The Status of the
“Deuxième Cycle de la Croisade”:
A Preliminary Note

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I. Introduction

When in 1893 Gaston Paris for the first time connected the Chevalier au Cygne et Godéfroid de Bouillon [CCGB] with the Baudouin de Sebourc [BS], the Bâtard de Bouillon [BB], the Saladin [Sal] and the Baudouin de Flandres [BdF], he in fact launched the idea of a “deuxième cycle de la croisade” even though he himself did not use this name. The “trait d’union” between these texts is the similar subject matter, that is the first and the third crusade, in which a “cast” of the same characters appears in different roles. Some of these are Hue de Tabarie, Baudouin de Sebourc, the Bastard of Bouillon and the Muslim sovereign Saladin. This second crusade cycle would then consist of a “remaniement” of the “first cycle” (in the CCGB), extended with large additions (in the BS, BB, Saladin and BdF).

Since Gaston Paris various scholars have studied these texts, which has resulted in a number of different views about the origin and structure of this cycle. According to Edmond-René Labande the BS was the original text, on which all the others depended. Suzanne Duparc-Quioc connected the chronological development of the cycle with its narrative logic, implying that it was written ab ovo by a single author, with the CCGB as starting point and the Sal as its end. According to her...

1 An earlier version of this article was read at the seminar on Problems in the Medieval Romance Epic II, during the 26th International Congress on Medieval Studies held at Kalamazoo, Michigan, 9-12 May 1991. This paper was translated by Drs. Joep Nijsen, for which I thank him wholeheartedly. I am also very thankful to Prof. Robert F. Cook (University of Virginia) and Prof. Larry S. Crist (Vanderbilt University) for their useful remarks on the earlier version.


the BdF did not belong to the cycle.\textsuperscript{4} Both theories have been convincingly refuted by the American Romanists Robert Cook and Larry Crist, who made a thorough study of the second cycle in the early seventies.\textsuperscript{5} They concluded that the BB was the original branch and that, with respect to content, the cycle showed a fork structure, as indicated in figure 1 below.

![Figure 1](image1)

They also examined the connections between the various texts, which led to remarkable results. Figure 2 shows these relations with indications of their "solidity."

![Figure 2](image2)

The two scholars tackled many a problem with respect to the second cycle and effective solutions to some of them have been offered. It is


\textsuperscript{5}Robert Francis Cook and Larry S. Crist, Le Deuxième Cycle de la Croisade: Deux études sur son développement (Geneva: Droz, 1972).
particularly Cook who clearly demonstrated that the BS does not really belong to the cycle and, therefore, has a separate status.6

But they did not offer satisfactory solutions to all problems. The issue of the transmission of the manuscripts remains unsolved: not a single manuscript has been preserved which contains all branches of the second cycle.7 Only the BS and the BB were handed down together in one codex and this is the only version of the BB known to us. Apart from this manuscript, probably written shortly after 1350,8 all others date from the fifteenth century or later.9 The age of the manuscripts differs from that of the texts themselves, which are all dated around the middle of the fourteenth century.10 It is this gap that should arouse our suspicion: the texts preserved might very well be miles apart from the original texts with respect to content. This catch certainly applies to the “annonces” present in the manuscripts: passages that explicitly refer to other branches. Since these “annonces” are the most important arguments for


7Cook’s attempt (Deuxième Cycle 46) to explain this lack by referring to the length of the complete second cycle—too large for one codex— is not convincing. Around 1320 an extensive compilation of Arthurian texts was produced in the Low Countries. Of this compilation, originally a set of two manuscripts, only one manuscript has been handed down. But it contains nearly 88,000 verses! On this so-called “Lancelot-compilatie,” see Maartje Draak, “De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van de proza-Lancelot,” Meldelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde. NS 17.7, 2d ed. (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1977).

8Cf. R.F. Cook, Le Bâtard de Bouillon, chanson de geste: une édition (Genève: Droz, 1972) xv.


10For these datings see: (CCGB) H. Pigeonneau, Le Cycle de la Croisade et la famille de Bouillon (St-Cloud: Belin, 1877) 225; Duparc-Quic, Le Cycle 118; Cook, Deuxième Cycle 45 and Crist, Deuxième Cycle 83-84. (BS) Labande, Étude, 63-66; Duparc-Quic, Le Cycle, 141-43 (she dates the BS incorrectly to 1360-70) and Crist, Deuxième Cycle 92. (BB) Cook, Bâtard LXV-LXIX. *(Sal) Dating this text is very problematic, cf. Crist, Deuxième Cycle 155.
the concept of the cycle— as Cook and Crist also seem to acknowledge—we even have more reason to question whether they are the work of the original authors, or insertions by later scribes. The fact that the larger part of the preserved manuscripts stems from the library of the house of Croy or of the dukes of Burgundy\textsuperscript{11} should draw our attention: were the copies made for one or two patrons and have the scribes therefore stressed the thematic relation by referring to other texts that deal with the same subject matter?

The \textit{Sal} which Crist describes as “suite et fin du deuxième cycle de la croisade”\textsuperscript{12} presents another problem. Is this indeed the end of a cycle? And if so, of which cycle? Another complication the \textit{Sal} presents, is that only two fifteenth-century prose versions have been preserved. Crist calls these \textit{Sal}-1 and \textit{Sal}-2. There is every reason to presume that an older version existed, the so-called proto-\textit{Sal}. And it is this proto-\textit{Saladin} that is supposed to have been the keystone of the second cycle.

These are not all the questions which the notion of a second cycle raises. Cook and Crist already concluded that there were many overlaps and inconsistencies between the different branches. Cook tried to account for them based on the premise that the preserved texts show a cycle in the process of crystallization, a hypothesis which is undermined by the way the manuscripts were handed down.\textsuperscript{13} How can fifteenth-century manuscripts demonstrate an unfinished fourteenth-century process? This would imply either that this process never ended— which puts the concept of a cycle even more in jeopardy— or that a manuscript of that completed process has (accidentally) not been preserved, while bits and pieces of it have started to lead a life of their own. Moreover, Cook’s hypothesis does not agree with another one of his hypotheses, namely that the second cycle passed through several different stages.\textsuperscript{14} This cannot be maintained through the lack of manuscripts that might prove such a developing process. Crist in his turn came up with the hypothesis of a workshop where various authors were cooperating on a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Cf. Cook, “Note,” passim.
\item This is the subtitle that Crist gave his edition of the prose versions (Crist, \textit{Saladin}). Also cf. Crist, \textit{Deuxième Cycle} 152, 170-71.
\item Cf. Cook, \textit{Deuxième Cycle} 42.
\item Cf. Cook, \textit{Deuxième Cycle} 28.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
large cycle.\textsuperscript{15} He even tries to explain the fork structure through the existence of two workshops “en compétition mais amis,” which both produced a comparable cycle: one of them with the CCGB and the other with the BS as opening text.\textsuperscript{16} A workshop, however, does not necessarily explain the inconsistencies between the branches, whereas the just connections can also be accounted for in different ways.

Although both scholars clearly realize that many questions remain unanswered and that their theory is largely based on hypothesis, they—just as all other researchers of the second cycle—maintain the a priori thesis that this second crusade cycle was indeed a fourteenth-century entity. Regardless of how critical their research was with respect to all questions concerning details, nowhere is the concept of the second cycle itself put up for debate. And this is exactly what I would like to do now. I am fully aware that I am moving into foreign territory. I am not a Romanist and my interest in Old French crusade epics stems from my study of their Middle Dutch translations and it is these translations that have prompted me to a critical evaluation of the second cycle.

I have already mentioned some of my doubts— the fact that the manuscripts are missing, for instance, and the exceptional position of the Sal. Because this article is meant to be a preliminary note and an invitation to a discussion— in which I hope to participate again in the near future— I will not discuss all my doubts and considerations in the rest of my argument. However, the part that I want to discuss will contain all lines of reasoning that may play a role in this subject matter. The Middle Dutch texts will play a crucial part in this discussion, as I hope to show. The intention of this article has kept me from including extensive methodological considerations in my argument: they will be dealt with in an elaborated article I plan to publish. The last favor I would like to ask concerns the structure of my argument. The issue I want to discuss is highly complex. There seems to be no simple or obvious approach, so all I can do is plunge into the matter and hope the reader will be able to bear with me.

\textbf{II. The position of the proto-Saladin}

\textsuperscript{15}Cf. Crist, \textit{Deuxième Cycle} 93.
\textsuperscript{16}Cf. Crist, \textit{Deuxième Cycle} 150.
Let us start with the position of the proto-Sal within this group of texts. According to Crist the CCGB and the Sal together form a cycle. These two branches present

(...) un tour de la Roue de Fortune, ou même plusieurs,
avec les fortunes de la croisade (conquête et puis perte
de Jérusalem), ainsi que les fortunes des deux
vainqueurs de la ville, Godefroi et Saladin.17

Moreover, the “annonces” in the CCGB also refer to the Sal. The author of the CCGB more or less promises a story or stories in which Saladin’s descent and the adventures of Chavengy and his son Cassant will be related, but also the adventures of Hëue de Tabarie’s sons, Gérad le Bel Armé and Seghin de Mélide. According to the author the story would continue into the days of Saint Louis and even into the Flemish wars of Philip the Fair.18 There is no reference to the BS or the BB in these “annonces”19 and for the moment I will leave these two texts aside. If we proceed to check these claims in the extant Old French prose versions of the Sal, we find that Saladin’s youth is only described in the Sal-1. In short: some promises are kept, other claims are not met. At this point I want to include the Middle Dutch translation of the Sal. Of this translation a short fourteenth-century fragment has been preserved as well as a printed version in rhyming stanzas, dating from around 1483.20 Particularly the printed version, titled Dystorie van Saladine [DvS], contains data that seem to contradict Crist’s thesis that there has been a second-cycle version of the Sal, written after the CCGB.21 As we will see,

17 Crist, Deuxième Cycle 148.
19 Cf. Crist, Deuxième Cycle 111-12, 120.
21 Cf. Crist, Deuxième Cycle 155. Crist prefers a proto-Sal in prose, written after the CCGB, BS and BB (Crist, Deuxième Cycle 155). There are, however, no reasons to assume the existence of a Sal-version of around 1355, and moreover: would a text tied to a cycle be written in prose, whereas all other branches are written in verse? Crist supposes that already shortly before or after 1300 a Sal-version was written and he briefly mentions the possibility that it was
a proto-Sal written before the CCGB and the other branches points to a possibly closer relation between this proto-Sal and the "premier cycle" in its "troisième état." A lack of codicological evidence for this relation, however, forces us to remain cautious.

Returning to the texts themselves, we find that the Sal-2 and the Middle Dutch DvS both start with references to Godefroid de Bouillon's unnatural death which leads to Tancreid's hanging. The CCGB gives a similar account, the younger manuscripts of the "first cycle" do relate the discord among the Christians, but in a different way.\(^\text{22}\) In this respect the proto-Sal might be in keeping with the CCGB and—possibly—with the "troisième état" of the "first cycle."\(^\text{23}\)

As Crist already established, the "undercover journey" Saladin makes to Europe, accompanied by Hue de Tabarie and Jean de Ponthieu, reminds one of the similar journey to Europe King Cornumarant makes in the Enfances Godefroi. Both sovereigns want to establish the might of the Frankish knights. While in the Old French prose versions this reminiscence is merely implied, it is made quite explicit in DvS. When the European nobility talks about Saladin's performance during the Cambrai-tournament, we find the following remarks:

"I well remember," the Flemish count spoke,
how King Cornubrant
—disguised as a rover of low birth—

\(\text{intended as an extension of the "premier cycle": "Evidemment, on pourrait même supposer un *Saladin composée pour servir de fin à un premier cycle— et qui contiendrait tout ce qu'il faut pour permettre, expliquer, voire motiver, les "annonces"-rappels du CCGB, du BB, de BS. Nous préférons l'hypothèse d'un BB comme premier poème du deuxième cycle à avoir été composé" (Crist, Deuxième Cycle 152). Also compare his schedule of the genesis of the cycle (Crist, Deuxième Cycle 154).}\)

\(\text{22While in the Sal-1, DvS and the CCGB the discord is related to Tancreid's involvement with Godefroid's death (Godefroid's mother Ida has Tancreid hanged for this), in the Jérusalem Continuations it is especially connected with the matter of succession that arose after Godefroid's death.}\)

\(\text{23About the story of Saladin's youth and coming into power that would subsequently disappear: there are indications that in particular the manuscripts of Turin and London (B.M. Add. 36.615) once contained a more extensive version of the Débuts Saladin. Compare Crist, Deuxième Cycle 90; diagram 154.}\)
came hence to spy in this country.
Likewise might this champion have come,
for it is foretold that
Godfried's conquest and rule
will fall into Saracen hands.”

These facts imply a closer relationship between the proto-Sal and the CCGB, but can also be explained by regarding it as a “reflecting repetition” of a motif from the Enfances Godefroi in the proto-Sal.

A considerable part of DvS is filled by the adventures of Gérard le Bel Armé and Seghin de Melide, as heralded in the CCGB. A separate narrative line tells the story of how they and their father, Hue de Tabarie, besiege the city of Babilone and conquer it. This campaign brought Babilone into the hands of the Christians and by marrying Lady Salatrie Gérard becomes ruler of the city. Seghin in his turn marries Morinde of Melide and becomes sovereign of this not further specified kingdom. Not only is thus a promise from the above mentioned announce in the CCGB fulfilled, it also solves the problem of Seghin’s name. In both the CCGB and the Sal-1 he is already called Seghin de Melide, but it remains unclear where his name stems from. According to Crist the suffix “de Melide” is “tout simplement l’invention de l’auteur du

24 “My ghedinct noch,” sprac die Vlaemsche grave, / “Hoe dat die coninc Cornubrant / Als een truwant van cleender have / Quam bespieden in dit lant. / Sghelijixx mach commen dese vigant / Want naer dibeghen der prophesie, / Ses nder Sarazijn en hant / Godefroeds conquest ende singlorie.” C.P. Serrure, Dystorie van Saladine. Maetschappy der vlaemsche bibliophilen, 2de serie. Werken voor de leden alleen bestemd 1 (Gent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1848) 28 (vv. 561-68). The punctuation is mine. I am also inclined to see a reference to the “prophecy of Calabre” in the last sentence of this passage. It is unclear whether the reference concerns the divergent “prophecy” as in Paris, B.N. f. fr. 1621 and the CCGB or the more general version in the other manuscripts of the Enfances Godefroi. Also unclear is the way in which the Christians of this story became familiar with this prophecy.

25 Cf. Serrure, Dystorie 1033-36 and 1049-1160 (pp. 48-53).

26 For these references, see CCGB 26325 (3:238) also printed in Crist, Deuxième Cycle 101 announce 3a; CCGB 26505 (3:244) Here Seghin is named as being a sultan, born in Melide! Because this passage is inconsistent with the more general fact that Seghin is a Christian and son of Hue de Tabarie and Sinamonde, I consider it a mistake on the part of the scribe; CCGB 33836 (3:474), 26325 (3:238), also printed in Crist, Deuxième Cycle 102, in announce 3b. For the reference in Sal-1 see Crist, Saladin 62 (X,5).
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If however, the author of the CCGB was familiar with a proto-Sal, in which (as in DvS), the origin of this name is given, we can regard this loose end as being taken care of. The Middle Dutch text thus also provides a new argument for supposing that the CCGB was written after the proto-Sal, which in my view again points towards a closer relation between this text and the “first cycle.”

According to my findings up to now, Gérard’s and Seghin’s adventures are not heralded in the “troisième état” of the “first cycle”, but that need not be an obstacle for a connection between the proto-Sal and the most recent stage of the “first cycle”: the story still had to be written! And I don’t believe in “annonces” of unwritten texts, unless there is solid external evidence to prove the fact that this particular text was written after the announce. The fact itself that Hue de Tabarie in the “troisième état” is the link between the history of the first and the third crusade already contains the possibility of a later description of his sons’ adventures!28 But what about the annonce of the adventures of Cassant, Chavengy’s son? And what about “la belle Herminette”? In the Old French prose versions of the Sal only Cassant’s birth is mentioned, while the figure of Herminette nowhere appears on the scene. Nor does DvS supply any more information. But this text does refer to an account of Cassant’s adventures in “a following story:”

By this woman a child was fathered in affection by Chavengy that would be feared among men as the following tales will tell.29

At first sight, this also seems a reference to a text we do not know. In Old French nothing of such a text has been preserved, but we do have remnants of it in Middle Dutch.

27Cf. Crist, Deuxième Cycle 90. Crist does not explain how the name “Seghin de Melide” comes up in the Sal-1. He seems to imply that the author of that prose version has derived it from the proto-Sal, which in its turn has extracted it from the CCGB.

28Compare Crist, Deuxième Cycle 129.

29-An dese vrauwe wan eene vrucht / Chavengy duer dat minlic doghen, / Die sichtent zeere wart gheducht, / So de naervolghende jesten toghen.” Cf. Serrure, Dystorie 1577-80 (70). The punctuation is mine.
III. The Roman van Cassant

The University Library of Ghent has preserved a severely damaged fragment of a fourteenth-century manuscript under shelf number 1732. The text of this fragment is unpublished\(^{30}\) and could until recently not be identified.\(^{31}\) The two strips of parchment contain 65 verses, of which only 24 are entirely legible. Yet we can distill some important data from these few lines. On one side of a strip we read in column A:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I myself will, believe me,} \\
\text{fetch my father Chavengy in Europe.}^{32}\end{align*}
\]

In column B on that side Herminette the Fair is mentioned for the first time. On the other strip she is mentioned as Herminette of Armenia.\(^{33}\) Although this fragment gives hardly any clues concerning the contents of the story, I am convinced that the fact that these two characters are mentioned unequivocally points towards a continuation of the Sal: the combination of the names and the reference to Chavengy as father are too unique to allow for any other conclusion.

I feel that this piece of information proves that the “annonces” in the CCGB—just as those in the BS and the BB—refer to texts that had been written before. And if we assume that the proto-Sal and this sequel were written before the other branches, the question seems justified whether these oldest texts are not linked to the “troisième état” of the “premier cycle” rather than to a possible second cycle. If we look in a similar fashion to the annonce of stories about the crusade of Saint Louis\(^{34}\) and

\(^{30}\) An edition of the text of this fragment is in preparation: Geert H.M. Claassens, De Middelnederlandse kruisvaartromans, 268-75 (forthcoming).


\(^{32}\) \text{“ic sal selue geloues mi / Minen vader chy. Varen halen in kerstijnheide” (Gent, U.B. 1732, 1ra. Claassens, De Middelnederlandse kruisvaartromans 269 (vv. 1-3).}

\(^{33}\) \text{“Herminette de scone” (Gent, U.B. 1732. 1b); “Herminette van Ermenyen” (Gent, U.B. 1732, 2b) vv. 11 and 55 of the edition in preparation.}

\(^{34}\) In the CCGB 22785-809 (3:128), also printed in Crist, Deuxième Cycle 101, in “annonce” 2. In the BS: L.N. Boca, Li Romans de Bauduin de Sébourg, IIIe Roy de Jérusalem, poème du XIVe siècle. Publié pour la première fois d’après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale. 2 vols. (Valenciennes: Henry, 1841; Rpt. Geneva: Slatkine,
the war of Philip the Fair against Flanders, the BdF again enters the argument. Could these references not point to a predecessor of this prose text? A text in rhyme that in a similar “loose” fashion fits in with the “first cycle”, just as the proto-Sal and its sequel? But if we presume that the proto-Sal and its continuation are in a loose way connected to the “premier cycle,” what does this imply for the status of the CCGB, the BS and the BB? And what is their specific relation to the “premier cycle”?

IV. New approaches

In my view we should regard the CCGB as the “quatrième état” of the “premier cycle,” the latest in a long series of adaptations the “matière de la croisade” underwent in the course of two and a half centuries. A relation between this text and the BS-BB combination seems rather improbable. As Cook and Crist already showed, it seems that the author of the CCGB only had a very superficial knowledge of the BS and vice versa. The CCGB does not seem to suppose the existence of the BB, this in spite of the reference in the Lyons manuscript of the CCGB. The reference proves some knowledge on the part of the scribe concerning the BB, it does not prove a tight connection between CCGB and BB. A combination of the CCGB with the Sal is conceivable, as said before, but

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37Cf. Cook, Deuxième Cycle 19-22 and Crist, Deuxième Cycle 112.

38Cf. Cook, Deuxième Cycle 26 and Crist, Deuxième Cycle 111-12.
the lack of codicological evidence forces us to be cautious when speaking about a “cycle.”

The connection between the BS and the BB is not a solid one in spite of the fact that both are brought together in a single codex and in spite of the explicit in the non-cyclic BS-manuscript (BN 12553). This explicit, “Chis romans est de Bauduwins de Sebourcq, et qui voet oir le fin et le mort de Bauduwin se se lisieche le roumant dou Bastart de Buillon, car c’est ce qui s’ensiet apriés”39 is incorrect: the death of Baudouin de Sebourc does not occur in the BB but in the Sal (in Sal-1). Moreover, the “annonce” does not prove that the BB is the sequel of the BS, it proves merely that the fifteenth-century scribe of BN 12553 was only vaguely familiar with the BB and the proto-Sal. On the level of content, there is only a weak connection.40 Moreover, we do not know to what extent the BB has been adapted by the scribe who brought both texts together.41 When Cook states that the BB starts in medias res and thus supposes a connection with a crusade epic about the first crusade, I am of the opinion that he underrates the unclear position of the original BB.42 I am more inclined to take his hypothesis that the branches in fact developed independently, as a basis for a closer examination of the BS and the BB, without including Cook’s option that they are a phase of a cycle in statu nascendi.43 When we regard the BS-BB-combination as a clumsy, not entirely successful attempt at compilation instead of an attempt at forming a cycle, I feel we are more in line with the body of facts that are at our disposal and this view might stimulate studying these texts for their individual qualities. In this respect we shall have a closer look at the BS. Elsewhere I have shown that this text was probably written under the patronage of the counts of Hainault-Holland.44 The BS seems

39Quoted after Crist, Deuxième Cycle 99.
41Cook (Bâtard xxviii) already stated that the BB is incomplete. The repetition of the “annonce” in the BS towards the end of the BB is also reason for suspicion.
42Cf. Cook, Deuxième Cycle 38. He also seems to contradict his own statement that the BB does not imply a preceding or following branch (cf. Cook, Deuxième Cycle 39 and Cook, Bâtard xxiv-xxix).
43Cf. Cook, Deuxième Cycle 42.
to propagate an important political aim of these counts, i.e. acquiring a more than nominal rule over Frisia. But the text might also serve as propaganda material for their crusade plans. In the character of Baudouin de Sebourc we find a crusader of Hainault par excellence. Cook, for instance, determined that this character plays a much more important rôle in the BS as compared to the same figure as portrayed in the “first cycle.” This would fit in well with the hypothesis of a hero who is foremost a man from Hainault. How to regard the BB from this point of view is still unclear to me: possibly in this text too, we can establish a link with Hainault. Further research into the background of its genesis would have to provide for this concept.

Offering these options does not mean that I want to deny that both the BS and the BB use the “matière de la croisade” as furnished by the “premier cycle.” The fact that the BS borrows from and refers to the CCGB and a Sal seems more than probable. A strange case in this respect is offered by the ancestry of Saladin. In the BS Saladin is a son of Jean de Ponthieu’s sister, whereas in the thirteenth- and fifteenth-century versions of La Fille du comte de Ponthieu and in Sal-1 too they are relatives, but not as cousin and uncle. In the Middle Dutch DvS we read that Saladin captured Jan van Pontieu shortly after his arrival in Outremer. Saladin then

asked his name and then understood

van der Meer and Oebele Vries, Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik 31-32 (Estrikken 69) 69-84, esp. 81-84.

45 On this topic see W. van Anrooij, Spiegel van ridderschap. Heraut Gelre en zijn eredien (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1990) 4-6. The counts William III (†1337) and William IV (†1345) made more plans than they actually executed. Apart from campaigns against the Muslims in Africa and in the Holy Land, they were mainly interested in expeditions against the Prussians. The fact is that William IV travelled to Palestine in August-November 1343 and returned to The Hague via Prussia in April 1344.

46 Cf. Cook, Deuxième Cycle 31.

47 So far that background is still uncertain, for the Hainault origin of the BB is played down by the manuscript tradition. We just do not know to what extent the text of the original work has been adapted to the preceding BS.

48 Compare the pedigrees in Crist, Saladin 200-02.
that duke Jan’s sister was his own mother. 49

On this particular fact we can see a perfect similarity between the BS and a good representative of the *Sal. But this in itself is not sufficient to prove a cyclic relation, supported by manuscripts that have been lost. Compare for instance the Old French *Fergus which also frequently and intensively uses Chrétien de Troyes’ *Perceval and yet does not form a cycle with it. 50

V. Conclusion

This brings me to the conclusion of my argument. I am fully aware that I have not been able to include all the available material with all its implications, but I hope that I have raised some doubts on your part concerning the second crusade cycle—doubts that I have been having for quite some time now. This would be a good starting point for a renewed discussion about both the second and the “first cycle.” If my findings bear any claim of probability, we should regard the texts that we have so far included in the second cycle, from a different point of view: the intertextual connections found, prove the vitality of the “matière de la croisade” in what can be called a coherent epic subgenre, especially in the fourteenth century. But I am convinced that we have every reason to abandon the concept of the “deuxième cycle”: the evidence in support of it is far too meagre to maintain it (even if only used as a “tool” in research). I rather adopt the name “late crusade romances” as Robert Cook recently suggested to me. 51 My argument, however, also has implications for the concept of the “first cycle”: when the proto-*Sal indeed fits in with the “troisième état” we can no longer speak of a finished cycle. When, towards the end of the thirteenth century the Godefroy-cycle is broken open by the addition of “historical” continuations to the *Conquête de Jérusalem, a series of texts of a linear

49... Vraegde zijnen name ende heeft verstaen, Dat hertoech Jans zustere was sijn moedere.” Cf. Serrure, Dystorie vv. 395-396 (21). The punctuation is mine.


51 In a personal letter, 22 July 1991.
“historiographic” nature has come into being. A “round cycle” with the central theme of “the life and work of Godefroy de Bouillon” has changed into a history with an open end, that is to say a history that need have no ending at all. And this might compel us to have a “never-ending” discussion about crusade epics. However, that would be preferable to all too swift conclusions and the silence that ensues.

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