
This paper rejects attribution of Aymeri de Narbonne to the author of Girart de Vienne, Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube. Lines in Girart clearly identify Bertrand as the author, but the only suggestion that Bertrand also composed Aymeri comes from what Kibler terms Gaston Paris' subjective evaluation of similarities of tone, style and versification between the two epics.

K. examines existing criticism and finds that subsequent scholars have, on the whole, merely accepted Paris' findings. K. refutes one by one the arguments favoring Bertrand as the author of Aymeri. To Paris' argument that the final laisse of Girart seems to introduce Aymeri, K. responds that this laisse could also introduce the Chanson de Roland, and he refers to the different versions of the Enfances Guillaume, each with its own transitional laisse, to show that transition laisses do not prove authorship. Similarly, Paris' assertion that Girart can serve as an introduction and Aymeri as a sequel to Charlemagne's excursion into Spain, while true, does not suggest common authorship. Louis Demaison also presented arguments for common authorship: that Aymeri is preceded by Girart in all save one of the extant manuscripts; that a passage of Aymeri presupposes knowledge of Girart; and that there is a stylistic similarity between two lines of Girart and two from Aymeri. K. contends that these arguments are inconclusive, since it is ridiculous to assume that juxtaposition of two texts implies common authorship; that allusions were often made in medieval texts to other works; and that stylistic similarity between lines of different writers was possible, when formulaic diction was used in composition and when stock motifs were freely borrowed, in an age which did not value originality of expression. K. has made a significant contribution in showing that Paris and Demaison's arguments are illogical, and that there is no proof that Bertrand is the author of Aymeri.

In the second part of this paper, K. compares formulaic diction, motifs and versification in the two poems, in an attempt to disprove common authorship. His point of departure is that the same formulaic diction does not prove common authorship, unless consistently identical, but that the presence of a significant number of expressions used extensively and almost exclusively in one text and not the other points to authorship by two poets. When outlining this method of approach, K. informs us that he has excluded from his study the expressions common to
both Aymeri and Girart and which also belong to the poetic fonds commun of any epic poet of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, because he believes (but does not allow us to judge) that the formulaic expressions not shared by the two poems are more numerous. This exclusion may distort the overall picture, for the expressions used in one poem and not the other are still the common poetic property of the age, and very few formulas appear exclusively in one work.

Enumerating the ways in which a speaker appeals to God, K. divides the material into part-line and full-line appeals. Since both techniques were part of a standard repertory, and since K. does not give us the information to calculate whether either work prefers one form over the other, this division is not necessarily significant. The presentation of the expressions where speakers appeal to God is statistically unsatisfactory. K. cites seven formulaic expressions in Girart, but, of these, he gives the number of occurrences for only one. Comparing the occurrences in both epics, we find that two expressions occurring several times in Girart also occur several times in Aymeri. One expression occurring several times in Girart, occurs only once in Aymeri. An expression that occurs in eleven part-lines and three full-lines in Girart occurs in an undisclosed number of times in full-line occurrences in Aymeri. A further expression which occurs in several part-line occurrences in Girart occurs only in full-line instances in Aymeri, but we do not know how many times. A last expression occurs in Girart, without, any mention of its appearance in Aymeri. This lack of precision makes it impossible to evaluate the presence or absence of these expressions as more than possibly random choices.

Perhaps more indicative of the work of two different minds is the fact that, in the full-line appeals, Girart shows a preference for references to the Pope, to pilgrimages, to Christ's sufferings on the Cross and to the power of God, while Aymeri alludes mostly to Faith and the saints.

K. presents numbers of occurrences for formulaic expressions of curses, insults, assertions of the truth of things and the fact that the author or speaker is hiding nothing. K., however, neglects to give us the total number of words in each work which renders transformation of numbers of occurrences into frequencies impossible. If an author used an expression with the same frequency throughout two works, the longer work, of course, would have more occurrences. The figures given by K., moreover, are so low that statistical interpretation is hazardous: the differences shown may be due to chance alone. For example, the fact that fill a putain occurs eleven times in Girart, but only three times in Aymeri, is not necessarily conclusive of different authorship when a writer could so easily change those numbers to fit his mood and the exigencies of the different epics. Nonetheless, while K.'s evidence does
not constitute a definitive proof, it certainly is indicative, with reservation, of two distinct authors, for one also finds that the combination gloton desfaé does not occur at all in Girart and desfaé occurs only four times, whereas gloton desfaé is the most popular insult in Aymeri, and desfaé occurs nearly twenty times.

Discussing the treatment of motifs in the two works, K. presents the case of the arming for battle, indicating that Girart allows a whole or half a line for each piece of armor, whereas Aymeri summarizes the motif. Other traditional motifs yield analogous results, which we interpret to mean that Girart consistently details motifs, while Aymeri as equally consistently summarizes them. Yet schools taught the techniques of composing long and short descriptions of the same event, so we should not automatically conclude that this difference, indicates two poets. A more convincing argument, however, for the existence of two authors is made by K.'s brief analysis of the versification of the two poems. Aymeri has mostly good rhymes and hardly ever rhymes -ent/-ant. On the other hand, Girart is heavily assonanced and mixes -ent with -ant. It is unlikely that a poet's technical rhyming skills would be so divergent at different times.

In his conclusion, K. has written a critique of the second part of his paper, stating that his hypothesis must remain tentative until further detailed study of repetitive patterns and motifs has been made. This is correct, but it is also true that his hypothesis must remain tentative because of the lack of a rigorous statistical methodology. The differences in versification and other evidence make it seem quite likely that K.'s thesis is correct, but it is to be regretted that he chose to present his statistical data imprecisely, perhaps to make it palatable for his fellow humanists. Such data is, however, essential to lend credible support to K.'s assertions. More precision is required to prove that the deviations mentioned in the choice of formulaic expressions are statistically significant and do indeed represent individual patterns.

Joan B. Williamson
New York City, 1974