

A Further Look at Secular and Sacred Lyric in the Early Consistory: *Lo Cocir de la Mort* and *La Contemplatio de la Crotz**

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ABSTRACT: The second version of the *Leys d'Amors* (1356) includes a long devotional poem, *La Contemplatio de la Crotz*, and omits a secular poem about the fear of Death, *Lo Cocir de la Mort*. The two poems are connected by a common concern with death in the broadest sense. The *Contemplatio* is not a contemplation but rather a dolorist narrative of the Passion that was intended to include a cycle of illustrations. It is linked to the *Planctus Mariae* and other texts that are attested in medieval Toulouse. This article argues that the *Contemplatio* replaced the more secular *Cocir* and underlined the more cautious attitude towards the Church of the second redaction. However, the first redaction of the *Leys d'Amors* contains fragments of Passion devotion and the *Contemplatio* is connected to religious visual and musical culture in Toulouse. This implies that the complexity of the early Consistory's relationship with mendicant spiritual devotion has been underestimated.

KEYWORDS: Toulouse; Poetry; *Leys d'Amors*; Inquisition; Passion devotion.

* This paper builds on my study of the *Cocir de la Mort* in Léglu (forthcoming and 2024). Key ideas were sparked by my invited participation at the colloquium *Autour du corps de l'apôtre Saint-Jacques-le-Majeur à Toulouse*, Toulouse, 8-9 November 2023, organized by Fernand Peloux. My thanks to him and especially to Catherine Fernandez. I also thank Marina Navàs Farré for her comments on an earlier version of this paper.

Introduction

The foundation of Toulouse's *Consistori de la Sobregaia Companhia del Gai Saber* shortly before their first poetic competition of 1324 is known from the Consistory's manuscripts. The earliest manuscripts were preserved in city archives and in the Académie des Jeux Floraux for six centuries until they were transferred to Toulouse's municipal library in 2005. The Consistory preserved manuscripts that contained prize poems as well as the collected works of other members, notably Raimon de Cornet (Navàs Farré 2022; Léglu 2013). These include a five-book treatise on grammar and rhetoric, the *Leys d'Amors*, written between 1323 and 1355, recently edited by Beatrice Fedi (2019) as *T*¹. A verse epitome of this first version was produced by Guilhem Molinier (Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya ms 239, f. 83-158v; ed. Anglade 1926). In the year 1356, a revised, shorter version in three books of the prose *Leys d'Amors* was produced by Molinier, by then the Consistory's Chancellor, and a fellow-*mantenedor* Bortolomieu Marc (Fedi's *T*²; ed. Anglade 1919-1920). This new version updated the anthology of troubadour quotations and included extensive translated excerpts in prose of the work of the lawyer and civic theorist Albertano da Brescia (fl. c. 1245-60) (Kay 2013: 176-88). Kay has drawn attention to the fact that while *T*² constructs a civic identity borrowed from Italian models, its second book is dominated by a long religious poem that she suggests is included chiefly for its «substantive content» (2013: 179). She argues that *T*² seeks to adapt post-troubadour poetry to a new context that was more comfortable with forms of «exemplary piety» within a city dominated by the inquisition tribunal and the university (2013: 179), while emulating Italian civic models (Maninchedda 2005: 354-55, 360). Given the great importance of the mendicant orders in Toulouse's university, especially the Dominicans, this long devotional poem requires further study. It contains a refrain and was designed to contain the multiple illustrations of a Passion cycle; neither of these are typical elements of the *Leys d'Amors*. This article takes a new look at the two redactions of the *Leys d'Amors*, the first (*T*) and the second (*T*²) and at that long religious poem, noting that the Consistory's first thirty years seem to be marked by a negotiation between different secular and spiritual positions. I had explored such issues in earlier studies (Léglu 2008; 2013) and recent research by specialists in several disciplines has greatly developed this enquiry.

1. See Fedi's analysis of the manuscript tradition (2019: 5-77), and of the foundation of the Consistory (77-100).

The early days of the Consistory are known from *T*², which opens with a series of versified letters. Ludmilla Evdokimova (2022) has suggested that these documents might be a fictional construct, part of the rhetorical presentation of the Consistory of 1356 as a community of souls and minds. According to the letters, poets were invited to join the seven *senhors* on the first day of the month of May 1324, in an orchard outside the city walls, to present poems on a Marian theme (Fedi 2019; Anglade 1919-1920: I, 8-12). The first *Jocs florals* were organized to coincide with important feast days in May, but the letter issued in November 1323 does not mention a religious devotion. On the contrary, it places the poetic Consistory under the aegis of *Dona Sciensa* and the God of Love, and their membership is exclusively secular, under the patronage of the city's elected councillors, the Capitouls (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 11-14). The *mantenedors* opened the submitted poems on May 1st, watched them and judged them (after Mass) on May 2nd, and awarded their prize during a public ceremony on May 3rd, the day of the «festa de Santa Crotz», the feast of the Finding, or Invention of the Cross (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 14). The letters do not mention that the feast of the Crown of Thorns followed on May 4th. This may also have been a significant date in Toulouse, for the basilica of Saint-Sernin is believed to have acquired a thorn relic in the thirteenth century (Bozóky 2018: 52), and a late thirteenth-century Dominican missal for Toulouse includes it in the calendar (see below).

The liturgical and civic calendars were intertwined in the Maytime celebrations, but it is still unclear how secular the early Consistory was, and what its relationship was with other literary movements (Navàs Farré 2014 and 2022). As we will see below, *T* contains comments about the reign of Pope John XXII (r. 1316-34), a period of consolidation of the Avignon papacy. The introduction of *T*² aims to blend university sciences, secular poetry, and religion, in that order of importance. The Consistory's patrons expanded to include several masters and practitioners of canon and civil law. While he is not mentioned, Pope Innocent VI (r. 1352-62) was formerly a student and teacher of canon law at Toulouse as well as a former judge in the *sénéchaussée* (De la Croix & Fabre 2022). The patrons included also the *maestre* in the *art de medecina* Philip Elefan and an unnamed inquisitor, probably the Dominican Pierre de Salgues, who had been appointed inquisitor in Toulouse in 1348 and was still active in 1357 (Fedi 2019: 90-91). The Franciscan Master of Theology «Guilhem Bernad» might have been Guillelmus Bernardi de Podio, who was employed by John XXII in 1333 in the controversy

concerning the Beatific Vision, and by Pope Benedict XII (r. 1334-42) in reforming the Franciscan Order in 1336 (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 36-38; Genet 2019: fiche 4351).²

Among the many changes that were made in *T*², the long poem entitled *Lo Cocir de la Mort* (*Anxiety about Death*) was omitted and replaced by a devotional piece entitled *La Contemplatio de la Crotz* (*The Contemplation of the Cross*).³ The *Cocir* is about the body and soul and the afterlife, but it is not a devotional work. It is a satirical precursor of the late-medieval macabre. The *Contemplatio*, on the other hand, is a Passion narrative typical of liturgical and extra-liturgical rituals during Easter Week. While the *Cocir* maintains the troubadour (and Consistory) tradition of a single first-person subjective voice, the *Contemplatio* has a refrain that invites a community to sing in praise: «Joencel faytz lauzor, uielh, efan et efantas | Al clavelhat senhor, e de mas e de plantas» (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 75) [Young, old, girls and boys, praise the nailed lord, [nailed] in hands in the soles of the feet]. The refrain is reminiscent of a confraternity and specifically of the *laude* tradition, gesturing to a performance context that has nothing to do with a poetry competition.

The *Contemplatio* must be dated to the year 1356, the completion date of *T*². This is because the allusions to political events in *T* are almost all datable to the years 1328-38 (Fedi 2019: 96-100). The *Cocir* is followed by a satirical poem that dates from 1332, the *Desconortz de las donas*, mocking the papal foundation of a university in Cahors in 1332, and both poems are copied by the same hand (Fedi 2019: 299, 311-12). The verse epitome of the *Lays* includes a short extract of the *Cocir* (Anglade 1926: 56). The *Cocir* and the *Desconortz* are both in manuscript *B*, a fifteenth-century copy of *T* produced for Barcelona (Fedi 2019: 311). Given the preservation of both poems in the fifteenth century, their omission in *T*² deserves further attention.

The *Cocir* and the *Contemplatio* are connected by their considerable length and by the theme of death, understood in the broadest sense. There is no similarity in meter or in rhyme schemes: one is not a contrafactum of the other. It seems that a poem that presents the terror of the soul as it confronts the Devil after dying has been replaced by a poem that presents the doctrine of the defeat

2. Petrus de Salgis was inquisitor in June 1352 (appointed in 1348), and active in 1357 (Théry 2017-2024: Act 20384, aposcripta-371, and Act 25667, aposcripta-2764).

3. *Lo Cocir de la Mort*, Toulouse BM ms 2884, f. 29v-31v, ed. Fedi (2019: 299-310); *La Contemplatio de la Crotz*, Toulouse BM ms. 2883, f. 84r-92v, ed. Anglade (1919-1920: II, 72-91); ed. and study Anglade (1917: 27-48).

of Death by the Resurrection. The powerful contrast between the two works raises questions about the effect of the substitution as well as its motivation. *T* and *T²* are separated by up to thirty years as well as by the devastating disruption of the Black Death in 1347-49. Guilhem Molinier was an ageing chancellor of the Consistory in 1356. He is usually credited with the authorship of the poems contained in both *T* and *T²*, but this attribution ignores the input of the other *senhors* and the changes in the kind of poems that the Consistory wanted to include.

The *Cocir* is an unusual poem. Its models are two long Occitan verse poems, a meditation on the penitential psalms and a debate of the body and the soul, but it is full of derision and doubt (Léglu 2024 and forthcoming). The *Contemplatio* is equally out of place, as it is a dolorist meditation on the Passion narrative. Its abhorrent anti-Jewish invective seems equally unsuited to the Consistory. However, there are four examples of the same violent anti-Jewish invective in *T*, written two decades after Jews were expelled from the kingdom of France in 1306 (Rowe 2011: 98-101). Two of these texts are presented as examples of the «exclamative voice» and all four allude to the Crucifixion.⁴ Such invectives are typical of Easter liturgies and of Passion devotion (Poláčeková 2023: 123-24; Roest 1998). Does the *Contemplatio* make explicit an otherwise undeclared Consistory engagement with liturgy and with ritualized intolerance? What makes the *Contemplatio* stand out further is that it was intended to be illustrated with a Passion cycle, and it would have looked very different to the other texts in the manuscript had this design been implemented. Blending visual and textual devotional supports was typical of the mendicant orders, particularly (but not exclusively) the Franciscans (McNamer 2010: 86-115, and 2018).

Both poems are hard to imagine as songs and easier to view as documents that were created to be read, either silently or aloud. This point has been made about the Marian Lament by Eliška Kubartová Poláčeková (2023: 23-27). The title of the *Contemplatio* gestures towards a meditative context. Had it contained its planned images, the poem might have resembled an illustrated manual such as the Italian version of the Pseudo-Bonaventure *Meditationes vitae Christi* (Paris BnF It 115, c. 1325-50; McNamer 2010 and 2018), but its location within a treatise on grammar and rhetoric excludes private devotion. It is closer to the Passion cycle that appears with illustrations in some copies of Matfre Ermengaud's encyclopaedic

4. Fedi (2019: 355), *de còbla exclamativa*, 693 (an example of vituperation), 696; 743-44, two examples in *Yronia* of «una flor d'una color apelada exclamatiòs».

Breviari d'Amor (for example, Paris BnF Fr 9219, f. 165v-178v; Haruna-Czaplicki 2015). The inclusion of such visual cycles within non-devotional Franciscan texts continued well into the fourteenth century (Roest 1998).

Outside books, the basilica of Saint-Sernin housed a big depiction of the Passion in a part of the edifice that was open to secular visitors. It is a fragment of a large fresco of the Crucifixion painted in or around 1119 to mark the consecration of the altar of Saint Augustine by Pope Calixtus II. Natacha Piano (2019) has commented on its depiction of one of the two thieves dying, his soul captured by demons, as his legs are broken by an executioner. This detail appears in the *Contemplatio* (v. 411-14). A large wall painting is one of the possible locations for a collective devotional contemplation if it happened in a church setting, on a designated feast day. However, this is only one surviving example of Crucifixion scenes that would have been located throughout Toulouse, and it is important to be cautious. Moreover, small, portable depictions of the Passion, for example on carved ivories, were owned in late-medieval cities, in addition to psalters (Rowe 2011).

Given that a learned Franciscan and a Dominican inquisitor were acting as advisers to the Consistory of 1356, it is interesting to look at the Passion imagery and feasts inside a missal (Toulouse, BM ms 90) donated to the Franciscan convent in 1344 by the Franciscan bishop of Rieux-Volvestre, Jean Tissandier (c. 1290-1348). The missal was produced for Tissandier, who had also held the office of librarian to the papal palace at Avignon. It contains a full-page Crucifixion, possibly transferred from another manuscript (f. 197v; Bilotta 2012b: 93). The calendar in this missal (f. 3) includes the feast of the Invention of the Cross in early May (May 3rd). A missal for the Dominicans in Toulouse also has a full-page Crucifixion (Fig. 1, Toulouse BM ms. 103, f. 133v-134r, c. 1292; Bilotta 2012a: 88-89). The missal's calendar also includes the Feast of the Invention of the Cross and, the following day, the feast of the Crown of Thorns (f. 3).

The image in the Dominican missal has been described by Bilotta as a dolorist work, noting its dramatic gestures and facial expressions (Bilotta 2012a: 88). Bilotta also notes the motif of the Virgin fainting as her heart is pierced by a sword, illustrating the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2.35) (Poláčková 2023: 6-7, 45, 91). The motif is found in the Victorine Latin sequence *Planctus ante nescia* that inspired the *Planctus Mariae* tradition: «O verum eloquium iusti Symeonis! | Quem promisit gladium sencio doloris!» [Oh, how true was the eloquence of the just Simeon! That promised sword of sorrow is what I now feel] (Otter 2017:



FIGURE 1 · *Crucifixion and Maiestas Domini, Missal of the Order of Preachers (Missal des Dominicains). Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse © Bibliothèque de Toulouse, ms 103, f. 133v*

74). According to Poláčeková (2023: 91), Simeon's sword features in most Marian Laments. It also appears in the *Contemplatio*:

Mayres de Dieu, le gaug del tieu filh se trasforma,
 Quar en planch et en plor et en dolor se torna,
 Cant lo sieu cors desfayt a fos de plagas vezes
 E-ls membres senes sanc et de la carn remezes
 Lo glazi que-t promes Symeons de paraula
 Per execucio dins lo tieu cor s'entaula.
 (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 90, v. 463-68)

[Mother of God, the joy of your son transforms itself, for it turns into laments, weeping and sorrow when you see his body destroyed with wounds, his limbs bloodless, the flesh shrivelled; the blow of the sword that Simeon promised you in words is carried out, piercing your heart.]

The poem describes the brutalized body on the Cross, shifting from the evocation of the Virgin's sorrow to visual horror. The two missals' Crucifixion scenes are subtly different. The Franciscan image shows blood pouring from Jesus's wounds and depicts a layman waving a spear at Jesus's side wound (Longinus and Stephaton with his sponge on his lance are both standing, in armour, on the other side). The Dominican missal's image depicts Christ's body bloodless, painted pale blue-grey, and shows the Sun and Moon grieving (an allusion to the darkness lasting three hours). These images show two different moments in the narrative of the Passion. The gushing blood in the Franciscan missal reflects a focus on the wounds, whereas the figure in the Dominican missal is already dead. The vast tradition of Passion iconography makes it unwise to go further in suggesting any meaningful differences between the two orders' treatment of the narrative.

The *Contemplatio* is, however, a poem intended for a collective secular readership, echoing Matfre Ermengaud's *Breviari d'Amor*, which includes an illuminated Passion cycle and has a strong Franciscan dimension (Haruna-Czaplicki 2015: 183-84, 188-89). Such readers could have seen a painted Crucifixion such as the diptych created for a Marian confraternity in Rabastens, dated c. 1295 (Haruna-Czaplicki 2015: 182). This image also depicts the Virgin pierced by the sword of Simeon's prophecy. Across Western Europe, artists produced naturalistic, life-sized sculptures of the crucified Christ (known as *crucifigi dolorosi*), and these have been related to Franciscan as well as Dominican spiritual practice (Kalina 2003: 85; Franco Mata 1984). One example in Toulouse is a wooden panel painted in memory of Cardinal Guilhem de Peyre Godin (1260-1336) that was visible to lay visitors in the Dominican convent (Bilotta 2012c; Haruna-Czaplicki 2015: 190-91). This double-faced panel depicts the cardinal in the robes of a Dominican friar, kneeling close to the Crucifixion, his hands extended as if to collect the blood flowing from Christ's feet (Fig. 2).

The *Contemplatio* also insists heavily on the physical details of the crucifixion:

Tant es le cors desfaytz qu'om pot nombrar los osses;
 Am fortz clavels agutz las mas el[s] pes i a fosses
 E las juncturas son rotas et desliadas,
 Las venas ysshamen rompudas et trencadas;
 Per lo gran pes del cors que la mortz fier e tusta
 Se plegan li genol moren ses cauza justa.
 (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 85, v. 325-30)



FIGURE 2 · *Christ on the Cross with Cardinal Guilhem Peire Godin. Italy, c. 1300-1325. Mairie de Toulouse, Musée des Augustins. Photo Daniel Martin*

[The body is so damaged that one can count its bones; there are holes made with strong, sharp nails in the hands and the feet, and the joints are broken and loosened, the veins are torn and cut too; because of the great weight of the body that death is striking and breaking, the knees bend, dying without a just cause.]

Such detailed descriptions appeared in other vernacular narratives, notably a fourteenth-century French poem, *Le Livre de la Passion* (Rowe 2011: n. 68, citing Frank 1930: v. 1322-46). The *Contemplatio* also gestures to drinking blood: «Per lo trauc del costat gran e fer e salvatge | Decorr menut le sancz desobre, dous beuratge | Et aygua de salut» [From the wound in the side, great and harsh

and wild, the blood trickles down, sweet drink and water of salvation] (v. 421-23). One of its intended illustrations accompanied a description of Jesus's body covering the Cross in blood (v. 315-18). Godin's hands are not cupped but there is an implication that they could gather the trickling blood.

Liturgical contexts

The *Contemplatio* is connected to the Marian Lament, a tradition of liturgical, extra-liturgical and secular texts that were designed for many uses, from silent reading to dramatic performances, mostly focusing on the Easter liturgies. This tradition has been defined by Sticca (1988) and analysed more recently by Poláčeková (2023). A Catalan piece survives from the mid-thirteenth century in Àger, followed later by Ramon Llull's *Plant de la Verge*. These developed at the same time as the Franciscan hymn *Stabat mater* by Jacopone da Todi (Poláčeková 2023: 75-88). While theatre and procession were part of a spectrum of practices, including private devotion, some laments were performed in front of sculpted or other material representations of the Crucifixion or the Deposition (Poláčeková 2023: 128-29, 137-41, 153). The performers of what Poláčeková calls «Lament-sermons» could be clergy or minstrels (*ibid.*: 157). All these features are implied in an Occitan *Planctus Mariae* printed in Toulouse in 1540 (Aude 1905). In this poem, the line «Ay filh...» that ends each *cobla* is sung by the Virgin, who also speaks significant portions of the *coblas*. Direct speech appears also for Jesus and for his companions. A narrator provides occasional exclamations.

The printed lament may be related to local practice, as the Benedictine priory church of La Daurade had a Marian pilgrimage shrine, and the seventeenth-century dictionary of Du Cange published an older description of a Marian lament that was performed in that church. It was sung after Matins on Maundy Thursday, after all the candles except one were extinguished, by two young oblates or novices. The boys were concealed from the eyes of the congregation by white drapes wrapped around the pulpit. If boys could not be found, then skilled laymen could sing the lament instead.⁵ This tradition may be related to the printed lament, and to a *tenso* between the Virgin and the Cross composed by a Franciscan friar, dated 1345, also from the region (ed.

5. «Quo ritu olim decantaretur in ecclesia B. M. Deauratæ Tolos. habemus ex vet. Cereemoniali MS. ejusdem Ecclesiæ», Du Cange (1883-1887: VI, col. 352c); see discussion by Poláčeková (2023: 160-61, 165).

Meyer 1880: lxxiii-lxxxv). This lament is in the same manuscript as a Passion play that includes a short Marian lament reminiscent of the early example from Àger (MacDonald 1999: 13-14, v. 1497-1523).

The Consistory's annual May festival seems to have culminated with the Marian prize poem performed in front of a statue of the Virgin, but the two versions of the *Leys* provide no evidence of an organized devotional identity. In *T*², Molinier describes the Consistory's green seal as the image of a crowned woman who represents Love (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 43), and he says that people of all religions worship divine things (I, 47). Molinier states further that the clamour of all living creatures is evidence of the divine, «Quar Deus es la votz de natura» (v. 190, Anglade 1919-1920: I, 51). *T*² opens with an illumination of the Virgin and Child on an altar, worshipped by a secular man who may be intended to represent Molinier, but it has been dated to the early fifteenth century and cannot provide useful information for this early period (f. 2r a; Haruna-Czaplicki 2013: 155).

The Consistory's letters as they appear in *T*² describe a competition held in 1348 on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin (May 1st) in a flowering orchard (*ibid*: I, 19-20). Graduands requested their grade in verse, asking for three items, «la cadiera, lo livre, e-l birret» (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 23). The *mantenedors* sat the graduate on his chair, placed the book in his hands, and adorned his head with a green biretta. Molinier's text evokes a ceremony that had nothing to do with a confraternity at prayer. Rather, it is a pseudo-university that enjoyed many genres of secular songs and poetry. He adds that the Church does not reject the creation of verses in designated genres:

Compas de rims la Gleiza no refuza,
 Quar nos ad huelh vezem que d'aquels uza,
 Hymnis cantan, antifenas, versetz,
 Prozas, respos, prozels et respossetz.
 (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 34)

[The Church does not reject composing in verse, because we can see with our own eyes that it does it: they sing hymns, antiphons, versicles, prosae, responses, prosulas and little responses.]

The green, springtime lyric community described in these prefatory pages of the revised *Leys d'Amors* is underpinned by a cautious distance from the ecclesiastical space. There is some unease in these verses about associating secular and liturgical song, as Molinier emphasizes that it is an empirical observation

that «we can see with our eyes» in church activity. The *Cocir de la Mort* reflects that distance.

Lo Cocir de la Mort

The poem is the monologue of a middle-aged, secular man who is afraid of dying. He laments the transition that awaits him, when he will be weighed in the scales at the «pas de la Mort» (§ 1, v. 89-91). The poem starts with a standard meditation on the process of dying and the weighing of souls immediately after dying (known as the particular judgement); an example of such standard material is in the *Breviari d'Amor*.⁶ The thirty-four eleven-line *coblas singulares* (379 hexasyllables) are grouped in eight blocks. The narrative structure is fragmented and there are abrupt changes of speaker. Each block has a rubric that describes a *cocir* (an anxiety or fear):

[1] De las coblas singulares las quals hom pot haver per aquest dictat appellat Cocir de la mort (nine *coblas*)

[2] [Del] cocir del deslassamen de l'arma (six *coblas*)

[3] Del cocir dels efans (three *coblas*)

[4] Le cocir de la molher (three *coblas*)

[5] [Del] cocir dels parens e dels tutors (three *coblas*)

[6] Del cocir de l'arma qu'es fora del cors (six *coblas*)

[7] Pregarias a Dieu (two *coblas*)

[8] Pregarias a la Maire de Dieu (two *coblas*)

Tornada (five lines)

The three shorter blocks describe the speaker's fears that his wife will enjoy a new husband, and that his children will be mistreated by his relatives and executors. The longer blocks on either side describe the speaker's fear for his soul once it is separated from his body. The poem describes Death as an archer, the antithesis of the God of Love, hunting down individuals not to pierce them with desire but to end their time on Earth: «quar tost e apert | vas totas parts se vira, | tant sap ferir cert» [because she swiftly and openly turns in all directions. She is so good at smiting her target] (§ 1, v. 31-33). Death seems to enjoy the fear that she inspires in her victims:

6. *Breviari d'Amor*, Paris BnF Fr 9219, f. 114r-115v (ms B). See my longer discussions in Léglu (2024: 232-36, and Forthcoming).

De paor cofus
 Estau, las, que m'engarre.
 L'arc me te su-l mus
 Trop m'es cozent e arre.
 (Fedi 2019: § 1, v. 36-44)

[I am overcome by fear (alas!) as she strikes me. She holds her bow against my face, it is terribly burning and rough.]

Rather than the conventional judgment (in which the soul is weighed in the scales, between an angel and the Devil), the speaker imagines a tribunal at which he will be unable to defend himself. The *Cocir* identifies Death closely with the Devil, who is also a sadistic hunter of the soul that is vulnerable once it has left its shell:

L'arma dol se da,
 Qu'es for a de l'escorsa;
 Am paor ques ha
 Pregua Dieu que l'estorsa.
 Le Fals pres li sta,
 Quar d'aver liey s'e[s]forsa
 (§ 6, v. 1-6)

[The soul is sorrowful because she is far from her shell. Out of fear, she prays God to assist her. The False One is near her, for he is trying to capture her.]

The soul, like a lost thing, cries and screams, «Can ve lo Trachor | Plora, sospir'e crida. | Va se-n de paor | Coma cauza faydida» (§ 6, 14-17). The speaker turns to the Virgin for intercession: «Per l'[ar]ma, tertal, | Fier una martelada | Et er ses tot mal» [Therefore, for the sake of the soul, strike one blow of the hammer, and all will be without evil] (§ 8, 20-22).

The poem is not a devotional work, despite its appeal in its conclusion to divine intercession. It describes a brutal afterlife in which the soul is lost and frightened in the space between life and the afterlife, unable to face judgement and flung into Hell by an aggressive Devil. This unpleasant narrative may reflect some beliefs that were under scrutiny because an interest in the fate of the soul at the particular and general judgements had been revived. The ghost at Beaucaire (Gard), narrated by Gervase of Tilbury (c. 1150-1220) in his *Otia imperialia*, wished to instruct the living about the afterlife and the care for departed souls. In 1323, the report of a similar revenant a few kilometres away in

Alès was reported to Pope John XXII and was swiftly diffused across Europe (Gobi 2004; Chiffolleau 1980: 399-408; Polo de Beaulieu 1994). This revenant was a middle-aged, secular man attempting to communicate with his widow about the torments that his soul was enduring in Purgatory. It may be that the spectacular haunting at Alès inspired the *Cocir de la Mort*. A decade later, the controversy over the Beatific Vision, a proposal by John XXII to rethink the fate of the soul after Death, may also have provoked some poetry (Léglu 2024: 232-36).

Despite omitting the *Cocir*, T² includes a short passage that partly explains the poem: «E d'aquesta parla le Psalmista e ditz: “La temors de la mort me torba”. D'aquesta temor Jhesus, Nostre Salvayre, en cant que era verays homs hac paor naturalmen, cossiran la mort» [And the Psalmist speaks of this and says: «The fear of Death disturbs me». Jesus, our saviour, felt that fear naturally as a real man, feeling anxiety [cossiran] over death] (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 194). The term *cossir* is related here to a natural, human fear. This passage breaks down different varieties into excessive fear of losing material possessions, and an excessive love of life. It provides a typology:

Sans Thomas, e son *Compendi*, ordena aquestas temors per esta guiza: la primera, natural; la segonda, humanal; la tersa, mondanal; la quarta, servil; la quinta, inicial; la seyzena, filial; la setena ditz qu'es temors de reverensa. (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 195-96)

[Saint Thomas, in his *Compendium*, creates an order of these fears as follows: the first is natural; the second is human; the third is worldly; the fourth is servile; the fifth is primal; the sixth is filial; he says that the seventh is the fear bred of reverence.]

The typology of fear matches the stages through which the body and soul progress in the *Cocir de la Mort*. The *Compendium Theologiae* was a handbook designed to introduce students to Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* (Torrell 2007; Teixeira 2015). The reference to «Sans Thomas» also provides a *terminus ante quem* for this little text, for Aquinas was canonized in July 1323, only a few months before the versified letter that opened the *Jocs florals*. Such school material helps to explain the narrative structure of the *Cocir* while erasing its theological ambivalence as well as its drama.

La Contemplatio de la Crotz

Returning to the *Contemplatio*, its vernacular literary sources are both well-known and different to those described above. One influence is the Ps-Bonavent-

ture *Meditationes vitae Christi* (Paris BnF Naf 6194), which was given the title *Contemplacion de la vida e miracles de Jhesu Christ*. As was noted above, the *Contemplatio* is a version of the Hours of the Cross. Pope John XXII was reputed to be the author of a *Parvus ordo de Cruce* (literally, a short office of the Cross). Some psalters and books of hours noted as early as 1324 that John XXII granted an indulgence to anyone who recited his new Office, or that he had composed it: «Incipit officium per Johannem papam xxii» (Passerat 2012: 444-47).⁷ A short poem in *T* states clearly that the early Consistory did not support this papal initiative:

Qui sab de Santa Crotz l'ufici
 Leu pot enpetrar benefici.
 Quis fenh a donar mut ni sort
 Atrobara corta la cort.
 Qui servir sab als cardenals
 Empetra rendas avesquals.
 (Fedi 2019: II, 132, 361)

[He who knows the Office of Holy Cross can easily obtain a benefice. He who pretends to be deaf or dumb to Giving will find his time in court to be short. He who knows how to serve the cardinals will obtain a bishop's revenue.]

This little poem does not attack theology or liturgy. Rather, it satirizes the cynicism of a cleric who would sing this Office in the hope of gaining papal approval. It is a rare example of political protest within the Consistory in its early years (it is also in the verse epitome, Anglade 1926: 68). Its inclusion points to an underlying polemic that might explain the choice of the *Contemplatio* over the *Cocir* in the new redaction of 1356, over twenty years after the death of John XXII.

The *Contemplatio* is 504 lines long, excluding the six-line refrain that occurs seven times, adding a further forty-two lines (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 72-91). The poem is structured in seven blocks (the Hours) each made up of twelve *coblas* of six 12-syllable lines; the refrain closes each block. Each section is rubricated as one of the seven Hours (Compline, Matins, Prime, Terce, *Mieg Jorn* [Sext],

7. This should not be confused with the longer Hours of the Cross, which also survive in an Occitan translation in the Didot manuscript, transcribed by Meyer (1880: cxi-cxix). Quotation from Smith (2003: 58, 303); Freeman Sandler (1979: 71-72).

Nones, Vespers). The rubric explains that the poem starts at Compline (the last hour of the night) because that was the start of the Passion:

Veus autre yshemble dels bordos de .XII. sillabas per lo presen dictat apelatz la Contemplatio de la Crotz.

Compline, v. 1-72, plus refrain (6 lines).

Matins, v. 73-144, plus refrain.

Prime, v. 145-216, plus refrain.

Terce, v. 217-88, plus refrain.

A mieg jorn, v. 289-360, plus refrain.

Nones, v. 361-432, plus refrain.

Vespers, v. 433-504, plus refrain.

As was noted above, the refrain invites a large group to sing about the pain and humiliation of the Crucifixion:

Lums de gran resplandor, joy de sans e de santas.
 Gloria, laus et honor, hajatz, Senher, que tantas
 Engoyshas de dolor, escupimens et antas
 Suffritz per nostr' amor, qu'ieu no say dire quantas;
 Joencel faytz lauzor, uielh, efan et efantas
 Al clavelhat senhor, e de mas e de plantas.
 (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 75)

[Light of great resplendence, joy of male and female saints. May you have glory, praise and honour, Lord, for you suffered such anxiety, pain, spitting and shame for the love of us, I cannot say how much. Young, old, boys and girls, praise the nailed lord, [nailed] in hands and in the soles of the feet.]

Setting aside the opening at Compline rather than Matins, it corresponds well to the Short Hours of the Cross, *Patris sapientia veritas divina* (Passerat 2012). One stanza was associated with each Hour, accompanied by a prayer and a verse. It was a short cycle, as the name suggests, so illuminated books of hours tended to illustrate it only with an image of the Crucifixion (Drigsdahl 2003). However, the *Contemplatio* is a much longer and more elaborate work.

There are fourteen gaps in the manuscript, each of them about six lines long, allowing for images. Some of them clearly correspond to standard scenes in Passion cycles. Terce includes five gaps, each of them corresponding to the flagellation, mockery, crown of thorns, etc. One gap is set between verses that describe the Deposition:

Jozep, Nichodemus al vertuos sacrari
 Nomnat cominalmen Pueg de Monticalvari
 Son vengut e tantost de la crotz lo desshendo
 [...]
 E donas e senhor en los brasses lo prendo;
 (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 89, v. 452-54)

[Joseph [of Arimathea] and Nicodemus have come to the powerful shrine usually known as Mount Calvary and take him down from the Cross [...] And ladies and lords taken him in their arms.]

As a poem, the *Contemplatio* can best be understood in relation to two textual traditions that were translated into Occitan from Latin in the fourteenth century. Both are typical of the kinds of meditative texts that surround the Marian lament tradition, as edited by McNamer (2010). The first is a guided meditation on the Passion divided into seven canonical hours. The narrative begins at Compline, like the text in the *Leys* (Salvioni 1899: 139-40).⁸ The narrator guides the reader to imagine him- or herself as an eye-witness of the Passion narrative from the Arrest to the Entombment: «En totas aquestas cauzas potz penssar aysi con si hi fosses present» (Salvioni 1899: 143). The reader sleeps from Compline to Matins and meditates after rising: «A matinas te deues leuar tot apenssat per aquellas cauzas que auies penssadas apres completa» (*ibid.*: 143). The reader is told to express his or her emotions internally and guided to imagine violent physical responses:

Penssa que feras adons si hi fosses. Not giteres tu sobre tu senhor e crideras:
 muyra eu e romangua mon senhor, car non o a afanat. Mas mj aunitz e tiratz e
 batetz ; sol mon senhor non muyra.
 (Salvioni 1899: 144)

[Think about what you would do if you were there. Would you not throw yourself on top of your Lord and shout: «Let me die and let my Lord remain, because I do not want it to be so. But shame me, pull and beat me; only let my Lord not die».]

8. Salvioni (1899), *Bernardus, Contemplacion de la passio de nostre senhor dieu Jesu Crist*. This manuscript is numbered 28 in the bibliography of manuscripts of the University of Pavia, ed. De Marchi & Bertolani (1894: I, 12). Salvioni reproduces a fragment of another Occitan text, also in Chabaneau (1889: 124-27, text II), and a Latin fragment.

The text urges the reader to interact with the different protagonists in their imagination, positioning themselves on a nearby rock, or on the ground at the feet of the beaten Christ. The Virgin's emotions are imagined: she throws herself on the ground, tears at her clothing and her face, beats her hands, and loses speech and sight as well as uttering two laments (Salvioni 1899: 146-47).

The text is very different to that of the *Leys*. It is a series of commands to meditate on painful and distressing moments and the objective is to feel compassion. For example, the reader is told to «look» at Christ's feet, imagining them delicate and broken (Salvioni 1899: 147). The additional information that he and his disciples rejected shoes and wore sandals (*cendalias*) may point to a Franciscan context for the work. There is an interesting and unusual point in common with the *Contemplatio*, the detail that the Virgin covers Christ on the cross with her veil, because his bruised and injured body makes him look like a leper (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 84, v. 297-300). In the prose meditation, it is simply because he is naked (Salvioni 1899: 149). This motif appears in Franciscan devotional texts of this period, notably the *Meditationes Vitæ Christi* (Flora 2017).

However, the prose text is different in other respects. At Vespers, the reader participates in the Deposition and Entombment, observing the emotions of the various witnesses, applying embalming unguents and kissing the ground that has been touched by drops of blood, also scooping some of them up (Salvioni 1899: 152). Scooping up blood echoes the gesture of Cardinal Peyre de Godin in the panel at the Jacobins (Fig. 2; Tomei 2022). The *Contemplatio* does not invite imagined actions but a collective song, a much more distant participation.

The second Occitan text that resembles the *Contemplatio* is a translation of the *Quis dabit*, an important work in the development of affective piety. It was attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, Anselm and Augustine (Bestul 1996). The *Quis dabit* is now attributed to the Cistercian monk Oglerius of Tridino (1136-1214), at Locedio in Piedmont (Poláčeková 2023: 84; ed. Marx 1994; Bestul 1996: Appendix 1). One consistent element in its varied Latin and vernacular tradition is that its male protagonist prays to the Virgin to let him feel the sorrow and physical pain that she endured during the Passion, then persuades her to tell her story (Boon 2024). She narrates the Passion from her first-person point of view. Four copies survive of the Occitan *Quis Dabit* (Mushacke 1890). Three of the copies are from the Languedoc: Chansonnier R, probably copied in Toulouse and linked to the Consistory; Chansonnier Z, copied in Agde before 1300, and a copy made in Béziers in 1373 that contains a cycle of illustrations, titled

*Aisi comessen lo romans de sant Augusti que apelha hom contemplation.*⁹ These images reproduce the metanarrative of the *Quis dabit*: a monk or bishop (Augustine) is taking dictation from the Virgin Mary (Fig. 3). That metanarrative is absent from the *Contemplatio*, so it must be concluded that its planned image cycle was not the same.

In the Occitan *Quis dabit*, the Virgin addresses Death in a style reminiscent of the *Cocir*, and typical of the traditional laments of Mary:

Mortz felonessa, mortz trefana.
 Mortz desconoissens, mortz vilana!
 Nom perdone, aucim ades,
 Pueis que mon filh m'aucis tan pres.
 A mi sola iest tu cruzels,
 Car nom venes a mos apels.
 Mo filh aucis, a me perdonas,
 Enaissi pieitz de mort me donas.
 Dossa cauzam fora morir,
 Mais tu me futz, not puesc seguir.
 (Mushacke 1890: 17, v. 405-14)

[Criminal Death, treacherous Death, miscreant Death, baseborn Death! You never spare me because you kill my son so close to me. You are cruel only to me because you do not come to my summons. You kill my son, you forgive me. In each case you give me the worst of Death. It would be sweet for me to die but you run away from me, I cannot follow you.]

The empathy constructed by the *Planctus Mariae* tradition has been described as an important development in the gendered history of the emotions: «Enabling the reader to *see* the moment of the Crucifixion “like a woman”, the tradition of compassionate writing thus encourages the devotee also to *feel* like a woman» (Poláčková 2023: 15; McNamer 2010: 119-49). The lament was frequently read, performed, and interpreted by male clerics in contexts that affirmed the prerogative of male clergy in sacred word and ritual (Poláčková 2023: 16). In the *Contemplatio*, however, the Virgin is almost silent. She speaks only after the Entombment, inside her house (Anglade 1919-1920: II, 91, v. 493-98). Her movements are described instead. She covers her son's injured body with her veil (v. 300), she falls to the ground (v. 479-80), or she looks distressed: «E la

9. Tours BM ms 944; Paris BnF Fr 22543, f. 123v-125; Paris BnF Fr 1745, f. 137v-144; Paris BnF Fr 25415, f. 24v-32.

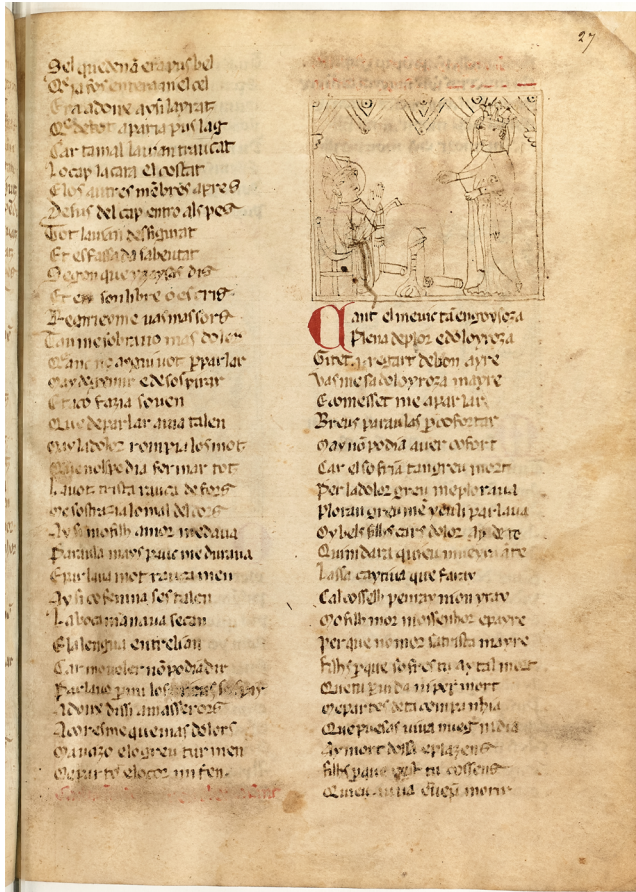


FIGURE 3 · Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms Fr 25415, f. 27r.

Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Mayres semblet may trop morta que viva» (v. 356). When her voice is heard, it is one voice among many:

La votz de lauzar Dieu Ozanna se reversa,
La votz dels sieus amix en lagremas s'esmersa:
La votz del filh de Dieu de gran pietat plena
Que deveda plorar e de l'umil Vergena
Que sanglotish e-s planh am rauca votz ploroza

Aspro so fan e crit am dolor engoysshoza.
(II, 83, v. 283-88)

[The voice praising God with Hosanna reverses; the voice of her friends sinks into tears; the voice of the son of God, filled with pity, that should weep, and [the voice] of the humble Virgin who sobs and laments and weeps in a hoarse voice. Harshly she cries and screams, anxious with sorrow.]

Napolitano (2009) has drawn attention to the gendered debate that develops in Passion plays between the Virgin and her interlocutors, who he argues tend to be rational in contrast to her emotion. McNamer (2010: 150-171) suggests that the Virgin's lamenting voice may have been a vehicle for protest. Wordless in the *Contemplatio* and subordinated to a collective of voices, it could be argued that she is all flesh, all body. She is certainly different to the Virgin of the *Quis Dabit*, who narrates the Passion from her point of view, and who appears in most of the illustrations of the Béziers manuscript as a female figure dictating to a male writer from an authoritative standing position (Fig. 3).

In the *Cocir*, the feminine soul is visible but silent. She has no direct speech and screams in terror rather than defending her cause. There are few other traces of direct feminine speech in the *Leys d'Amors* poems. It may simply reflect the fact that the Consistory forbade female contestants in their games, but in *T*², a comment on the foolishness of women's advice combines standard school sayings with a vicious poem that calls a woman a «votz de Sathan, rosa pudens» [the voice of Satan, a stinking rose] (Anglade 1919-1920: I, 159). Despite the spiritual celebration of the Virgin, school misogyny meant that there was only a short distance between the Marian golden violet, the rose of May and the demonic *rosa pudens*. In this respect, the *Contemplatio* is in keeping with the Consistory.

Conclusion

The Consistory of 1323 had changed by 1356, when it sought to bring church and secular authorities closer together, just as Chansonnier *R* would include the *Quis dabit*. *T*² never mentions the loss of half the population of Toulouse to the Black Death in Spring 1348, but the Consistory must have lost some of its members and rebuilt itself (Benedictow 2004: 96-104, 308-14). Molinier and Marc omitted other poems that had challenged the authority of John XXII, possibly because they were no longer relevant twenty years later. The *Contemplatio* goes further than simply updating *T*. It alludes to liturgical performances and

introduces affective devotion into the Consistory. Through its content and its planned illustrations, the *Contemplatio* tries to shift the focus of the *Jocs florals* from the Marian feast on May 1st to the two feasts of the Cross on May 3rd and 4th. *T* had included several invectives against Jews, and in *T*², the *Contemplatio* focused that polemic into a single text, locating it within the Easter liturgical cycle and associated devotional literature. However, this change remained incomplete. The illustrations were never added, and that new direction was not followed by others, which means that the *Contemplatio* looks incongruous in the *Leys d'Amors* tradition. Marian prize poems remained consistent with the poems of the 1320s, eschewing affective devotion. The *Contemplatio* therefore raises further questions about the early years of the Consistory and its attempt to define a collective literary identity. Despite its clear mendicant character, the poem may reveal that this literary influence did not take root in the secular community of poets.

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