Jean Rychner's systematic exposition of insights into the esthetic functions of the formula, the motif, and the laisse in the chanson de geste have made him the giant on whose shoulders we stand, But it would be a disservice to his discoveries if we failed to look at them critically. The broad lines and basic concepts of his analysis provide an extremely useful perspective for the literary critic of the chanson de geste, but in the detail of their application to specific texts we discover that, like any significant departure, his study has missed nuances of no small importance.

The Prise d'Orange, for example, drew Rychner's approval for its "structure strophique forte" (p. 107), but it also incurred his rather severe judgments that in it incidents follow each other without any order (p. 42) and that the second-rate author, "dépourvu de talent," had no sense of the inappropriateness of the formulas and motifs he used for the tale (pp. 137-8). This ambivalent evaluation of the poem reappears, albeit somewhat modified, in Claude Régnier's introduction to the three versions of the poem. Régnier repeats Rychner on the strength of the laisse, and he disallows Rychner's assertion that the poem lacks order (pp. 74-5), but he cannot rid himself of a certain discomfort before the many repetitious passages. "L'impression de monotonie est réelle," he tells us (p. 73), and the condescension is clear when he characterizes version A as "un art populaire qui va droit à l'essentiel et requiert la complicité de l'auditeur" (p. 74).

Yet the very tools of analysis which Rychner provides, when examined critically and applied with care to the reality of the texts, give itself more akin to the rehabilitations of the poem by Dufournet and Kibler based on the content of the poem than to the analyses of form by Rychner and Régnier.²


²Les Rédactions en vers de la "Prise d'Orange" (Paris: Klincksieck, 1966). Let me note here that Régnier, following a long tradition, takes version A of the poem to be the closest reflection of the archetype.

³Régnier, correcting Rychner, noted the skillful progressions of the poem (p. 74). Reviewing Régnier's edition, J. C. Payen remarked
I should like, then, to examine in the Prise d'Orange the use of the laisse and the function of repetition both in order to examine an aspect of this particular poem and in order to see what kind of information the individual poem can give us about the genre as a whole. More particularly, I shall look at some questions which arise out of a short segment of the poem, laisses XXXII-XXXV of version AB, the corresponding laisses in versions C(E) and D, and some further passages in all three versions which in one way or another illuminate the questions posed by these laisses. In the loosely ordered reflections inspired by this sampling, I shall begin with some remarks on the intricate connection which echoes in the text create between literary criticism and textual criticism; then I shall look at two questions related to the laisse, the coincidence of laisse and incident and the marks of laisse boundaries; and finally I shall examine two separate clusters of details which occur repeatedly in the poem: the assaults against Gloriette and the raising of the drawbridge.4

On the parodic nature of the love interest in the poem and noted the poem's fairly marked departure from properly epic themes ("Considérations sur la Prise d'Orange. A propos d'un livre récent," MA, 76 [1970], 493-513).

On the question which interests us here, he observed that the poem uses echo largely to emphasize insignificant episodes (p. 327).

Jean Dufournet ("La Météamorphose d'un héroïque épique, ou Guillaume Fierabras dans les rédactions A et B de la Prise d'Orange," RLR, 78 [1968], 17-51) and William W. Kibler ("Humor in the Prise d'Orange," in Studi di letteratura francese, 3 [1974], pp. 5-25) succeed in shaking themselves loose of the tradition of severity by discovering that Guillaume amoureux is funny. (Régnier noted "une utilisation discrètement parodique de la technique épique" and called the A version a "chef-d'oeuvre d'humour," p. 76, but we have seen his severity. Payen saw the humor as well, but qualified the poem as one of those "oeuvres manquées qui sont de grandes œuvres," p. 329.) By looking at the function of repetition in the poem, we too arrive at the conclusion that the poem is funny.

The opinions expressed about v. 829 in ms A1 typify the shifting attitude toward the poem. Rychner took the line literally and found that when Guillaume charges across a room, Celé part vient poignant et trésué, to pick up a club with which to fight, the second-rate jongleur's stock of ready-made formulas has provided him with an inappropriate line (pp. 137-8). Régnier glossed the second hemistich as meaning "very quickly" and supposed that the literal meaning had been worn out by usage (p. 318, note to v. 829). Dufournet (p. 29) and Kibler (p. 23) see in this hemistich a rather discreet parody.

4I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my graduate students,
It is worth noting that variants occur within a manuscript as well as between manuscripts. The same processes of association, the same flexible constraints operate between parallel passages within a manuscript as between corresponding passages in separate manuscripts. Compare the following readings:

Al 206 Dex mar i fu ses cors et sa jovente
    258 Tant mar i fu la seue grant beauté
    281 Tant mar i fu la seue gaillardie

D 141 Dex tant mar fut la soe persone
    158 Dex tant mar fut la soe jalardie

Close echoes like these, either within a text or between manuscripts, teach us to recognize less immediately obvious ones like the following echo in C:

Mar fu ses cors et sa bele jovente
Quant ne croit Dieu le pere omnipotente
(vv. 190-191)

C'est grans damages que Diex le fist criër
En tele forme por Mahom aourer.
(vv. 224-225)

The literary critic must recognize these echoes in which the signifiant varies considerably while the signifié remains essentially constant. Do, for example, these lines in C represent a deliberate play of varied wording against constant content (cf. Al 206-7, 258-9, 281-2 and D 141-2, 158-9) or are they rather supposed to disguise the who performed, and endured, a good deal of preliminary exploration, and especially to M. Bright and J. Hassel, whose analyses of AB XVII (= C XVII = D XIII) and of AB XXVI-XXX (= C XXVI = D XXII-XXVI) form an important background to the material I develop here.


6The progressions which Régnier (p. 74) and Dufournet (pp. 38-40) point out are, after all, passages which repeat each other with variations.
Edward A. Heinemann/Prise d'Orange 39

similarity of content?

This literary function of the variant presents some difficult questions for the textual critic. Laisses XXXIX of A1, XXXVIII of C, and XXXIII of D will provide an illustration. The Saracens break into Orable's palace through the underground passage, and Guillaume is the first to perceive them:

A1 1185-190

Premièrement les aperçut Guillelmes
Dex dist li cuens beaus glorjeus celestre
Tuit somes mort et livré a malterre
Dist Guīelin par le cors saint Hylaire 1188
Se Dex m'aïst traî nos a Orable
Et Dex confonde la sarrazine geste

C 1155-157

Voit le Guillelmes a poi qu'il n'est dervés
Diex dist li quens biax rois de majestés 1156
Nos sommes mort et a dolor livrés

D 935-938

Prumierement les a coisit Guillelmes . . .
Dist Guīelin par lou baron saint Jaque 936
Chier me cuit vendre ans que païen me baillent
De lor vendut nos a Orable la déserte

This passage makes rather specific allusion to the numerous other passages in the poem where Guillaume perceives a danger and breaks into lamentation, thereby provoking a caustic reply from Guīelin.7 The following schematization gives some of the most prominent marks of the cluster:

1. Guillaume sees and reacts (as in C 1155)
   Voit le Guillelmes a pou ne + expression denoting extreme fury
2. anticipation of death (as in A1 1187 and C 1157)
   . . . sommes mort et . . .

3. Guêelin replies with an oath (as in Al 1188 and D 936) or with a caustic comment on the worth of Guillaume’s words

1. Dist Guêelin
2. par le . . .
3. vos parlez . . .
(See C 979-980: Dist Guêelins vos parlés de folage
Que par l’apostle c’on requiert à
[Saint Jake]
4. Guêelin promises to sell himself dearly (as in D 937)
Chier me cuit vendre ainz que . . .

As can be seen in the clustering of discourse presentation, oath, and caustic comment in mark #3, certain details tend to cluster together, but, while they may all occur together in one realization, in another some of the details may be left unstated.

What is important for our purposes is that any one of the details may suffice to imply the others, and at a given point in the narration the poet/scribe/remaniur/jongleur may relate all the details or only a selection of them. In the latter case the unstated details remain implicit in the narration.9

In this light, the lacuna which Régnier sees in ms D between vv. 935 and 936 (p. 289) could conceivably be a deliberate variation within the text. Both Al and D show another variation in this segment, namely the significant verb of perception is not the usual veoir, the perception is expressed in a full verse instead of the first hemistich only, and the reaction is present only by implication. The previous occurrences of this cluster have set us up to expect the perception and reaction in a different form, the one which C, in fact, does give, and Al and D attract our attention because they depart from this norm. Al is elliptic in that it does not state explicitly Guillaume’s fury, and it is possible to read the text in D as a still more elliptic form of the cluster. (C, too, cuts back the passage

8Guêelin’s promise to sell himself dearly is less frequent in this cluster of details than a sarcastic allusion to Guillaume’s amatory intentions. Al 1189 and D 938 should perhaps be understood as recalling these, allusions. Similarly Al 1613-14 and C 1825-26, referring to Guillaume’s friends in the palace, can be taken as one of these allusions.

9See below the discussion of C 935-939, where C makes explicit (and transforms) an aspect of the tale which had been left implicit in the archetype.
by eliminating Guïelin's reply and setting the three Frenchmen directly into action.) In other words, we could take Régnier's suspension points at the end of v. 935 as part of the text of the manuscript instead of as an editorial intervention.

I linger over this minor point in an inferior manuscript in order to emphasize the oddly double perspective imposed on us by this "poésie qui vit de variantes." On the one hand simple respect for fact as opposed to fancy obliges us to observe rigorously the very letter of the text. And on the other, the multiplicity of variants, testifying to a kind of latency in the poem, puts us remarkably close in outlook to Jean-Louis Bourdillon's curious edition of Roland; we stand back from any one version of the poem and see it through the ensemble of versions.

The extraordinary wealth of raw information in the complete variant apparatus of Régnier's editio maior sets before our eyes the very life of this poetry and actualizes for us the latency of the genre by giving us concrete cases of the choice between one expression and another, between the amplified and the compressed version of a detail, between an emphasis on echo and an emphasis on variety, between the implicit and the explicit. In addition to the usual contrastive value of any variants, we find here, presumably backed by the full authority of the Old French epic tradition, actual cases where a performer (be he scribe, jongleur, or remanieur) has seen fit, for whatever reason, to make explicit a detail which other performers leave implicit or conversely to leave unsaid, but no less present, what others state explicitly. From our Bourdillon-like perspective we may learn to feel in the text a closer interplay between the concrete reality of the text and its unrealized possibilities than we are used to.

On the Laisse

A musical unit dividing the narrative, the laisse can possess two kinds of unity. On the one hand it furnishes its own frame in the introductory and concluding verses, which, by accentuating the change of assonance from one laisse to the next, set off each laisse as a separate

10Bourdillon, much enamored of the Roland manuscript he had acquired in 1822, devoted a good portion of his time and energy to the acquisition and study of material relevant to the poem and the legend. Eventually he found that he had learned the poem by heart, and he presented his edition not as a copy of a manuscript but rather as a blend of all the versions. See Wendelin Foerster (ed.), Das altfranzösische Rolandslied, Text von Chateauroux und Venedig VII, Altfranzösische Bibliothek, 6 (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1883), pp. ix-x.
unit. And on the other, the laisse can be used to relate a single incident. When Rychner refers to the "structure strophique forte" of the Prise (p. 107), he means both kinds of unity. There are few composite laisses, he notes, and the laisses are "bien marquées, nettement découpées." This judgment can hardly be disputed.

An examination of the elements which compose the strong strophic structure of the poem, however, raises some interesting questions about both unity of content and the marks of laisse boundaries.

Unity of Content. Unity of content, or coincidence of laisse and incident, is obvious in most of the laisses of ms Al. To pick just four, laisse XXXII relates the expulsion of the Saracens from Orable's palace, laisses XXXIII and XXXIV each narrate a victorious sortie, and laisse XXXV gives the exchange of threats between Aragon and Guillaume. In contrast, the seventy verses of laisse XLII in the same manuscript relate the voyage of Aragon's messengers, their message to Tiebaut, and the voyage of Tiebaut's army toward Orange. The laisse is both long and diffuse.11

The unity of content in these four laisses of version AB is to some extent confirmed by the testimony of the other two versions. Despite differences of detail, C XXVIII and D XXVIII group the same incidents as AB XXXII. D eliminates as a single block AB XXXIII. AB XXXIV, C XXXI, and D XXXI all group the same incidents.

The agreement of the versions is, however, complete. C XXXII does not give the end of AB XXXV, and D XXX corresponds to only the end of AB XXXV. D has shifted toward the beginning of AB XXXV and inserted it into its own laisses XXIII and XXIV (Régnier, p. 65). C has separated the Saracen assault (XXIX) in AB XXXIII from the exchange between Guillaume and his nephew (XXX) to create two units where AB has only one, and the coincidence of laisse and incident in C is quite as satisfactory as in AB.12

11It is one of the "laisses composites ou floues" which Rychner mentions in the poem (p. 107). Still it could be argued that the length and multiplicity of details do not make the laisse composite or amorphous. Everything in the laisse is directed to the message sent across the sea to Tiebaut.

12Version AB has created two laisses in XXVII and XXVIII from a single one (Régnier, p. 69), but with less success than C. Laisse XXVII is strangely amorphous: vv. 865-871 evoke the unsuccessful assault against the palace, 872-875 Aragon's fury, and 876-878 Guillaume's reply. Neither the proportions of the parts nor the logical relation of the content makes any one element central.
We shall return to C XXIX-XXX and AB XXVII-XXVIII in considering the marks of laisse boundaries, but these two cases interest us here in that they show how single, unified chunks of narrative can be subdivided and that the unity of content in a laisse derives to some degree from the simple fact that certain details have been related in a single laisse. The laisse can act as a kind of frame and bind together in some sort of unity elements which in other circumstances would be disparate.

In this vein, I would venture to affirm a certain comic unity to the long laisse LX in version AB. The variety of incidents in it is amusing. The conquest of the city is of little interest to the narrator, who, as Régnier points out, has little taste for "les beaux coups d'êpée" (p. 75), and who shows his amusement at epic prowess by packing into the ninety-five verses of this laisse (in ms Al) all the diverse aspects of the capture: the discussion of means (1767-777), the expedition into the subterranean passage and Bertrand's sudden doubts about Guillebert (1778-798), the joy inside the palace (1797-808), general combat (1809-828), Aragon's death (1829-844), victory (1845-848), and the deliverance of Orable (1849-861). The fun of the subject lies in Guillaume's propensity for getting himself into nasty scrapes. Once we have thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle of Guillaume in love, Guillaume in disguise, Guillaume in prison, etc., the remanieur brings along this "composite" laisse to tie up the narrative, and the "composite" nature itself conveys the lack of importance of the incidents in the laisse.13

The unity of content of the laisse, then, is somewhat relative. A given segment of the narrative can be broken up into a variety of "units" according to the lights of the poet, and the laisse, once it is marked off by its introductory and concluding verses and by its separate assonance, can impose unity on the diverse incidents which it contains.

Boundaries of the Laisse. In a few economical pages Rychner (pp. 71-73) and M. K. Pope before him (I, pp. 355-358; II, pp. 43-45, 48-49) have sketched the marks which characterize the introductions and conclusions of the laisse. To improve on their remarks would require a disproportionate amount of work, and yet those very remarks raise some tantalizing questions. Certain marks characterize laisse introductions, and others conclusions, but some marks seem to fill both functions. Pope finds that some sixty laisses in Roland begin with discourse (I,

13See Mildred K. Pope, "Four Chansons de geste: A Study in Old French Epic Versification," MLR, 8 (1913), 352-367; 9 (1914), 41-52; 10 (1915), 310-319. I, p. 353: "Sometimes for the purposes of quick narrative the poet [of the Chanson de Roland] summarizes several comparatively unimportant occurrences [in a single laisse]."
but she also notes that in some 135 cases a speech ends the
laisse in that poem (p. 357). These laisse-ending speeches are often
a comment on the preceding action, and as such they fit into a broader
category, perception and reaction by a character or characters. We
find such perceptions and reactions linking laisses XXXIII-XXXIV-XXXV
of ms Al:

```
• •  •
Arragon l'ot a pou d'ire ne font        1044
XXXIII Mahomet jure que il le comparront

XXXIV Arragons voit les paiens qui se targent
     Il les apele belement et aresne
     Fill a putain gloton mar i entrastes     1048
     • •  •
XXXIV Voit l'Arragon a pou d'ire n'enville     1069

XXXV Quant Arragon voit tormenter sa gent
     Lors a tel duel a pou d'ire ne fent
     A clere voiz s'escria hautement         1072
     • •  •
The phenomenon of enchaînement, or "bridging" as Pope calls it (I,
p. 356), naturally brings the same details to figure at both the begin-
nings and ends of laisses. In splitting in two the laisse corresponding
to AB XXXIII, C uses the simple expedient of redoubling a verse expressing
perception to create a distinct boundary between its two laisses:

• •  •
XXIX Voit le Guillelmes mout en fu aïrous     946

XXX Or voit Guillelmes qu'il est en mal broion
     Il en apele son neveu par son non15        948
     •  •  •
```

14In thé Charroi de Nîmes (Duncan McMillan, ed. [Paris: Klinck-
sieck, 1972]), some 29 out of 59 laisses begin with speech or discourse
presentation.

15Nor is this simple operation performed without skill. The
second hemistich of v. 946 recalls the first verse of the laisse, Or
fu Guillelmes courechiés et irous, and this return in the conclusion
to the point of departure makes the laisse into a well-organized
In each of these laisse conclusions and introductions we find certain basic patterns repeated irrespective of the position at the beginning or end of a laisse. In these perceptions, the bare scheme of subject (name), verb of perception, and direct object (Arragon l'ot, Or voit Guillelmes qu'il est en mal broion) dominates the variety in the details of expression. Nearly all the reactions are furious, and the fury is expressed in one hemistich, a pou d'ire ne ... (cf. C 946, mout en fu aïrous). In the longer form, the reaction carries on into a speech (Il ... âpèle, Al 1047, C 948).  

The distinction between the introductory and the concluding tone seems to lie in a variety of details not all of them immediately obvious. The use of the pronoun as direct object in Al 1044 and 1069 and in C 946 and the consequent necessity of an antecedent makes these verses concluding rather than introductory. In contrast, the laisse-opening perception in Al 1046 expresses the direct object as a noun; the thing perceived is explicitly named rather than merely alluded to. Similarly, in the laisse-opening verses Al 1070 and C 947 the direct object of the verb of perception is expanded to fill a complete clause.  

A general statement of the circumstances is an introductory detail, and it is often signalled by the adverb or at the beginning of the verse, where its initial position in the clause causes the inversion of the subject (C 947; Al 1024, Or fu Guillelmes dolant et cor-reços). But both or and the epic inversion figure in the conclusion of Al XXXII,  

Or en penst Dex qui tot a a jugier  
Voit l'Arragon le sens cuide changier, 1023

where the temporal reference of or introduces a note of menace rather than an evocation of circumstances. (See below: C amplifies and paragraph explaining Guillaume's anger. Further, the perception, expressed in v. 946 as a secondary part of the exposition, becomes, in the reprise of v. 947, the point of departure for a new development. 

Notice the rhythmic echoes within each bridging: Al 1044-6 Arragon + verb + cesura; Al 1069-70 1 syllable + Arragon + cesura; C 946-7 ...voit... + Guillelmes + cesura. 

Is the contrast deliberately comic between the belement of Al 1047 and the fury of Fill a putain in the following verse? 

Rychner refers to "vers descriptifs" (p. 72), Pope to descriptive lines or passages (I, p. 356; II, pp. 43, 48). 

Rychner, p. 72: "L'inversion épique se rencontre souvent en début de laisse: elle avait certainement valeur d'intonation."
specifies the menace at the end of this laisse.) Amplification in laisse introductions forming the second element of an enchaînement seems to be a part of the introductory tone, as does, in more general terms, a slowing down in the narration. We saw in the laisse conclusions above that the direct objects of the verbs of perception are pronouns, a single consonant in Al 1044 and 1069, a single syllable in C 946. In the introductions above they are amplified to fill an entire second hemistich (Al 1046, C 947) or five syllables of one (Al 1070).

In separating laisse XXVIII from laisse XXVII, version AB uses the slackening of pace which is provided by a verse evoking the general situation. Compare the corresponding texts of Al and D (C has eliminated this passage):

Al XXVII-XXVIII  D XXIII

876 Et dist li cuens voirement Et dist li cuens volrement i suis
Par ma proesce i sui ge [i sui gié
Dex m'en aist qui en croiz [fu drecié
Or fu Guillelmes en Gloriéte
[entré
880 As Sarrazins commença a parler Mal dahé ait por vos se quiert Maldahait ait por vos celer s'i
[celer [quiert 721

The presentation of the general situation in the familiar pattern, Or fu + subject, stops the forward movement of the narrative, as does the discourse presentation of v. 880. Still a third of the four verses in Al which D does not give carries in it a mark of a laisse boundary. V. 878 carries a shade of foreboding, which is another characteristic note of laisse conclusions.

Rychner, p. 78: "l'enchaînement s'accompagne souvent d'une sorte de palier que marque, dans le déroulement du récit, et très exactement entre deux laisses, l'aspect sous lequel apparaît la même action à la fin de la laisse précédente, puis au début de la laisse suivante." The "beaux paliers chronologiques" are one of the traits which Rychner appreciates in the Prise (p. 107).

Rychner notes the "valeur de conclusion suspensive" in antici-
We noted above the hint of menace in Al 1022, Or en penst Dex qui tot a a jugier. In the corresponding laisse conclusion, C has chosen to make the threat more explicit even though doing so creates two different difficulties in the copying of the text of its model.22

Or en penst Diex li peres droiturier
Qu'il n'ont laens n'a boire n'a mangier 936
Fors or molu et argent bon et chier
Mais tiel viande lor puet petit aider
Voit le Arragon vif quida erragier

The expansion of the threat in vv. 936–938 separates the pronoun le (v. 939) from its antecedent, the success of the Frenchmen at driving the Saracens out of the tower and raising the drawbridge (vv. 931–934). In Al the pronoun is separated from its antecedent by only one verse, Or en penst Pex . . . , and the connection can be understood easily; in C Aragon appears to lose his temper because the Frenchmen have no provisions. Further, having posited a lack of food in the tower, the remanieur is somewhat embarrassed when in laisse XXXII one of the besieged Frenchmen taunts Aragon and boasts of the supply of provisions in the tower: the narrator quickly intervenes to assure us that the hero is speaking in good faith but does not really know how badly off they are (C 1002–032, cf. Al 1083–108).

Finally, part of the tone of conclusion seems to derive from the mere fact that a verse occurs at the end of the laisse.23 The menace and suspense in Aragon's fury at the ends of laisses XXXIII and XXXIV of Al are greater than in the laisse introductions which follow them precisely because of the pause, the suspense, in the narrative implied by the transition between laisses.

The Siege Cluster

Laisse introductions in Al tend to be long (the introduction to laisse XXXII, for example, runs to nine verses, from v. 987 to 995), and we encounter in a series of these long introductions a cluster of details, relating Saracen assaults against Gloriette, which is quite instructive about the creation of a norm within a text and about the patiences and presages, p. 73. Pope mentions the note of foreboding as a trait of the conclusion, I, p. 358.

22 This innovation may have been made for its comic possibilities: see Guillebert's concern for food when Guillaume and his nephew are occupied with the ladies, XXXIV–XXXV.

23 Pope notes that simple termination of incident ends some 80 laisses in Roland, I, p. 357.
function of repetition in the Prise. Vv. 1026-028 give each of the standard details in standard form:

Mout les destraignent cele gent paiennor
Lancent lor lances et dars ovrez a tor
A maux de fer toz los murs lor deffont 1028

Three elements compose the cluster, each with characteristic marks.

1) Evocation of the assault in general terms:
   a) requerre, destraindre, assaillir
   b) noun or pronoun designating the Saracens

2) Hurling of weapons:
   a) lancier, geter
   b) nouns designating throwing weapons
   c) syntactic and rhythmic pattern
      first hemistich: paroxytone verb + lor + direct object
      (1-syllable oxytone or 2-syllable paroxytone)
      second hemistich: second direct object, in coordination and modified in a variety of ways

3) Pounding on the walls: A maux de fer toz los murs lor + verb

The cluster occurs, in varying degrees of completeness and with some variation of expression, seven times in Al: vv. 863-864, 865-869, 895-896, 902-903, 926-928, 1026-028, and 1050-053. If it did not happen that every single one of these occurrences is part of a laisse introduction or conclusion, one would be tempted to think of this cluster as a kind of mini-motif. As it is, the repetitions occur as part of the laisse structure of this particular text and stand in counterpoint to the movement of the story. Whether or not the chanson de geste as a tradition had a motif of the siege, the reason for these particular repetitions has more to do with the structure of the poem than with traditional motifs.

Let us look at the first four occurrences, at the boundaries between laisses XXVI and XXVII and laisses XXVIII and XXIX.²⁴ At both boundaries, the first occurrence, in the laisse conclusion, is a short evocation, and the second, in the following introduction, represents an amplification of the cluster.

²⁴As we noted above, it is likely that laisses XXVII and XXVIII were originally one laisse. In that case, the siege cluster would have tied together three consecutive laisses rather than two groups of two laisses.
In the space of forty verses a number of striking repetitions occur relating the assault against the palace. The verb assaillent appears three times. The first two times the subject of the verb, Sarrazin, is found in the preceding verse, and the verb itself figures at the end of its hemistich: Bien les assaillent. In the third occurrence the direct object changes from les (the French) to Guillaume, but it continues to precede the verb, and, when the verb changes in the fourth occurrence, we return to the original pattern, Bien les + verb. This detail is somewhat varied in expression, and the hemistich which follows the verb differs in all four cases, but the amplified versions of the two laisse introductions allow no possibility of mistaking the repetition:

Lancent lor lances et dars d’acier 867

Even though the word order varies at the assonance, the words used remain constant.

The repetition of signifiants emphasizes the repeated signifiés by drawing attention to them. And, by alerting us to the possibility of further occurrences, it prepares us to take note of the play between repetition and variation. The close repetitions we have just examined establish a norm for relating the siege of Gloriette. V. 868 is instructive in this regard, for it is echoed in the fifth occurrence of the
cluster:

Cil se defendent com chevailler membre. 927

The echo between vv. 868 and 927 is almost as close as the one between vv. 867 and 903, but the detail "defense offered by the three French heroes" does not attain the same status as the detail "hurling of weapons" for two reasons. First, the distance between the two occurrences is somewhat greater, and, second and more important, the detail "defense" does not occur as regularly. "Hurling weapons" appears in all five amplified occurrences (in occurrence #5 it is the French who hurl weapons), and "defense" appears in only two. More important still, one amplified occurrence intervenes between the two occurrences of "defense." This detail occurs as a kind of modulation added to the more fundamental elements of the cluster, those belonging to the norm.

The treatment of this cluster in D 711-716 (introduction to laisse XXIII) and 765-769 (introduction to laisse XXV) is equally instructive, for D here makes less use of verbal echo than does A.

We recognize echoes from ms A, but the echoes within D between these two parallel laisse introductions are limited to two combinations of words, fut + corroc- (711 and 765), and one syllable tool word + les asaillent (713 and 767). These two combinations disappear in the mass of dissimilar verses, and these laisse introductions establish no norm for relating the siege of Gloriette.

Why, and this brings us to a rather central question, why do these repetitions occur? The C and D. versions give considerably less attention to the assaults against Gloriette. 25 The siege clusters, to limit
ourselves strictly to this one case of repetition, co-exist with a progression of events. After the pagans are expelled from the palace for the first time (Al XXVI), Aragon questions his foe to verify his identity (XXVII), and, following Guillaume's taunting reply, the Saracens put on their armor and renew the assault (XXVIII). Faced with this renewed assault, Guillaume expresses doubts, and his nephew mockingly invites him to pursue his principal goal of courting Orable (XXIX). The next evocation of the siege appears to move Orable to provide Guillaume with armor (XXX), and, following the arming of Guélein and Guillebert and a second expulsion of the Saracens, the next evocation of the siege provokes another lamentation from Guillaume, another taunt from his nephew, and a victorious sortie by the three heroes (XXXIII). The last evocation of the siege provokes the same sequence of events (XXXIV), and it is at this critical moment for the pagans that Aragon learns of the underground passage into the palace. The sameness of the activity, emphasized by the sameness of the words describing it, contrasts with the increasing frenzy of the Saracens and the deepening predicament of the Frenchmen, and the contrast is funny. The siege cluster grows in keeping with the intensifying dilemma: in the last two occurrences it expands to include a new detail, hammering on the walls (detail #3 in the schema above), and still, for all their increasing exertions, the characters are all doing the same things as before. Thus the repetitions occur for a combination of reasons.

The following table gives the relevant verses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Al</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>863-4</td>
<td>(XXVIa) ---</td>
<td>(XXII) ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>865-9</td>
<td>(XXVIa) ---</td>
<td>713-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>895-6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>902-3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>767-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>926-8</td>
<td>(XXVII) ---</td>
<td>(XXVI) ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1026-8</td>
<td>941-5</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1050-3</td>
<td>966-73</td>
<td>858-62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kibler documents an elaborate scheme of interlaced repetitions in laisses XVI-XXII and attributes the high degree of repetition to a "deliberate intent to parody repetitive structure" (pp. 9-10). Since my basic assumption is that the place of repetition in the tradition of the chanson de geste is not yet clear, I think it more prudent to restrict ourselves to studying the function of repetition in the text and the means by which this particular text uses repetition for comic ends. I am more ready to concur with Kibler when he continues to the effect that repetition is "a deliberate comic device" in the presentation of Guillaume's character. Each time that Guillaume vosist estre somewhere else because of a Saracen's threats (vv. 497, 539, 801), the comic
Bridging between laisses and parallelism of introductions and conclusions, two traditional devices, are used here not only for their traditional purposes of slowing the narration and marking the boundaries between units of the narrative but also to highlight the comic contrast between the efforts expended and the results obtained from those efforts. This seeming mini-motif has illustrated the way in which a text creates its own norm, the use this text makes of repetition, and the wide range of devices which make use of repetition. Laisse linking, parallel introductions or conclusions, motifs, parallel laisses, all these traditional devices depend on repetition. Still one more device is present in the Prise d'Orange, one which has already figured prominently in this paper. Guillaume's doubts and his nephew's taunting replies echo from one end of the adventure to the other, a musical theme unifying the various incidents. This system of echoes operates independently of the laisse structure and is basic to the poem as a whole. But rather than this extensive network, which has already been studied, let us examine another detail, one which occurs only three times in the poem and which is therefore more easily grasped. By looking at the treatment given to the raising of the drawbridge of Glori
tette in the three versions of the poem, we shall not only be able to sketch a tentative characterization of each of the versions, we shall also develop something of an insight into the seeming unconcern of the genre for precision of detail.

The Art of Raising a Drawbridge

On three occasions in the poem our heroes drive their foes out of the palace (AB XXVI 851-859, XXXII 1004-023, LVII 1640-649; C(E) XXVIa 823-830, XXVIII 921-939, LXIIIa 1852-866; D XXII 688-705, XXVIII 837-853, L 1309-320). In AB and in D they lock the gates and raise the drawbridge on each occasion; in C they do so the second and third times only. The third raising of the bridge presents little strain to the imagination, for it follows the heroes' escape from prison, and the pagans have presumably lowered the bridge while they have been in possession of the palace. It is the combination of the first two raisings which caught Régnier's attention as unlikely ("les assiégés lèvent un pont-levis que personne n'a jamais baisé", p. 73 on version A), and in addition to this detail he found improbable the two sorties which follow immediately on the second raising of the drawbridge (AB XXXIII and...

impact in the repetition of this unflattering evocation of Guillaume's character increases.

2Dufoumet, pp. 30, 42-45. See above, n. 7. See also Kibler, pp. 14-15, 16, 18, 20.
just how do the Frenchmen get out to their enemies? The besieged Frenchmen in version A "font une sortie sans passer par les portes 1036, 1063" (p. 73). Régnier seems to prefer the revision which C makes of this sequence of events: the three heroes drive the Saracens out and follow Orable into her tower (XXVI), drive the pagans out of the tower once the latter have penetrated it and then raise the drawbridge for the first time (XXVIII), and finally stay in the besieged tower and hurl weapons from the windows instead of making a sortie (XXXI). The remanieur of this version "s'efforce de construire un récit logique et cohérent qui motive les actes des personnages, évite les moyens simplistes . . . " and "il agence les combats de façon que le pont-levis reste constamment levé, en supprimant le v. A 858 et la sortie des assiégés l. XXXI" (p. 80).

This assessment of the revisions in C seems accurate. To adduce just one small point, v. 910, A *fors bastons ont les huis depciés*, makes explicit the way in which the Saracens penetrate through the gates which have been locked against them. Plausibility seems to have been a major concern in this revision of the poem, and in this respect the C version of the poem is more accessible to the modern reader than are the other two versions.

But is it certain that the implausibility of the two sorties in AB shows unconcern for detail? Are the nearly word-for-word repetitions really a sign of limited imagination?28 If, instead of saying with Régnier that the poem is repetitious because the subject is (p. 73), we say that the poet has made the poem repetitive to suit particular needs, we find ourselves envisaging the poem in a rather different way.

For one thing, the second raising of the bridge is not quite as awkward as Régnier would have it. In any narrative some things remain implicit and others are made explicit. If the pagans succeed in entering Gloriette while Guillaume and his companions are arming, they have presumably also lowered the drawbridge, which would be a good reason for the Frenchmen to raise it a second time after expelling their enemies a second time.

Then too, if the raising of the drawbridge is a "moyen simpliste," it is part of a larger weakness in the poem, for it occurs each time in a highly structured sequence of verses. Let me point out the principal details repeated in these three passages, nearly all of them highlighted by verbal echo:

1. Combat. The deeds of each of the three Frenchmen are

28Régnier attributes some of the poem's "monotony" to the
specified, but the verbal echoes are not obvious.

2. Body count. The number 14 is fairly constant.

3. Terror among the pagans.

4. The pagans are driven out the gates.
   Par mi les huis les ont . . .

5. The gates are locked.
   verroillier, serrer, fermer in various combinations

6. The drawbridge is raised.
   A granz chaînes ont le pont sus . . .

7. Menacing intervention of the narrator.
   Or en pense Dex . . .

8. Perception and fury of Aragon.
   Voit l'Arragon . . .

For the sake of convenience I base myself here on the readings of Al, but, by and large, this network can be discerned in all three versions. If C seems to work at systematically reducing the echoes, the other two versions seem rather to insist on the echoes, and, as I indicated above with respect to the siege cluster, there is something comic about this recurrence of the same situations. The insistence provided by the verbal echoes, like Harpagon's sans dot, ensures that we will not mistake the similarity of the situations.

One last observation about this cluster. Both the AB version and the D version exploit a system of echoes, but they do not use the same echoes. D creates its own networks of echoes. I cite a few lines from "penchant de A pour la reprise exacte" (p. 73).

Neither the body count nor the terror among the pagans appear in the second occurrence, and, of course, the raising of the bridge does not occur in the first one. Only two of the details we have listed as showing close verbal echo appear in the first two occurrences in C, and the wording of these two disguises rather than accentuates the repetition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Que par les huis les en ont</th>
<th>Par vive force lor covint l'huis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[fors boute</td>
<td>[widier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et ont les barres et les</td>
<td>Errant le keurent fermer et ver-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[verrois coulé</td>
<td>[roller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>829-830</td>
<td>932-933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining ms D from a somewhat different perspective, Duncan McMillan has documented numerous lines and groups of lines which D has copied from its model on a first occasion and then repeated independently of its model on subsequent occasions: pp. 547-551 and
In Al we have the body count (1), the terror among the pagans (2), driving the pagans out the gates (3), and locking the gates (4). In D the pagans beat a retreat (1 Païen lo voient, 2 En fuie tornent, 3 Francois les chacent), the body count (1) occurs as the pagans go put the gates (3), and the locking of the gates (4) is formulated with the noun huis. I shall not strain the reader's patience with a more detailed

examination of this very complicated question.

* * *

The reflections which I have set forth here rise out of a two-fold interest, an interest, on the one hand, in the devices of the chanson de geste, its formal conventions, and on the other a concern for the questions which the Prise d'Orange raises about those conventions.

From what we have seen, it would appear that versions AB and D make extensive use of echo and that C on the other hand avoids for reasons of plausibility the recurrence of similar situations and disguises those which remain by changing the wording from one occurrence to the next. It may be that the system of echoes in AB resembles that of the archetype and that D has created its own particular set.

Still, this study is based primarily on laisses XXXII-XXXV of ms Al and the corresponding passages in C and D, and I have made references to other parts of the poem primarily because this passage makes reference to those other parts. A comparative study of the complete networks of echoes in the three versions remains to be done. A question, for example, at which I have only hinted here but which presents some interest, is whether version A may be taken as the most faithful reflection of the archetype in all ways and particularly in the length of the laisse introduction.

Tentative though these conclusions may be, they furnish extremely useful information for the study of the chanson de geste. The elaborate interweaving of echoes which lies behind most of the phenomena which I have examined but which I have scarcely examined in itself, may or may not be unique among the chansons de geste, but it is a fact which must be taken into account in discussing the chanson de geste. And small and hesitating though they be, the observations on the laisse do point the way to an understanding of that musical unit somewhat more complicated than one based primarily on the use of the laisse in Roland.

Just as we cannot be sure, until we have studied all of version D, whether the elimination of echoes in the siege cluster or the creation of echoes in the drawbridge cluster is the more typical of D, just as we can suspect, but not be certain until the complete study has been made, that version C is atypical of the Prise d'Orange, so, too, we cannot be sure that the Prise is any more or less typical of the chanson de geste in its use of the laisse and of echo than is the Chanson de Roland. Only a detailed study of a vast corpus will answer that question.

Edward A. Heinemann
University of Toronto