Line 103 of the *Chanson de Guillaume*, in laisse 9, does not fit the context.

The Saracen king Deramed of Cordres and his forces sail up the Gironde to the Archamp, where they land. They pillage, desecrate holy relics, and take captives. A knight escapes and carries the news to the drunken Tedbald of Bourges, who is with his nephew Esturmi, Guillaume’s nephew Vivien, and seven hundred armed men. Tedbald calls for advice. Vivien recommends sending messengers for assistance, especially to Guillaume, who is in Barcelona. Esturmi advises against this course of action, arguing that if Guillaume comes, even accompanied by only a few men, victory over the pagans will be credited to him. Instead, Esturmi counsels, the Christians should fight with the men they have at hand. Vivien praises Guillaume as without equal in battle. Nevertheless, Tedbald decides to attack the pagans the next morning and calls for wine, which he and Esturmi drink. Vivien goes to his lodging to sleep.

In laisse 9, the “men of their land,” that is to say the vassals of Tedbald, gather until, at dawn, they are ten thousand strong. Tedbald rises in the morning, opens a window, and cannot see the land, so many armed men are assembled:

MIRAT LE CIEL, NE POT MIRER LA TERRE;
VIT LA COVERTÉ DE BROINES E DE HELMES,
E DE SARAZINS, LA PUTE GENT ADVERSE.
« DEUS, » DIST TEDBALD, « ÍÇO QUE POT ESTRE? »

(McMillan 1949-50: ll. 101-04)
Line 103, positing that the terrain is covered with Saracens, is represented as the narrator’s own statement, not Tedbald’s. But the narrator is wrong because the land is covered not by Saracens but by Christians, by Tedbald’s own vassals. The poet has Tedbald immediately go on to say that for the eighteen years he has held the county of Bourges, he has never seen so many armed knights, and that if this force should attack a castle or a city, the enemy would come off poorly. Vivien then comments that Tedbald is much wiser now, compared with the previous night when he was drunk. Tedbald arms and leads his men out toward the Archamp. When they reach the battlefield, they see that the pagans are lodged in five hundred tents.

In laisse 14, Tedbald rides up onto a hillock to survey the pagan forces. He sees the seacoast covered by vessels.

Garde Tedbald vers la lasse de mer,
Vit la covertre de barges et de nefs,
Et de salandres et granz eschiez ferrez;
Mire le ciel, ne pot terre esgarder.
De la pour s’en est tut oblié.

(McMillan 1949-50: ll. 185-89)

The presence of the formula “he looks at the sky, he cannot see the land,” commonly found in scenes in which a Christian is looking out over a Saracen army that has just invaded, is entirely fitting here, and one might well expect it to be followed by a verse that is equivalent in sense to line 103, because here it is indeed the Saracens who cover the landscape, so numerous are they.

I say “equivalent in sense” because line 103, although it fits perfectly into the feminine e.e assonance of laisse 9, would not be appropriate in laisse 14, in which the assonance is masculine, in close e. The scribe has not, then, merely copied line 103 in the wrong location, displacing it from after line 188.
Unlike line 103 of the *Chanson de Guillaume*, line 2242 of the Oxford text of the *Chanson de Roland* was copied out of place. Specifically, it should have been written as the last line of folio 40v of the manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 23, but instead the scribe wrote it as the last line of folio 33r. According to Charles Samaran’s hypothesis, Digby 23 would have been copied from a model whose quires were not sewn together. Lulled by the identity of assonance of the line in question with that of the passage he was copying, the scribe began to copy this line onto the quire that immediately followed the one he should have taken. Then, realizing his error, he went on to copy the correct lines but neglected to eliminate the erroneous one. As a result, the line that should have been the last line of folio 40v was transmitted in the Oxford codex as the last line of folio 33r. This hypothesis requires that the model from which Digby 23 was copied should have had a quire of eight folios with 26 long lines to the page, which is entirely within the realm of possibility. Ewert and Roques (“L’Accident du vers 2242”) took the hypothesis of scribal error one step further, conjecturing that the scribe of Digby 23 was writing on loose bifolia. In copying the last page of the verso, the scribe had before him the first page of the recto of a quire that had already been completed. After having written the twenty-seventh line of the verso (l. 2241), he paused and then mistakenly wrote the line in question, “Mors est Turpins le guerreier Charlun,” on the folio on his right. Accordingly, folio 33r, where this verse is written at the bottom of the page, has 29 lines, and folio 40v only has 27, all the folios in between bearing the normal 28 lines. The displacement of this line in the Oxford *Chanson de Roland* is, then, purely a scribal phenomenon.

In the *Chanson de Guillaume*, line 103 occurs in the manuscript as the twenty-third line of the first column of folio 1v, a column of forty-one lines, thus just below the mid-point of the column, and line 188 is the twenty-sixth line of the first column of folio 2r, likewise a column of forty-one lines. The two lines are not positioned in the same place in their respective columns, nor is either at the beginning or the end of a column, situations which might be expected to have led the scribe to copy line
103 in the wrong place. The initial word of line 103, which renders the line hypermetric, is a scribal error that is easily corrected, the addition of e at the head of a line being a frequent error in the manuscript of the Chanson de Guillaume.\textsuperscript{1} The inclusion of line 103 at this point in the text, however, is a poetic, not a scribal, phenomenon.

Nonetheless, editors have conjectured that line 103 is a scribal error. Suchier (1911\textsuperscript{2}) tried to salvage the reading by supposing that a line had been skipped between lines 102 and 103 that expressed Tedbald’s great fear and his mistaken supposition that the assembled warriors were enemy troops rather than his own men (p. vi; see also p. xviii). Suchier reconstructed this supposedly missing line out of whole cloth so that the passage becomes:

\begin{quote}
[De la poür quidat que ço fust presse]
de Sarazins, la pute gent adverse.
\end{quote}

(Suchier 1911: ll. 104a-05)

This solution places the passage at the service of a supposition that can neither be proved nor disproved, but that has no basis in the text and has not been accepted by subsequent editors of the Chanson de Guillaume. Franz Rechnitz (1909), Nancy V. Iseley in both of her editions (1953, 1966), and Duncan McMillan (1949-50) simply included the line after line 102 without comment, although Rechnitz regularized the meter in his critical text by rejecting the first word of the line.

\textsuperscript{1} The conjunction e is erroneously added at the head of a line 93 times in the Chanson de Guillaume (Wathelet-Willem, Recherches sur la Chanson de Guillaume, p. 239).

\textsuperscript{2} The various editions of the chansons de geste in question will be noted in the text simply by the editor’s name and the year of publication. Specific titles of the editions can be found under the editors’ names in the Works Cited section.

\textit{Olifant}
Elizabeth Stearns Tyler (1919) placed the offending line after line 105 of her edition:

“Deus,” dist Tedbalt, “iço que podrat estre, —
(E) de Sarazins, la pute gent aduerse?
(Tyler 1919: ll. 104-05)

This transposition has Tedbald speculating whether the forces are those of the pagan enemy. Jeanne Wathelet-Willem (Recherches sur la Chanson de Guillaume) left the line blank and did not translate it. In her note 34 on page 287, she observed correctly: “Le passage, tel qu’il figure dans le manuscrit, est incompréhensible.” Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann (1983) uses Wathelet-Willem’s critical text in her edition and thus also omits the line, but she supplies a translation of it: “und von den Heiden, diesen üblen Ausgeburten des Teufels” [and of the pagans, these evil offspring of the devil]. Philip E. Bennett (2000) places the line in his rejected readings, and in a note deems it “an inadvertent intrusion produced by a scribe aware of developments in laisse 14.” Bennett retains the blank slot where the line was written so as not to disturb the numbering of the subsequent text. François Suard also includes the line among his rejected readings and writes in a note:

Ce vers, comme l’a bien vu W[athelet-Willem], n’a pas sa place ici, et il est inutile de chercher à l’insérer dans le contexte, comme l’a fait S[uchier], par un vers additionnel […]. Tiébaut, dégrisé, est stupéfait de voir la troupe de ses guerriers rassemblés. S’agit-il d’un «ébahissement admiratif», comme le pense W[athelet-Willem]? Nous considérerons plutôt que Tiébaut ne comprend pas ce que font tous ces gens, puisqu’il a perdu le souvenir des événements de la veille: c’est ce que suggère la question d’Estourmi au v. 125. (Suard 1991: p. 228, repeated in Suard 1999)
This is a valiant effort to save the reading, but it necessitates consent to two hypotheses: that the line was displaced, and, once it is restored to its proper position, that the poet intentionally produced an illogical sequence of thoughts in order to show that the character’s memory was clouded. In line 125 Esturmi asks Tedbald if he does not remember the events of the preceding evening, but line 103 is an authorial comment rather than an utterance of Tedbald, and I do not believe that it can plausibly be explained as a feature of characterization.

From this review of the editions, it is clear that several points are at issue: Should the line be included? If so, where should it be placed to make some kind of sense? If not, what motivated its inappropriate insertion at this point in the text?

Let us examine analogous scenes in other *chansons de geste*, passages in which a Christian observer observes a force of Saracens that prevents him from seeing the earth’s surface.

The earliest and best known of such scenes is in the Oxford text of the *Chanson de Roland*. The rearguard of the Frankish army has heard the sound of the approaching Saracens, and Oliver has climbed a prominence from which he can look out over the landscape of Spain, where he sees the armor and arms of the approaching enemy:

Oliver est desur un pui muntét;  
or veit il ben d’Espaigne le regnét  
e Sarrazins, ki tant sunt asemblez.  
Luïsent cil elme ki ad or sunt gemmez.  
e cil escuez e cil osbercs safrez  
e cil espiez, cil gunfanun fermez.  
Suc les escheles ne poet il acunter:  
Tant en i ad que mesure n’en set.  

(Short 1990: ll. 1028-35)

He reports what he has seen to his compatriots:
Dist Oliver: « Jo ai paiens veüz ;
Unc mais nuls hom en tere n’en vit plus. »
(Short 1990: ll. 1039-40)

Asking Roland to sound his elephant-tusk horn to call back the main body of the army, Oliver hears his companion’s response that such an action would be shameful and subject to reproach. Oliver reiterates what he has seen, emphasizing that the Saracens are so numerous that they cover the landscape:

Dist Oliver: « D’iço ne sai jo blasme.
Jo ai veût les Sarrazins d’Espaigne :
Cuverz en sunt li val e les muntaignes
E li lariz e trestutes les plaignes.
Granz sunt les oz de cele gent estrange ;
Nus i avum mult petite cumpaigne […] »
(Short 1990: ll. 1082-87)

Although Oliver has carried out his function of scouting out the enemy forces, he cannot persuade the commander of the rearguard to call for reinforcements. Although there is no line to the effect that Oliver cannot see the land, the Saracens are said to cover the various features of the topography. The Oxford \textit{Roland} was likely copied in the second quarter of the twelfth century and the state of the poem that it represents appears to be from the extreme end of the eleventh or the first few decades of the twelfth century.

In the \textit{Chevalerie Vivien}, a poem that provides an alternate version of the events recounted in the first part of the \textit{Chanson de Guillaume}, Vivien, referred to as an \textit{enfant}, scouts out the enemy forces. At this point in the \textit{Chevalerie Vivien}, the Saracens are still in their ships.

Devers senestre commence a regarder,
Et vit l’estoille [fleet] paroir et demostrer,
De l’or d’Arable vit l’air estanceler,
Avis lor est tot doie acoveter,
Que il ne vitrent point d’yave de la mer.
Lors commença l’enfes a sopirer;
Dist a ses homes: “Or poés esgarder.
Bataille avrons, n’en poons eschaper.
Ceu sunt paien, Sarrazin et Escler.
Huimais devom nos proësses mostrer,
Et a Jhesu nos armes comander.”

(McMillan 1997: ll. 329-39)\(^3\)

The opening laisse of *Aliscans*, also an alternate version of what is told in part of the *Chanson de Guillaume*, contains this type-scene as well. After the Saracens disembark, Vivien

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mout a ocis de Turs et de Persanz,} \\
\text{Mes ne li monte le pris de II. besanz,} \\
\text{Que tant en ist des nes et des chalans} \\
\text{Et des dromonz et des escoiz coranz} \\
\text{Ainz tant n’en vit nus hom qui soit vivanz,} \\
\text{D’escuz et d’armes est couverz li Archanz.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Régnier 1990: ll. 15-20)

In the same poem, the image of line 20 is repeated in varied form shortly afterward:

\[^3\text{This is McMillan’s texte de référence, largely based on manuscript S, Oxford, Bodleian Library, French. e. 32. The D text, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds français 1448, which is on the facing page of McMillan’s edition, does not differ appreciably in this passage. The corresponding passage of C (Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, 192) is ll. 402-14.}\]

*Olfiant*
Adont commencent Sarrazin a venir,
Toz Aleschans en veïsez covrir.
(Régnier 1990: ll. 54-55)

*Aliscans* and the *Chevalerie Vivien* both date from the late twelfth century.

*Garin le Loherain*, likewise from the late twelfth century in its extant versions, has the messenger Jouffroi, who is sent to king Peppin to summon help on behalf of Tierri of Morienne whose lands have been invaded by Saracens, invoke the motif in his message:

> “Li rois Tierris, qui ça m’a fet venir,
sire, vos mande, ne le doi pas tesir,
qu’a Val Parfonde le veingniez garentir
vers Sarradins qi l’ont fet asaillir.
Ses murs li font entamer et croisir;
tot environ font la terre covrir.
Cretians font de male mort morir.”

(Berkeley, Bancroft Library, ms. UCB 72, f. 8r)

In Jehan Bodel’s *Chanson des Saisnes*, from around the turn of the thirteenth century, Guiteclin’s army faces off against Charlemagne’s:

> Saisne, Lutif assamblent a la geste Francor.
Armé d’auberc et d’eaume et d’escu de color;
Tuit en cuevre li val, li tertre par antor.
Qant le voit Charlemaigne, si en ot grant dolor;
Damedeu en apele de bon cuer par amor:
« Aïde moi, vrais Dex, si me fai hui honor! »

(Brasseur 1989: ll. 4956-61 of the *LT* redaction)
The Saracen Thiebaut leads his fleet of forces to Narbonne in the *Enfances Guillaume* (first half of the thirteenth century), to besiege the city. As the fleet arrives,

\begin{quote}
Totte mer ceuvre, tant i ait de navie.
(Henry 1935: l. 284)
\end{quote}

In the *Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarche*, whose extant version is from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, a messenger arrives to tell the Saracens, who have just had the worst of a battle, that a large force of reinforcements has arrived at Bari in Apulia:

\begin{quote}
« N’a il remés Sarrasins ne Persant,
Turc ne Païen, Rous ne Popelicant.
A Bar en Pulle est li navie grant;
Tant i a barges e dromons e calans,
Et galieres et escipes corrant,
Tote mer covre tant est l’estoire [fleet] grant. »
(Eusebi 1963: ll. 2322-27)
\end{quote}

In the next laisse of the *Chevalerie Ogier*, the messenger repeats this news with the requisite change of assonance:

\begin{quote}
« Tant i asanllent Païen et Sarrasin
Sous Drogemer, es pres de val Chorin,
Est li navies aprestês et garnis
Des rices rois qui vus viennent servir;
Tant i a barges et grans dromons bastis,
Tote mer quevre, per foi le vos plevis. »
(Eusebi 1963: ll. 2344-49)
\end{quote}

This maritime scene is analogous to those found in the *Chevalerie Vivien* and the *Enfances Guillaume*. Note that, although this scene differs
from what is usually found in other *chansons de geste* in that it is described from the point of view of a pagan rather than a Christian, the name of a pagan people, a standard element of the type-scene, is still present.

In *Vivien de Monbranc*, composed toward the middle of the thirteenth century, the eponymous Vivien leads his wife Esclarmonde into the tower of Monbranc to view a pagan army brought by the Soudant de Babylone to besiege the city:

> Tout entour le païs la dame reguarda:  
> Ne voit fors Sarrasins, dont le païs peupla! 
> (Van Emden 1987: ll. 124-25)

These eleven passages (the second passage in the *Chanson de Guillaume* and the ten from other *chansons de geste*) make it clear that the type-scene of a character looking at an assembled army and seeing that the earth’s surface, be it the land or a body of water, is covered by the army, sometimes to the extent that the surface cannot be seen, is a stock feature of the *chanson de geste*. This type-scene is attested in texts ranging in date from around 1100 to the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The components of the type-scene are, although not always in the same order:

1. a verb of seeing (*garder, voir, mirer, esgarder, regarder*);
2. the objects (or people) that cover the surface (for the land, *escuz, armes, osbercs, espiez, eaume, escheles, Sarrasins*; for the sea, *estoire, navie, escoiz, nefs, barges, salandres, eschiez, dromons, chalans, galieres, escipes*);
3. the surface that is hidden from view (*val, muntaignes, lariz, plaignes, mer, lasse de mer, Archamp, Aleschans, terre, tertre, païs*);
4. a verb signifying that what the character sees is covered (*cuvrir, acoveter, peupler*);
5. the pagan invaders, usually in the form of the name of a people (*painen*, *Turs*, *Persanz*, *Sarrazins*, *Escler*, *Saise*, *Lutif*, *Rous*, *Popelicant*).

It is important to note that the forces preventing the viewer from seeing the surface consist typically—and perhaps, if one were to survey the entire genre, invariably—of pagans and not of Christians, except in the case of line 103 of the *Chanson de Guillaume*.

The poet who composed the *Chanson de Guillaume* shared techniques that are typical of the genre, in particular the techniques of composition by formula and type-scene (*motif*) that were described by Jean Rychner in his pioneering work, *La Chanson de geste: essai sur l’art épique des jongleurs*, and that are typical of orally composed poetry. The poem is particularly rich in formulas, an indication of which is that 31% of its hemistichs are repeated within the text itself (Duggan, *The Song of Roland: Formulaic Style*, p. 23), but its peculiarities are also well documented.  

In the passage of the *Chanson de Guillaume* in which line 103 occurs, the poet starts to recount a vista like the ones seen by characters in other *chansons de geste* as given here or reflected in the words of messengers relating the experience of viewing such a vista. He has Tedbald look out the window of his castle at an assembled army. Tedbald sees that the land is covered with coats of mail and helmets, that is to say with men wearing this armor. Continuing on with an element normally found in the type-scene, the poet sings a line that identifies the army as an enemy force composed of Saracens. This identification is erroneous, but, like a horse that, through habit, routinely makes its way to the stable, the poet did not realize his error. Neither, obviously, did the person responsible for taking down his text from performance, perhaps through

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4 See in particular the comprehensive treatment in Wathelet-Willem, *Recherches sur la Chanson de Guillaume*, pp. 66-276.
the medium of wax tablets (Duggan, “Prélégomènes,” pp. 414-17). Whether the faithful copying of an inappropriate line constitutes scribal error is a delicate point that depends on one’s view of the scribe’s function and how much of an editorial component it might include.

Jean Rychner (La chanson de geste, p. 137) pointed out a similar inappropriate use of formulaic lines in the *Prise d’Orange*, where, in lines 947-83, Guillaume and Guielin are unsuitably armed with lances in Orable’s bedroom in preparation for fighting in the staircases of the tower Gloriette. Furthermore, formulas appropriate only for combats on horseback, such as *briser leurs lances*, are used. Lances would certainly be obstacles rather than aids in such confined quarters, but the type-scene of the arming of a knight includes them, and the poet has, accordingly, absent-mindedly depicted them in his performance in keeping with the tendencies of his craft, inappropriately, without the scribe’s having corrected the passage. Unlike lines 103 of the *Chanson de Guillaume*, these lines of the *Prise d’Orange* are not so jarring as to have motivated editors to cast them into the rejected readings of their editions.

The oral composition of the *chanson de geste* in performance has come to be recognized by many specialists on the basis of both internal and external evidence. Consciousness of this primary stage, which lasted at least well into the thirteenth century, can help to elucidate the process behind a textual anomaly that is difficult or impossible to explain on paleographic or codicological grounds. In the hermeneutic process that characterizes all intellectual advances, the theory sheds light on the text, and what the text tells us reflects back upon the theory.

5 Judging by the jongleur’s intervention in performance preserved in the two oldest manuscripts of *Huon de Bordeaux* (Ruelle 1960: ll. 4976-92; 5510-19). See Riquer, “Épopée jongleresque.”
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