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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

POETRY AS HISTORY: CONTRIBUTIONS OF OLD FRENCH EPIC POEMS ON A CRUSADE THEME, CIRCA A.D. 1100 - 1250

BY

© GRANT L. TOLLEY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1988

ISBN 0-315-42709-4

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Grant L. Tolley

TITLE OF THESIS: Poetry as History: Contributions of Old French Epic Poems on a Crusade Theme, Circa A.D. 1100 - 1250

DEGREE: Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1988

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Le grand intéret d'une oeuvre d'art, poème, ou roman, est de nous faire comprendre, séntir, goûter délicieusement la vie avec le goût particulier qu'elle avait au temps ou cette oeuvre fut conçue et dans la société dont elle est l'expression la plus subtile, et enfin, il n'est pas de monument plus précieux des moeurs d'autre-fois, pas de témoignages plus surs des vieux étâts d'âme que tel conte ou telle chanson, à les bien entendre.

Anatole France.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Poetry as History: Contributions of Old French Epic Poems on a Crusade Theme, Circa A.D. 1100 - 1250, submitted by Grant L. Tolley in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Date: January 15, 1988

DEDICATION

TO

MY WIFE DIANE,
for her endless patience and encouragement

AND TO

MY PARENTS
for instilling in me a thirst for knowledge.

ABSTRACT

During the period from the late eleventh century to the mid-thirteenth century, a substantial number of epic poems on a crusade theme were composed in old French. These dates also circumscribe the era during which the major crusade campaigns took place which serve as the subjects of the poems under study.

The purposes of the study are: to examine this body of poetry to determine how far they supply historical detail that complements or supplements the non-poetic chronicles of the same time and subject; and to determine whether this same body of poetry offers significant insight into the individual and collective mentality of the French people involved in crusade.

The poems are first identified and placed into their historical and literary context. Examination of each poem follows in order to determine its significance as an historical source. La Chanson d'Antioche, the Estoire de la Guerre Sainte and La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise are shown to hold significant historical detail as to accept them cautiously as sources. These and other poems also contribute to our knowledge by illuminating the conditions of crusading life.

In some instances, history is distorted in poems for propaganda purposes. These include poems composed as exculpatory devices for crusade failure, poems critical of crusade as well as in favor of crusade, and poems opposed to papal crusading policy.

The study concludes with an analysis of the individual and collective views of the French crusaders, as reflected in the poems, on such subjects as crusading, Christian and non-Christian religion, racial differences and the functioning of their material and spiritual world.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A study of the Crusades reveals that a considerable number of poems exist, written in Old French, which contain the common thread of a crusading theme. The quantity, quality, and physical length of some of the poems make them a potential source of historical material.

Initial research by the author on the subject led to the conclusion that either the vernacular literature of the period was both little known and under-studied or that the material had been given some consideration as source material but not a place of prominence by historians of the Crusades, for whatever reason. As study continued, it became evident that a large volume of material existed, and that both the time-span and subject matter would have to be rather narrowly defined in order to produce an academic study which would make a portion of this historical literature better understood. Hence the choice of theme -- crusade -- and the dates, A.D. 1100 - 1250, which circumscribe the time of production of a substantial number of significant Old French epic poems of the era, as well as the major crusade campaigns which serve as their subject.

Apart from the objective of making a portion of these Old French epics better known, the intent of this study is two-fold: to examine Old French epic poetry of the time of the early crusades to determine how far they supply historical detail that complements or supplements the

non-poetic chronicles; and to determine whether this same body of poetry gives significant insight into the individual and collective mentality of the French people of the time, both in the west and in the eastern crusading kingdoms.

In the past, the tendency has been to study these poems from a literary rather than an historical angle. To approach the matter from an historical viewpoint does not deny the literary value of the poems; rather, the literary value is complemented by such a study. However, the literary style, form and content of these poems will enter this discussion only insofar as these factors affect in some way the historical nature or content of the poems. Discussion of the literary cycles will serve to place the poems into their more familiar literary context.

Although some previous studies have investigated the historical accuracy of such poems, most if not all have dealt in great depth with individual poems. This study seeks rather to examine a representative sample of early crusade poetry.

Among the various types of Medieval epic, those on the crusade theme lend themselves particularly well to a study of this nature, for two reasons: first, the time period immediately prior to and during the time of the early crusade movement was the period in which poetry in the vernacular first became generally popular; and secondly, there is adequate non-poetic literature available on the subject to allow for an assessment of the historical accuracy of the specific poems.

Most of the poems to be examined date from between circa A.D. 1100 and circa A.D. 1250. For reference and continuity, other poems from both

earlier and later periods will be discussed as the need arises. These dates are necessarily approximations, since much controversy exists as to precise dates of composition. Sources used in this study have for the greater part been modern annotated editions of primary sources and relevant secondary studies. These works include translations, critical commentaries and studies, and historiographical works. Where possible, the Old French texts themselves were used; unfortunately, texts were not always available.

An English translation of all French and Provençal passages appearing in the text is provided in an Appendix.

II. THE IDEA OF CRUSADE

It is self-evident that an event of the magnitude of the First Crusade, which began in 1096, did not just happen by chance, without some formative period when the idea of crusade could be developed into something compatible with Christian doctrine and acceptable to the popular mind. The preaching of the crusade, and the event itself, were only the first physical manifestations of an idea that had undergone a considerable period of development and evolution. A brief examination of the development and multi-faceted nature of the crusade idea will be useful as a reference point in the study of early crusade-theme poems.

PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimage had long been an integral part of Christian devotion. Instances of Christian pilgrimage are recorded as early as A.D. 382, and likely occurred before that time.[1] Innumerable shrines, relics, and holy places--not the least of which were the Holy Land and the city of Jerusalem--had arisen during the first ten centuries of the Christian era. All of these places, in varying degree, were worthy of reverence by any devotee who might take it upon himself to visit and worship. A pilgrimage to such a holy place had its inherent spiritual rewards, often transmitted through the symbolism of the imitation of Christ's sacrifice

and suffering to achieve a higher spiritual end.[2] In some instances, pilgrimages were imposed as penance, designed to teach the sinner of suffering and sacrifice while, in the end, providing for a remission of the penalties of sin.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land was not uncommon by the eleventh century.[3] It was regarded by many as the ultimate pilgrimage, since one could walk in the steps of Jesus and vicariously share in his suffering and death at Jerusalem. The Holy Land itself was occupied and controlled by non-Christians who were often less than hospitable and who were intolerant of the presence or passage of Christian pilgrims. The roads between the western Christian kingdoms and the Holy Land were replete with brigands who waylaid many a pilgrim, even though much of the road was in supposedly Christian territory. Although normally a pilgrim was unarmed and under vows of poverty and penance, it became increasingly necessary to be armed in order to complete a pilgrimage.[4]

JUST WAR AND HOLY WAR

The sixth commandment was seemingly uncompromising in its proscription of killing, in any form. The basic Christian commandment of "love thy neighbor" further confirmed the intent of the earlier commandment. But the stark reality of life, with its wars and contentions that often appeared to be inevitable and irreversible, called the real meaning of the commandments into question. The theory of the "just" or "meritorious" war rationalized the apparent contradiction by

declaring that in some instances war was necessary and would be condoned by God. To be a "just" war, there had to be a just cause; the war had to be proclaimed by legitimate authority, such as the ruler of the land or the feudal overlord; and the battle had to be fought with proper motives and intentions on the part of all participants.[5]

A "Holy War" was a just war that was positively sanctioned by God. The distinction was made between waging a war that was simply just, and waging one that was sacred, rendered so by commandment of God or his authorized representatives upon the earth. The very term "holy war" implied a connection with organized religion which defined the need for the war and provided the cause of it. Nonetheless, a holy war could not transcend the requirements of a just war; the former was a higher form of the latter. A just war, however, was not necessarily a holy war. A just war could be waged in defence of the state, and did not need a particularly religious motive or doctrinal basis that would make it a Holy War. A crucial point, however, was that a just war could be seen as being just from only one side of the issue; the other side, by implication, caused the war by reason of injustice.[6]

The transition of "just war" as a war of defence to "holy war" as a sanctioned war of aggression was not easily made. There was adequate scriptural precedent which included references to all Christians as the "army of God"; the Christianization of the secular states made increasingly necessary the assumption of secular duties by the Church; and the influence of the battle-minded Germanic states in the Church over time saw the inclusion of Holy war in the ethics of the Church.[7] With the invasion of Northmen, Hungarians, and Moslems into the Christian

kingdoms, military service became a dominant necessity of life from which the Church could not remain aloof. Defence of the Church--certainly a most just cause--necessarily included defence of the Church's lands and territories. It was not a far conceptual leap, in 1095, to regard Jerusalem and the Holy Land, the very birth-place of Christianity, as lands rightfully belonging to the Church.

THE APOCALYPTIC IDEA

Distinct from, yet allied with, the concepts of pilgrimage and holy war was the popular belief in Armageddon, the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. Jerusalem held attraction as a destination for a pilgrimage not just because it was the place where Christ lived and preached his gospel, but also because it was regarded as the location of the second coming of Christ. But the second coming, as noted particularly in the writings of John the Revelator in the Apocalypse, would be preceded by Armageddon, the final battle between good and evil which would signify the end of the world.[8] Armageddon too would take place in the Holy Land, and many of the early Christian theologians had given Jerusalem an other-worldly significance that elevated it above the ordinary world of day-to-day reality. For a would-be pilgrim, the Holy Land--and Jerusalem in particular--held unrivalled attraction. Although it is difficult to trace the extent of the apocalyptic element in the formation of the crusade idea, it is incontestable that the popular mind was much concerned with these future events.[9]

THE CRUSADE IDEA

The Investiture Controversy which was at its peak during the late eleventh century provided much impetus for popes to be involved in initiatives normally left to emperors. Pope Urban II combined elements of pilgrimage and the notion of holy war in a plan to help the Byzantine emperor regain territories lost to Moslem invaders, all the while hoping to exploit the opportunity in an attempt to reunite the eastern and western Churches.[10] His plan, the ground-work for which had been laid by Pope Gregory VII as early as 1074, called for warfare in defence of the Church under the direct authority and supervision of the Pope. Scholars have generally accepted that Urban II made a significant contribution to the birth of the crusade idea by planning the campaign in the east in conjunction with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; the matter was therefore simple to divert the benefits of pilgrimage to reward the act of war.[11] In doing so, the enthusiastic response by the masses to the call to arms in 1095 was probably fuelled by the apocalyptic vision of the adventure that many held. What Urban understood as the primary objective of the campaign is uncertain in relation to what the people understood. Was it to be primarily a campaign of relief to the eastern Church, with the side benefit of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem? Or was Jerusalem the primary objective from the start? The question remains unresolved.[12]

Another factor in the development of the crusade idea was the rising notion of the "Christian knight". Prior to the establishment of Christian states and the overlap of secular and ecclesiastical administrative structures, war was war, knights were knights, clerks and

priests were clerks and priests, and rarely was there an admixture. As it became increasingly necessary to provide for the military defence of the Christian territories, it also became increasingly necessary to rationalize the place of the warrior knight within the Church structure.[13] Over time the role and conduct of the Christian knight became more and more subject to the regulations and expectations of ecclesiastical leaders. It was soon established that a knight or soldier was not only required to render faithful military service but was also required to adopt a strict code of personal moral discipline and devotion, which included, if necessary, engaging in pilgrimage or other such acts of spiritual regeneration.[14]

The crusade idea was thus born before the address at Clermont-Ferrand in 1095, and continued its evolution throughout the entire time of the various crusade campaigns. Its evolution combined, in varying degrees and with varying influence, elements of pilgrimage, holy war and apocalypse. The crusade-theme poems which are the subject of this study exhibit a variety of elements of this hybrid form of Christian thought that sustained crusading campaigns for centuries after.

NOTES - IDEA OF CRUSADE

1. See Jonathan Sumption, Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1975), pp. 89-90.

2. Pp. 92-93.

3. See Paul Alphandéry, La Chrétienté et l'Idée de Croisade (Paris: Albin Michel, 1954), pp. 10-24. Cf. Carl Erdmann (trans. by M.W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart), The Origin of the Idea of Crusade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 8.

4. Sumption, pp. 93-94.

5. Erdmann, pp. 7-8.

6. Pp. 8-14.

7. Pp. 15-27.

8. See Revelation 16:14-21, Authorized (King James) Version.

9. See Alphandéry, pp. 23-24. Cf. Erdmann, p. 301.

10. E. O. Blake, "The Formation of the 'Crusade Idea'", The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XXI: 1 (January 1970), 13.

11. See Blake, pp. 14-17.

12. See Erdmann, pp. 306-307. Cf. Blake, pp. 17-18.

13. See Erdmann, pp. 204-210.

14. Pp. 21-23.

III. EARLY VERNACULAR LITERATURE

The written literature of continental Europe was almost wholly clerical in origin and in Latin until the beginning of the twelfth century. Written Latin held a clerical origin because literate education was virtually an exclusively clerical privilege, and formal education was in Latin because it had been for some time the established and accepted language of the literate. Vernacular languages were much less universal, and the need for their written form was minimal. "Oral literature" in the vernacular had been developing for decades or even centuries prior to the development of a distinct written form of the vernacular languages.

This oral literature usually centred on a particular theme or legend generally based in history but invaded by the supernatural or the fictitious. In Britain, for example, from the scant fifth-century detail of the possible existence of a wise and benevolent King, later known as King Arthur, grew a great oral literature which spawned many legends and stories which eventually appeared in written form during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Various versions of the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table appear in the literature of France, Germany, Spain, the Scandinavian countries and other areas of the continent. Similarly, the legend of Tristan and Iseult appears to have developed in France and later spread to Britain, Germany, Austria, and other regions. The Nibelungenlied appeared first in Germany and the Lowlands, later

arising elsewhere; the Roman or Romance arose in Italy and also spread to far countries. Each region of Europe appears to have developed an oral literature which later developed into a written literature.

Jean Bodel, a mid-thirteenth century French poet, recognized that three distinct regional themes or literary matières existed. In his Chanson des Saisnes (or Chanson des Saxons), Bodel identifies them:

> Qui d'oir et d'antandre a loisir et talent
> Face pais, si escoût bone chancon vaillant
> Don li livre d'estoire sont tesmoing et garant.
> Jà nuls vilains jugleres de ceste ne se vant,
> Qar il n'an sauroit dire ne les vers ne le chant.
> Ne sont que .iij. matieres à nul home antandant:
> De France et de Bretaigne et de Rome la grant;
> Et de ces .iij. matieres n'i a nule samblant.
> Li conte de Bretaigne sont si vain et plaisant;
> Cil de Rome sont sage et de san aprenant;
> Cil de France de voir chascun jor apparant
> La corone de France doit estre mise avant,
> Qar tuit autre roi doivent estre à lui apandant
> De la loi crestiene qi an Deu sont creant.
> Le premier roi de France fist Dex par son commant
> Coroner à ses angeles dignement an chantant;
> Puis le commanda estre an terre son sergent;
> Tenir droite justise et la loi metre avant.
> Cest commandemant tindrent apres lui li auquant:
> Anséys et Pepins, cil furent conquerant,
> Et Charlemaigne d'Aiz, qui Dex parama tant.[1]

The trois matières that Bodel outlined indicate three distinct literary traditions that existed by the time of the writing of the Saisnes, circa A.D. 1250. Each matière is distinctive in both style and content, if not form. Bodel points out that the stories from the matière de Rome are wise and full of "sound learning", which refers to the wisdom of the ancient Romans that is often the thematic basis of this matière. The form became so distinctive as to be called Roman. Early pieces in

this matière were in versified form in the vernacular but by the fourteenth century had taken prose forms as well.

The matière de Bretagne, Bodel notes, is "vain and pleasant", or without serious foundation: he expends only one line on the subject, pressing to get on to what is, to his mind, the much more important matière de France. The matière de Bretagne is based on the legends of medieval Britain, largely those surrounding King Arthur and his Knights but including other minor figures as well. That these stories later came to be known as "romances" indicates their presence and popularity on the Continent, since they were adapted à la façon des Romains for continental audiences.

Bodel's purpose in delineating the trois matières was to place them into his own subjective perspective. The third theme, the matière de France, is for him the most important and hence merits the greatest share of his attention. His bold assertions as to the divine connections of the French monarchy clearly show his feelings on the subject.

The matière de France consists of poetry for the greater part, both lyric and epic. Few chronicles in the vernacular had appeared before the year 1250, but a distinctively French poetic literature had arisen prior to this time in the form of epic poems. These epics were arranged into series or "cycles" that would follow a figure or family through an entire lifetime or generation. For the greater part, the poems studied here are taken from these cycles that form a large portion of this matière.

EARLY CRUSADING POEMS

The stories and legends which became poems were passed orally among jongleurs or trouvères who found the lilting musical phrase easier to memorize than a mere story or verse.[2] The jongleurs-trouvères were adept at supplying products and services which were in demand. As the verses became more popular and widespread in the common tongue, more of the common people became interested in them, the circle thereby becoming self-perpetuating. The escapades of a prominent figure, present or past, were frequent themes of the early oral traditions, and poems were usually built upon episodes from the life of that figure.

Few of the early epics have come down through the ages in their original form since they were largely the product of an oral tradition, the content and form could easily be changed by an enterprising jongleur to suit a particular audience or to achieve a particular end. From such beginnings, and with the flexibility of the system allowing virtual free rein to the jongleurs, various versions of a story, not necessarily adhering to fact or history, could, and indeed did, arise on particular themes, figures, stories and legends.

The earliest piece of crusading literature that arose in the vernacular from the oral tradition is a crusade song written before the year 1137 by Guillaume Bechada, a knight from the Auvergne. Bechada's text has been lost, but his work is mentioned in the writings of Geoffroi, the Prior of Vigeois.[3] Another historian, Ordericus Vitalis, wrote that the troubadour William of Poitiers also had written an early poem with a crusade theme, but this manuscript has been lost as well.

Guillaume de Tudela, in a poem of the early thirteenth century, mentions yet a third primeval vernacular poem with a crusade theme that existed when he was writing. A fragment of some seven hundred lines, known as the Canso d'Antiocha, exists today and is possibly the remains of one of these early poems. Little else is known of them other than the fact of their one-time existence.

Similarly, songs are known to have been sung during the campaigns of the First Crusade, but their form and content remain a mystery since nothing written, if indeed anything was written, has survived.[4]

Other than these few sparse pieces, there is little poetic literature in Old French on the First Crusade until approximately 1170, when a flowering of vernacular literature started to take place, in particular in the field of epic poetry. Prose literature had not yet established itself in any language but Latin and did not flourish in French until well into the twelfth century.[5] As the Franks increased in numbers, economic and political strength and national pride, Latin, theretofore unchallenged as the language of diplomacy, commerce and literature, was slowly displaced by the common man's tongue that had gained increased acceptability, popularity and usage. With this new-found acceptability, the chroniclers and jongleurs-trouvères began to write down the songs, poems, and stories that had come down to them, for the most part through the oral tradition, over the decades. These jongleurs-trouvères are responsible in large measure for creating, collecting and recording the epic poems that have survived to our day.

NOTES - EARLY VERNACULAR LITERATURE

1. Jean Bodel, La Chanson des Saxons (Geneva: Slatkine, 1969 reprint), laisse I, lines 1-21, pp. 1-2.

2. A jongleur-trouvère is defined by Faral as anyone "who by profession provides diversion for men", a definition purposely left open-ended to include many diversionary talents. Strictly speaking, the trouvère was the lyricist, the jongleur the performer; ofttimes the talents were combined in a single artist. Jongleurs are first expressly mentioned in the literature of the ninth century, with a formative period before that time. See Edmond Faral, Les Jongleurs en France au Moyen Age (Paris: Champion, 1964), pp. 1-3.

3. See C. Hippeau, La Conquête de Jérusalem (Geneva: Slatkine, 1969). pg. vi. Hereafter cited as Jérusalem. Cf. U.T. Holmes Jr., A History of Old French Literature from the Origins to 1300 (New York: Crofts and Company, 1937), p. 183. Cf. Paulin Paris, La Chanson d'Antioche (Geneva: Slatkine, 1969), p. xli. Holmes states that Bechada was Limousin, not from the Auvergne as Hippeau and Paris state. See also Martin de Riquer (trans. I. Cluzel), Les Chansons de Gestes Françaises (Paris: Nizet, 1957), p. 283. De Riquer attributes the Canso d'Antiocha fragment to Bechada which, if true, would make it the earliest of the epic poems.

4. Gaston Paris speaks specifically of La Chanson d'Outrée, named for a phrase in the refrain, that was sung during the First Crusade. See Gaston Paris, La Littérature Française au Moyen Age (Paris: Hachette, 1888), pp.124-125.

5. Villehardouin was one of the first prose chroniclers to write in French, his work dating from the early thirteenth century. See Holmes, p. 121.

IV. THE POEMS IN THEIR HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT

THE LITERARY CYCLES

In much the same fashion as Jean Bodel classified mid-thirteenth century literature into trois matières, so also had a twelfth-century poet named Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube divided the Old French poetry of his time into three groups, or "cycles" as they have come to be known. In a poem titled Girart de Vienne, he identified three thematic cycles:

> Bone chançon plest vos que ge vos die,
> de haute estoire et de grant baronnie?
> . . . . . .
> n'ot que trois gestes en France la garnie;
> ne cuit que ja nus de ce me desdie.
> Des rois de France est la plus seignorie,
> Et l'autre aprés, bien est droiz que jeu die,
> fu de Doon a la barbe florie,
> Cil de Maience qui molt ot baronnie.
> El sien lingnaje ot gent fiere et hardie.
> . . . . . .
> De ce lingnaje, qui ne fist se mal non,
> fu la second geste.
>
> La tierce geste, qui molt fist a prisier
> fu de Garin de Monglenne au vis fier.[1]

The three cycles can be summarized from this classification as: the Geste du Roi, concerned with the adventures of Charlemagne and his Court as defenders of the Christian faith, with king as Emperor; the Cycle de Doon de Maience (also known as the Cycle des Barons Revoltés or the Feudal Cycle), which treats the subject of a rebellious feudal baron in his family's struggles against other houses or kings; and the Cycle de

Garin de Montglane, alternatively known as the Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange, which centres on the figure of Guillaume d'Orange who was supposedly a descendant of Garin de Montglane and a loyal and trusted subject of Charlemagne.

Although Bertrand's classification is somewhat artificial and does not accommodate all Old French epics, the use of it has survived and is cited here for reference. Many of the poems to be examined fit into one of these three cycles.

Approximately one hundred poems produced during the eleventh and twelfth centuries have survived, the great majority of these dating from the twelfth century. It is impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy how many poems were written during the thirteenth century, as dates are uncertain and numbers are great. Of these many poems, approximately twenty-five have a central crusade theme, while dozens more mention crusade in passing or deal peripherally with a crusade theme.

POEMS OF THE TIME OF THE FIRST CRUSADE

A crusading poem in many respects, La Chanson de Roland is the oldest and most famous of the Old French poems. The Roland provided the basic framework for the Geste du Roi and served as a model for countless other songs and poems.

The historical event on which the Roland is based, the Battle of Roncevaux, occurred 15 August 778 and is mentioned in several sources of the ninth century. There is little more said of the event until some two

hundred years later when La Chanson de Roland first appeared in written form.[2] But the written version is rather astonishing in the transformation that it underwent after the time of the Battle of Roncevaux. Legend and fantasy created an epic story, little resembling the actual skirmish at Roncevaux, of vast proportion and significant ideological meaning: Charlemagne became a 200-year-old larger-than-life sage and champion of Christianity against infidels; the Battle of Roncevaux was transformed from a mountain skirmish into a symbol of the larger conflict between Christianity and Islam; and the figure of Roland, a nondescript knight in Charlemagne's rear-guard, became the nephew and "right-hand man" of Charlemagne, and a warrior of immense ability, strength and virtue. His band of Chosen Peers became the models of chivalry and knighthood.

The transformation of event to legend, and the popularity of the legend, is more easily understood in the light of certain events or circumstances of the era. The animosity between the Saracen and Christian nations, notably Spain and France, was increasing about the end of the tenth century. This animosity resulted in a number of Christian expeditions, based on religious motives, against the Spanish Moors. As well, a series of legends based on local heroes or families had become more popular along the major trade and pilgrim routes of Europe, each of which glamorized its own subject. And, the preaching of the First Crusade in 1095 solidified the popular excitement for "holy war" against unbelievers.

If "crusade" is taken to mean a campaign of Christians against non-Christians for a religious purpose, certainly the seeds of crusading

were present in the Roland. The poem, at least in its oral form, was undoubtedly quite topical at the time of the preaching of the First Crusade. The story of the ignominious death suffered by Roland and the Peers at the hands of ignoble men perceived as infidels would have served to heighten the realization in 1095 that the most holy and sacred shrines of Christianity--indeed virtually the entire Holy Land--were held by infidels. Action against such a travesty, as in the case of Charlemagne's revenge in the Roland, was undoubtedly seen as a proper course to follow.

Next to the Roland, the oldest of the crusading poems is La Chanson d'Antioche, composed around the beginning of the twelfth century.[3] The Antioche in its original form was written by Richard the Pilgrim, a poet from the Artois region of northern France. Richard is believed to have been part of a crusading army, since much of what is described in the poem appears to have been witnessed by the author. Richard's exact position with the army is uncertain, some scholars believing him to have been a participant in the First Crusade under the flag of the Count of Flanders.[4] That the Antioche was actually written during the campaign of the First Crusade is uncontested, with many historians and literary experts believing that it was written as a journal record and subsequently converted to verse form either during the campaign or shortly afterward.[5]

La Chanson d'Antioche is, as the title suggests, an epic poem dealing largely with the siege of Antioch in 1097. Some 9000 lines of the poem describe directly the events of the crusade campaign, with the remainder devoted to conditions of life and the actions of the average crusader.

The oldest manuscript of the poem dates from 1268, but internal evidence indicates that the original poem was finished shortly before the crusaders arrived at Jerusalem.[6] After an eight-month stay at Antioch, Richard the Pilgrim likely would have continued the story to include the taking of Jerusalem, but either circumstances did not allow for it or his continuation has been lost. The poem (or at least Richard's portion of it) ends abruptly. It is believed by some that Richard may had died suddenly at Arches (Archas), a city mentioned in the latter lines of the poem; were Richard to have died at Archas as supposed, however, his subsequent authorship of the poems La Chanson de Jérusalem and La Chanson des Chétifs, as discussed following, would have been impossible.[7] Whatever the reason for Richard's absence, a reviser or revisers continued the poem from that point, relating the story of the taking of Jerusalem by the crusaders.

The major characters of the Antioche are well-known figures: Peter the Hermit, Bohemond, Bishop Adhemar du Puy, Tancred, and Baldwin. The story commences with the call to crusade and proceeds through the vision and ill-fated expedition of Peter the Hermit, through the glorious victory of Baldwin and ends with the final victory speech of Bishop Adhemar after the taking of the city of Antioch.

Le Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange is a third series of poems that has a crusade theme. The cycle is known alternatively as Le Cycle Narbonnais or La Geste de Garin de Montglane. The cycle consists of some twenty-five songs and poems surrounding the clan of William of Orange, with William himself usually serving as the central personnage in both the clan and the poems. The character of William, "if not completely

legendary, is probably a somewhat elaborated portrait of William, Count of Toulouse, who fought against the Saracens, founded the monastery of Gellone, and died in 803."[8] Although the relationship is not mentioned in the poems, the historical William was a cousin to Charlemagne and was invested as the Count of Toulouse in 789 by Charlemagne himself. As an obligation of his investiture, the Emperor charged him with the defence of the Spanish borders. William fared well with this obligation, winning much fame by achieving the submission of the fierce and independent Gascons. He likewise achieved much renown as a result of his numerous victories in various campaigns against the Saracens of Spain. Within his own comté of Toulouse, he was respected as a noble and judicious ruler.

Historically documented little more than is the historical Roland, William achieved most of his legendary reputation from the Chançun de Willame, a poem likely contemporary with the Roland.[10] It appears that the song was written largely as a reflection of the historical battle waged by Guillaume de Toulouse on the banks of the Orbieu (Orbigo) River against the Saracens of Spain. It also contains many legendary and mythical features that have no documented links with history.

POEMS OF THE TIME OF THE SECOND CRUSADE

Richard the Pilgrim was probably responsible for two other epic poems: La Chanson de Jérusalem (also known as La Conquête de Jérusalem), a poem written between 1130 and 1135; and, La Chanson des Chétifs, dating from between 1140 and 1149. None of Richard's original work has survived for either of these poems; we know of them only through their revision

(along with a revision of the Antioche) carried out by Graindor de Douai some time between 1180 and 1200.[11]

La Chanson de Jérusalem narrates the capture of the city of Jerusalem by the crusaders, tells of the election of Godfrey of Bouillon as Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri in Jerusalem and continues with the greater part of the story telling of the Frankish dynasty in Jerusalem at the time of the poem's composition.

The story of La Chanson de Jérusalem leads almost directly into the beginning of the second poem, La Chanson des Chétifs. The Chétifs recounts a fabulous tale of five noble Christian knights captured by the Saracen king Corboran after the defeat of Peter the Hermit and his followers at Nicea. The captives are transported to the city Oliferne and, with a clever twist on the Old Testament story of the Jews' being put in bondage to a gentile nation, the Christian knights are put to work as slaves in the building of the pagan city. As the story progresses, a discussion ensues among the Saracen captors who search for reasons for the fall of the city of Antioch, with one among them postulating moral and physical superiority of the Franks as an excuse. A trial by ordeal tests the hypothesis: the Christian knight, Richard de Caumont, emerges victorious over the pagans, Golias and Sorgales, winning thereby the release of the five captives. The knights leave Oliferne and wend their way back to Jerusalem, fighting great serpents and overcoming tremendous obstacles along the way.[12]

La Chanson d'Antioche, La Chanson de Jérusalem, and La Chanson des Chétifs were arranged by Graindor de Douai into a series, and form the principal part of what has come to be known as Le Premier Cycle de la

Croisade. The "cycle" aspect becomes apparent when one sees that without the literary divisions it would be difficult to determine where one poem ends and the other begins. Five other poems of smaller proportion and of lesser historical significance further extend the series and complete the cycle. Two of these are placed chronologically ahead of the Antioche, with the other three placed after the Chétifs.[13] This series of poems taken together completes the cycle of the life of Godfrey, from his birth to his death.

The first two of these latter five poems were composed by a jongleur named Renaut,[14] and by portraying the supernatural origins of Godfrey they introduce the truly legendary material into the epics of the First Crusade. These poems are entitled La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne, also known as Elioxe; and Le Chevalier au Cygne et Enfances Godefroi.[15] There are several variations of the Swan story, and it is obvious that Renaut knew much about the life and exploits of Godfrey but chose to portray the legendary aspects.[16] The three poems that end the cycle are known as: La Mort de Godefroi, which tells of how the treacherous Daimbert slipped poison into Godfrey's cup; Beaudoin de Sebourc, a history of the third king of Jerusalem; and Le Bâtard de Boullion, the story of a bastard son who aspires to the throne of Jerusalem.[17] All three of the latter poems are as fabulous in content as the Chétifs.

POEMS OF THE TIME OF THE THIRD CRUSADE

Ambroise, a jongleur from the village of Evreux in Normandy, produced

"a monument of the first order" in the form of an epic on the subject of the Third Crusade, titled Estoire de la Guerre Sainte.[18] The manuscript of the work dates from the later thirteenth century, but the poem itself was written in the late twelfth century. The work exhibits many aspects of eyewitness accuracy in the description of several of the events of the crusade waged by Richard Coeur-de-Lion, even though Ambroise was not privy to the war councils.[19] He writes as though he had participated in or at least been present at deliberations in both Richard's and Saladin's tents, with the greater part of the text being written from the viewpoint of the common man on crusade who was not a knight, noble or priest. The majority of his narrative is concerned with the common folk and provides excellent insights into their style of life.[20]

In addition to a human interest in his work, Ambroise possessed a definite Christian faith similar to that which appears in La Chanson de Roland and many other of the chansons de geste. Ambroise often points out his admiration for the poise, chivalry and skill at arms of Saladin and his Moslem troops, seeing them as tools in the hand of God to punish corrupted Christians who had strayed from the path of true Christian virtue. Patterned after the same type of expression in the Roland, Ambroise often repeats the sentiment: "what a man he would have been, if only he had been a Christian."[21]

A second poem dating from the time of the Third Crusade but belonging to the Geste du Roi is La Chanson d'Aspremont. This poem was, as were many poems of the era, modelled after the Roland and is a direct result of it. La Chanson de Roland commences with the lines:

Carles li reis, nostre emperere magnes,
Set anz tuz pleins ad estet en Espaigne.[22]

The Aspremont purports to account for those seven years spent in Spain by Charlemagne and his court; as such, it becomes a "pre-history" of and companion to the Roland. The poem takes its name from the setting of Aspramonte, Italy, but the scene switches early in the poem to Spain, where, as told in the Roland, the court of Charlemagne resides temporarily.

An anonymous and rather ingenious jongleur-trouvère created the Aspremont out of the hint that there was a seven-year period of history unaccounted for in the first two lines of La Chanson de Roland. The poem was completed between 1177 and 1190, the dates of the Battle of Ramleh and the departure of Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Philippe-Auguste for the Third Crusade, respectively.[23] Internal evidence indicates that it was written in Sicily or Calabria, most likely during the winter of 1190-1191, in preparation for the Third Crusade which departed from Messina in the spring of 1191.[24]

La Chanson d'Aspremont shows the influence of both the Antioche and the Jérusalem, and to some degree, the influence of the legend surrounding Charlemagne as revealed in Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne (to be discussed below). The poem speaks somewhat disdainfully of the exploits of the crusaders at Jerusalem, revealing some concern on the part of the author regarding the excesses of some crusaders.

OTHER POEMS ON A CRUSADE THEME

After the appearance of La Chanson de Roland, Charlemagne appears frequently as a subject, central or otherwise, of subsequent poems; his court often provides the setting for a poem featuring some other distinguished nobleman or baron. Charlemagne again appears most prominently as the central figure with the appearance of a poem titled Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne, an epic poem connected to the Geste du Roi.

Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne (known also and perhaps more appropriately under the alternate titles of Le Voyage de Charlemagne en Orient and Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople) is an epic poem describing a legendary pilgrimage or voyage made by Charlemagne to Jerusalem and Constantinople. The poem itself is believed to date from the early twelfth century; this date, however, is not universally accepted.[25] The style of the poem is similar to that of the Roland but is much less dignified in both tone and content. The Pèlerinage is not typical of epic poems: it allows only superficial treatment of the usual heroic elements common to other epics and treats lightly--at times even maliciously--leading figures and themes common to the chansons de geste in general.[26]

The poem has no apparent basis in fact, for the historical Charlemagne never went to the Holy Land on pilgrimage, voyage, or crusade. The poem nonetheless describes just such a voyage and over time it was accepted as fact and used as pro-crusade propaganda, particularly after the failure of the Second Crusade. The story had become very popular, to the point that Charlemagne "had come to be seen as above all

the heroic champion of Christ, the tireless defender of Christendom against the armed might of Islam; and . . . it became almost universally believed that he had once led a Crusade to Jerusalem."[27] There is evidence, notably in the works of Ekkehard of Aura, that the First Crusade (as modern historians understand the term) was called the Second Crusade by many people of the time, since it was widely believed that Charlemagne had indeed led the first.[28]

La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise is a poem on the subject of the Albigensian Crusade, 1208-1213, a campaign undertaken by Christian nobles of the north of France and from the Languedoc-Occitan regions against Cathar heretics in southern France. The poem was written in two parts, the first by the poet Guillaume de Tudela, the second by an unknown author.[29] The distinct style and form of the two authors is apparent in the text. In the first part, the facts are reported fairly objectively, with little apparent criticism of the leader of the Crusade, Simon de Montfort. The language of the poem encompasses a mixture of French and provençal expressions. The second part, however, reveals the hand of a subjective author who is at times highly critical of Simon's behaviour. The style of this section contains much imagery and vivid description and lacks Provençal influence.[30]

By his own admission early in the poem, Guillaume used the Antioche as a model of style and content:

> Senhors, esta canso es faita d'aital guia
> Com sela d'Antiocha et ayssis versifia
> E s'a tot aital so, qui diire lo sabia.[31]

Later in the poem, he states that he intends to undertake a "bona canso novela" on the subject of the crusade of the Spanish Christian Kings against the Moslems, which resulted in their victory at Las Navas de Tolosa in July of 1212.[32]

The main thrust of the Albigensian Crusade occurred in the years 1211-1212; the poem itself was completed in the spring of 1213. The Albigeoise is therefore valuable from an historical viewpoint as Guillaume was an eyewitness to many of the events of the Crusade which he describes, his account rendering an almost day-to-day journal of events. Guillaume is occasionally lax in his chronology, and he could not have been at all of the events that he describes. He was nonetheless well-informed of what happened when he did not witness it personally, and his account is largely in accord with contemporary chronicle accounts.[33] Unlike many provincial authors on the subject, Guillaume was in favour of the crusade against the Albigensian heretics. His pro-crusade bias is fairly unusual among poems on the Albigensian Crusade.

NOTES - HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT

1. Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube, Girart de Vienne (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1977), pp. 3-5, lines 1-2, 11-17, 44-47. This poem dates from between 1190 and 1224.

2. The Oxford Manuscript (Bodleian Library, Digby 23) is the oldest known and, arguably, the best version of all manuscripts of the poem. It has been dated by various scholars to circa 1100, some arguing its composition as early as 1080, others as late as 1170. See Joseph Bédier (trans.), La Chanson de Roland (Paris: L'Edition D'Art, 1927), pp. I-X. For a detailed discussion of the various manuscripts and theories surrounding their date and source, see also Gerard Moignet, La Chanson de Roland (Paris: Bordas, 1969), pp. 6-10.

3. Crosland dates it at 1130; Hatem claims that it was written during or shortly after the siege of Antioch, definitely prior to 1100. Neither date is substantiated. See J. Crosland, Medieval French Literature (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), p. 209. Cf. Anouar Hatem, Les Poèmes Epiques des Croisades (Geneva: Slatkine, 1973), pp. 117-124. Cf. Robert Francis Cook and Larry S. Crist, Le Deuxième Cycle de la Croisade (Geneva: Droz, 1972), p. 79.

4. See Paulin Paris, La Chanson d'Antioche (Geneva: Slatkine, 1969), I, xlv. Hereafter cited as Paulin Paris. Paris noted that Richard may have been a jongleur accompanying the Count; such formed part of the armies of crusading barons much as did priests and chaplains. Cf. U.T. Holmes Jr., A History of Old French Literature from the Origins to 1300 (New York: Crofts and Company, 1937), pp. 121-123. Cf. Hatem, p. 246, p. 349. Hatem here also believes that "l'histoire poétique de la Croisade est née au camp meme des Croisés", but sees Richard as simply a devout pilgrim following the army.

5. See Cook and Crist, p. 79.

6. H. Pigeonneau, Le Cycle de la Croisade et la Famille de Bouillon (St. Cloud: Berlin, 1877), p. 15.

7. Paulin Paris, p. xiv.

8. Crosland, Old French Epic, p. 30. De Riquer claims that William became a monk in 804 at the encouragement of a close friend, the Monk Benoit, and places his death at Gellone in 812. See de Riquer, pp. 129-130. De Riquer sees William as the legendary equivalent of Saint Guillaume d'Aquitaine (or alternatively, de Toulouse), whose day is celebrated by the Church on May 28.

9. See de Riquer, pp. 130-131.

10. See Nancy V. Isley (ed.), La Chançun de Willame (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1952), p. viii.

11. There is some confusion and no little controversy on the authorship of the Chétifs. Some scholars believe Richard to have been the author, others claim Graindor de Douai to be the original author, while yet others feel that a third unknown party may have penned the original. See Cook and Crist, pp. 78-79. Cf. Holmes, pp. 122-123.

12. Holmes calls the whole of the Chétifs "pure imagination." Claude Cahen feels certain that it has a real historical basis, although none has been established. Harpin de Bourges is the only historically-known individual in the song. See Claude Cahen, "Le Premier Cycle de la Croisade", in Le Moyen Age, LXIII (1957), 321, 328.

13. The Chétifs, because of internal chronology in the stories, is often inserted between the Antioche and the Jérusalem in the cycle designation, even though it is evident that it was the last of the three to be composed. See Cook and Crist, p. 78.

14. The name also appears as "Renax". Nothing more of the man is known. See Pigeonneau, p. 15.

15. See Holmes, pp. 125-126. The story tells of how the fairy Elioxe gave birth to six sons and a daughter. The sons are turned into swans by a wicked sorceress. The daughter, who was not transformed, eventually manages to have all but one swan restored to human form, and this last swan accompanies one of the brothers from that time forth. This brother became known as Le Chevalier au Cygne, or the Swan Knight, Godfrey.

16. See Crosland, Medieval French Literature, pp. 209-210.

17. See Paulin Paris, p. liv.

18. Holmes, p. 128.

19. Although the poem appears to be an eyewitness account, some scholars hold that it is not. Evidence indicates that it is perhaps a second-hand account based directly on the account of one who had seen the events described. The extant manuscript follows the "original" so closely and was apparently written so soon after the Crusade that it possesses considerable value that is only slightly inferior to that of a first-hand account. See Ambroise (editor: John L. LaMonte; translator: Merton Jerome Hubert), The Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart (New York: Octagon, 1976), pp. 3-4. Hereafter cited as Ambroise (LaMonte and Hubert). LaMonte and Hubert also point out that a Latin chronicle, non-versified, entitled Itinerarium Regis Ricardi, exists, and is closely paralleled by the Estoire de la Guerre Sainte -- so closely paralleled that there is undeniably some sort of connection between the two. See the discussion from the above work, pp. 4-18, which concludes: "first, the poem of Ambroise cannot be a translation from the Itinerarium; second, the Itinerarium cannot be a translation from Ambroise. Yet the two books a

obviously and undeniably related in some fashion" (p. 10). The discussion concludes with the hypothesis of an "original source," probably in French and prose form, that is now lost, from which both works were drawn. For further discussion of this, see also Edward Noble Stone (trans.), Three Old French Chronicles of the Crusades (Seattle: University of Washington, 1939), p. vii.

20. See the discussion in the following chapter for an example of this human interest.

21. Ambroise (Lamonte and Hubert), p. 21.

22. Bédier, p. 2.

23. Louis Brandin (ed.), La Chanson d'Aspremont (Paris: Champion, 1919), pp. 187-191.

24. Martin de Riquer (trans. I Cluzel), Les Chansons de Geste Françaises (Paris: Nizet, 1957), p. 209.

25. Paulin Paris dated the composition of Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne from the early twelfth century, and possibly from the third quarter of the eleventh century; in any case, contemporary with the era of the First Crusade. Gaston Paris stated only that it dates from the twelfth century, with no specifics attempted or implied. Professor Theodor Heinerman placed the date of composition at 1150. Horrent made no claims as to the date of the poem, but admitted that a definite fixation of the date of composition of the poem would have to be made in order to establish any connections between the events in the poem and actual crusade (post-1096) events. See Gaston Paris, "La Chanson du Pèlerinage de Charlemagne" in Romania, IX (1880), 1-50. Cf. Jules Horrent, Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne (Paris: Société d'Edition "Les Belles Lettres", 1961), pp. 117-119. Cf. Paul Aebischer, Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople (Geneva: Droz, 1965), p. 8.

A thirteenth-century manuscript was used by Francisque Michel to produce an edition of the poem in 1836. Since 1879, this manuscript has been lost, stolen, or otherwise mislaid, an unfortunate circumstance curtailing the work of establishing the date of the poem which is a necessity for establishing any historical fact which the work may contain. Although Charlemagne never attempted either a pilgrimage or a crusade to the Holy Land, the Pèlerinage should not be considered as pure fiction. See Madeleine Tyssens (trans.), Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople (Gand: Editions Scientifiques, 1978), p. v, for a full discussion. Cf. Jean-Louis G. Picherit (ed. and trans.), The Journey of Charlemagne to Jerusalem and Constantinople (Birmingham, Ala: Summa, 1984), p. vii. Picherit here indicates that the poem has been dated from as early as the second half of the eleventh century to as late as the second half of the thirteenth century.

26. See the discussion in the chapter following for examples of this levity.

27. Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium (New York: Oxford, 1976), p. 72.

28. Gaston, Paris, "La Chanson du Pèlerinage de Charlemagne" in Romania, IX (1880), 16. Paris here offers an extensive discussion on the legend of the trip as a whole.

29. Alternate spellings of the name are "Guilhem" and "Guilelme". This poem has also been known as the Canso de la Crozada. Another poem of lesser importance but bearing the same name is attributed to one Peire Cardenal. This poem is hostile in attitude both towards the crusaders and the French monarchy of the time. See Martin de Riquer, p. 285.

30. See Eugène Martin-Chabot (trans.), La Chanson de La Croisade Albigeoise (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1960), pp. v-vi.

31. Laisse 2, lines 1-3, p. 8.

32. Laisse 5, lines 23-24, p. 19.

33. Pp. xii-xiv.

V. THE POEMS AS HISTORICAL SOURCES

FACTUAL INFORMATION IN THE POEMS

Many of the poems discussed in this study contain historical information not found in the historical chronicles, or information that elucidates points found in the chronicles. Those crusade-theme poems that hold such information should be regarded, albeit cautiously, as sources of historical information on crusades, the crusade idea, the conditions of the life of crusaders and on the mentality of the people involved in the crusade movement, both in the East and the West.

La Chanson d'Antioche

Of the poems included in Le Premier Cycle de la Croisade, dealing with the First and Second Crusades, only La Chanson d'Antioche and La Chanson de Jérusalem can be termed "historical" poems in the sense that they contain factual historical material. Of these, the former far outstrips the latter in both amount and accuracy of historical fact.

It is not until well into the Antioche that the poem provides substantial historical interest. The first several hundred lines of the poem were used by the author to make his introduction and to prepare the audience for what was to follow.

It is noteworthy that the author, Richard, indicates that Bohemond,

Tancred, and the other leaders summoned to Clermont were first urged to depart on crusade by Philippe, King of France:

> Et li bons rois Phelipes en est en piés levés,
> Dist à Pieron l'ermite: "Est-ce dont verités
> Que Pavien ont nos gens desconfis et matés?
> "Jà i avoit-il tant de chevaliers membrés!"
> --"Sire," ce respont Pieres, "par Dieu de majestés,
> "N'i a baron né prince, mon ensciant remés.
> "Que Paien n'aient tous ocis né afolés;
> "Et bien trente milliers en ont pris et menés.
> "Or mande l'apostoles que vous les secourés,
> Et les saint vrai sepilcre de Paiens delivrés.
> "Et qui morra pour Dieu il sera couronés;
> "El ciel avoec les anges sera ses lis parés."
> --"Ha Diex!" ce dist le rois, "t'en soies aorés!"
> Dist al conte Huon: "Biaus frères, vos irés."[1]

No chronicle confirms this pro-active role played by Philippe; most indicate only that he was present at Clermont.[2] He later came to be regarded falsely as the "organizer" of the events following the Council of Clermont, which is unlikely given his excommunication for bigamy in 1094 and a re-excommunication at Clermont in 1095.[3] Philippe did preside over a council of Frankish barons, held in Paris, shortly after the assembly at Clermont. The author of the Antioche portrays Philippe as playing a much more central role in the initial exhortations to crusade.

Arriving at Constantinople after an ardous journey, the crusaders pitched camp outside the city walls. Of the chroniclers, Fulcher de Chartres, a chaplain of Baldwin I who wrote a record of the First Crusade entitled Historia Hierosolymitana, attributes their exclusion from the city to distrust by the Emperor, who did not want to have too many crusaders in the city at any one time.[4] The anonymous author of the

chronicle titled Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum, revealing his intense dislike of the Greeks, attributed it to the perfidious character of the Emperor.[5] The Antioche states that it was simply a matter of there being insufficient lodging in the city:

> Dedens Constantinoble fu molt grans li barnés
> De France et de Borgoigne et d'estranges regnés.
> Cele nuit les conroie Estatins l'Esnasés,
> Drus fu l'empereor et de sa seror nés.
> Tant i a des barons venus et assamblés
> Ne porent herbregier dedens les fremetés,
> Ains ont tendu defors et pavellons et trés;
> Estatins lor envoie et car et vin et blés
> Et le fuere et l'avaine et les pains buletés.[6]

Given the size of the western army,[7] it is likely that lodging within the city would not have been adequate, as Richard noted. The logistics of feeding both the human and animal contingents would have been simpler with the army outside the city rather than inside. It is doubtful that the crusaders had any designs on the city itself, but the Emperor had not yet extracted an oath of allegiance from them and the suburbs of the city had earlier suffered from raids by the followers of Peter the Hermit.[8] Fulcher's account complements that of the Antioche; the fact that he was personally present lends some credibility to his version of the matter.[9]

Richard's account of the difficulties encountered by the crusaders on their march to Nicea is generally corroborated by the chroniclers. Richard provides some details, however, that surpass the collective contributions of the chroniclers. After telling of the crusaders arriving at Nicea and laying siege to the city, Richard provides a

lengthy list of the names of over fifty crusaders who were present.[10] Of the chroniclers, Fulcher offers the names of only six,[11] as does Raymond d'Aguilers, in his work entitled Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem;[12] the Gesta gives seven.[13] In compiling his list, however, Richard the pilgrim was either not fastidious or was overly anxious to include the names of all who eventually participated; although Robert de Normandie and Etienne de Blois, whose names appear in the list, did not arrive at Nicea until some two weeks after the core army, Richard includes them as though they had been present all along.[14]

On the march of the crusaders into Asia Minor after having left Constantinople, the Antioche is accurate in details of geography and much more descriptive than the chroniclers; however, neither Richard nor the chroniclers offer many details of nor reasons for the division of the crusaders into two separate armies. At the Battle of Dorylaeum, Richard gives a vivid description of the Christian women who carried fresh water to the battling crusaders:

> Li jors fu bels et clers et li solaus levés,
> Tot droit a miedi est li jors escaufés,
> Li barnages ot soi, si est molt esgarés,
> Molt desiroit de l'aigue li chevaliers Tangrés.
> Mestier lor ont eu celes de lor regnés,
> Les dames, les puceles dont il i ot assés.
> Quar eles se rebracent, s'ont lor dras jus jetés.
> S'aporterent de l'aigue les chevaliers menbrés.
> As pos, as escuieles et as vaïsiaus dorés.
> Quant ot but li barnages, si est resvigorés.
> Atant vint le secors qui tant fu desirés.[15]

Only the Gesta corroborates this detail, and Richard's version is more complete and informative.[16]

Of all accounts, the Antioche offers the most concise and believable description of the events leading up to the taking of Tarsus. Tancred leaves the main group first, apparently on some sort of political mission for Bohemond. Baldwin leaves after:

> Es vos autre compaigne u sont de l'ost sevré:
> Pieron d'Estaenor et Rainalt le menbré
> Et Bauduin de Burs ont avoec els mené,
> Bauduin de Boloigne ont avoec els josté,
> Vint li en son corage qu'ira après Tangré.[17]

The Gesta depicts Baldwin and Tancred leaving together, separating later. Tancred takes Tarsus while Baldwin, according to the Antioche, loses his way for four days, causing great suffering for his men. Both the Antioche and the chroniclers tell of the hunger and thirst suffered by Baldwin's armies in their march toward Tarsus; Richard's account is the most descriptive and complete:

> De Bauduin dirons com a esté baillis,
> Ne pain ne vin ne car ne capon ne pertris
> Ne truevent qu'achater, li mangiers est faillis.
> Il ne set qu'il puist faire; ses messagiers a pris,
> A Tangré le Puillant les a tantost tramis:
> Por amor cel Segnor qui en la crois fu mis
> K'il li envoist l'aumosne, car de faim est soupris.
> Et Tangrés li respont: "Volentiers, non envis,
> De tant com en avons li ert par mi partis."
> Quant Bauduins le voit s'en est molt esbaudis,
> De Deu del ciel l'en rent et graces et mercis.[18]

While Fulcher devotes only a small paragraph to Tancred and Baldwin at Tarsus,[19] the Gesta account is somewhat longer.[20] The Antioche devotes 75 lines in three laisses to the subject, and provides much information not found in the other accounts.[21]

Both Richard and the chroniclers tell of Tancred's departure toward Mamistra: the former omits the detail that Tancred stopped first at Adana and assisted in the taking of the city from the Turks. The Antioche alone indicates that, arriving at Mamistra, Tancred found Bohemond and his army already camped there. (Throughout the poem, the author reveals his admiration of Bohemond.) Richard gives Bohemond a pre-eminent role in the siege of Mamistra, an important detail not found in the chronicles but one that is plausible since Tancred's army of only 300 men would have found it difficult if not impossible to lay siege to an entire city.[22] The detail and understanding of the event make it nearly certain that Richard was an eyewitness to the event.[23]

One of the most important contributions of the Antioche is its description of the arguments and battles among the crusaders themselves, notably between Tancred and Baldwin. These details are important because they reveal that the motives of the Christian leaders were not entirely altruistic: they sought principalities and kingdoms of their own, and were not always willing to unite for the common good of Christendom.

Although the chronicles all contain some discussion of the challenges and quarrels between Tancred and Baldwin, those found in the Antioche are superior in number, detail and content. An unrivalled account of an argument and an eventual reconciliation, in the Antioche, demonstrates the point:

Ricars le voit li princes, s'en apela Tangré:
"Veés la Bauduins qui a grant tort vos hé,
Semonés vos barons, cels qui sont vo privé,
A lui nos combatons com vasal aduré.
--Molt volentiers, ciers sire, quant le m'avés loé."
Dont fait soner un graille, si home sont armé.
Quant Bauduins le voit forment l'en a pesé.
A Tangré envoia et se li a mandé
Por Dex et por pitié, por sainte carité.
Que il le laist en pais, sil l'en sara boin gré.
Et Tangrés respondi: "Ja n'ert acreanté."
Les mesagiers encace ariere dusc'al tré.
Quant Bauduins ce voit, si a un cor soné,
Dont coururent as armes li baron alosé.
Bauduins vait devant, son olberc endossé,
S'a le hante brandie, le frain abandonné,
Et fiert un chevalier sor son escu listé
Del bon espiel trencant, qu'il l'a jus craventé.
Et quant li Tangré virent qu'il a ensi josté,
Il sevent bien de fi qu'il ne l'a pas greé.
Il li tornent les dos, tos rengié et serré,
Bauduins les encauce desci que el fossé,
.xiiii. chevalier i sont desafeutré.
Puis a traite l'espee qu'ot le puing doré,
Et vint as chevaliers, tot sont desbaretē,
En .iii. lius se sont et parti et sevré;
Puis remet ens l'espee, si s'en est retorné,
Les barons chevaliers a a Deu commandé.
Li compaignon Tangré l'en ont araisoné:
"En la moie foi sire, mar avés encontré!
Ce vos a fait deables qui vos a encanté,
.xiiii. chevalier i furent malmené."
Meismes Buiemons l'en a forment blasmé:
"En ma foi, sire niés, mar vi vostre fierté.
Se li frere li duc m'eust or pris en hé
N'eusce ore vaillant un denier monneé;
Car mandés Bauduin, si soiés racordé.
--Sire, ço dist li dus, a vostre volenté."
Quatre .c. chevalier sont avoec lui alé,
Tant prient Bauduin que il l'ont amené.
Tangrés r'ala encontre par grant humilité,
Descaus piés et en langes lu a merci crié;
Volentier s'entrebaisent, si sont aseguré.[24]

The Antioche is particularly valuable for the graphic details which it offers on the conditions of the life of the crusaders. As an example, the people suffered terribly from hunger and thirst, to the point that

some were driven to cannibalism. Fulcher of Chartres acknowledged the fact but glossed over it as quickly as possible:

> Here our men suffered from excessive hunger. I shudder to say that many of our men, terribly tormented by the madness of starvation, cut pieces of flesh from the buttocks of Saracens lying there dead. These pieces they cooked and ate, savagely devouring the flesh while it was insufficiently roasted. In this way the besiegers were harmed more than the besieged.[25]

Raymond d'Aguiliers also speaks briefly of acts of cannibalism associated with the famine, and the Gesta even more briefly.[26] The Antioche gives considerably more detail on the conditions surrounding the event, as well as the attitude of both Franks and Turks towards it:

> Crestien sont en l'ost, moult i a grant cierté;
> N'orent point de vitaille, tot furent esgaré.
> Dans Pieres li hermites fu ens enmi son tré,
> Li rois Tafurs i vint, avoec lui son barné,
> Plus en i ot de mil, tot sont de faim enflé:
> "Sire, conselliés nos, por sainte carité!
> Por voir morons de faim et de caitiveté."
> Et respondi dans Pieres: "C'est par vo lasqueté!
> Alés, prandés ces Turs qui la sont par cel pré,
> Bon ierent a mangier s'il sont quit et salé."
> Et dis li rois Tafurs: "Vos dites verité."
> Del tré Pieron s'en torne, ses ribals a mandé,
> Plus furent de .x. mil quant furent assamblé.
> Les Turs ont escorciet, s'en ont le quir osté,
> En l'eve et el rostier ont le car quisiné;
> Assez en ont mangiet, mais de pain n'ont gosté.
> De cel furent paien durement esfreé;
> Por le flair de la car sont al mur acouté,
> De .xx. mil paiens sont li ribaut regardé,
> K'il n'i a un seul Turc qui n'ait des iex ploré;
> De lor cent qu'il manjuent ont grant dol demené
> Ahi! Mahomet sire, com grande cruelté!

Quar prent de cels venjance qui si t'ont vergondé,
Quant il te gent manjuent, tot t'ont despersoné,
Co ne sont pas François, ançois sont vif malfé.
Mahomés les maldie et lor crestienté!
Quar s'il le puent faire, tot sommes vergondé!

Or est li rois Tafurs auques esvertués,
Et il et s compaigne dont il i ot assés;
A lor coutels qu'il ont trencans et afilés
Escorçoient les Turs, aval parmi les prés;
Voiant paiens, les ont par pieces decolpés,
En l'eve et es carbons les ont bien quisinés.
Volentiers les manjuent, sans pain, tos dessalés;
Et dis li uns a l'autre: "Molt est cis savourés,
Mius vaut que cars de porc ne que bacons ullés,
Dehés ait qui morra tant com en ait assés."
Ricement se conroie li rois et ses barnés.
Des Turs que il rostisent est grans li flairs montés,
Par le cit d'Anthioce en est li cris levés
Que li Francois manjuent les Turs qu'il ont tués.
Paien montent as estres, grans en fu li plentés,
Des paienes meismes est tos li murs rasés.
As fenestres plus hautes est Garsions montés,
Et ses fils Sansadonies et ses niés Ysorés,
Bien i ot mil paiens que jovenes que barbés.
Garsions lor a dit: "Por Mohomet veés,
Cil diable manjuent nos gens, or esgardés!"[27]

The details offered by the poem on the siege, battle, and subsequent taking of Antioch offer information supplementary to that of the chronicles, and leave little doubt that Richard's vivid account was a result of his presence at the scene. Once again, it is the detail on conditions of crusading life and warfare that is most instructive:

Ki veist no barons Anthioce cerkier,
Et ces paiens ocire et les membres trencier,
L'un par deseure l'autre verser et trebuchier!
De sanc et de cervelle font tos lor brans soillier,
Del sanc qui des cors ist furent grant li sentier.
Mainte bele paienne veissiés esmaier
Et detordre lor poins et lor cevels sacier,
Mahon et Apollin reclamer et proier,

K'il maldie François qui lor gent font irier:
"Grans dels est qu'en nos terres mainent cil aversier!"
Sarrasin et paien s'alerent raloier,
Bien furent .xxx. mil l'estor commencier,
Dont peussiés veir un capleis molt fier,
Tante grosse anste fraindre et tant escu percier,
Et tant clavain desrompre, tant auberc desmaillier,
Et tant Sarrasin traire a lor ars de cornier,
De guivres et de dars et ferir et lancier,
Et ces gavrelos traire et ruer et ficier,
De maces, de plomees et ferir et maillier!
Des mors et des navrés font le terre joncier.
La bataille dura trestor le jor entier,
Le soir et l'endemain desci qu'a l'anuitier,
Bien poés dire et croire, la ot grant destorbier.[28]

In various minor episodes throughout the poem, the Antioche provides details that supplement or complement the chronicle account. For example, the Gesta is the only account among the three chronicles that speaks of the Iron Bridge, or Pons Ferreus (Farreus), which crossed the Orontes river a short distance north east of Antioch. The best description of the bridge in the Gesta is:

On the third day after we entered the city
Karbuqa's vanguard came up before the walls,
for his main army was encamped at the Orontes
bridge, where it stormed one of the towers on
the bridge and killed all the garrison in it.[29]

The Antioche provides additional details on the appearance and construction of the bridge itself:

A grant joie cevalce l'os qui Dex neneie.
Desci c'al pont de Fer ne s'aresterent mie,
La cort une eve rade qui porte grant navje,
Li pons fu a arvol, fais par grant segnorie,
As .ii. ciés a deus tors, cascune est bien garnie.[30]

Although of relatively minor significance, the detail provided is enlightening nonetheless.

In several instances, the Antioche recounts events that are not reported in any of the chronicles. The following account of the death of Sansadoine at the hands of Engerrand de Saint-Pol is one:

> Quant voient le bataille, cascuns Frans s'aira;
> Il crient: "Saint Sepucre! baron, or i parra
> Jamais n'ara onor qui bien ne le fera,
> A cascun otrions çou que il conquerra;
> Molt ert bien des barons qui sor paiens ferra."
> Engerrans de Saint Pol molt tost esperona,
> Trestoute le grant route de no jent trespassa
> Et le plus forte esciele des Turs ferir ala,
> L'espiel que il tenoit molt bien i emploia:
> Tres devant Garsion son neveu li tua.
> Ains que l'espius brisast .v. Turs en craventa,
> Puis a traite l'espee, del fuere le jeta,
> Bredalant consivi, la teste li coupa.
> Garsions d'Anthioce un fausart li lanca,
> Son ceval consivi, les flans li tresperca,
> Li destriers cai mors, Engerrans releva;
> Il a estraint l'espee et l'ecu enbraça,
> Paiens est corus seure, ainc nul n'en redouta,
> Al brant d'acier forbi molt grans cols lor dona;
> Mais se Jhesus n'en pense qui tot le mont forma,
> Trop est entre paiens, ja ne retornera.
> Quant no baron le voient, saciés molt lor pesa:
> "Saint Sepucre" escrierent et cascuns s'avança:
> S'Engerran ne reskeuent grant damage i ara.[31]

One may argue that with no corroborating accounts the accuracy or existence of such events may be questioned, particularly in an artistic account such as the Antioche, but this may be countered by the argument that without evidence to the contrary, the account can reasonably be regarded as factual, within the limits of its source.

Taken as a whole La Chanson d'Antioche must be regarded as a source of information on the events leading up to and surrounding the taking of Antioch by the western Crusaders. In many instances, the Antioche confirms the chronicle accounts; in many others, it surpasses them. One can only conclude that Richard the Pilgrim, author of the Antioche, was present during most if not all of the events which he describes in the poem, and that the poem itself is valuable as a source of historical information.

La Chanson de Jérusalem

La Chanson de Jérusalem is clearly modelled on the Antioche and purports to be a continuation of it, even though it appears to have been written some thirty years after the Antioche.[32] The poem is grounded in fact, but presents neither the amount nor accuracy of detail that the Antioche presents.

The goal of the Jérusalem is to recount the events between the arrival of the crusaders at Jerusalem and the victory at Ascalon over the Egyptian troops of El Afdal. This it accomplishes in the main but does so in a highly legendary fashion with feeble ties to the history of events as the chronicles portray them. Nowhere does the poem surpass the chronicle accounts in historical fact; only in its vivid descriptions of the geography traversed by the crusaders does the poem provide supplementary detail. The comprehensive and correctly-detailed description of geographical features demonstrates the familiarity of the author with the places he describes, the incredibility of other portions

of the poem notwithstanding. For example, the author of the poem knew very well the geography of the city of Jerusalem and area. In one instance, Peter the Hermit leads the Frankish knights to a point outside the city to show them places associated with events in the life of Christ:

Dans Perres li Hermites sor son asne monta:
Les barons et les princes avoc lui enmena,
Et le riche barnage, que Dex mult honera;
Et desor Josaphas le grant tertre puia.
Jherusalem la ville sorvit et esgarda;
As barons et as princes le dist et devisa:
"Dedens le sainte vile, biax Seignors, fu jo ja;
"Vés là mont Olivete, là ou Dex demanda
"L'asnesse et le faon et on li amena.
"Veés la portes oires, par ou Jhesus entra
"Dedens le sainte vile, et on li despoilla
"Et le vair et le gris et il desor monta.
"Li enfant as Juis grans torbes i ala;
"Ens en mileu des rues, sternebant in via
"Les rains des oliviers et de ramis palma.
"La chités fu plorans, la terre si ploia
"Sos les piés Jhesu Crist, ainc puis ne redrecha.
"Veés là le prétoire, là on le plaidoia,
"Ou Judas le vendi quand de lui se sevra.
".xxx. deniers em prist, ainc plus n'en demanda.
"Et veés là l'estaque, là ou on le lia,
"Et le leu ensement, là on le coloia:
"Veés monte Calvaire, là ou on le guia,
"Baron, à icel jor qu'on le crucefia,
"Quant Longis son costé de la lance nercha,
"Et li sans en corut de si qu'en Golgota.
"Veés là le sepulcre ou Joseph la posa;
"Li jentiex soldoihiers son seignor le rova:
".vii. ans l'avoit servi, ainc plus ne demanda:
"Che furent grans soldées que li rois li dona.
"Veés là le saint temple que Salemons fonda.
"Là érent li apostre, quant Dex les conforta,
"Et il dist Pax vobis, dont les enlumina.
"Veés la letanie ou il les doctrina
"De nonante-neuf langes que il lor enseigna.
"Vés là monte Syon, ilueques devia
"Le mere Jhesu Crist, quant del siecle passa,
"Et vés chi Josaphas, là ou on la porta;
"Si est la sepolture, là ou on la posa.
"Or deprions la Dame, si come Dex l'ama

"Quant ses beneois angles el chiel la convoia,
"Nos pechiés nos pardoinst li rois qui tot cria,
"Les grans et les petis com chascuns fais les a,"
"Amen. Dex! sire Pere!" chascun d'ax s'escria.[33]

Certainly the Gospel accounts include many of these details, but the understanding shown by the author of the various places in relation to each other and of the events which took place at each could not have been gleaned entirely from the scriptures.

The Jérusalem is perhaps most noteworthy for its breadth of discussion on the role of women in the crusade effort. Early in the poem, the author notes that women carried water to refresh the crusaders:

Or chevalcent ensanble et Franchois et Puillant,
Les lances sor les feutres, lor gonfanons pendant;
Et li cheval aloient moult grant fierté menant.
Les tentes et les tref remanoient séant.
S'esgardent li malade, qui i sont moult dolant;
Les dames portent l'iaue que Franc vont desirrant.[34]

The participation of the women, however, was not limited to tasks such as carrying water:

Moult fu grans li assaus et ruiste l'envaie,
Et defors et dedens muerent à grant haschie.
Les dames i estoient, cascune rebrachie;
Ainc n'i ot une seule n'ait sa robe escorchie;
Cascune portoit eue; che fu moult grans voisdie;
Et tote i ot de pieres avant sa mance enplie;
Cascune à son pooir à haute vois s'escrie:
"Qui mestier a de boire, por Deu si le nos die!
"Volentiers en aura el non sainte Marie;
"Or desfende cascuns et son cors et sa vie:
"Cil qui bien le fera, s'ert en la conpaignie
"El ciel avoec les angles en pardurable vie:
"Illuec aura cascuns sa pensée aconplie!"
E Dex! cele parole fist no gent rehaitie;

Saint Sepucre escrierent haut à une bondie.
Ainc desci au fossé n'i ot resne sachie;
Plus de .m. en i salent ensamble à une hie.[35]

While rejoicing over a victory and lamenting fallen comrades, the women of the camp mingled and participated fully:

Là oissiés tel joie, tel noise et tel tempier
Et de pitié plorer tant vaillant chevalier,
Et tante damoisele, tante franche moillier,
Maint prinche et maint baron par dolchor lermiier;
Dont veissiés le duc estraindre et enbrachier
El col et en la fache soventes fois baisier.
Les dames oissiés soventes fois huchier:
"Sire Dex! or avons auques no desirrier.
"Ahi Jherusalem! tant faites à proisjer!
"Damledex nos i doinst encore herbergier,
"Si com i puist son cors sacrer et prinseignier,
"Et le son saint sepulcre faire bel netiier;
"Si ferons nos encor, se Dex velt cex aidier,
"Qui ont le mer passée por le son cors vengier.
"Tos jors aurions les cuers à vos servir entjer."
Hé Dex! cest parole fist no gent renhaitier.[36]

Certainly the chroniclers speak periodically of women succoring wounded crusaders or even, at times, engaging in skirmishes at the side of their male counterparts, but no account is as detailed nor as extensive in this regard as is the Jérusalem.

La Chanson de Jérusalem is replete with accounts of fabulous events for which there is no corroborating evidence in the chronicles or elsewhere. This fact detracts somewhat from the reliability of the poem as a source, even though some of the accounts could be accepted at face value and judged on their own merits. The presence of many legendary accounts and descriptions of unsubstantiated supernatural events can only lead to the conclusion that the Jérusalem represents the

legend of crusade as it existed in the minds of the Franco-Syrians some four or five decades after the events which the poem describes.

This is not to imply that the inclusion of legendary and supernatural accounts automatically renders a story non-historical; indeed, the chroniclers on whom we rely for our basic knowledge of the Crusades all cite instances of supernatural intervention or other-worldly revelations which assist in the cause. These are wholly acceptable by medieval standards, and recognized by modern historians as indicative of the collective mentality of the people of the time.

The Jérusalem, based on historical events, contributes insights into the conditions of crusade and the lives of crusaders, both male and female. The poem likewise offers insights into how the Franco-Syrians viewed themselves and the crusade movement, even though much of that viewpoint consisted of the legend of crusade which developed after the fact of crusade. As a source of accurate historical fact, however, the Jérusalem is to be treated with caution.

Other Poems of Le Premier Cycle de la Croisade

The remainder of the poems of Le Premier Cycle de la Croisade hold little value in terms of strict historical veracity, although their value in terms of insights into the Franco-Syrian mind is comparable to that of the Jérusalem. Le Chevalier au Cygne and La Chanson de Godefroi de Bouillon were composed before the Third Crusade by Graindor de Douai, and were later inter-mixed with the history and legends of the "famille de Bouillon" by trouvères from northern France. A final version was

undertaken by a Bouillonais trouvère at the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century. This reviser attempted to make the legendary fit into the family history a little more tightly, with the effect of altering substantially any purely historical details that may have been original to the poems. La Chanson des Chétifs, as nearly as can be discerned, is the pure invention of the imagination of a trouvère, and follows no known historical account. The poem was inserted in the Cycle between the Chevalier au Cygne and La Chanson de Godefroi de Bouillon.[37]

Estoire de la Guerre Sainte

The Estoire de la Guerre Sainte is one of only two contemporary western histories of the Third Crusade and is the oldest historical work in the French language on the subject. The second is a non-rhymed anonymous chronicle entitled Itinerarium Peregrinorum Et Gesta Regis Ricardi (often referred to as Itinerarium Regis Ricardi), but it is overshadowed by the Estoire in both length and content.[38] Much of our knowledge of the Third Crusade comes from the poem. Richard Coeur-de-Lion took the cross in November of 1187; Ambroise completed the poem in 1195 or 1196, apparently having accompanied Richard for the duration of the campaign.

As no contemporary accounts of equal magnitude exist with which comparisons can be made, one can proceed on the tentative assumption that the information contained in the poem is accurate and trustworthy. An examination of the internal integrity of the poem, with a view to

demonstrating the care that Ambroise took in his work, largely bears out this working assumption.

Ambroise was present at and an eyewitness to many of the events he describes. Note the vivid description of the intricate floating towers built by the Pisans, and the defence by the Saracens of the Tower of Flies which was situated in the middle of the harbour of Acre:

Li Pisan qui en l'ost esteint
E gent qui de la [illegible] saveient
Firent un chastel sor gualees
E deus eschieles granz e liees;
Toz lor veissels de cuir covrirent,
E del chastel autretel firent;
La tur des Mosches asiegerent
E mult i trestrent e lancerent.
Cil de la tur se defendoient
Si bien que mult chier se vendoient,
E des gualees de la vile
S'en issi hors plus de deus mile
Sarazin guarni de bataille
Por aidier a l'autre chenaille;
Mais il traioient e lançouent
E de granz pierres lor jetouent,
Granz e pesanz, e dars aguz,
Brusoient lances e escuz.
Quant cil del chastel assailloient,
Cil a defendre ne faillouent.
La veissiez bien noz genz traire
E meint bel trait sor les murs traire;
La veissiex pilez pluveir
E Turs mucier par estoveir;
La veissiez proz genz osees
E assaillir par reposees.
Les eschieles furent dreciees
Contre la tur e adresciees
A grant force e a granz meschiefs.
Car l'en jetoit desor les chiefs
As cristiens quis i dresçouent
Grandismes fustz que il lançouent
Qu'il n'aloüent as coardant,
E s'en retornerent a tant
Tant que le chastel alumerent,
E cil s'en vindrent jus qui i erent,
E jetent feu grezeis ardant

A grant bataille combatu.
Mais mult ot ainz en la marine
Grant gwaive de gent sarazine.
Li chastels fud ars erralment
E les eschieils ensement
E li vessiel qui les porterent,
Dont li Turc se reconforterent;
Et quant il virent la desfaute
Lors ecrierent a voiz haute
E huerent la gent haie
L'ost qui a Deu iert en aïe.[39]

Ambroise's detailed descriptions appear throughout the poem and are not limited to events of major significance. Ambroise includes descriptions of many events which he simply found interesting (and amusing), exemplified by the following account of a sneak attack by a Turk upon a Christian knight who was attending to a call of nature:

E plusors choses aveneient.
Il avint que hors des fossez
S'iert uns chevalers adossez
Un jor a faire sa besoigne,
Si com il a chescun besoine.
Issi com il iert abeissiez
E a sa besoigne aaisiez,
Des Turs qui erent en l'anguarde,
Dont cil ne se perneit pas guarde,
S'en parti uns grant aleure;
Si fu vilainie e laidure
Qu'il velt al chevalier mal faire
Tant com il ert en tel affaire.
Il aveit l'anguarde esloignie
E veneit la lance esloignie
Al chevalier por lui oscire,
Quant cil de l'ost pristrent a dire:
"Fuiez, sire, fuiez, fuiez!"
Il se fud a paines dresciez,
Neporquant en piez se leva
E sa besoigne n'acheva.
Cil vint quant que chevals pot rendre,
Quil quida bien a tere estendre,
Mais, merci Deu, il i failli,
Car a la traverse sailli;

E si prist en ses mains deus pierres
(Orez com Deus est dreiz vengieres):
Si com li Turcs ot son tur feit
Por retorner a son forfeit,
E li chevalers l'avisa,
Sil feri com il devisa,
Enz el venur com il veneit,
D'une des pieres qu'il teneit
Desoz le chapel en la temple:
Cil chai morz en cel contemple.
Li chevalier prist le cheval,
Si traist la reigne contre val;
Si vit cil quil me reconta
Que li chevalers i monta
E s'en ala jusqu'a sa tente,
Sil fist guarder en bone atente.[40]

A second example of Ambroise's interest in the happenings of everyday life depicts heated arguments between a man and a woman which ultimately required royal intervention:

Si avint un jor c'une fame,
Que l'en dist que aveit non Ame,
Portoit par l'ost son pain a vendre:
Uns pelerins vit chaut e tendre
Le pain, e si en bargaigna,
E la feme se desdeigna
Del fuer por qu'il le requereit,
Si que par poi que nel fereit,
Tant ert ele iruse e desvee.
Eth vos la barate levee,
E tant que li burgeis se mistrent,
Le pelerin iloques pristrent,
Sil batirent e chevelerent,
E laidement le demenerent.
Al rei Richard vint la clamor:
Cil lor requist pais e amor;
Pais entr'els quist e porchaça
E ses genz ariere chaça.
Mais diables, qui par nature
Het pais sor tote creature,
Resmut el demain la meslee
Ki a meschief fu desmellee.
E li dou rei erent ensemble
A un parlement, ço me semble,

E les justises de Sezile
E des hauz homes de la vile;
Illoc parloent de pais faire.
Eth vos endreit en cel afaire,
Issi com li dou rei parloent
De la pais que faire quidoent,
La novele qui fud saillie
Que nostre gent ert assaillie,
E vindrent par deus foiz message
Que l'om en feseit grant damage;
E li tierz mes qui vint aprés
Dist al rei: "Ci ad male pes,
"Quand li home de ceste terre
"Ocient les genz de Engletere
"Dedenz e dehors la citié."
Si fud donques la verité
Que li Lungebard s'en partirent.
Que as reis distrent, si mentirent,
Que ço iert por la tençon desfaire,
E ço n'esteit fors por mal faire.
Jordans del Pin e Marguariz,
A cui toz mals seit eschariz,
Cil dou bracerent la braçaille
Del mal e furent començaille.
Le rei de France esteit illoeques
E li reis d'Engletere oveques,
Si fud o lui quil reconta.
Li reis d'Engleterre monta,
Qui la ala por departir
La mellee, mais al partir
De granz vilainies li distrent
Cil de la vile e lui mesdistrent;
E li reis se curut armer,
E les fist par terre e par mer
Assaillir tut a la rounde,
Ke tel gerrier n'aveit el monde.[41]

Once again it becomes clear that the role of women on crusade was not limited to the stereotypical duties of cooking, cleaning, and nursing the wounded. Ambroise points out that the women were as committed and active as the men in the affairs of crusade, and in just as much danger of meeting death:

Issi com li tens aveneient,
E plusors choses aveneient.
Une foiz ravint une affaire
Dont l'em doit bien parole faire.
Meintes genz as murs assaillouent,
E meintes feiz s'en deffaillouent;
Tels i aveit qui ne finouent
De pieres coillir qu'il portouent,
E li baron a lor destriers
I portouent e as somers,
E meinte femme i reporta,
Qui en portant s'i deporta.
Entre les autres i portot
Une qui mult s'i deportot:
Uns Sarazins quil defendeit
Vit que cele feme entendeit
Al fes de son col deschargier;
Si com el volt en sus marchier,
Cil treist a lui, si la feri,
E la femme a terre chai,
Qui fud ferue mortelment;
E tud li poeples eralment
Vint entor la femme acorant,
Qui se detortoit en morant.
Sis mariz la veneit poroques,
Mais el preia as genz illoques,
As prodes homes e as dames,
Que li por Deu e por lor almes
Feissent de son cors atrait
Al fossé ou ele avoit trait,
Car ne volent que sa charoine
Fust meis mise en altre besoine.
Ele se faiseit ja porter,
Quant Deus en fist l'anme porter;
E tel femme, co dil l'estoire,
Deit chesçons aveir en memoire.[42]

The women and girls nonetheless tended to many of the support duties, as noted in this passage:

Quant l'ost errot tote sa voie,
La veissiez, si Deu me voie,
Vallez e dames e puceles
Od biaus pichiers e od orceles
E od seilles e od bacins
L'eve porter as pelerins;
Dreit al chemin a l'ost venoient,

Les bacins en lor mains tenoient
E disoient: "Deus, rois celestre,
"Dont vienent tant genz? que puet estre?
"U furent nees tels joventes?
"Veez quels faces si roventes!
"Tant sunt ore trisles lor meres,
"E lor parenz, lor filz, lor freres,
"Lor amis, lor apartenanz,
"Dont jo voi ci tanz de venanz!"
L'ost commandoient a Deu tote
E ploroient après la rote.
Lors prierent escordement
A Deu por els e dolcement
Qu'il les menast a son servise
E ramenast a sa devise.
Errant vindrent a la Deu grace,
Qui bien lor fist e bien lor face,
Od grant joie et od grant leesce,
E sanz coruz e sanz tristesce
E sanz eschar e sanz rampone,
Tot droit a Leons sor le Rogne.[43]

Although a great deal of Ambroise's narrative is concerned with the common people, he also spends considerable effort in describing the actions of the crusade leaders and the Saracen defenders. At times he even recounts the conversations between the various leaders, including Saladin. He was likely present to witness first-hand many of these conversations; undoubtedly some of them, particularly those of Saladin with his own men, were created by Ambroise after having analysed the events as they happened. The following passage demonstrates one such conversation:

Salahadins en itel ire
Com vos m'avez ci oï dire
S'apela Safadin son frere,
Si dist: "Ore voil qu'il i pere
"Com jo ai en mes genz grant fiance.
"Montez e alez sanz dotance,
"Feites mei Eschalone abatre;
"Nos n'avoms mestier de combatre;

"Abatez la citié de Guadres,
"E seit debrisiee com madres;
"Mais le Daron faites tenir,
"Par ont mes genz peussent venir:
"Abatez mei la Gualatie,
"Que Franc n'i facent aatie:
"E faites abatre le Fier,
"Qu'il ne s'i peussent alier;
"Abatez mei la Blanche Guarde,
"Que nos n'aioms par dela guarde;
"Abatez Jaffe e cel mult bien,
"Casel des Plains, Casel Maien;
"Abatez moi Seint Jorge, Rames;
"La grant citié que nos trovames,
"Bel Mont de la montaine en halt,
"Le Thoron, le Chastel Ernald
"Et Bel Veeir e Mirabel;
"Abatez le, car mei es bel,
"E les chastels de la montaine,
"Que ja un entier ne remaine,
"Chastel ne casel ne citié,
"Que tut ne seit agraventé,
"Fors le Crac e Jerusalem:
"Si le voit, si le fera l'em."
Salahadins l'ad comandé,
E cil ad congié demandé,
Qui bien set son comandement.[44]

In two instances in the Estoire, Ambroise appears to have included questionable items for the sake of rhyming the verses. In one instance, Ambroise notes Rhodes as the birthplace of Herod, a fact unsubstantiated anywhere;[45] in the second, Ambroise associates the well-known historical figure, Andrew of Chauvigni, with the Abbey of Cluny, a bit of information which is curiously unreported elsewhere.[46] The Rhodes/Herod and Chauvigni/Cluny coupling produces the rhythmic couplet which Ambroise used throughout the poem. Although the supposed facts cannot be disproved, it appears as though poetic license may have overshadowed strict reporting of fact.

Ambroise often makes certain to tell the reader when he is being

exceptionally accurate, periodically using phrases to the effect of: "this I know without any error."[47] Elsewhere, he states that he can offer no guarantee on the accuracy of information that he provides from outside his own experience.[48] By so doing, Ambroise himself assists in determining the credibility of his own account.

La Chanson d'Aspremont

La Chanson d'Aspremont has no historical basis that is immediately apparent. The poem purports to be an account of a battle in Calabria, southern Italy, between Charlemagne and Saracen invaders. Charlemagne is joined by his ally, Girard de Frate, the Duke of Bourgogne, Auvergne, and Cosenza; the Saracen armies are led by Agoland and his son Eaumont. Charlemagne and his armies, supported by the Pope and confident in the righteousness of their Christian cause, defeat first the armies of Eaumont and then those of his father.

Written between 1177 and 1190, the poem is some four centuries removed from the battles which it purports to describe and attempts in its story to set the stage for the Roland. A series of studies has attempted to trace the roots of the poem to determine whether there are, as with most legendary pieces, historical elements that gave rise to the poem. Several scholars have put forward differing theories, but none has been substantiated.[49] It is known that neither Charlemagne nor any of his immediate successors set foot in Calabria, nor did the Emperor ever fight anyone by the name of Agoland, nor any other Saracen king. Nonetheless, the author of the poem in several places offers details of

geography that are quite accurate, indicating that he had likely visited Calabria or was at least familiar with the terrain.[50] He had perhaps travelled through the region and was prompted to use it as the setting for his poem. As for the events that are described, there is little evidence of any ties to the facts of history. It would appear as though the poem were composed at the time of the Third Crusade as a form of encouragement for would-be crusaders.[51]

La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise

La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise contains a considerable amount of useful historical fact. The Albigeoise is for the most part an eyewitness account by Guillaume de Tudela of the Albigensian Crusade. William relates in the body of the poem itself important details of its composition:

> Senhors, oimais s'esforsan li vers de la chanso
> Que fon ben comenseia l'an de la encarnatio
> Del Senhor Jhesu Crist, ses mot de mentizo,
> C'avia .M.CC.e.X ans que venc en est mon
> E si fo lan e mai can floricho l boicho.
> Maestre Guilhelms la fist a Montalba on fo.[52]

Such details are an immense aid in assessing the truth of supposed fact included in the poem by making possible its comparison with other contemporary accounts of the Crusade. Of the contemporary records, two are regarded as the most complete chronicle accounts: the Chronique, written between 1249 and 1273 by Guillaume de Puylaurens; and the Historia Albigensis, written during the time of the Crusade itself by

Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay, a nephew of the Abbot of Citeaux, who later became the Bishop of Carcassonne. The latter is the more authoritative account of the two; it is almost certain that Guillaume de Puylaurens used both the Historia Albigensis and La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise in the preparation of his Chronique.[53]

Guillaume de Tudela wrote an account that is a fairly complete day-to-day, journalistic record of the time and events. Unlike many other poets, he usually distinguishes between his eyewitness experiences and the events at which he was not present. For example, after having listed all present at the encampment of the crusaders in the fall of 1209 with Simon de Montfort in the Carcassais and Bitterois mountains, Guillaume states:

> S'ieu fossa ab lor ni ls conogues ni ls vis,
> Ni anessa ab lor pel pais c'an comquis,
> Plus rics ne fora l libres, ma fe vos en plevis,
> E mielher la cansos.[54]

Guillaume is also fairly fastidious in crediting specific individuals who supplied him with information on events to which he was not an eyewitness. He cites as his informants: Pons de Mela, the envoy of the King of Navarre to the Pope in 1209, from whom he obtained details of events at Rome;[55] an unnamed priest, who provided details of a council held by the Count of Beziers;[56] Izarn the Archdeacon of Vielmurois, who supplied details on the heretics of the Casses;[57] a bailiff and provost, both unnamed, of Count Baudouin, who supplied details on the siege of Moissac;[58] and a man Guillaume calls "maitre Nicolas".[59] We are left to assume that the rest of the poem was based on Guilluame's own

experience.

Unlike his precision in other areas, Guillaume's dating of events is often imprecise. He is content at times, in describing when an event took place, to mention only a month or simply a day of an unspecified week, or that it happened around the time of a certain religious festival or holiday. For example, the following passage mentions only the month of August as the time of arrival of the army of Peter II of Aragon at Carcassone:

> So fo en aquel mes c'om apela aost
> Que fo a Carcassona trastot entorn la ost.
> Lo reis Peyr' d'Arago i es venguts mot tost,
> Ab lui cent cavaliers qu'amena a son cost.[60]

Such imprecision normally would be immaterial where the date is given by or deducible from other sources; in the above instance, however, neither the Historia nor the Chronique mentions Peter's involvement at the siege of Carcassonne, although his involvement is entirely possible. While regretting the occasional lack of detail in the Chanson, one can be grateful for facts provided that are not recorded elsewhere.

A second major detail provided by the Chanson which the chronicles fail to report is the joining of the Crusade by an army from the Agen area, among whom are listed several notable characters:

> Autra ost de crozatz venc de ves Agenes,
> Mas no es pas tan grans co sela dels Frances;
> E mogron de lor terra abans denant un mes.
> Aqui es lo coms Guis, us Alverhas, cortes,
> E l vescoms de Torena, quis n'es fort entremes,
> L'Ivesque de Limotges e cel de Bazades,

E lo bos arsevesques qui es de Bordales,
L'evesques de Caortz e cel de Agenes
Bertran de Cardelhac e cel de Gordones,
Ratiers de Castelnou, ab tot Caersines.
Cest prezen Pegua Rocha, que no i troban defes,
Et fonderon Gontaut e Tonencs an mal mes;
Mas Cassanhols es fortz, per que no l'agron ges
E per la garnizo que l'a mot ben defes;
Que s mes dins de Gascos fortment leugiers de pes
Que son bon dardasier.[61]

The chronology of the poem accords well with that of the chronicle accounts, except in one case: Guillaume places the Council at Saint-Gilles after the taking of Termes, whereas other accounts have the order of the two events reversed. The council actually took place in July of 1210, whereas the siege of Termes began, at the earliest, in late July and lasted until 23 November of the same year.[62]

Only one other error in fact appears in the text of the Albigeoise: Guillaume cites Arles as the location of a council held in February, 1211, a council which by Guillaume's own description was in fact the one held at Montpellier in February, 1211. In all other details, La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise agrees with the chronicle accounts of the Crusade and seems therefore to be a reasonably accurate history of the events it describes.

As with both the Jérusalem and the Estoire, the Albigeoise is valuable for the insights it offers into the conditions endured by crusaders. The following passage indicates the desperation exhibited by some due to a lack of fresh water:

La ost estet entorn entro foron nou mes,
Que l'aiga lor failhi, que resecada es;

Vi avian asatz a dos mes o a tres,
Mas nulhs hom senes aiga no cug viure pogues.
Pois plog una gran ploja, si m'ajud Dieu ni fes,
E venc un grans diluvis, de que lor es mal pres:
En tonas e en vaisels en an ilh asatz mes.
De cela aiga prestiron e meiren els conres:
Tals menazos los pres negus no sab on s'es.
Coselh an pres mest lor, que cascus s'en fuisses
En abans que morisson en aisi descofes.
Las domnas del castel an sus el dompnho mes;
Cant venc la noit escura, que anc no'n saub res,
Ichiron del castel senes autre arnes
Que, si no son diners, no cug nulhs ne traiches.[64]

Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay mentions the lack of water experienced by the people but does not describe the maladies and desperation caused by it,[65] and the Chrônique omits the topic entirely.

Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne

Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne is a poem based in legend rather than fact. As previously noted, Charlemagne did not embark on either a pilgrimage or a crusade to either Jerusalem or Constantinople. The author of the poem did not invent the legend but was only giving a new form to a tradition that was widespread by the end of the tenth century. Charlemagne's interest in the Holy Land was nonetheless a well known fact; indeed, the Patriarch of Jerusalem had sent him certain relics of the Holy Sepulchre in 799 and by a second embassy in 800, as an indication that he accepted Charlemagne as his suzerain. The presence of obscure relics in many of the churches and monasteries in France subsequent to Charlemagne's reign required explanation; one well-argued theory is that the imagination of the people attributed the existence of

their relics to none other than the Emperor who, as the great protector of the Holy Land, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to gather the relics himself. The Pèlerinage became a vehicle which supported this popular belief.[66]

The Pèlerinage is usually included in the literary Geste du Roi cycle, but it is quite unlike the Roland. While the Roland has a quasi-historical basis, the Pèlerinage has none that has been substantiated, excepting--as with several other poems examined here--some accurate details of geography and architecture which indicate a first-hand familiarity by the author with the settings in which the poem is placed. The feature of the Pèlerinage which most distinguishes it from the Roland and other medieval epics is its tone and treatment of its subject. Scholars do not agree on the intent of the poem; most agree, however, that it is a jocular poem based loosely on the heroic literary tradition; and that it treats its subject lightly and even maliciously at times, with a main purpose of light-hearted entertainment. An example follows:

> Trés beau est le présent qu'y offre le roi Charles!
> Il entra dans une église voutée de marbre polychrome.
> Là se trouve un autel de Sainte Patenotre:
> Dieu y celebra la messe, et aussi les apotres;
> d'ailleurs les douze sièges y sont encore tous,
> et le treizième au milieu, solide et fermenent assemblé
> Quand Charles y entra, son coeur s'emplit de joie;
> voyant le siège, il s'en approcha.
> L'empereur s'assit et se reposa un instant;
> les douze pairs s'assirent sur les autres sièges
> tout autour de lui:
> personne auparavant ne s'y était assis et personne
> ne s'y est assis depuis lors.

La grande beauté du lieu rejouit fort le roi Charles.
Il vit l'église ornéee de peintures aux couleurs éclantantes:
images de martyrs, de vierges et de grandes figures en majesté,
et les cours de la lune et les fêtes annuelles;
et il vit couler les eaux lustrales, et les poissons dans la mer.
Le visage de Charles était hautain et il tenait la tête levée
Un Juif entra, qui avait tout observé attentivement.
Quand il vit le roi Charles, il se mit a trembler:
son visage était si hautain qu'il n'osa le regarder;
pour un peu il tomberait; il a pris la fuite
et monte d'une traite tous les degrés de marbre.
Il vint au patriarche et se mit a lui parler:
"Seigneur, allez à l'église appreter les fonts baptismaux!
Je vais me faire présenter et baptiser sur-le-champ!
Je viens de voir entrer dans l'église douze comtes et avec eux un treizième - jamais je n'ai vu d'homme aussi beau!
A mon avis, c'est Dieu en personne:
Lui et les douze apotres viennent vous faire visite!"
Quand le patriarche l'entend, il va se vetir dignement
puis, par la ville, il convoque les clercs dans leurs simple aubes
et leur ordonne de ses vetir et d'endosser les chapes.
En grand cortège, il s'en est allé vers le roi.

L'empereur le vit et se leva pour venir a sa rencontre,
il se découvrit et lui fit un profond salut.
Ils s'embarassent et s'informent.
Le partiarche dit: "ou etes vous né, seigneur?
Jamais personne n'osa entrer dans cette église
si ce n'est sur mon ordre ou a ma demande."
"Seigneur, je m'appelle Charles et je suis né en France."[67]

At least two other incidents in the poem of similar nature contain the same comic tone and demonstrate the entertainment value of the piece.[68] As a source of factual information, the poem makes little contribution and must be treated cautiously.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE POEMS

Much study has been devoted to the development of the idea of Crusade.[69] It can safely be said that before the time of the First Crusade, the idea and ideal of crusade were present and developing; time was the evolutionary factor, tempered by the actual experience of crusade subsequent to 1095. La Chanson de Roland contains many ideas and statements that influenced actual crusading endeavors. In light of the relatively early date of composition of the poem, this is the greatest contribution of the Roland in relation to the Crusades: a fairly accurate portrayal is given of how western Christians viewed Moslems and other non-Christians and acted towards them. As well, it gives an insight into how western Christians regarded themselves, their religion and their life in general in relation to other nations and religions.

The Pèlerinage is particularly enlightening in revealing the view of the Franks of themselves in relation to fellow Christians such as the Greeks as well as in relation to non-Christians such as Jews and Moslems. The argument has been advanced that the Pèlerinage does not accurately reflect the life of the time, since the subject has no basis in reality and was intended purely as entertainment. Indeed, the commentator J. Horrent is emphatic on the point:

> Le poème est comique et non satirique. Le poète a les yeux tournés vers l'orient plutôt que vers l'ouest celtique. Il prend le contrepied des gestes héroiques et des croisades militaires en magnifiant en triomphe pacifique et un pèlerinage

[illegible]orieux ... Son évocation du monde oriental [illegible]sciemment fantaisiste, elle transporte son public hors de la réalité courante et transcende toute situation politique.[70]

The point is worth considering, for the Pèlerinage appears to be nothing more than a delightfully mischievous piece of poetry designed purely for entertainment purposes. However, even though the author of this and other poems did not give us totally accurate historical detail, his poetic world and his view of it should not be considered to be a total fantasy, as Horrent would suggest them to be. Undoubtedly, behind the mischief, behind the fantasy, behind the mythical and the imaginary elements, are details of events and icons and images that stirred the poet to commit to paper those events, images and personages, whether imaginary or real, that constituted part of his life. These details are a valuable aid in understanding the popular mind or mentality of his era, and are valuable in revealing specific characteristics of medieval society. The poets were steering a middle course between fact and fantasy, their work reflecting their perceptions of the world either as it was, as they thought it was or as they thought it should be. In any case, we come to know that world better by attempting to understand the poet's perception of his world and his motivation for creating his poems.

In La Chanson d'Antioche and other poems which follow in its cycle, aspects of medieval society are depicted in various ways, each dependent upon the time sequence followed or influenced by events at the time of the creation of the poem. The earlier poems in the cycle were written largely in praise of crusade, depicting the righteousness of battling the heathen and the rewards associated with spreading the Christian faith, by

force or otherwise. Later poems, after the shock and disillusionment of failure associated with the Second and subsequent Crusades, began to deal less with religion and the idea of holy war, and largely took up the theme of individual knights fighting for the honour of their religion, name and country. Heroes appear frequently in these later poems as heroes of defeat, possibly as a result of the many knights inexplicably defeated or killed on crusade, for to die fighting, especially on crusade, was to imitate the death and suffering of Christ. Glory and salvation were thus won, martyrdom being the true reward even though the particular crusade itself may not have been successful. It appears that the attempt was to portray success, in some form, in the face of overall failure.

The message of the later poems turned from praising crusade itself to praising the ideals of crusade or the qualities that the ideals implied. When the crusades themselves seemed to be largely unsuccessful, the poems acted as encouragement to the unwilling or the disillusioned to carry on, or at least not to abandon the ideals even if active participation did not happen. The popular image of crusade as a whole was being shaped first by the events of the time and then by the poetic interpretation of these events.

Although the trouvères responsible for the poems may not have accurately reflected history, they nonetheless attempted to convey messages about their world that were important to them. Richard the Pilgrim, author of the Antioche, never painted any pictures that would discredit in any way the crusade leaders whom he so admired, nor does he

or negative actions undertaken by some less-than-scrupulous crusaders; a sort of patriotic emotion keeps those details from us, and he attempts to lift the reader up to the view that he held of these great people. Emotional though it may have been, the patriotism betrays how Richard functioned in his world.

The poet Ambroise in the Estoire de la Guerre Sainte provides "one of the most significant documents extant in revealing the mind and spirit of the Crusaders."[71] The document is thus recognized for the indirect history and knowledge that the unveiling of the crusading mind and spirit reveals, in addition to its use as a factual source. Similarly, the interest in La Chanson d'Antioche, because of its historical and factual information, is primarily in the historical-epic story that it tells and in the details provided on the life of the crusaders and society of the time. The interest in La Chanson de Jérusalem or La Chanson des Chétifs or any of the other "fabulous" poems that may lack historical detail, is in the indirect knowledge that they provide on the life and mentality of the Franco-Syrian crusader:

> Au point de vue historique, les poèmes que nous avons étudiés nous apportent peu de renseignements nouveaux sur les grands évenements de la Croisade. Un seul, la Chanson d'Antioche, par la date de sa composition, par les informations précises de l'auteur ... merite de prendre place parmi les documents historique .... Quant aux autres parties de la légende, sans en excepter la Chanson de Jérusalem, il est inutile d'y chercher de faits authentiques dont les trouvères se souciaient médiocrement; mais on y peut saisir le reflet des passions, des idées, des croyances, en un mot, de la vie contemporaine.[72]

NOTES - POEMS AS SOURCES

1. Paulin Paris, XXXI, lines 709-722.

2. Fulcher of Chartres (trans. Frances Rita Ryan; ed. Harold S. Fink), A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095-1127 (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 61. Hereafter cited as "Fulcher".

3. Hans Eberhard Mayer (trans. John Gillingham), The Crusades (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 2.

4. Fulcher, VIII, p. 78.

5. Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), pp. 11-12. Hereafter cited as Gesta.

6. Suzanne Duparc-Quioc, La Chanson d'Antioche (Paris: Geuthner, 1977), laisse XXXVIII, lines 857-865, p. 56. Hereafter cited as Antioche.

7. See Steven Runciman, A History of the Crusades (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978) I, 169. Runciman here states that "the actual size of the crusading armies can only be conjectured", and estimates that between 60,000 and 100,000 persons entered the Empire between the summer of 1096 and the spring of 1097.

8. Gesta, p. 3.

9. Runciman, I, 149.

10. Antioche, laisse L, lines 1152-1194, pp. 68-71.

11. Fulcher, IX, 4, p. 80 and X, 1, p. 81.

12. Raymond D'Aguilers (trans. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill) Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), p. 25. Hereafter cited as Raymond D'Aguilers.

13. Gesta, pp. 15-16.

14. See Fulcher, X, 1-3, p. 81. Cf. Runciman, I, p. 178.

15. Antioche, laisse XCIX, lines 2142-2152, pp. 121-122.

16. See Gesta, p. 19.

17. Antioche, laisse CV, lines 2259-2263, pp. 128-129.

18. Laisse CVII, lines 2288-2298, p. 131.

19. Fulcher, XIV, 3, p. 84.

20. Gesta, pp. 24-25.

21. Antioche, laisses CVI-CVIII, lines 2254-2328, pp. 128-133.

22. Runciman estimates Tancred's forces at 100 knights and 200 infantrymen. See Runciman, I, p. 197.

23. Antioche, laisses CIX-CX, lines 2329-2365, pp. 133-135.

24. Laisse CX, [illegible]21, pp. 136-138.

25. Fulcher, XXV, [illegible]-113.

26. See Raymond D[illegible]s, p. 81 and Gesta, p. 80.

27. Antioche, laisses CLXXIV-CLXXV, lines 4039-4093, pp. 217-220.

28. Laisse CCLX, lines 6310-6332, pp. 314-315.

29. Gesta, p. 50.

30. Antioche, laisse CXVII, lines 2563-2567, pp. 147-148.

31. Laisse CCLXI, lines 6352-6375, pp. 315-316.

32. See note 3, Chapter 3, p. 16.

33. Jérusalem, lines 842-885, pp. 37-38. The underlined words in this passage are italicized in the edition cited.

34. Lines 224-229, p. 11.

35. Lines 4214-4230, p. 169. See also lines 3006-3050, pp. 123-124.

36. Lines 2272-2287, p. 92.

37. Hatem, p. 375.

38. See Runciman, II, 478-485.

39. Ambroise (Ed. G. Paris), L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte (Paris: Imprimérie Nationale, 1897), lines 3771-3818, pp. 101-102. Hereafter cited as Ambroise (Paris).

40. Lines 3584-3624, pp. 96-97.

41. Lines 627-686, pp. 18-19.

42. Lines 3626-3660, pp. 97-98.

43. Lines 385-412, pp. 11-12.

44. Lines 6835--6869, p. 183.

45. Lines 1285-1286, p. 35. Cf. Ambroise (Edward Noble Stone, translator), Three Old French Chronicles of the Crusades (Seattle: University of Washington, 1939), p. 27, laisse XV. Hereafter cited as Ambroise (Stone).

46. Ambroise (Paris), lines 11877-11878, p. 318; Cf. Ambroise (Stone), laisse LX, p. 154, and footnote.

47. Ambroise (Paris), line 6012, p. 160.

48. Lines 4179-4202, p. 112.

49. For a comprehensive discussion of these theories, see Roelof Van Waard, Etudes sur l'Origine et la Formation de la Chanson d'Aspremont (Groningue: Societe Anonyme d'Editions, 1937), pp. 24-69.

50. Pp. 19-20; Cf. Brandin, I, verses 2079-2094, pp. 67-68.

51. See discussion in the following chapter on the Aspremont as a propaganda device.

52. Eugène Martin-Chabot (trans.), La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise (Paris: Société d'Edition "Les Belles Lettres", 1960), laisse 9, lines 21-27, p. 28. Hereafter cited as Albigeoise.

53. Guillaume De Puylaurens (Ed., Trans. Jean Duvernoy), Chronique (Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1976), p. 8.

54. Albigeoise, laisse 36, lines 21-24, p. 92.

55. Laisse 5, line 16, p. 18.

56. Laisse 32, line 11, p. 80.

57. Laisse 84, lines 12-13, pp. 200.

58. Laisse 119, line 5, p. 266.

59. Laisse 99, line 7, p. 228.

60. Laisse 26, lines 1-4, p. 68.

61. Laisse 13, lines 22-37, pp. 38-40. See also laisse 14.

62. Laisse 58, lines 9-12, pp. 140-143. Cf. Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay, Historia Albigensis (Paris: J. Vrin, 1951), pp. 69-80. The Chronique mentions neither the siege of Jerusalem nor the Council of St. Gilles. Hereafter cited as Historia Albigensis.

63. Albigeoise, laisse 59, lines 1-8, pp. 144-146.

64. Laisse 57, lines 3-17, p. 138.

65. Historia Albigensis, pp. 75-76.

66. De Riquer, p. 197. Cf. Jules Coulet, Etudes sur l'Ancien Poème Français du Voyage de Charlemagne en Orient (Montpellier: Libraires de l'Université, 1907), pp. 74-77. Cf. also Jean-Louis G. Picherit, The Journey of Charlemagne to Jerusalem and Constantinople (Birmingham, Ala: Summa, 1984), pp. iv-vi.

67. Tyssens, pp. 4-5.

68. See the opening scene, lines 13-38, and the incident of the boasts, lines 453-617, as other examples; Tyssens, pp. 1-2 and pp. 15-21, respectively.

69. For detailed discussions of the origins and development of the crusade idea and ideal, see P. Alphandéry, La Chrétienté et l'Idée de Croisade (Paris: Albin Michel, 1954), 2 volumes. See also E.O. Blake, "The Formation of the Crusade Idea", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XXI: 1 (January 1970). See also Carl Erdmann (trans. by M.W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart), The Origin of the Idea of Crusade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

70. Jules Horrent, Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne: Essai d'Explication Littéraire avec des notes de Critique Textuelle (Paris: Société d'Edition "Les Belles Lettres", 1961), pp. 125-126.

71. Ambroise (LaMonte and Hubert), p. 27.

72. Pigeonneau, pp. 264-265.

VI. HISTORICAL DISTORTIONS AND POEMS AS PROPAGANDA

Many of the poems under study contain some factual historical information; others do not, are highly legendary and fabulous in content and yet present themselves as serious histories of past events. Given the contradiction, one might well ask what impetus may have prompted a medieval author to create a poem that is only loosely based on fact but which is presented to the public as factual. The vernacular literature of the time reflected this tendency. The purpose here is to discuss the reasons for the distortion of factual history in a poem, or for the creation of a fabulous poem, if indeed there are reasons beyond those of pure entertainment and artistry.

PRO-CRUSADE DISTORTIONS

La Chanson de Jérusalem

Of all figures associated with the crusading ideal, the most widely known to the popular mind is St. George. Throughout the Christian world the image of Saint George appears in art and icons, and the story of Saint George slaying the Dragon is to this day a popular story. Saint George, the patron saint of equestrian knights, became the official

patron saint of England and a symbol for all Christians engaged in war with the Anti-Christ.

Legend tells that Saint George, in the third century, suffered martyrdom at Lydda, in Palestine, while on a pilgrimage of sorts. In honour of him, a church was erected bearing his name and housing, some believe, his entombed mortal remains. The legend became very widespread during the crusades; many soldiers and armies invoked his blessings as they entered battle.

George appears as a prominent player in La Chanson de Jérusalem. The poem begins at the arrival of the crusaders outside Jerusalem, after having already conquered both Ramleh and Lydda. Almost immediately, the Jérusalem departs from and distorts the history of the crusade as told by the chroniclers. Bohemond, according to the chronicle accounts, had no part in the siege of Jerusalem, returning instead to Antioch after accompanying the armies of Godfrey to Lattaquieh. Bohemond, according to the Jérusalem, felt badly about this to the point of losing sleep over the matter. One sleepless midnight he arose, called his ten thousand men to arms, and departed to wage war on the Saracens, hoping to expiate the error of his absente at Jerusalem. His exploits were numerous, but he soon found himself in danger of defeat by the formidable armies of the enemy. En route to the castle of La Mahomerie, north of Jerusalem where the armies of Raymond were camped, Bohemond decided, along with Tancred who was in his company on the venture, to stop at Lydda (also known as Saint George of Ramleh and St. George of Lydda, the two cities lying only a mile apart). The purpose of this

visit to Lydda was to invoke the blessings of St. George in his own cathedral:

> A St. Joire de Rames parvinrent no baron,
> Buiemons et Tangrés et tot si compaignon,
> A trestote la proie dont il i a foison.
> Il descendent à pié et font lor oraison
> Et batent lor poitrines par grant afflicion;
> Reclament Damledeu et son saintisme non,
> Et le Baron St. Pierre, St. Joirne le prodon,
> Que de tos lor pechiés lor face le pardon.[1]

Saint George responds at the head of armies of angels and saints, leading the crusaders to glorious victories over the astounded and demoralized Saracen armies. Bohemond praises Saint George, and the story continues with Saint George producing a variety of miracles in support of the crusaders, and in particular in support of Bohemond. As noted previously, belief in the supernatural was a normal and accepted part of life, and the inclusion in this instance of numerous miraculous events is not regarded as the distortion of history. The factual distortion is evident even before the intervention of St. George in that from other more credible sources there is good reason to believe that Bohemond had no part in the siege of Jerusalem at all.

Yet another distortion of the facts occurs in what is quite clearly a description of the Battle of Ascalon, but which, in the Jérusalem, takes place not at Ascalon but on the plain of Ramleh where Saint George is again said to have led the Christian armies in a trouncing of the Saracen troops, who call in vain on Mohammed to come to their aid. Ramleh is some twenty-five miles northeast of Ascalon, a distance deemed too

great for the poet to have merely made a mistake in location. The distortion was deliberate and appears to have been done to laud Saint George and magnify his association with Ramleh-Lydda. To laud Saint George was to laud crusade, and the legend and stories of his exploits, such as are found in the Jérusalem, undoubtedly served to inspire crusade campaigns, to glorify Christianity, and to endear Saint George to the hearts of crusaders.

To show a bias towards a favoured crusading leader (or to show a dislike of another) was not uncommon in the literature of the time. Indeed, each of the chroniclers exhibits favouritism towards his respective leader: the anonymous Gesta is pro-Bohemond, Fulcher favours Baldwin, and Raymond d'Aguilers applauds Count Raymond IV of Toulouse. Each shaped his history to reflect his personal bias.

The Jérusalem exhibits a bias as well. Bohemond appears prominently in events throughout the poem and appears frequently in the company of St. George. Most notably the Jérusalem tells of Bohemond's presence at the battle of Jerusalem when the chronicle accounts unanimously agree that he was not present. The poet's purpose in distorting the facts appears to result from his desire to magnify Bohemond's role in the First Crusade and to redeem him from the perceived dishonour of his absence when Jerusalem fell. The reason that the poet esteemed the Norman leader so highly is unknown; perhaps the author was himself of Norman descent;[2] or perhaps the figure of Bohemond lent itself more readily, in the mind of the author, to a heroic tale; or perhaps the poet was from Antioch and knew Bohemond well.

La Chanson d'Aspremont

As discussed previously, the legends of Charlemagne were firmly established by the beginning of the eleventh century. There was undoubtedly a long period of oral transmission of the legends, one author stating that "la fin de l'empire carolingien coincide avec la naissance de la légende de Charlemagne."[3]

Part of the legend of Charlemagne as defender of imperial territories took the emperor into Italy in defence of these lands (and to various other quarters that may have been threatened by invaders). The Roland itself helped to foster this legend:

> Dist Blancandrins: "Merveilus hom est Charles,
> Ki cunquist Puille e trestute Calabre."[4]

And Roland himself, as he lies dying, reminisces with his sword Durendal:

> E! Durendal, cum es bele e clere e blanche!
> .....
> Si l'en cunquis Provence e Equitaigne
> E Lumbardie e trestute Romaine.
> Jo l'en cunquis Baiver e tute Flandres
> E Burguigne e trestute Puillanie.[5]

These verses and others provided ample precedent for portraying Charlemagne as either having been on campaign in Italy or having sent his noble knights there to secure the lands. La Chanson d'Aspremont grew from the same tradition.

A considerable amount of study has gone into determining whether there are any identifiable historical events that served as the basis for

the creation of the Aspremont. Some have seen Charlemagne's descent into Italy in 773 as the historical framework of the poem; others have examined a variety of other movements, or elements of several, by the emperor and viewed them as forming part of the story. Still others have seen echoes of various Saracen expeditions between 846 and 878 as a thinly disguised framework for the poem. In spite of the various theories, it can be concluded that there is no single event, or series of events, that serve as an apparent historical basis for the poem.[6] The question then arises as to the purpose of its creation, if it was not intended as a history.

Internal evidence in the poem strongly suggests that it was composed after the Battle of Hattin and the conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187. It is almost certain that the recitation of this particular poem was one of the forms of entertainment enjoyed by the armies of Philippe-Auguste and Richard Coeur-de-Lion during their stay in Sicily over the winter of 1190-1191.[7] Given that the legends of Charlemagne already existed, as did the notion that he had spent time in Calabria, the poet of the Aspremont was putting into a poem, on the eve of a new crusade campaign, the story of Charlemagne's exploits in Italy. It is highly likely that the poem was composed as propaganda for the Third Crusade in an attempt to foster some enthusiasm for the campaign which lay ahead, both among the Frankish soldiers and among the locals.[8]

The southern Italians were no strangers to crusading. The armies of both Robert of Normandy and Stephen of Blois had spent the winter of 1096 - 1097 in Calabria before proceeding eastward.[9] Their armies undoubtedly included some Italians who were persuaded to join the ranks;

indeed, both Fulcher and the Albigeoise specifically mention the presence of Italians in the crusading armies.[10] In addition, the Normans, who were key players in many of the crusade campaigns, had an extensive presence in southern Italy which even pre-dated the First Crusade.[11]

For these reasons, the Aspremont, set as it is in southern Italy, was likely as appealing to the native Italians as it would have been to the armies of Richard who were already committed to the Crusade. The Aspremont may have been used as a recruitment tool among the Italians, a campaign which would have been strengthened by the presence of Richard's armies during the winter of 1190-1191.

Le Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange

Le Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange is concerned largely with the medieval ideal of family or "clan"; taken together the poems of the cycle span five generations of the clan of William of Orange. The Chançun de Willame is the oldest known poem of this cycle, with others modelled on it or structured around it dating well into the fourteenth century. As with the stories of Godfrey in Le Premier Cycle de la Croisade, the poems that appear in Le Cycle Guillaume d'Orange take us from William's infancy through his senior years. This Cycle is, in fact, exceptionally complete in this respect.[12]

Just as the Chançun de Willame delves mainly into the life and character of William, many of the other poems treat the story of the lives of other members of the clan, the most notable being Aymeri de

Narbonne, William's father, and Garin de Montglane, the progenitor of the clan. (It is from these two men that the alternative cycle titles are drawn.)

Another important feature of this cycle is the prominent role assigned to the women of the clan, notably William's wife Guiborc. Guiborc appears first in the Cycle as a Saracen woman of high birth, beautiful almost beyond description, named Orable. She is married to a Saracen knight, but is soon smitten by the charms of William. Eventually she deserts her pagan husband, renounces her family and religion, is baptised under the Christian name of Guiborc, and marries William. She is often at his side and constantly in his thoughts; their life together is nothing short of idyllic.[13]

Guiborc's prominence in the Willame adds an emotional depth not often found in the epics, and her feminine gentleness serves as a foil to William's warrior character. Note Guiborc's tenderness as she learns of the death of her nephew Guischard:

"Tien, dame Guiburc, ço est tun nevou Guischard.
Ja Vivien la cunte vif mes ne verras."
La franche femme li tendi ses braz,
E il li colchat desus le mort vassal.
Peise le cors, si li faillirent les braz;
Ele fu femme, si out fieble la char.
Contre tere en prist le cors un quas,
Tote la langue li turnad une part.

Joesdi al vespre.
Guiburc le guarde jus a la tere;
Troble out le vis, e pasle la maissele,
Turnez les oilz qui li aistrent en le teste;
Tote la langue li pendit sur senestre,
Sur le mentun li enbrunchat sun halme.
Plurad Guiborc, dunc la confortat Willame.[14]

The perception by audiences of the Willame and other poems of the Cycle would have been that William had enticed the most beautiful of Saracen women to renounce her former life and embrace Christianity as his spouse. Undoubtedly this captured the imagination of young men seeking adventure and romance. To combine these two factors with the defence of holy Christianity, in the form of crusade, would have served as a strong encouragement for many young men to join a crusading army.

The cycle in general, and the Willame in particular, are crusade epics in the same sense that the Roland can be considered a crusade poem. In the Willame, William's efforts are largely self-interested, but following closely was the objective of preserving and advancing Holy Christianity through a form of crusade. In this poem, William and his nephew Vivien are out to kill as many of the heathen as possible, and with this goal in mind they set forth on their adventures against their Saracen enemies.[15] Note the familiar crusade shout of "muntjoie" in the following passage where the Franks surprise the Saracen armies:

La Bataille out vencue Deramé
A l'altre feiz que Willame i fu al curb niés.
Si out pris l'eschec e les morz desarmez;
Entrez erent Sarazins en lur nefs,
Lur vent demoert, ne s'en poent turner.
Mais les seignurs des paens e les pervers,
Ben tresqu'a vint mile de la gent Deramé,
Terre certeine alerent regarder
Une grant liue loinz del graver sur la mer,
Ensemble od els unt lur manger aporté,
En renc esteient assis a un digner.
Es vos Willame al manger asené
od trent mile de chevalers armez
Qui un freit més lur ad aporté.
Crient Muntjoie! Si vont od els juster.
Paien escrient: "Francs chevalers, muntez!"

Dunc saillent des tables a l'estur communel;
Iço i remist que ne s'en pout turner;
Pain e vin e char i ad remis assez,
Vaissele d'or e tapiz e dossels.
Mais li paien nen purent endurer;
Acuillent fuie vers la halte eve de mer,
Si entrent es barges e es nefs.
Pernent lur armes pur lur cors conreier,
A terre certeine lur vint estur doner.[16]

After many fabulous exploits, Vivien is killed; his reward in heaven is assured, however, since his death was in a holy cause. The exploits of William and Vivien are crusade exploits, and the poem served as pro-crusade propaganda even while functioning as an entertainment piece.

POEMS AS EXCULPATORY DEVICES FOR CRUSADE FAILURE

The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries saw many poems written and developed about various rebel heroes, barons whose families or clans were involved in a struggle or feud with another house, baron or king. These poems developed into what has come to be known as Le Cycle des Barons Revoltés. (Alternative cycle titles include Le Cycle de Doon de Maience or La Geste de Doon de Maience, and The Feudal Cycle.) In the previous poems discussed, a lineage or genealogy was almost always traced back to some noble ancestor who provided both credibility for the story and legitimacy for the characters and their deeds.[17] As the stories of the exploits of usurping barons and surreptitious lords were formulated by the jongleurs-trouvères, the need for a noble lineage spurred the creation of Doon de Maience, a great legendary progenitor to many of the

rebel barons and their clans and a symbol of revolt against central authority in other instances. The alternative cycle title, in bearing his name, shows the importance given this figure and lineage, even though his existence has never been proved. It appears that his character was created to provide a foundation for the rebel barons and their clans, which offered the opportunity of juxtaposing good and evil; in many cases in the cycle the evil was embodied in the king (often Charlemagne), the good represented by the rebel barons. The opposite assignment of good and evil was not totally unknown, however.

The crusade theme appears in this cycle in a rather obscure but nonetheless enlightening form. From the ranks of the rebel barons and their armies very often come the traitors and villains who collaborate with the Saracens, thereby bringing defeat and destruction upon the Christian armies or leading a good Christian knight to a premature death while on a crusading campaign. Even Ganelon, whose treachery in La Chanson de Roland is responsible for the deaths of Roland and the Peers at the hands of the Saracens, is linked to the family of rebel barons descended from Doon de Maience. The lengths to which the poets went to make these connections demonstrates the importance placed upon lineage and birth.

It is possible that, given the largely unsuccessful nature of the crusade movement in general, accompanied by the many defeats of Christian armies and the deaths of noble Christian barons and knights, the rebel barons--and conversely, the Wicked Emperor--were created in response to a need for a scapegoat on which to place the blame for crusade failure. To the medieval Christian mind, it was inconceivable that failure could come

about as a result of inherent weakness in the crusading armies: the cause was just and the armies were righteous defenders of the only true religion; the Christian crusaders should therefore have been almost automatically assured of victory.

When failure did occur, an excuse was needed--indeed essential--without necessitating a re-examination of the premises of crusade. The only conceivable excuse for failure, without calling into question the righteouness of the crusade cause, was human weakness from with the ranks, the infectious disease of betrayal and treachery by rebel barons or evil monarchs who had been tempted beyond their endurance by the forces of evil embodied in the Saracen armies. To the Christian mind of the time, such a view could easily have been taken as a cause of crusade failure.

The use of just such an exculpatory device, one that was easily transmitted through the oral literary channels, would have served two purposes: the crusade movement (and, therefore, Christianity itself) would not lose face in the light of repeated failure, allowing the crusade to continue unabated; and, the importance of honouring one's convenants and obligations, be they covenants of participating in the crusade or the obligations of a noble Christian birth, was reinforced in the minds of men by juxtaposing these convenants and obligations with the utter despicability of someone who had fallen from his station of noble stature, as had the rebel barons or the wicked monarchs of the poems.

POEMS CRITICAL OF CRUSADE

The theory of poems and unsavoury characters being created as exculpatory devices for crusade failure is indirectly supported by the appearance of a series of poems negative in tone towards crusade in general, in many cases attempting to allocate blame for the failure of particular crusades. For some time after the failure of the Second Crusade, the defeat of the Christian armies was blamed on the sins of the Crusaders--again, weakness from within--as expressed in Latin by the phrase peccatis exigentibus.[18] Many of the poets felt that the crusaders had allowed themselves to fall into greed and avarice by plundering and looting after the crusade battles. Such deeds should not have been allowed, for the sole goal of crusade was to have been the defeat of the infidel and the recapture of the Holy Land, not the taking of worldly gain. Until the crusaders went into battle with this singleness of mind, God would not uphold them in their endeavors.[19]

A wave of non-epic anti-papal poetry swept the Occitan region of France after the devastation caused by the Albigensian Crusade; however, a few poets remained faithful to the Papacy by blaming the crusaders themselves for their misfortunes. A poetess named Gormonda de Montpellier defended the Papacy by calling the crusade failure (and in particular the loss of Damietta) the fault of "vile men" in the Christian armies, echoing the peccatis exigentibus line of reasoning. She termed "false Christians" worse beings than "unbelieving Saracens", a statement indicative of the attempts made by the people of the time to rationalize

the failure of what was supposed to be a glorious Christian endeavor.[20] The rebel barons and the stories of wicked monarchs may, therefore, have been produced in order to fill the need for "vile men" on which the blame for failure could be placed.

POEMS OPPOSED TO PAPAL CRUSADING POLICY

The Albigensian Crusade stirred much negative emotion in the hearts of the residents of the Languedoc region, whose own country had come under attack and devastation. Several non-epic poems, shorter and less appealing than La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise, appeared which denounced both the Crusade in general and the avarice of the Pope, or at least the papal policy that had given rise to the campaign in the first place. Guillem Rainol in two separate poems accused the papacy of neglecting the "true crusade," that of protecting Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre from the infidel, in order to wage a war at home that could be nothing more than a move to consolidate both spiritual and temporal/political power over the region. Roger de Wendover, a monk at St. Albans, saw the crusade against the Albigensians as unjust, immoral and greed-inspired, writing several non-epic poems of varying length in this regard. A poem written in 1228 by Folquet de Romans further reflected the hatred that had been created among the people for the Papacy and its policies in the Albigensian campaign.[21]

Although some discontent with the Papacy was evident before the time

of the Albigensian Crusade, the feeling became much more widespread as a result of the campaign and resulted in a number of other poems and songs being produced which accused the Papacy of misguiding the crusade movement and of using crusade efforts to achieve worldly ends.[22] The earliest of this series of poems was by Girault de Bornelh, who was moved by the loss in 1187 of Jerusalem to Saladin to write a poem criticizing the Papacy for allowing such a travesty to occur. Guyot de Provins wrote a song early in the thirteenth century which denounced the avarice of the Papacy in allowing the Fourth Crusade to be waged against fellow Christians, the Greeks, even though they had produced the schism in the Church. Guillem Figueira repeated this in a later poem as well.[23] The tone of each of these poems is much the same as that of the poems expressing outrage at the disgrace of the Albigensian Crusade.

The Fifth Crusade (Damietta) helped to spread the feeling of distrust of the Papacy. Huon de Saint-Quentin wrote several poems placing the blame for loss of Damietta on clerical avarice, particularly that of the Papal Legate in the crusade. He was also very outspoken against the monetary redemption of their crusade vows. The views of Huon were echoed by three other poets: Moniot, Gautier de Coincy, and Guillaume le Clerc de Normandie in his poem entitled Le Besant de Dieu.

The crusade against Frederick II, who was thought to be a heretic, also inspired the writing of poems in opposition to the papal-sanctioned campaigns and their leaders. Thibaut IV, Count of Champagne, declared in a song that it was heresy itself to persecute Frederick. A troubadour from Lombardy, Uc de Saint Circ, did not agree with Thibaut, writing a

poem that described Frederick as a "monster of heresy" and charging him with attempting to humiliate both France and the Church.[24]

Still other poets spoke against what they perceived as the misdirected crusade policy of the Popes. Raimon Gaucelm (Gaucelin) de Béziers, writing well into the 1270s, joined Huon de Saint-Quentin in denouncing the sale of crusade-vow redemptions.[25] Peire Cardenal became one of the most bitingly satirical poets of the thirteenth century. Two of his poems, written about 1238, scorned the misguided "holy wars" and the greed of the clerics that had inspired them. He saw the worldly motivations of the crusade leaders as the reason no new campaigns were launched against the Saracens or in relief of the city of Jerusalem.

The writings of these anti-papal poets reflect the widespread discontent among the people with what had been, scant decades earlier, a glorious crusading and Christian ideal that had fallen far short of its once-noble mark:

> Their protests show to what extent the pope lost control of public opinion in his firm determination to establish theocracy. No one should doubt that theocracy was a high ideal, but the means used to make it a reality conflicted dramatically with the twelfth century conception of an internally peaceful Christendom united against the Moslem.
>
> The Papacy had once been able to unify Europe with the Crusading ideal; (it) however, could not unify Europe with claims to secular overlordship and when it strove to enforce these claims by means of a Crusade, it inevitably laid itself open to suspicion and contempt.[26]

Since none of these latter poems are of epic proportion, they are excluded from detailed examination here. Nonetheless, they attempted to put forward a serious message about crusading in the medium of poetry.

NOTES - DISTORTIONS AND PROPAGANDA

1. Jérusalem, laisse XIX, lines 545-552, p. 23.

2. See discussion on authorship of the Jérusalem in Chapter III.

3. Van Waard, p. 66.

4. Bédier, laisse XXVIII, lines 370-371, p. 32.

5. Laisse CLXXII, lines 2316, 2325-2328, p. 194.

6. See Van Waard, pp. 24-38 for a full discussion of these many theories. Note especially his conclusion on p. 37, and item 8 on pp. 262-263, where he concludes that the poem holds nothing so representaive of any earlier events as to state that it has any factual historical basis whatsoever.

7. See the discussion in Van Waard, pp. 144-151.

8. P. 235, note 1.

9. Runciman, I, p. 166.

10. Fulcher, XIII, 4, p. 88; Albigeoise, laisse 47, lines 16-18, p. 112 and note.

11. Runciman, I, pp. 56-58.

12. Pierre le Gentil, La Littérature Française du Moyen Age (Paris: Colin, 1963), p. 47.

13. Joan M. Ferrante, Guillaume d'Orange: Four Twelfth-Century Epics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 43-44.

14. Nancy V. Isley (ed.), La Chançun de Willame (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1952), laisses CXXXVI-CXXXVII, lines 1288-1302, pp. 36-37. Hereafter cited as Willame.

15. The "heathen" were not differentiated in this cyle as clearly as in other crusading cycles: the term "Saracen" often included Moors, Northmen, Moslems, and even Saxons. See Crossland, Medieval French Epic, p. 167. Cf. Crosland, Old French Epic, pp. 147-148.

16. Willame, laisse CLVII, lines 1680-1704, p. 47.

17. The appearance of what often appears to be a Biblically-patterned genealogy was not a coincidence. A noble birth lent both status in

society and legitimacy for certain actions within the social structures of the time. Crosland notes: "During no period of French literature was the necessity of being "bien né" more ingrained in men's minds than in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries." Crosland, Old French Epic, p. 8.

18. "Demanded by sin".

19. For a complete discussion of the peccatis theme, see Joseph Bédier and Pierre Aubry, Les Chansons de Croisade avec leur Mélodies (New York: Franklin, 1909), pp. 71-72. Cf. Palmer Throop, "Criticism of Crusade Policy in Old French and Provencal" in Speculum, XIII (1938), 379-412.

20. See Throop, p. 386.

21. See Throop, p. 403. Throop contends that the rapid expansion of anti-papal poetry in the vernacular was a reflection of popular discontent with the Papacy and the disenchantment with crusading in general as a result of the failures experienced and the problems encountered.

22. For detailed discussion see Throop, pp. 379-412.

23. The charges of Guyot and Figueira are not wholly justified, as Innocent III was also outraged at the diversion of the Fourth Crusade. See Throop, p. 384.

24. P. 399.

25. P. 403.

VII. CONCLUSION

THE POEMS AS SOURCES - SUMMARY

The stated objectives of this study were: to make the epic poems on a crusade theme in Old French from the approximate period of A.D. 1100 to A.D. 1250 better known; to examine these poems to determine their significance as to historical detail that is complementary to the non-poetic chronicles; and, to determine if this same body of material gives significant insight into the individual and collective mentality of the French and the French nation of the time, both in the west and in the crusading kingdoms.

Representative passages in previous chapters demonstrate that some of the Old French epics do indeed have some historical content that is worthy of study. A brief summary follows.

La Chanson d'Antioche demonstrates the character of a text that is, barring some minor imperfections that do not substantially detract from the remainder of the work, both accurate in detail and reliable in content. The poem contains numerous descriptions of events, battles, customs, geography, and other information that either supplements information found in chronicle accounts, complements that information, or both. In many specific instances, La Chanson d'Antioche surpasses corresponding chronicle accounts in detail; taken as a whole, the poem

rivals the chronicle histories of the First Crusade up to and including the taking of Antioch. As an historical source, its value is great and should not be underestimated. In 1932, one scholarly commentator noted the following:

> Nous croyons que les poèmes épiques des Croisades meritent d'être mieux connus. La Chanson d'Antioche, due, dans sa forme primitive, à un temoin oculaire, est l'un des documents les plus vivants, les plus poignants, et les plus originaux que nous ayons sur la première Croisade. Aucun historien consciencieux ne devrait plus la négliger. Car elle contient des renseignements très importants qu'on chercherait vainement chez les chroniquers latins.[1]

Some work has been done on the Antioche since 1932; much more yet remains. It is remarkable that an English translation of the poem has not yet appeared.

The Estoire de la Guerre Sainte is essentially the only work, in prose or verse, of major length that addresses the subject of the Third Crusade. It is recognized as a major source of knowledge on the subject, and contains no flaws that detract in any substantial way from its reliability as a source. Other accounts of the Third Crusade are generally measured against the Estoire for accuracy and reliability; the poem stands on its own merits as an important primary source of historical information.

Work on the Estoire has progressed slowly. In 1897 Gaston Paris produced a translation, in French prose, of the Estoire which is still the best source in French apart from the manuscript. Since that time,

two English translations, one in prose and one in verse, have appeared. No critical translations nor annotated editions have appeared since Paris' work.

La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise provides an accurate and substantial history of the Albigensian Crusade. In general agreement with other histories on the subject, its oftimes lax chronology is its only substantial flaw. In most other respects, the Albigeoise is both reliable and accurate, and may be regarded as an important source of historical knowledge. Only two other sources are comparable to it in content and detail.

THE POETIC VIEW OF THE CRUSADING WORLD

In a strictly factual analysis, the poems under study make some contributions which are worthy of further study. Additionally--and perhaps just as importantly--the poems provide significant insight into the poetic view of both the Christian and Saracen world of the time.

The style of life of the Franks in Syria was undoubtedly so different, or at least had become so different, from what life was like in France that a new and different society evolved. This new society, distinct from that of occidental French society, evolved from the adaptation of old culture and customs to new and different geography, laws, governments, races, events and even climates. The French carried with them to the Holy Land the French mentality of the time: beliefs in

prodigies and miracles, in signs and visions; legends of Charlemagne rising to lead the Crusade; prophecies and stories of the Christians rising en masse to defeat the anti-Christ; legends of the glory and chivalry embodied in the Knights of the Round Table; and prophecies and promises of impending justice and peace; usually intermingled with a belief in the second coming of Christ, the defeat of the heathen nations of the world and the end of the world. When this collective mentality of the Franks arrived in Syria via the crusade campaigns, it was, by virtue of events, location and new social, economic and political pressures, altered to reflect the Franco-Syrian life and presence. This new--or altered--mentality of the Franco-Syrian crusaders very much affected the writing of both the chronicle histories and the poems, and many of the facets of this new mentality of the time are reflected in the body and content of the poems. In one writer's words:

> Les poèmes des Croisades constituent des témoignages importants sur une société française, déracinée de France, pour vivre, sous d'autre cieux, pendant deux siècles environ, une magnifique épopée . . . . Sur ces poèmes, l'influence orientale est sensible. Ces conquérants, conquis par l'attrait, la poésie, le luxe et le soleil de la Syrie, ont laissé dans leurs Gestes un reflet de leur âme, française toujours certes, mais fortement attachée à cette terre célèbre, ou, au risque de leur vie, ils avaient transporté leurs foyers, leurs institutions, leur langue et leur réligion.[2]

In addition to insights into the peculiarities of Frankish Christianity and Franco-Syrian society which the poems provide, indications are given as to how the Frankish crusaders viewed the Saracen world.

Their attitude is first revealed in La Chanson De Roland: Paien unt tort e chrestiens unt dreit.[3] From this basic premise, the crusaders regarded themselves as God's chosen people and saw crusading as the work of God:

> Si orez come Deus reguarde
> Cels que il velt prendre en sa guarde:
> Qui a lui servir se velt duire
> Nule rien ne lui poreit nuire.[4]

The Saracens were "mortal enemies",[5] a repugnant race of misbelievers who were out to overthrow Christianity.[6]

The Willame portrays the Moslem view of the Christians as equally one-sided and inflexible:

> Dist Alderufe: "Sez dunt te ared, Willame,
> Que home e femme crestien ne deivent estre;
> Nule baptisterie ne deit aver en terre,
> A tort le prent qui le receit sur la teste.
> Cele baptisterie ne valt mie une nife.
> Deus est el ciel e Mahomet en terre;
> Quant Deus fait chaud e Mahomet yverne,
> E quant Deus plut, Mahomet fait creistre l'erbe.
> Qui vivre volt congié noz en deit guere,
> E a Mahomet qui le secle governe."[7]

Mohammed's curses were invoked upon the Christians and upon their "wrong" religion.[8] The physical manifestation of these attitudes appears frequently in the poems. The following is an example:

> Le jor que Acre fud rendue,
> Si com jo ai l'ovre entendue,
> Ot quatre anz, ço fud chose enquise,

Que Sarazin l'orent conquise;
Si ai en memorie e a main
K'el fud rendue l'endemain
De la feste saint Beneeit.
Mal gré le pople maleeit,
Qui Deus de sá boche maldie,
Nel puis leissier que jo nel die.
Qui lores veist les eglises,
Qui ierent en Acre remises,
Com il aveient depechiees
Les ymagenes e enfacees,
E les autieus jus abatuz,
E croiz e crucifix batuz
El despit de nostre creance
Por acomplir lor mescreance,
E faites lor mahomeries!
Mais els lor furent puis meries.[9]

The poets viewed the two religions as totally opposed to each other ideologically and as virtually irreconcilable. Throughout the crusading epics, the Christian soldiers offer their Saracen adversaries only two choices: baptism or death. In the poems under study here, only two Saracens renounced their natal religion and accepted Christianity, and in these instances the conversion is by choice and is not forced upon them.[10] In all other instances encountered, the Saracens chose death.

It is noteworthy that in none of the epics is the question raised of a Christian converting to the Moslem faith;[11] perhaps the poets regarded such as totally unthinkable. The Albigeoise, however, shows how denial of the orthodox Christian religion in favour of heretical "conversion" was viewed:

Al comte o fan entendre e a sa companhia
La fola gent malvaza c'an crezut le eretgia.
Encar veiran elh be, si Diaus me benaia,
Cal cosselh lor an dat aicels cui Dieus maldia.

Per so er trastot mort e la terra peria
E per la gent estranha gastea e issilheia;
Que li Frances de Fransa e cels de Lombardia
E totz lo mons lor cor e'ls porta felonia
Plus qu'a gent sarrazina![12]

It was less bad to be born and die a pagan than to be born a Christian and turn from the faith.

To belong to the false Moslem religion was to invoke the hatred of God himself. This attitude appears throughout the poems and is most vivid in the Jérusalem:

Moult fu grande la proie que Franchois acoillirent.
Le val de Josaphas arriere revertirent.
Chil de Jherusalem à bataille en issirent,
Paien et Sarrasin qui moult fort s'esbaudirent;
.L. mile furent qui Damledeu hairent.[13]

Christ taught that no man can serve two masters; this doctrine was at the core of Christian theology.[14] If the Saracens worshipped a false god, that god could only be the Devil, also known as the Anti-Christ. This view of the Saracens is common throughout the poems, as shown by one author who noted that "Tos vos metra ensemble a la gent Andecris."[15] A second author expressed a similar attitude by stating "Si en getera cex qui servent au diable."[16] Seen therefore as servants of the devil, the Saracens embodied every imaginable evil and every negative character trait. Their religion itself was seen as grounded in sorcery;[17] they were traitors of the same type as Judas Iscariot;[18] they were cowardly and weak-willed;[19] and they were haughty and arrogant.[20]

The religious differences between the Christians and Moslems were

also closely identified with racial differences, to the extent that little differentiation was made. The Saracens were viewed as an accursed race of unbelievers, a view which carried the same negative connotations as noted above.[21] The physical characteristics of race are portrayed as distasteful if not abhorrent to the western warriors:

> Une hisduse gent oscure,
> Contre Deu e contre nature,
> A roges chapels en lor testes,
> Onc Deus ne fist plus laides bestes.[22]

Generally speaking, the Christians regarded their eastern opponents as "miscreants", a word commonly used throughout all the poems.[23] As an accursed race of sub-humans, no treatment of them by crusaders was seen as immoral. In the following passage, the insult comes first from the Saracens, but is soon reversed by the Christians:

> Ce fu un jor d'un samedi,
> Selone l'estoire que jo di,
> Que la vile fu recovree
> E des Sarazins delivree,
> Que merveilles i orent faites
> E qui tozjorz serront retraites,
> Car il orent Jaffe reprise,
> E la gent crestiene ocise
> Malade qu'il orent trovee;
> Si fu la verité provee
> Qu'en la vile tanz pors troverent,
> Que il ocistrent e tuerent,
> Que ço fu une enfinité;
> E ço est seu de verité
> Que char de porc il ne manjuent,
> E por ço volentiers les tuent:
> Ne heent plus rien terriene,
> El despit de fei cristiene;
> Si avoient mis e mellez
> La gent e les pors lez a lez;

Mais li cristien les cors pristrent,
Cil qui por Deu s'en entremistrent,
Les cristiens toz entererent
E les Sarazins hors jeterent
Qu'au samedi ocis avoient
Ovec les pors, qui tant puoient
Qu'il ne pooient endurer.[24]

To a Saracen, whose religion forbade any association with swine, such treatment would have been a cardinal insult. That the crusaders engaged unapologetically in such actions, while attributing their actions to God's command, betrays their attitudes both towards the Saracens and towards themselves and the Christian cause.

The Christians, as shown in the previous quotation, were not alone in perpetrating atrocities. It is noteworthy, and again indicative of how the crusaders viewed themselves and the crusade, that atrocities directed towards the Christians were interpreted as a direct dishonour to God:

Ore escotez que li Turc firent
A Deu e com il lui mesfirent.
Le jur de la feste honoree
Ou tante lerme fud ploree,
Le jur de la feste a ensemble
Toz les sainz qu'il el ciel asemble,
Nos pendirent la gent haie
As murs d'Acre par envaie
Les cors des cristiens qu'il preistrent
Dedenz l'eneske, qu'il oscistrent.
Cil furent a dreit parconier,
Co poent dire sermonier, --
De la grant joie pardurable
Qui sanz fin iert e est durable
Cels dont la feste esteit tenue
Qui a cel jor iert avenue.[25]

It is worth noting that Jews were regarded in the same negative light as the Saracen unbelievers and the Albigensian heretics: all were equally

accursed. In one instance, the word "synagogue" is used to describe a Moslem place of worship;[26] and throughout the poems similar negative adjectives are used to describe both Jews and Saracens.[27]

Despite the multitude of seemingly irreconcilable differences, the western poets admired the skills and military prowess of many of the Saracen warriors. In the following passages, Ambroise pays a back-handed compliment to the "limbs of the devil":

> La gent Dampnedeu assaillirent
> Cil de dedenz as murs saillirent:
> Grant fud l'assaut e la defence
> De cels qui orent poi despense.
> Qui si forment se defendoient,
> Qui lor mesaise nos vendoient:
> Ne furent gent si defensable
> Cum furent lu menbre al diable.[28]

The poet cannot quite bring himself to admire his opponents openly but does go on to admit that, were it not for their unbelief, a better people could not be found:

> Fierre iert la gent e orgoillose
> En la citié e merveilose:
> Se ço ne fust gent mescreue,
> Onques mieldre ne fud veue.[29]

It is debatable whether the people, as represented by the poets, really understood the crusade campaigns in which they were involved. The author of the Antioche does an excellent job of recounting the story of the fall of Antioch but offers little comment on the reasons for the campaign in the first place. Ambroise offers no editorial comments in

the Estoire on the failure of the campaign as a crusade campaign. He speaks quite unapologetically of the cross' being ceded to Saladin and ends his epic describing what amounts to little more than a travelogue of his "pilgrimage" to Jerusalem.[30] Certainly the title of his poem is apt, for he saw the conflict as a holy war; but whether he understood it as a crusade--as a campaign to recapture the Holy Land and overthrow the infidel--is questionable, for he offers little insight into the matter.[31]

The Albigeoise, on the other hand, gives the impression that the people understood the goal of the crusade from beginning to end. This is due perhaps to the fact that the Albigensian Crusade was unique and could not, by virtue of location and objective, be confused or inter-mingled with ideologies of pilgrimage or racial bigotry. It was a holy war designed to stamp out heresy amongst a western Frankish people who had no excuse as others might have had. As noted earlier, similar terminology was used to describe both heretics and pagans; but a distinct impression is left that it caused the crusaders pain to fight their own race in their own territories.[32]

If proper caution is exercised in analysing this type of material, the attitudes and perceptions of the people described in the poems and the spirit expressed within the poems become important aids in understanding the history of the period. The poems themselves are an excellent representation of the cultural and social development of the French people of the era. The fact that for the first time the poems appear in the tongue of the layman also reflects this development.

The case can be made that the poems are more representative of the common man's viewpoint than are the chronicles. The chronicle histories were produced, generally speaking, by upper class persons for an upper class audience. Poems, on the other hand, were produced generally by a lower class of person, in a vernacular language, for a general audience. Therefore the poems may be to some degree more indicative of how the common people perceived crusade. The poems are the fruits of a certain frame of mind that reflects French life at the time of the crusade campaigns which they describe. If taken not altogether literally, this poetic perception of French society reveals much about the history of the period, and is perhaps the greatest contribution of the poems discussed here.

NOTES - CONCLUSION

1. Hatem, pp. XI-XII.

2. P. 404.

3. Bédier, laisse LXXIX, line 1015, p. 86.

4. Estoire, lines 2841-2844, p. 76. Compare lines 3815-3819, p. 102.

5. See Willame, laisse XCIV, lines 813-822, p. 23.

6. See Estoire, lines 3367-3372, p. 90.

7. Willame, laisse CLXXXIX, lines 2111-2120, p. 58.

8. See Antioche, laisse CLXXV, lines 4063-4065, p. 219. Compare Aspremont, laisse 18, lines 328-334, p. 11.

9. Estoire, lines 5225-5244, p. 140.

10. Guiborc and her brother, Reneward, both convert willingly to Christianity in the Willame.

11. The Roland speaks of an invitation by the Saracen king Baligant for Charlemagne to become his vassal. Charlemagne turns the tables by making a much more convincing and powerful counter-offer to Baligant. Baligant's invitation hints at conversion; Charlemagne's is straight-forward. See Bédier, laisse CCLX, lines 3589-3601, p. 298.

12. Albigeoise, laisse 47, lines 10-18, p. 112.

13. Jérusalem, laisse II, lines 62-66, p. 5.

14. Matthew 6:24, Authorized (King James) Version.

15. Antioche, laisse XVII, line 366, p. 35.

16. Jérusalem, laisse I, line 1810, p. 75.

17. See the Antioche, laisse CCLVIII, line 6218, p. 310.

18. Laisse CCCXLVII, line 8803, p. 433.

19. Willame, laisse CCXXXII, line 2954, p. 80. Compare Estoire, lines 4030-4034. Note here that the Christians are portrayed as exact opposites of the cowardly Saracens.

20. Estoire, lines 5530-5539, p. 148. Compare lines 3433, p. 92 and lines 6735-6768, p. 180.

21. Lines 3056-3076, p. 82. Compare lines 5067-5079, p. 135.

22. Lines 3348-3352, p. 90. Compare the Willame, laisse CXC, lines 2134-2143, p. 59, where Alderufe the Saracen is described as a large, hardy, swarthy man.

23. See, for examples, the Antioche, laisse XXVI, line 569, p. 43; the Aspremont, laisse 36, line 676, p. 22, and laisse 121, line 2104, p. 68; and the Willame, laisse XIV, line 103, p. 3.

24. Estoire, lines 11267 - 11293, pp. 301-302. Compare lines 3661-3700, pp. 98-99 as another example of atrocities by crusaders.

25. Estoire, lines 3175-3190, pp. 85-86.

26. See Jérusalem, laisse XXV, lines 1247-1248, p. 53.

27. See Antioche, laisse CCCIII, line 7628, p. 379. Compare laisse CCXCIV, line 7304, p. 363. Compare Willame, laisse LXI, line 540, p. 16. Compare Jérsualem, laisse XIII, line 6471, p. 258.

28. Estoire, lines 3409-3417, pp. 91-92. Compare lines 2913-1920, p. 78 for a similar back-handed compliment.

29. Lines 5067-5071, p. 135.

30. See lines 12013-12352, pp. 322-332.

31. See Ambroise (Lamonte and Hubert), pp. 24-25, who claim that Ambroise never understood the psychology of the Syrian Franks.

32. See Albigeoise, laisse 28, pp. 71-73.

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APPENDIX

TRANSLATIONS OF FRENCH QUOTATIONS

The following translations of the non-English passages found in the text of the paper are provided for reference purposes, to assist those readers who may encounter difficulty in following the French.

Where possible, the attempt was to retain the configuration of lines and laisses as in the original; no attempt has been made, however, to provide an English rhyme.

The attempt was also to provide as literal a translation as possible, to parallel the text of the Old French for comparison purposes. This provides the English-speaking reader with an idea of and feeling for the poet's original medium.

All translations are by the author.

Translations are identified first by the name of the chapter in which they are found, and then by the footnote citation number which marks it in the text.

FRONTISPIECE

The great interest in a work of art, a poem or a romance is to make us understand, feel and taste deliciously, life with the particular taste that it had at the time when this work was conceived and in the society of which it is the most subtle expression; in the end there is not a more precious monument of the mores of other times, no testimony more certain of the old state of a soul than to listen well to such a story or such a song.

Anatole France

CHAPTER III - EARLY VERNACULAR LITERATURE

Note 1:

He who listens at leisure and with talent
Will have peace, if he listens to a good and valiant song
Of which the book of history is both witness and guarantor.
Therein no wicked songsters boast,
For if so they would know how to say neither verse nor song.
There are but three types of song which all men hear:
Of France and of Britain and of Rome the great;
And there are no others which resemble these three.
The stories of Britain are so droll and pleasing;

Those of Rome are wise and of sound learning;
For those of France it must be apparent for each to see
That the crown of France should be placed ahead of all others,
For all other kings which believed in God
By Christian law must be dependent on him.
The first king of France God made by his command,
Crowned in dignity by his angels amidst singing;
Then commanded him to be on earth His lieutenant;
To dispense true justice and elevate the law.
This commandment others held after him:
Anselm and Pepin, who were conquerers,
And Charlemagne of Aix, whom God greatly loved.

CHAPTER IV - CONTEXT

Note 1:

May it please you that I tell a good song
of great story and grand barons?
.....
There are but three song cycles told in France the well-provided;
None can deny this.
That of the kings of France is the greatest,
And the other coming after, good and true is what I say,
Is of Doon, who has a full beard,
He of Maience who was a great baron.
From his lineage come men that are proud and strong.
.....
From this lineage, which made a bad name,
Is the second song cycle.
The third song cycle, which is of great value,
Is of Garin of Montglane, he of proud appearance.

Note 22:

Charles the king, our emperor Charlemagne,
Fully seven years has been in Spain.

Note 31:

My lords, this song is made after the pattern of
That of Antioch, and versified in the same manner
And with the same song, for those who know how to recite.

CHAPTER V - THE POEMS AS HISTORICAL SOURCES

Note 1:

And the good king Philippe arose to his feet,
Saying to Peter the Hermit: "Is it true
That the pagans have our men discouraged and beaten?
We have there so many strong knights!"
"Sire," answered Peter, "by the God of majesty
There is no baron or prince who comes to my mind,
Which the pagans have not beaten or killed.
Fully thirty thousand have they taken and led away.
It is ordained by the Apostles that you succor them,
And the true holy supulchre deliver from the pagans.
He who dies for God will be crowned;
In heaven with the angels will his place be."
"O God," said the king, "Be thou praised!"
Said he to Count Hugh: "Dear brothers, you will go."

Note 6:

At Constantinople were many great ones assembled
From France and from Burgundy and other far lands.
One night they called upon Taticius,
Close friend of the Emperor and born of his sister.
So many barons have come and assembled here,
And have no lodging inside the walls,
And have erected outside both pavilions and tents.
Taticius sent to them meat and wine and grain
And hay and oats and barley bread.

Note 15:

The day was beautiful and clear and the sun was high,
Right at noon was the day hot,
The troops were so thirsty that many had strayed,
The Knight Tancred greatly desired water.
Those of the company had a job to do,
The women and girls, of whom there were so many,
Threw down their cloaks and got to work.
They carried water to the valiant knights,
With pots, shields and in golden vessels.
When the troops had drunk they were invigorated.
And so came the relief which was so much desired.

Note 17:

And the other company which was divided from the host:
Peter of Estaenor and Rainalt the valiant
And Baldwin de Bourg, who was with them,

Baldwin of Boulogne who was reunited with them,
It came into his heart that he would be after Tancred.

Note 18:

We will say that Baldwin had been supplied with
Neither bread nor wine nor meat nor capon nor bird,
Nor could any be found to buy, and so food had given out.
He knew not what he could do; and so, he took messengers
And sent them straight to Tancred the Apulian:
For the love of the Lord who was hung on the cross
May you send us alms, for we are overcome with hunger.
And Tancred replied: "Gladly, do not worry,
Such as we have will be shared with you."
When Baldwin saw it he rejoiced greatly,
And offered prayers of thankfulness to the God of heaven.

Note 24:

Richard, seeing the princes, called Tancred:
See there Baldwin, who greatly hates you,
Call your barons, those who are your own,
We will give him battle, as a contumacious vassal.
"Willingly, dear sire, when I have been so advised."
A trumpet was sounded, the men were armed.
When Baldwin saw the formation, he weighed his thoughts,
And sent to Tancred and told him that
For God and for pity, for holy charity.
That Tancred would be left in peace, if he showed good will.
And Tancred responded: "I do not believe it."
The messengers were chased back to the camp;
When Baldwin saw them, he sounded a horn,
All ran to arms with the honoured baron.
Baldwin went in front, with his hauberk on,
Brandishing a lance, without restraint,
And attacked a knight who held a shield
And a sharp sword, until he was brought down.
And when the people of Tancred saw him jousting so,
They knew well that they would be given no mercy.
So they turned their backs, all together;
Baldwin pursued them down into a valley,
Fourteen knights were there unseated,
Then he drew his sword with golden hilt.
And he came to the knights and gave battle;
They scattered over three leagues;
Then he put away his sword, and returned;
And the baron knights he commended to God.
The companions of Tancred then reasoned with him on the matter:
"By my faith, sire, you have encountered evil!

Devils who have bewitched you have done this to you;
Fourteen knights have been led to destruction."
Then even Bohemond reproached him:
"By my faith, friend and nephew, your pride has led to evil.
If the brother of the Duke had now taken me in hatred
You would not have a penny worth anything;
You should approach Baldwin, that you may be reconciled.
--Sire, so tell the duke, as you wish."
Four hundred soldiers went with him,
And beseeched Baldwin to whom they had been led.
Tancred went in great humility to the encounter,
Speaking piously and begging mercy;
They willingly knelt before each other, and were reconciled.

Note 27:

The Christian host was very large;
They had no victuals, many were lost.
Peter the Hermit was in his tent
When the King of the Tafurs came to him, with his followers,
More than a thousand there were, all swollen with hunger:
"Sire, counsel us, for holy charity!
For we die of hunger and from captivity."
And Peter responded: "It is because of your weakness!
Go, take of these Turks who are close there;
They are good to eat if they are cooked and salted."
And said the King of the Tafurs: "You speak the truth."
He turned from the tent of Peter, to instruct his rabble,
Who numbered more than ten thousand when assembled together.
The Turks were gutted, leaving the skin,
And in the evening were roasted, with flesh well cooked;
There was sufficient for all to eat, but with no bread.
By this the pagans were greatly troubled;
For the smell of the flesh rose to the walls,
Where twenty thousand pagans witnessed the feast,
There was not a sole Turk whose eyes did not weep;
For their kind that were eaten they lamented in great sorrow
Ah! Lord Mohammed, what great cruelty!
Take vengeance upon those who have caused thee such shame;
When they eat people, all are defiled;
They are not French, but rather living devils.
Mohammed curse them and their Christianity!
For if they do this thing, all will be dishonored!

Now the king of Tafurs was reinvigorated,
And he and his company, of whom there were many,
With their knives used for slicing and preparing
Gutted the Turks, beneath those who were close by;
Seeing pagans, they cut them into pieces,
And in the evening over coals they cooked them well.

Willingly they ate them, without bread or salt;
And said one to the other: "This is so savoury
As to be worth more than pork or bacon;
Sad are those who die without having tasted."
The king called together his assemblage.
The Turks that they roasted caused a great aroma to mount,
And in the city of Antioch the cry arose
That the French ate the Turks they had killed
Pagans showed themselves outside, many and great they were,
Pagans so plentiful that all of the walls were filled.
To the highest window climbed Garsion,
With his son Sansadoine his relative Ysores;
There were thousands of pagans, young and old.
Garsion said to them: "For the sake of Mohammed,
These devils eat our people, now think of it!"

Note 28:

Our barons encircled Antioch,
And murdered the pagans and cut off their limbs,
Fallen and thrown one on top of the other.
With blood and brains were all their arms sullied,
And the blood from the bodies was high in the streets.
Many lovely pagan women were seen to be greatly troubled
Shaking their fists and taking up arms,
Invoking the guardians Mohammed and Apollyon
That they might curse the French who afflict their people:
"Great sorrow do these adversaries bring to our lands!"
The Saracen pagans went back to reassemble for battle,
There were thirty thousand preparing to fight,
Of which could be seen a very proud array,
Many great lances were broken, and many shields pierced,
Many shoulder plates were shattered, and coat mail cut through,
And many Saracens drew their bows
And struck with shafts and darts and blades and lances,
And javelins were launched and struck and pierced many,
And maces and battle-axes and pikes and hammers!
The dead and the dying made of the earth a marsh,
The battle lasted through the whole day,
And the evening and the morrow until the night descended,
Believe what the poet says, it was a great and terrible event.

Note 30:

In great joy came the host which God ordained.
They descended to the Iron Bridge, none stopping,
The span of which was large for great boats,
The bridge was of arches, made with great skill,
With two guardhouses and towers, each well adorned.

Note 31:

When they saw the battle, each of the Franks was angered;
They cried: "Holy Sepulchre! Barons, now it appears
That none will have honour but those who are worthy of it,
To each is given that which he will conquer;
Much good will come to those who gain mastery over the pagans."
Engerrand de Saint-Pol spurred on his horse,
Ahead of the great body of men
And went to attack the strongest battalion of Turks,
The lance that he held knew he well how to use:
And right before Garsion he killed his nephew.
And when the lance broke in battle, five Turks fell upon him,
Then he took his sword, and tossed its sheath aside,
And muttering oaths he cut off their heads.
Garsion of Antioch shot an arrow at him,
Which hit his horse, piercing the flank shields,
The war horse took death, but Engerrand got up;
He grasped his sword and held tightly his shield,
He ran upon the pagans, fearing nothing
With the cold steel blade he gave them hefty blows;
He was encircled by pagans, and if Jesus who created all the world
Had not taken thought for him he would not have returned.
When our barons saw this, the scene weighed heavy upon them:
"Holy Sepulchre" they cried, and all went forward:
And great damage would have befallen had they not rescued Engerrand.

Note 33:

Pete the Hermit mounted his mule:
He led the barons and the princes away with him,
And the rich assembly of nobles, which God greatly honoured;
And went to the top of the mount Jehosaphat.
All the city of Jerusalem they could see and looked upon it;
To the barons and the princes he spoke, and recounted wisely:
"In the holy city, good lords, I have been;
See there the Mount of Olives, the place where God asked for
The ass and its colt, and they were taken to him,
See there the golden gate, by which Jesus entered
Into the holy city, and many removed
Both tunic and robe, and he went forth upon them.
The children of the Jews were there in a great crowd;
In the midst of the streets, they strewed in the way
Olive branches and palm boughs.
The city was weeping, the people knelt down
At the feet of Jesus Christ, and none arose.
See there the Pretorium, the place where his case was pleaded,
Where Judas sold him after having left him.
Thirty coins were taken, no more were requested.

And see there the column, where he was tied,
And the nearby garden, where he was crowned with thorns.
See Mount Calvary, to which he was lead,
Barons, on that same day they crucified him,
And Longis the soldier pierced his side with a lance,
And the blood came forth from him onto Golgotha.
See there the sepulchre where Joseph placed him;
The good servant watched over his lord:
Seven years he had served him, and asked no more:
A great recompense it was that the king had given him.
See there the holy temple built by Solomon.
There were the apostles, when God consoled them,
By saying 'peace be unto you', which enlightened them.
See there the courtyard where he taught them
In ninety-nine languages which he taught them.
See there Mount Sion, where died
The mother of Jesus Christ, when the century passed,
And see the valley of Jehosaphat, where she was carried;
There is the sepulchre, where she was laid.
When his blessed angels conveyed her into Heaven,
Now we pray to the Lady who God loves so much,
That our sins will be pardoned by the king who created all,
The great ones and the small ones as each has so committed."
"Amen! God! our Father!" each one of them cried.

Note 34:

Now came riding together the Franks and Apulians,
With lances in their holsters, ensigns waving;
The mounts displayed great pride.
The tents and the shelters remained there.
The sick were tended, those who were greatly suffering;
The women carried water to those Franks who were wanting it.

Note 35:

Great was the assault and long the attack,
And many died around and amongst us in great suffering.
The women were there, each one armed;
And not one of them had not a tattered robe.
Each carried water; and very much was emptied;
And each carried stones in her folded sleeves;
Each one to her troops cried in loud voice:
"Who ever has need of drink, for God's sake may he tell us!
Gladly he may have it in the name of holy Mary;
Now defend each one of you both yourself and your life:
He who does it well will be in the company
Of the angels in heaven, in eternal life:
There will each have his fondest thoughts fulfilled!"

O God: these words encouraged greatly our men;
Holy Sepulchre they cried with one loud voice.
Then they entered the ditch with no rein reserved;
More than a thousand went together at one time.

Note 36:

You would have heard such joy, such noise and such confusion
And crying in pity for so many valiant knights,
And so many squires, so many wives,
Many princes and many barons weeping from grief;
You would have seen them hugging and embracing the Duke.
They hugged his neck and kissed his cheeks many times.
You would have heard the women crying many times:
"Lord God! Now are our wishes fulfilled.
Ah, Jerusalem! How much is done to make you proud!
The Lord God must shelter us there again,
So that his body may be worshipped and blessed.
And his holy sepulchre made beautifully clean.
Let us do it, if God will aid those
Who have come across the sea to avenge his body,
Each day we will have pure hearts to serve you."
Oh God! these words inspired our men.

Note 39:

The Pisans who were with the host
And the other men who knew the sea
Built on galleys castle-towers
With two great ladders bound upon them;
All of their vessels were covered with hides,
And the castle-tower as well;
The Tower of Flies they besieged
And there launched many arrows and other weapons.
Those in the tower defended themselves
So well that they sold their lives dearly,
From the city in galleys
Emerged more than two thousand
Saracens who readied for battle
To aid the other sons of dogs;
And they shot arrows and launched sharp darts,
While throwing large rocks,
Great and heavy,
Which broke lances and shields.
When those of the tower attacked,
Those defending fared no less well.
You would have seen well our men drawing their bows,
Sending many shafts over the walls;
You would have seen the arrows raining down

So that the Turks were obliged to hide themselves;
You would have seen assaults made by valiant men
Who worked in relays.
The ladders were readied
On the tower and made fast against the wall
With great effort and with much loss.
For the enemy threw down upon the heads
Of the Christians who where setting up the ladders
Large beams, but they were thrown
Upon men who were not discouraged.
The Turks returned in great numbers
And set fire to the tower,
And down came those who were in it.
This was done by throwing burning Greek fire,
Fighting a great battle.
But much happened at sea
Where died many of the Saracen men.
The castle-tower was burnt quickly
And the ladders also
And the vessels which carried them,
By which the Turks took great comfort;
And when they saw our distress
They cried in loud voice
And the hated folk howled
At the host which gave God aid.

Note 40:

And many other things came to pass.
Outside a trench, it happened one day
That a certain knight had turned his back
To attend to a need
That each man experiences.
As he was bent down
To relieve himself
One of the Turks of the forward guard,
Of whom the knight was taking no notice,
Left the others and hastened toward the knight.
Now it was villainous and distasteful
How he conspired to do the knight evil
While he was engaged in such matters.
He was some distance from the forward guard,
Holding the lance extended
Towards the knight to kill him,
When the others of the host began to cry:
"Flee, Sire, flee, flee!"
It was with difficulty that he raised himself,
Nevertheless he raised himself to his feet
Not having fulfilled his need.
The Turk came as fast as his horse could stride,

Thinking to knock the knight to the earth,
But, by the grace of God, he failed,
For the knight ran aside;
And grasped two stones in his hands;
(Now hear how God is a just avenger):
And when the Turk had made his pass,
And returned to finish his task;
The knight took aim
Seeking to bring him down,
And while he was still coming at him,
One of the stones which he held
He threw, hitting him under his headgear in the temple:
And the enemy fell dead as he had contemplated.
The knight took the horse,
And led it away by the reins;
He who told me this saw
That the knight mounted the horse
And went away to his tent,
Where he guarded it and kept it well.

Note: 41:

It came to pass that one day there was a woman
Who they say had the name of Amy,
Who carried bread to sell to the host;
A certain pilgrim saw that the bread was warm and fresh,
And bargained with her for it.
But the woman declined,
Causing such a furore over the price he offered her
That she came close to striking him,
Because she was so angry and distraught.
And so the disagreement was raised,
And many of the townsfolk joined in,
And they took the pilgrim
And beat him and tore his hair
And otherwise treated him badly.
The clamor was heard even by King Richard:
He requested of them peace and love;
Peace between them he sought and obtained
And his own people he sent back.
But the devil, who by nature
Hates peace above all things created,
Renewed the melee again the next day
And only at great pain was it quelled.
And the two kings were together
Speaking, it seems to me,
Together with the justices of Sicily
And the men of high station of the city;
They spoke there of how to bring about peace.

And right in the midst of this meeting,
Even as the two kings spoke
Of the peace they sought to make,
The news was brought
That our men had been attacked,
And twice came the message
That they had suffered great loss.
And the third messenger which came later
Said to the king: "It is bad peace,
When the men of this land
Kill the men of England
Inside and outside the city."
And therefore, in truth,
The Lombards who were there withdrew.
And they said to the kings, while lying,
That they did this to defuse the tension,
But it was only to do evil that they did it.
Jordans of Pin and Marguerite,
To whom all evil should befall,
These two stirred the pot
And from them all evil commenced.
The king of France was there
And the king of England with him,
Also he who told this tale.
The king of England mounted up
To go there and quell
The brawl, but when he parted
They spoke many evil things to him,
Those of the city, and rebuked him,
So the king hurried to arm himself,
And caused that by land and water
They should be attacked on every side,
For there was not such a warrior as he in all the world.

Note 42:

As the time passed,
Many things came to be.
One time there came an event
Of which much ought to be spoken.
Many men attacked the walls,
And many times they wearied;
However, there were some who wearied not
Of gathering and carrying stones,
And the barons on their war-horses
And on their beasts also carried stones.
And many women brought them stones
And rejoiced in the task.
Among the women who carried stones

Was one who rejoiced greatly while carrying;
One of the Saracens defending the city
Saw this woman intending
To discharge from her shoulders her burden;
As she walked forward,
He shot an arrow at her, and it hit her,
And the woman fell to the ground,
Mortally wounded;
All the people rallied
And came running, circling around her
While she lay writhing in death.
Her husband came looking for her,
But she prayed the people there gathered,
The brave men and the brave women,
That for the sake of God and their own souls
They make of her body a bundle
To fill the trench to which she had brought stones,
For she had not wanted that her flesh
Should be used for any other purpose.
And she was having herself carried there,
When God carried away her soul;
Such a woman, as the story says,
Should everyone keep in memory.

Note 43:

All along the way that the host took,
You could see, as God sees me,
Young boys and ladies and young girls
With good pitchers and cups
And pails and basins
Carrying water to the pilgrims;
They came straight to the road which the host followed,
Holding the basins in their hands
While saying: "God, heavenly king,
From where come so many people? What could it be?
Where were born such young ones?
See their faces, so ruddy!
How sad must be their mothers,
And relatives, their sons, their brothers,
Their friends, those who are close to them,
For these of whom I see so many coming!"
They commended all of the host to God
And wept as they passed by.
Their prayers they offered
To God for them, and softly,
That they would be led to his service
And brought back again at his will.
And so they came by the grace of God,

Which blessed them well and will yet bless them,
With great joy and rejoicing,
And without anger and without sadness
And without bitterness and without mocking,
Straight to Lyons[2] on the Rhone.

Note 44:

Saladin was in great anger
As you have heard me say,
He called to him Saphadin his brother,
And said to him: "Now I wish it to appear
How much confidence I have in my men.
Mount up and go without delay,
And cause for me that Ascalon be razed;
We no longer have need to battle for it;
Bring down the city of Gaza,
Let it be broken as sticks;
But hold Daron Castle,
So that my men may come past there:
Raze for me the Castle Galatie,
So that the Franks will not make use of it:
And bring down Fig Tree Castle,
That they may not go there;
Raze for me the White Guard,
So that after we will have no fear of it;
Raze Jaffa, and do it well,
The Castle of the Plains, and the Middle Castle;
Raze for me Saint George, Ramleh,
The great city which we found,
And Bel Mont on the high mountain,
Thoron, the Castle Ernald
And Fairview Castle and Mirabel;
Raze also, for it seems to me good,
The castles on the mountain,
So that not one remains standing,
Neither castle nor fort nor city,
But all must be brought down,
Excepting Krak and Jerusalem:
This is my will, so let it be done."
Saladin had commanded,
And the other asked his leave to depart,
Knowing well his commands.

Note 52:

My Lords, the following verses of this song are stirring
It was begun in the year of the incarnation
Of the Lord Jesus Christ, in truth,

Where there have been 1210 years since he came into the world
And in the month of May when the flowers are in bloom.
Master William created it while at Montalban.

Note 54:

Had I been with and known and seen them,
And had I travelled the country which they conquered,
Richer would have been this book, I swear by my faith,
And better would have been the song.

Note 60:

It was in the month which is called August
That the entire army arrived at Carcassone.
The king Peter of Aragon came there quickly,
With a hundred knights which he brought at his own expense.

Note 61:

Another company of crusaders came from the region of Agen,
But was not so great as that of the Franks;
These had left their lands a month earlier.
Among them was the Count Gui, a noble of Auvergne,
And the Viscount of Touraine, who contributed much,
The Bishop of Limoges, and the one from Bazas,
And the good Archbishop of Bordeaux
The Bishop of Cahors and the one from Agen
Bertrand de Cardaillac and the lord of Gourdon,
Ratiers of Castelnau, and all from Quercy.
This army took Puylaroque, where they found little trouble,
And brought down Gontaud and brought evil to Tonneins;
But Casseneuil is so strong that they could not take it
For the place was very well defended by a garrison
Of Gascons who were very light of foot
And very good bowmen.

Note 64:

Nine months had passed from the time of the battle,
When the company lacked water, which had dried up;
There was sufficient wine for two or three months,
But no man can live long without water.
And then came a great rain, as God and faith came to my aid,
Which soon became a deluge, which did them some harm:
In barrels and casks they put much of the water.
They made use of this water and mixed it in their food:
Such an illness overtook them that none knew what to do.
They took counsel together, and decided to leave

Rather than to stay and die without confession.
The women were assembled in the dungeon of the castle;
When the dark night came, so that none could see,
They all left the castle and
Excepting money, no one carried anything.

Note 67:

Beautiful is the present offered there by the king Charles!
He entered the church which was vaulted with multi-colored marble.
There is found an altar of Saint Paternoster:
God there celebrated mass, and also the apostles;
The twelve seats are all still there,
And the thirteenth in the midst, solid and well built
When Charles entered, his heart filled with joy;
Seeing the seat, he approached it.
The emperor sat down and rested a moment;
The twelve peers sat upon the other seats all around him:
Never before had anyone sat there, and none have sat there since.

The great beauty of the place filled king Charles with rejoicing.
He saw the church appointed with paintings in vivid colours:
Pictures of martyrs, of virgins and of great persons in majesty,
And the cycles of the moon and of yearly feasts;
And he saw flowing lustrous waters, and the fish in the sea.
The face of Charles was haughty and he held his head high.
A Jew entered, who had watched all of this attentively.
When he saw king Charles, he began to tremble:
His countenance was so stern that he dared not look upon it;
For a moment he might have fallen to the ground; then he took flight
And mounted straight away all of the marble stairs.
He came to the Patriarch and began speaking to him:
"Lord, go to the church and prepare the baptismal font!
I am going there and will be baptized on the spot!
I have just seen twelve counts enter the church, and with
Them a thirteenth -- never have I seen such a magnificent man!
In my opinion, it is God in person:
He and his twelve apostles have come to visit you!"
When the Patriarch heard this, he went to clothe himself properly
And then, in the city, he called the priests in their simple vestments
And instructed them to dress up and put on their robes.
With a great procession following, he went to see the king.

The emperor saw him and stood to come and greet him,
He uncovered and offered him a warm salutation.
They embraced and spoke.
The Patriarch said: "Where were you born, Lord?
Never before has anyone dared to enter this church
Unless it is on my order or by my request."
"Lord, I am called Charles, and I was born in France."

Note 70:

The poem is comical and not satirical. The poet has his eyes turned towards the orient rather than towards the celtic west. He takes the opposite position from the heroic songs and the military crusades by magnifying a pacific triumph and a victorious pilgrimage . . . . His image of the oriental world is wittingly fantastic, for it takes its audience beyond current reality and transcends all political situations.

Note 72:

From an historic point of view, the poems that we have studied give us little new information on the great events of the Crusade. Only one, the Song of Antioch, by the date of its composition, and by the precise pieces of information given by the author . . . merits place among historical documents . . . . As for the other parts of the legend, excepting the Song of Jerusalem, it is useless to search for authentic facts, about which the poets cared but little; but you can find there a reflection of the emotions, the ideas, the beliefs, in a word, of contemporary life.

CHAPTER VI - DISTORTIONS AND PROPAGANDA

Note 1:

At St. George of Ramleh came our barons,
Bohemond and Tancred and all of their company,
And all of the proud men of whom there were so many.
They stood down from their mounts and offered their prayers
And struck their breasts in great affliction:
They invoked the Lord God and his holy name,
And the noble St. Peter, and St. George the wise,
That all of their sins would be forgiven.

Note 4:

Said Blancadrin: "A marvelous man is Charles,
Who conquered Apulia and all of Calabria!"

Note 5:

Oh Durendal, how you are beautiful, pure and brilliant!
.....
By her I have conquered Provence and Aquitaine,
And Lombardy and all of Romania.
With her I have conquered Bavaria and all of Flanders
And Burgundy and all of Apulia.

Note 14:

"Hold, lady Guiborc, it is your nephew Guischard.
Vivien the Count will no more see him alive!"
The gentle woman extended her arms to him,
And slipped them gently around the dead knight.
The body was heavy and nearly slipped from her arms;
She was a woman of little bodily strength.
Against the earth she held the broken body,
Holding to a part of his coat.
Thursday at Vespers.*
Guiborc watched him lying on the ground;
Troubled was her look, her face pale,
Her eyes turned away and started in her head;
Her tongue hung out to the side;
And on her lap she embraced his head.
Guiborc wept, and then William comforted her.

*This is a refrain that appears at intervals throughout the poem.

Note 16:

Deramed was victorious in battle,
As at another time when he fought William with the shortened nose.*
They had won the game and taken the weapons of the dead;
The Saracens entered into their ships,
Their wind was slow, they could not get away.
So the leaders of the pagans and the perverted,
Nearly twenty thousand of the people of Deramed,
Went to a certain place
A good league away from the shores of the sea,
And with them they carried food to eat;
In ranks they were seated at dinner.
And they saw William approaching
With thirty thousand armed knights
Who had brought with them a large meal.
The knights cried Montjoie! and went to battle them.
The pagans cried: "French knights, mount up!"
They jumped up from their tables to go to battle;
The battle was renewed and none could turn from it;
Bread and wine and meat they had in abundance,
And golden vessels and tapestries and curtains,
But the pagans could not endure;
They followed the flight of the Saracens to the edge of the sea
Where they entered their boats and ships.
They lost their weapons which guarded their lives,
In a certain land where they came to give battle.

*In one of the early poems of the cycle, William has the tip of his nose

cut off by an opponent named Corsolt. William is often identified by this unique physical characteristic in many of the poems of the cycle which follow.

CHAPTER VII - CONCLUSION

Note 1:

We believe that the epic poems of the Crusades should be better known. The Song of Antioch, which is due, in its primitive form, to an eyewitness, is one of the most lively, one of the most striking, and one of the most original documents that we have on the First Crusade. No conscientious historian should neglect it any longer. It contains some very important information for which one will search in vain in the Latin chronicles.

Note 2:

The poems of the Crusades consist of important testimonies concerning a French society, uprooted from France, to live under other skies for nearly two centuries, a magnificient epic . . . . On these poems, the oriental influence is marked. These conquerers, captured by the attraction, the poetry, the light and the sun of Syria, have left in their songs a reflection of their souls: certainly still French, but strongly attached to this celebrated land where, at the risk of their lives, they transported their homes, their institutions, their languages and their religion.

Note 3:

Pagans are wrong and Christians are right.

Note 4:

You will see how God looks upon
Those whom he takes in his guard:
Those who take a vow to serve him
Nothing harmful will come to him.

Note 7:

Said Alderufe: "These things condemn you, William,
Christian men and women should not exist;
No baptism should there be on earth,
And wrong is the person who receives it on his head.
Such a baptism is not worth even a trifle.
God is in heaven, and Mohammed on earth;
When God makes it hot, Mohammed provides cool breezes,
When God makes rain, Mohammed makes the grass grow.
He who wishes to live must seek our leave,
And from Mohammed who governs the world."

Note 9:

The day that Acre was taken,
As I understand it,
It was four years ago, this is a certain thing,
That the Saracens conquered it;
And I have firmly in memory
That it was taken the day after
The feast of Saint Benedict,
Despite the accursed people,
May God curse them by his mouth,
I cannot refrain from saying this.
You should have seen the churches
Which had been given up in Acre
How they had defaced
The images and the paintings
And the altars were thrown to the ground,
And they broke the crosses and crucifixes
Out of spite for our faith
And to fulfill their misbelief,
And made them into Mohammedan places!
But for this they later paid dearly.

Note 12:

This was heard by the Count and his company
Of the foolish wicked people who believed in the heresy.
All will soon see, God bless me,
What counsel was given by those whom God will curse.
All of them will die and the land will perish
At the hands strangers who ravage and lay desolate;
The French and the Lombards
And all the world will tread upon those who carry a curse
Worse than the Saracen people!

Note 13:

Great was the company which the French encountered there.
The valley of Jehosaphat had recently reverted to them.
Those of Jerusalem came forth to give battle,
The pagans and Saracens, who were greatly encouraged;
Fifty thousand there were of those whom the Lord God hates.

Note 15:

All are put together of the Anti-Christ people.

Note 16:

And brought down will be those who serve the devil.

Note 22:

A hideous dark people,
Against God and against nature,
With red headgear on their heads,
Never had God made beasts more ugly.

Note 24:

It was on a Saturday
According to the story that I tell,
That the city was recovered
And delivered from the Saracens,
And marvels were done there
Which will always be spoken about,
When they took Jaffa a second time,
They killed
The sick Christian people that they found there;
And it was in truth proved
That in the city they found many swine,
Which they slaughtered and killed,
So many that it seemed an infinite number.
And it is known in truth
That they do not eat the flesh of swine,
And because of this they killed them gladly;
They hate nothing more on earth,
In their spite for the Christian faith;
They had placed and mingled
The dead people (Christians) and the swine side by side;
But the Christians took the bodies,
Those who for God had intervened,
And all the Christians they buried
And the Saracens
That on this Saturday had been killed,
They threw out with the swine, which stank so badly
That none could endure it.

Note 25:

Now listen to what the Turks did
To God and how they dishonoured him.
The day of the honored feast
When so many tears are shed,
The day of the feast of
All the saints that are in heaven assembled,
The hated people hanged in defiance
From the walls of Acre
The bodies of the Christians they had taken
In battle, and afterward killed.

These became just partakers,
As the preachers will say,
Of that great and everlasting joy
Which is without end and is eternal,
The joy of those whose feast
Was held upon that day.

Note 28:

The people of the Lord God attacked
And those in the city came out upon the walls:
Great was the assault and the defense
By those who had so little sustenance.
They defended themselves vigorously,
And made us pay dearly for their suffering
Never were there men so able at defense
As were these limbs of the devil.

Note 29:

Proud were the men of the city,
Both haughty and marvellous:
Were it not that they were a miscreant people,
A better people was never seen.