

Classic Poetry Series

Gace Brulé

- poems -

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Gace Brulé (1160- Unknown (after 1213))

Gace Brulé was a French trouvère and a native of Champagne.

His name is simply a description of his Blazonry. He owned land in Groslière and had dealings with the Knights Templar, and received a gift from the future Louis VIII. These facts are known from documents from the time. The rest of his history has been extracted from his poetry.

It has generally been asserted that he taught [Thibaut De Champagne](http://www.poemhunter.com/thibaut-de-champagne/) the art of verse, an assumption which is based on a statement in the Chroniques de Saint-Denis: "Si l'est entre lui [Thibaut] et Gace Brulé les plus belles chansons et les plus delitables et melodieuses qui onque fussent ales." This has been taken as evidence of collaboration between the two poets.

The passage will bear the interpretation that with those of Gace the songs of Thibaut were the best hitherto known. Paulin Paris, in the Histoire littéraire de la France (vol. xxiii.), quotes a number of facts that fix an earlier date for Gace's songs. Gace is the author of the earliest known jeu parti. The interlocutors are Gace and a count of Brittany who is identified with Geoffrey of Brittany, son of Henry II of England.

Gace appears to have been banished from Champagne and to have found refuge in Brittany. A deed dated 1212 attests a contract between Gatho Bruslé (Gace Ernie) and the Templars for a piece of land in Dreux. It seems most probable that Gace died before 1220, at the latest in 1225.

Chanson d'Amour

This absence from my own country's
So long, it brings me to death's door,
I languish here, beyond the sea,
Weary, in comfort and joy no more,
And I greatly fear that enemy
Who slanders me: I wronged endure,
Yet feel my heart so true and pure,
Please God, no harm will come to me.

Sweet Lady mine, don't believe
Those who speak of me in malice.
Though you no longer look at me
With those sweet eyes that took me captive,
Me, with your true heart, you'll still see.
But whether it urges you so to live
I know not: of all things fearing this
Alone: lest you not remember me.

For lightness in the hearts of women
Often strikes fear in the hearts of men,
Though loyalty stops me from despairing:
Without it I'd soon be dead and gone!
And you know that True Love's coming
Causes lovers such fear, no one
Who ever loves is ever certain,
And false the love that is un-fearing.

My heart comforts me and destroys me,
But it's right that I should think of her,
And the fear she might be lost to me,
Makes me doubly thoughtful of her.
So my solace only comes to flee,
Yet thinking always of my lover,
To my mind, as you would discover,
Is always a true delight to me.

Song, I send you to my Lady,
Before a single one has sung you,
And you must say to her from me,
(Let it not stay a hidden truth)
'If in Faith there's no treachery,
Of treason in Loyalty no proof,
Then I'll have what's owed to me,
Since with loyal heart I've loved you.'

Gace Brulé

The Birds

The birds, the birds of mine own land
I heard in Brittany;
And as they sung, they seemed to me
The very same I heard with thee.
And if it were indeed a dream,
Such thoughts they taught my soul to frame
That straight a plaintive number came,
Which still shall be my song, Till that reward is mine which love hath promised long.

Gace Brulé