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🚩 **Guilhèm VII coms de Peitieu** (or Peitieu), **Guilhèm IX duc d'Aquitània e de Gasconha** (1071 - 1127)
 (+ **William**, 1071 - 1127, Count of Poitou, Duke of Aquitaine)
 (**Guillaume**, 1071 - 1127, comte de Poitou, duc d'Aquitaine)

William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, usually known in his native Occitan as Guilhem de Peitieu, and in French as Guillaume d'Aquitaine) is the earliest troubadour whose work survives. His familiarity with his art, along with certain allusions in his poems, suggest that he was not the only trobador of his time. It generally assumed that although he had contemporaries he had no predecessors, as no allusions to any earlier trobador are known. Among contemporary and later troubadours Guilhem was invariably known as The Count of Poitou.

He is said by the chronicler Ordericus Vitalis to have made joking verses about his disastrous crusade in the East, but none of them have come down to us. According to other chroniclers Guilhem was a brave and accomplished knight, but also a gloriously irreverent and immoral one. Anecdotes about him are recorded, and some of his own songs confirm his reputation. Among the eleven extant works some barely qualify as examples of troubadour verse. Their boldness and coarseness are reminiscent of old popular songs rather than concepts of chivalry. On the other hand, four of his love-songs display notable charm, simplicity and sincerity. They express less conventionalised emotions than other troubadours; presumably because the conventional courtly form of love was then unknown - it was created by troubadours over time so cannot be expected in the works of the earliest troubadour. Some troubadour conventions can already be discerned in his work. Another of Guilhem's poems is an "enigma," or nonsense verse. Later troubadours used this form to convey the dreamy and confused emotions to which love purportedly reduced them. It is not known to whom his songs were addressed, but it seems probable that some were addressed to one of his mistresses, the Countess Amalberge.

The verse-forms employed by Guilhem in his love-songs are simpler than those typically used by the later troubadours, but there is a grace about them which show him to have been a practised poet. Except for a fragment of the melody to one of his songs (which was adapted to different words in a mystery play of Saint Agnes), none of his music has come down to us, so we know nothing of his talent as a musician.

His domain extended south to the Pyrenees covering a large part of Occitania. Guilhem spent time in what is now Spain where he had friends. He may have learned song-making there. Ezra Pound says that Guilhem brought his song from Spain. As he puts it in Canto 8:

"And Poitiers, you know, Guillaume Poitiers,
had brought the song up out of Spain
with the singers and viels..."

Perhaps there was a Moorish influence as well as Guilhem is known to have captured a group of Moorish dancing girls. He may also have adopted some monastic ideas. At the monastery of Saint Martial in Limoges near Poitiers the monks were making up church songs in rhyming Latin. Guilhem adopted their tunes and verse forms and set vernacular words to them to amuse his companions. In any case, Guilhem was the first rhyming poet in any modern European language.

During Guilhem's reign the Languedoc (🚩 Lengadoc), Provence (🚩 Proveça), the Aquitaine (🚩 Gasconha) and much of the rest of Occitania had not yet been annexed by France.

In France to the north the troubadour tradition was copied by speakers of French (the langue d'oïl) who are generally known as Trouvères. This was probably accelerated when Eleanor of Aquitaine (the grand-daughter of William IX of Aquitaine) married the King of France. She exported the same ideals of courtly love to England when she later married King Henry II. Her daughter Marie, Countess of Champagne took the same ideas of courtly behaviour to the court of the Count of Champagne. Henry and Eleanor's son Richard d'Anglaterra was also a troubadour like his great-grandfather. Although his first language was Occitan and his favourite place the Aquitaine, of which he was Duke, he is better known to us as Richard the Lionheart, King of England. His works include: two sirventes, one with music.

Click on the following link for more about **William IX of Aquitaine** ►►

Below are some examples of Guilhem's work, with rhymed English translations

Farai un vers, pos mi somelh

How the Count of Poitiers pretended to be mute

Ben vuelh

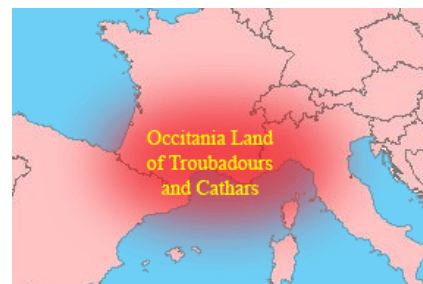
"I brought this song in from the shop", Guilhem's master craftsman brag.

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The
Troubadours



Companho, tant ai agutz

Farai un vers de dreyt nien

Ab la dolchor del temps novel

"Friends, so miserably I've fared."

"I've made this rhyme completely free of sense"

"New life: the woods are leafing out."

Farai un vers, pos mi somelh

Farai un vers, pos mi somelh
e·m vauc e m'estauc al solelh.
Domnas i a de mal conselh,
e sai dir cals:
cellas c'amor de cavalier
tornon a mals.

Domna fai gran pechat mortal
qe no ama cavalier leal;
mas si es monge o clergal,
non a raizo:
per dreg la deuri'hom cremar
ab un tezo.

En Alvernhe, part Lemozi,
m'en aniey totz sols a tapi:
trobei la moller d'en Guari
e d'en Bernart;
saluderon mi simplamentz
per sant Launart.

La una·m diz en son latin:
"E Dieus vos salff, don pelerin;
mout mi semblatz de belh aizin,
mon escient;
mas trop vezem anar pel mon
de folla gent."

Ar auzires qu'ai respondut;
anc no li diz ni bat ni but,
ni fer ni fust no ai mentaugut,
mas sol aitan:
"Babariol, babariol,
babarian."

So diz n'Agnes a n'Ermessen:
"Trobat avem que anam queren.
Sor, per amor Deu, l'alberguem,
qe ben es mutz,
e ja per lui nostre conselh
non er saubutz."

La una·m pres sotz son mantel,
e mes m'en sa cambra, al fornol.
Sapchatz qu'a mi fo bon e bel,
e·l focs fo bos,
et eu calfei me volontiers
als gros carbos.

A manjar mi deron capos,
e sapchatz agui mais de dos,
e no.i ac cog ni cogastros,
mas sol nos tres,
e·l pans fo blancs e·l vin fo bos
e·l pebr' espes.

"Sor, aquest hom es enginhos,
e laissa lo parlar per nos:
non aportem nostre gat ros
de mantenent,
qe·l fara parlar az estros,
si de re·nz ment."

How the Count of Poitiers pretended to be mute

I rhymed this while I was asleep
and sunning out among the sheep:
By prejudice, some ladies keep
away from knights,
but gallant cavaliers to spurn
just isn't right!

Great mortal sin a lady does
if she won't give us knights her love.
To favor priests instead of us
is a mistake;
and monks?, I'd say we ought to burn
her at the stake.

When I was roving on the sly
once in Auvergne, as I passed by
I saw two well-appointed wives
survey the square.
In wide-eyed innocence one turned
and spoke me fair

Her style was decorous and prim:
"Good pilgrim, God your soul redeem,
a worthy gentleman you seem,
but in this world
the wanderers, as we have learned,
are often fools."

How I answered you will hear—
no indiscretion, never fear,
or word that might offend the ear,
just this remark:
"Baboogaloo baboogaloo,
babar babark!"

To Eremesse said Agnes, "Sister,
we've discovered one at last!
For love of God, make him our guest.
The man is mute—
with him, no matter what we do,
it won't get out!"

One led; the other steered my arm
and shared her cape. They took me home
beside their hearth so I'd be warm.
The fire glowed;
I gladly stretched my legs and basked
before the coals.

They brought roast quail to eat, and we
applied ourselves to gluttony.
No servants, just a cozy three.
I liked it fine:
spice and white bread by the basket,
first rate wine.

"This man may be a clever trickster,
holding back on talking just to
fool us. Fetch the kitty, sister!
If he's not mute,
he'll soon be remonstrating briskly
with our cat."

N' Agnes anet per l'enujos,
e fo granz et ac loncz guinhos:
e eu, can lo vi entre nos,
aig n'espavent,
q'a pauc non perdei la valor
e l'ardiment.

Quant aguem begut e manjat,
eu mi despoillei a lor grat.
Detras m'aporteron lo gat
mal e felon:
la una·l tira del costat
tro al tallon.

Per la coa de mantenen
tira·l gat et el escoissen:
plajas mi feron mais de cen
aquella ves;
mas eu no·m mogra ges enguers,
qui m'ausizes.

"Sor," diz n' Agnes a n'Ermessen,
"mutz es, qe ben es conoissen;
sor, del banh nos apareillem
e del sojorn."
Ueit jorns ez encar mais estei
en aquel forn.

Tant les fotei com auzirets:
cen e quatre vint et ueit vetz,
q'a pauc no·i rompei mos coretz
e mos arnes;
e no·us puesc dir lo malaveg,
tan gran m'en pres.

Ges no·us sai dir lo malaveg,
tan gran m'en pres.

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Sant Launart - St. Leonard, a 6th Century hermit - was invoked invoked as patron saint of deafmutes, imbeciles, and those possessed by the devil.

That cat—I'm no enthusiast—
was huge and wore a big moustache.
The villain had me so abashed
and so surprised
I nearly lost my taste for risky
enterprise.

When we had finished with our feast
I doffed my clothes, at their request.
One sidled round me with the beast,
which didn't fail
to flail with rage, because she bore
it by the tail.

Right then from stem to stern she hauled
that vicious cat and made it maul
my hide while digging in its claws.
Though I'd be skinned
within an inch of life, I swore
I wouldn't flinch.

To Eremesse said Agnes, "Sis,
the man is mute for sure, so let's
get ready for our little rest
and take a bath."
Eight days I stayed with them, and more,
upon that hearth.

I humped them—why say "lots" of times?—
a clear one hundred ninety nine.
My gear below the waterline
would almost break.
You won't believe what all is sore
and how I ache.

No, you'd not believe what all is sore
and how I ache.

Ben vuelh

Ben vuelh que sapchon li pluzor
d'est vers si's de bona color,
qu'ieu ai trag de mon obrador:
qu'ieu port d'ayselh mestier la flor,
et es vertaz,
e puesc en traire·l vers auctor
quant er lassatz.

Ieu conosc ben sen e folhor,
e conosc anta et honor,
et ai ardimen e paar:
e si·m partetz un juec d'amor
no suy tan fatz
no·n sapcha triar lo melhor
d'entre·ls malvatz.

Ieu conosc ben selh qui be·m di,
e selh qui·m vol mal atressi,
e conosc ben selhuy qui·m ri,
e si·l pro s'azauton de mi,
conosc assatz

Master craftsman brag. "I brought this song in from the shop"

I brought this song in from the shop
to show you all how well it's made
so note the shape, which is tiptop.
My work's the flower of the trade,
and that's the truth.
These verses, all laced up for show,
can serve as proof.

I know foolishness from sense;
honor I can tell from shame,
and bravery from diffidence.
Try me in some courtly game:
I'm not so dense
I'd bet the wrong way on the throw
and miss my chance.

I know who greets me honestly
and which ones wish I'd go to Hell.
I know real laughter—I can tell
the brave who seek my company,
and how I must

qu'atressi dey voler lor fi
e lor solatz.

Mas ben aya sel qui·m noyri,
que tan bo mestier m'eschari
que anc a negu non falhi;
qu'ieu sai jogar sobre coyssis
a totz tocatz;
mais en say que nulh mo vezi,
qual que·m vejat.

Dieu en lau e Sanh Jolia:
tant ai apres del juec doussa
que sobre totz n'ai bona ma,
e selh qui cosselh mi querra
non l'er vedatz,
ni us mi noa tornara
descosselhatz.

Qu'ieu ai nom "maiestre certa":
ja m'amigu' anueg no m'aura
que no·m vuelh' aver l'endema;
qu'ieu suy d'aquest mestier, so·m va,
tan ensenhatz
que be·n sai guazanhar mon pa
en totz mercatz.

Pero no m'auzetz tan guabier
qu'ieu non fos rahusat l'autr'ier,
que jogav'a un joc grossier,
que·m fon trop bos al cap primier
tro fuy 'ntaulatz;
quan guardiey, no m'ac plus mestier,
si·m fon camjat.

Mas elha·m dis un reprovier:
"Don, vostre dat son menudier,
et ieu revit vos a doblier."
Dis ieu: "Qui·m dava Monpeslier,
non er laissatz."
E leviey un pauc son taulier,
ab ams mos bratz.

E quant l'aic levat lo taulier,
empeis los datz,
e·lh duy foron cairavallier
e·l terz plombatz.
E fi·ls fort ferir al taulier,
e fon joguatz.

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provide the welcome they expect
to earn their trust.

Bless him who taught me winning ways
anywhere my hand is dealt.
I can play it as it lays
between the sheets and on the felt;
nobody else
has been able to perfect
the moves so well.

Praise Saint Lulu and the Lord,
I've practiced at the sweetest game
till I'm an expert. I've such fame
that students come to me for lore
and are made wise.
The novice—if there is one here—
I will advise.

The master craftsman is my name:
a girl who's spent the night my way
is sure to want me the next day.
I'm such an artist with a dame
that I could earn
my bread in any market square
with what I've learned.

But, friends, you'll never hear me say
I wasn't flat-out on the floor
last Tuesday in some high-stakes play.
I'd so enjoyed the round before,
I was amazed
to find my skill just disappear
as we engaged.

She chided me for my delay:
"Duke, your dice aren't in the cup;
why don't you double and replay?"
Said I: "I would not pass that up
for Montpellier."
With both my arms I got her rear
a little way

raised up, and having trued the board,
I grabbed three dice and rolled the same:
two of them just knocked around
but the third sank plumb to ground.
Then a solid hit was scored,
and it was game.

Companho, tant ai agutz
Companho, tant ai agutz d'avols conres
qu'ieu non puesc mudar non chan e que no·m pes;
Enpero no vueill c'om sapcha
mon afar de maintas res.

E dirai vos m'entendensa de que es:
no m'azauta cons gardatz ni gorcs se peis,
ni gabars de malvatz homes
com de lor faitz non agues.

Senher Dieus, quez es del mon capdels e reis,
qui anc premiers gartet con com non esteis?

"Friends, so miserably I've fared"
Friends, so miserably I've fared
I can't resist the urge to sing.
Instead of every little thing
that vexes me in my affairs,

I'll tell the crux: I am not fond
of guarded cunt, or fishless ponds,
or listening to lively cracks
from those who talk but never act.

Great Ruler of the world! Oh Lord,
why didn't you destroy the first

C'anc no fo mestiers ni garda
c'a si dons estes sordeis.

who ordered cunt kept under guard?—
for no man served his lady worse!

Pero dirai vos de con—cals es sa leis,
com sel hom que mal n'a fait e peitz n'a pres:
si c'otra res en merma
qui n'pana e cons en creis.

Despite my recent poor success
I'll cite the bottom line on grooves:
While other goods by use grow less,
the supple opening improves!

E silh qui no volran creire mos casteis
anho vezer pres lo bosc en un deveis:
per un albre c'om hi tailla
n'i naison dos ho treis.

And anyone who fails to see
can try this country metaphor:
Where skillful woodsmen fell the tree
there always spring up several more.

E quam lo bocx es taillatz nais plus espes
E l senher no n pert son comte ni sos ses
A revers planh hom la tala,
si l dampnatges no i es.

As trees are logged, so grow the woods.
The owner gets his revenues,
so why complain? How does he lose
when he can show no damaged goods?

Tortz es c'om planha la tala si negun dan noi a ?
ges. ?

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In the original Guilhem uses the word con four times, but the fifth time it is conres (fare, provisioning) as a pun.

Farai un vers de dreyt nien
Farai un vers de dreyt nien:
non er de mi ni d'otra gen,
non er d'amor ni de joven,
ni de ren au,
qu'enans fo trobatz en durmen
sobre cheveu.

"I've made this rhyme completely free of sense"
I've made this rhyme completely free
of sense—it's not of you and me,
or youth, or doings he-and-she,
or springtime thoughts.
It came to me while I was sleeping
on my horse.

No sai en qual hora m fuy natz:
no suy alegres ni iratz,
no suy estrayns ni sui privatz,
ni no n puesc au,
qu'enaissi fuy de nueitz fadatz,
sobr' un pueg au.

What planet ruled when I was born?
I'm native here and still feel foreign.
Can't be contented, or forlorn,
or change myself:
I was the midnight work of freaking
magic elves.

No sai quora m fuy endurmitz
ni quora m velh, s'om no m'o ditz.
Per pauc no m'es lo cor partitz
d'un dol corau;
e no m'o pretz una soritz,
par Sanh Marsau!

I can't tell when I wake or sleep
unless the others keep me briefed.
It almost breaks my heart—I'm deeply
plagued by doubts,
and none of them, by Saint Martial,
is worth a mouse.

Malautz suy e tremi murir,
e ren no sai mas quan n'aug dir;
metge querrai al mieu albir,
e non sai tau;
bos metges es qui m pot guerir,
mas non, si amau.

They say I'll soon be dropping dead
Fetch that doctor, quick!—I said—
his name has just escaped my head.
No matter who:
he's bad if I do not get well,
good if I do.

M'amigu' ai ieu, no sai qui s'es,
qu'anc non la vi, si m'ajut fes;
ni m fes que m plassa ni que m pes,
ni no m'en cau,
qu'anc non ac Norman ni Frances
dins mon ostau.

My lady friend I've never seen:
I don't know if she's cute or plain,
or if she's kind to me or mean.
Why should I care?—
I don't let French and Normans stay
the night in here.

Anc non la vi et am la fort,
anc non n'aic dreyt ni no m fes tort;
quan non la vey, be m'en deport,

My passion's absolutely strong
but she won't do me right, or wrong.
Avoiding her I get along

no·m pretz un jau
 qu'ie·n sai gensor et bellazor,
 e que mais vau.

Fag ai lo vers, no say de cuy;
 e trametrai lo a selhuy
 que lo·m trametra per autruy
 lay vers Anjau,
 que·m tramezes del sieu estuy
 la contraclau.

just fine. Forget her:
 I've others nicer anyway
 who please me better.

This verse I've made—of what or who
 unknown—I'll send to someone who
 will send it on to someone who
 is in Anjou,
 who might decode it and convey
 the key to you.

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Ab la dolchor del temps novel
 Ab la dolchor del temps novel
 foillo li bosc, e li auchel
 chanton, chascus en lor lati,
 segon lo vers del novel chan;
 adonc esta ben c'om s'aisi
 d'acho don hom a plus talan.

De lai don plus m'es bon e bel
 non vei mesager ni sagel,
 per que mos cors non dorm ni ri,
 ni no m'aus traire adenan,
 tro que eu sacha ben de fi
 s'el es aissi com eu deman.

La nostr' amor vai enaissi
 com la branca de l'albespi
 qu'esta sobre l'arbre tremblan,
 la nuoit, a la ploia ez al gel,
 tro l'endeman, que·l sols s'espan
 per la fuella vert e·l ramel.

Equer me membra d'un mati
 que nos fezem de guerra fi,
 e que·m donet un don tan gran,
 sa drudari' e son anel:
 equer me lais Dieus viure tan
 c'aia mas manz soz so mantel.

Qu'eu non ai soing de lor lati
 que·m parta de mon Bon Vezi,
 qu'eu sai de paraulas com van,
 ab un breu sermon que s'espel,
 que tal se van d'amor gaban,
 nos n'avem la pessa e·l coutel.

"New life: the woods are leafing out"
 New life: the woods are leafing out
 and every type of bird is shouting
 now in its specific tongue,
 all versions of the latest song.
 The time is sweet—a man should find
 the ease which most is on his mind.

From there (where it would please me best
 to be) so far I have no word—
 until I can be reassured
 by her of what I'm hoping for,
 I don't dare go there any more
 and so can neither laugh nor rest.

This is how our love is now:
 it's like a fragile hawthorn bough
 that trembles on the tree all night
 and rattles under hail and rain,
 but next day feels the spreading light
 on twigs which soon are pushing green.

That branch reminds me of a morning
 when we made an end to war
 and when she gave me precious gifts:
 her ring, her friendship, and her love.
 Dear God, may I live long enough
 to get my hands beneath her shift!

You know how the jabber goes
 that keeps the two of us apart:
 officious meddlers breeding strife.
 Let's not take idle talk to heart—
 no matter what the others boast
 of love, we've both the loaf and knife.

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Some other websites about Guilhem and his works:

- <http://www.planck.com>: by Leonard Cotterrel. Great site from which the translations above are taken.
- <http://www.multimania.com/chamboliva/trobadors.html> by Ivon d'a Chamboliva has a list of links to sites with troubadour songs including Guilhem's.

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