew well how to guide them in this region. They destroyed Montcuq, which belonged to Count Raymond, and did not stop all their way to Penne d'Agenais, for they met with no resistance anywhere except only at Penne, which used to belong to King Richard. They set siege around it on a Tuesday. There were many Frenchmen, Normans and Bretons, there were Germans, Lorrainers and Frisians,

many lords from the Auvergne and many powerful Burgundians. But the castle was strong, and they did not pay attention to them more than to a button. The crusaders brought up mangonels, catapults, and rams. Inside is Sir Hugh of Alfaro, a place near Aragon, Bausan, the commander in chief of the mercenaries, Gerald of Montfabès, who is the warden of Montcuq, and a great number of others whose names I do not know. They set the siege after Ascension Day and lasted until September, as the song says, until the graper harvest.

Laisse CXV

The siege was very great (so Jesus Christ protect me!) and the castle so strong that no one could storm it. The crusaders from the Barrois threw so many stones with their big mangonels that they almost made a breach. Inside the village, there were many knights, many mercenaries, many men from Navarre. Sir Hugh of Alfaro held it for Count Raymond. Certainly, if the defenders had had something to drink and eat, the attackers could not have taken it nor could have entered. But the heat was very high, and they could not endure it. Thirst tormented them to such degree that it made them ill; the wells dried up, and this made them scared. And every day they saw them growing larger and never decreasing. They saw Count Guy arrive, and Sir Foucaud of Berzy riding a dappled grey horse and his brother Sir John clad in grey coat made of vair, the precentor of Paris, who knows well how to preach to a crowd, and many more barons that I could not tell you, and on that side, the assieged could find no succour. They were compelled, although reluctantly, to surrender the castle, which the count of Montfort ordered then to fortify well on all sides with lime and mortar. I do not want to tell you about the encounters that took place there, for the song is long and I do not want to stall. But I have interrupted my song and now I wish to go back. Once the castle was taken, they did not want to stay there any longer than necessary, so they had their tents and pavilions taken down and loaded onto carts. Then they went to Biron, which is near the sea and belonged to Martin Algai, whence he used to depart to wage war. Périgord and Saintonge had come to our crusade to complain about this.

Laisse CXVI

Carrying their standard high, the count and the crusaders rode along the main road to the castle of Biron. They took it at once without

delay. They executed Martin Algai dishonorably, dragged out by a horse, that is the proven truth, and then they hanged him in the meadow in the sight of all. Then they entrusted the castle and all the region to Sir Arnold of Montaigu. Next morning they returned towards Moissac, making a good three leagues per day, the army travelled as fast as it could and well arrayed. The count sent for my lady the countess, who is very virtuous and intelligent, and she joined them at Catus with fifteen thousand good fighting soldiers. Catus, where they stopped, has surrendered to Count Baldwin and our crusaders. The army gathered at Penne in the Agenais. Next morning by dinner time they reached Montcuq, and the following day they made it to Moissac after the bells rang for Terce. There was a large group of mercenaries inside, where they arrived the previous evening.

Laisse XVII

The citizens of Moissac watched the army camp around them on the bank of the Tarn river, and it is no marvel that they were dismayed. Were it not for the mercenaries, they would have been willing to make an agreement, for they well knew that in the long run they could not hold out. They could have escaped outside through the vineyards (what was the value of their wine yet to be harvested?). Three of them did so (rest assured I am telling the truth) who did not lose there a pennyworth. But no one can change what is to come. The inhabitants of Castelsarrasin knew how to save themselves like the intelligent, loyal and upright men they are, about whom nobody could ever say a bad word. They well understood that if the count recovered his land and reached an agreement with the pope, or if the king of Aragon were so superior to the crusaders that he could defeat them in the battlefield and drive them off, then he would recover them without delay. Things being what they were, they did not want to get themselves killed and murdered. They followed the example that you heard me mention of the citizens of Agen, who had already surrendered. "Of two evils one must always choose the lesser," said Bernard of Esgal. "If you are following a road and you see your companion fall into the mud, or if you are crossing a river, do not lead the way but keep in the middle, so that if you see anyone drowning, you can go back immediately." For that reason, so help me God, the citizens are not to be blamed as their garrison on whom they ought to have relied, Gerald of Pépieux and all his knights, had gone out of the castle and away along the banks of the Garonne. He said he would not stay there for gold nor money...The

crusaders are about to kill and mistreat those of Moissac, and their town is about to be taken.

Laisse CXVIII

I do not know if it was a mistake or a just decision when the citizens of Moissac refused to make any kind of peace when Penne was taken. They never thought that in all their days their town would be conquered, and the Toulousains, who had shut themselves inside, exhort them and encourage them all day long. The archbishop of Reims was robed in a squirrel fur-coat and was seated in his tent on a brown cushion. The count of Montfort was there with the precentor of St Denis and the countess (who sat in front of them) and many barons (who sat beside them), and Sir William of Contes, beloved and esteemed by God, Sir Peter of Livron (who prays frequently in church), and Sir Lambert of Limoux (who was wearing a shirt of Phrygian material because of the heat). These all recommended that Moissac should be besieged and they sent for the army.

Laisse CXIX

At the beginning of September, as soon as August was over, they laid siege to Moissac on all sides. Count Baldwin spent generously there. He ate many a goose and many a roast capon, according to what I was told by his warden and provost. Cats and siege engines were set up throughout the army. There was great abundance of wine and other supplies for sale in the army.

Laisse CXX

There were many frequent combats during the siege. The mercenaries inside Moissac harried the crusaders' army, who frequently killed many of those poor villeins. They killed a young nobleman of Count Baldwin's (may Jesus help me). Neither hauberk nor ventail could spare him from death, for a rock went through his guts as a sack of straw. The count of Montfort then ordered his men to go and fetch the timber cut by his many carpenters. He goes with them as also do all his companions, fully armed, for fear of an assault.

Laisse CXXI

The count of Montfort, called Simon, and the other barons had catapults set up, a cat built and a battering ram made that beat day

and night against the walls around. Those inside Moissac are irate and afflicted. One day they all took up arms quietly, in secret, and rode out at full speed to attack the army with the intention of burning the cat and carrying for it many firebrands. "To arms," shouted the French and the Burgundians, and out from their quarters sallied Poitevins and Gascons, Flemings and Lorrainers, Normans and Bretons. Many are wearing hauberks and good quilted jackets and over them doublets and ciclaton surcoats. And the count of Montfort spurred through the sand carrying the image of a lion on his armour and shield. They killed his warhorse at the exit of a forest; he would have been taken and imprisoned right there but for William of Contres (Lord God grant him his reward) and his comrade my lord Sir Moreau, who is a knight of great appearance, valiant and courteous, daring, handsome and good. To his rescue hurried Peter of Livron and Sir Foucaud of Berzy together with Count Guy of Montfort. They attacked in rows with such impetus that they freed the count despite the assailants, although his Achilles tendon was slightly injured. The archbishop's nephew was taken by four servants who killed him immediately.

Laisse CXXII

My lords, the battle was great and wonderful; when the French, Bretons and Normans came up the mercenaries fled at once and went back into town. The archbishop mourned his nephew. The following morning, before the bells rang for Terce, I don't know how many crusaders were coming from Cahors. The men of Montauban, who were watching the roads, came out to attack them in front and rear. News reached the siege quickly. Count Baldwin hurried to arms and all his companions were dressed up in arms immediately. Armand of Mondenard, who had a fast steed, and the sons of Sir Hugh of Le Breil, who are courageous and valiant, pursued them all around so that they captured eight good horses, an iron-grey among them that went to a crossbowman.

Laisse CXXIII

Brave Count Baldwin and all his knights returned to their quarters that very evening. The catapults threw stones against Moissac all day long, breaking them down and opening breaches. So that it was no surprise if the defenders were frightened, for they knew that help was coming from nowhere. It was a full month since the count of Toulouse

had gone to Bordeaux to see Savari and he never got a pennyworth for it, except that he ransomed his son for a large sum of money.

I return to my subject and do not intend to leave it. I wish to tell you about a little miracle that Jesus the righteous did for the crusaders. A great section of the wall fell into the moat and they could now go through the breach. When the citizens saw this, there is no need to ask if they were terrified (both they and the troops). They would have liked to make an agreement with the count of Montfort, but he swore by all the saints of the Holy Land that he would not let one of them escape alive unless they handed over the mercenaries, who have given him much travail. I do not know what else I could tell you if I talked all day, except that they loved themselves better than brother or wife, parents or cousin.

Laisse CXXIV

One beautiful morning, Moissac surrendered to the crusaders and the mercenaries were made prisoner and taken away. I believe, by St Martin, that more than three hundred were killed and they took their armour, horses and draft horses. The citizens paid a ransom of more than one hundred marks of pure gold. The neighbours, all around, are terrified. Sir William of Contres received Castelsarrasin and Montech was given to Count Baldwin and they awarded Verdun-sur-Garonne to Sir Peter Cissei. Then they took to the road towards Montauban.

Laisse CXXV

The son of the count of Foix rode from the Puigcerdà region with a hundred knights and entered Montauban. This is a real stronghold; no one has ever seen a flat place so well fortified and with such deep ditches. The great men of the army, those who hold high positions, saw that winter was approaching and summer ending and that the defenders were no more afraid of them than of an acorn. Furthermore, the abbot of Pamiers and one of his chaplains kept telling them every day that they would lose the village, that its garrison would flee and surrender unless it received help soon, for the men of Saverdun had taken the village's wine and bread, and they had not harvested their vines, I believe, for more than a year. For this reason, the crusaders moved all in that direction and they set off next day marching long distances. They went by Auterive, where they were joined by the Germans from the Carcassès, with many an oriflamme and many a rich pennon.

Laisse CXXVI

When the men of Sauverdun saw so many banners, they came down out of the castle and fled at full gallop, among them the count of Foix, who was also there and who thought to be safe inside. I do not know what else to tell you or how to prolongue my description: throughout the whole of Gascony they entered without any resistance, St Gaudens and Muret, the castle and village, Samatan and Isla Jordan, and all the way down to the country of Oloron, they conquered everywhere, including the land of Gaston, for they met with no resistance except when they entered Foix. And then, when it seemed good to them, they returned to their countries, once they had completed their forty-days duty and gained their indulgences. That winter they rested, for Count Simon guarded his land well together with his brother Sir Guy. Then he called an assembly attended by many barons. There were many bishops and many noblemen. All the castellans of his fief were attended, summoned as they were by him.

Laisse CXXVII

Many clergy had gathered for the meeting at Pamiers, as well as many rich bishops and many mighty lords. They laid down, as you know, the usages and customs for this country, which is wide and large, and had them drawn up charters and sealed letters, after which they returned to their own lands. Sir William of Contres, who is wise and valiant, went to meadows of Muret on the feast of St Denis. He left the count cheerful, joyful, resolute, together with Peter of Cissey, who joined them, and Bernard Jordan, who was born in La Isla. Bernard remained in his own town and the others moved away from La Isla, where they had halted, and continued to Verdun, where they dined. Next day the mercenaries took to the roads and hurried until they reached the moats of Castelsarrasin after having taken many sheep and many other provisions. Their number was estimated at more than one thousand mounted men. As soon as the alarm sounded through the country, Sir William of Contres put on his armour, as did my lord Moreau, who rode next to him, and Sir Peter of Cissey, who was soon ready. Once they were all arrayed, they were no more than sixty, but few as they were, they made them flee and pursued them victoriously all the way to Montauban, to the point of drowing many in the waters of the Tarn. Nightfall prevented them from continuing, what made them upset; their horses were also exhausted from running. They untied and freed their prisoners and recovered the plunder.

Laisse CXXVIII

Then William of Contres battled with them and recovered from them all the plunder, and took a large booty from them also. Then he rode back with all his troops all the while rejoicing the whole group with the goods they had taken. They came to Castelsarrasin (lances raised) and did not take their lodgings until after midnight or eat until almonst morning. I believe they slept the bells rang for terce. On another occasion, the mercenaries started pillaging, running through Agen and its entire territory. The army could hardly move because of their heavy load. Sir William of Contres, who was not pleased with this, moved forward to attack them with all his troops. Many blows were struck there with lance and sword to the point that the land was red with blood and there many broken hafts strewn around them. Many lackeys lied dead, bloody and with a gaping wound in their throats. He did not let them keep any plunder worth a penny. He mistrusts all of those valiant people that he had brought to this land from France and Burgundy.

Laisse CXXIX

William of Contres, as I told you already, defeated all the mercenaries, recovered what they had pillaged and captured their horses and pack animals. They plundered the land around Castelsarrasin once again but (I swear) I guarantee you they never took any of his property worth two coins from Poitou. On the contrary, they were beaten and threw themselves into the Tarn. His horse was struck by five or six darts. Sir William of Contres fell to the ground in front of all his friends but as the valiant man he was, he grabbed his sword and, on his feet, leaped forward shouting his wacry, the Paris cry. My lord Moreau spurred his good and costly charger and I believe all the others came to his help together. In the midst of battle, they did not believe to be sure to rescue him or prevent his capture. "God help us" they shouted, and "St Denis." You would have seen there many a squire of his army killed and his warden greatly injured. But Sir William mounted a spirited horse, charged the mercenaries and pushed them back all the way to the waters of the Tarn. It was then that he laughed about his fall.

Laisse CXXX

My lords, many graces and miracles were done by God for Sir William of Contres, who took such great pains that everybody who

saw him even once loved him much. Certainly no better man ever came to the crusade from Burgundy, nor ever will, unless he is richer and mightier than him. I return now to my subject, which I have interrupted. King Peter of Aragon gave one of his sisters to the count of Toulouse, and then married another to his son, in spite of the men on this side. He went to war and said that he would take with him one thousand knights, all paid by him; and that if he finds the crusaders, he will fight them in battle. And we, provided we live long enough, will see who wins and will include in our account what we recall, and we will continue to write whatever we remember, as long as we the matter to write about lasts and the war is over.

Laisse CXXXI

Before the peace returns and the war is over, there will be many a blow struck and many a lance broken, and many a new gonfalon will lie on the meadow, many souls will be detached from their bodies and many widows will be ruined. King Peter of Aragon left with his army. He summoned all the people of his kingdom, so that he is able to gather a large and beautiful company. He spoke to all and told them that he wanted to go to Toulouse to fight against the crusade because they are ravaging and destroying the whole region. He also said that the count of Toulouse appealed to their compassion so that his land will not be burned and laid waste, for he has done no harm or wrong to any living soul. "And as he is my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, and I have married my other sister to his son, I will go to help them against this accursed people who are trying to disinherit them."