# BOOK REVIEWS

Mary Virginia Reese
Grove City College

PETER R. GRILLO, ed. *La prise d'Acre, La mort Godefroi, and La Chanson des Rois Baudouin*. The Old French Crusade Cycle 7; The *Jérusalem* Continuations, Part 2. Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1987. Pp. 231 + liii. 2 black-and-white plates, 1 table.

This book serves as the companion to Peter R. Grillo, ed., *La Chrétienté Corbaran*, The Old French Crusade Cycle (OFCC) 7, The *Jérusalem* Continuations, pt. 1, and forms part of a nine-volume series whose general editors are Jan A. Nelson and Emanuel J. Mickel. The plan of publication for the series appears on p. viii.

The *Jérusalem* Continuations as a whole include "post- *Jérusalem*" material (xxii), which Grillo divides into two branches. Grillo regards the contents of this second part of the *Jérusalem* Continuations as a single branch of the Cycle rather than as three separate works. He offers a compelling defense for the grouping of the three texts edited here as Branch II, calling them "a continuous and autonomous narrative" and a "stylistically cohesive whole" (xxii).

While conceding that scholars have traditionally viewed this narrative as highly fanciful and historically inaccurate, Grillo prefers to describe it as "pseudo-historical" (xv), recognizing some common elements between this text and the chronicles. He suggests that the anonymous author, "who must have had some acquaintance with the historiographical perception of the Crusades" (xxiv), may have departed deliberately from factual details for the

purpose of entertainment. Furthermore, Grillo, in his discussion of the circumstances of composition, implies a connection between factual deviation and the author's desire to please his patrons. In fact, in establishing a time frame for composition, Grillo provides textual evidence for the patronage of a powerful "pro- French" family (xxxiii-xxxv).

In addition to three relatively detailed paragraphs describing the physical appearance and scribal peculiarities of the base manuscript **E** (MS Paris, BN 12569), Grillo refers the reader to Geoffrey M. Myers's introductory essay in Volume I of the OFCC series (xxxix-xlviii-lii), to Part 1 of Volume VII of the series (xliii-xlviii), and to a study by P. R. Grillo and R. F. Cook ("Un Manuscrit composite de cycle épique," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* 8 (1978), 223-46) for further discussion of MSS **E** and **I** (MS London, BL, Additional 36615).

The relationship between the manuscripts is perplexing, though the editor cites a number of meaningful details to support his assertions that "the marked degree of coincidence in individual reading, and the shared fund and presentation of narrative elements show [**E** and **I**] to be closely related representatives of a single poem [and that the] copyists appear to have worked from a common prototype" (xlvi). Grillo follows these assertions, however, with examples of significant disagreement between the two manuscripts and perhaps all too frequently attributes these inconsistencies to scribal intervention. "A large number of the lines unique to [**I**] are of uneven quality, however, and may be attributed to the scribe's own initiatives" (xliv). "Our editorializing scribe appears to have wanted to drop from his copy the references to Calabré's marriage. . . . The end of *laisse* 55 is thus severely truncated in **I**, and the opening of the next *laisse* bears telling signs of scribal intervention. . . . In effecting these changes, the copyist might also have fallen under the influence of the other post- *Jérusalem* version of

the Continuations" (xlv). Surely this discussion of the complex relationship between **E** and **I** supports the conclusions drawn in Volume II by Jan A. Nelson: "[It] seems as though the scribes who produced the different redactions of the OFCC frequently had more than one exemplar from which to work and that they made deliberate choices among them"(Nelson xlii).

Of notable interest and value is the editor's treatment of the phonology and orthography of the base text (xxxvii-lxiii), whose Picard features he identifies. In light of this Picard influence, earlier editors of the OFCC did not employ the cedilla; Grillo, however, has acquiesced to criticism of this omission (see, for example, Keith Busby's review of Volume II in *Olifant*, 15.1 (1990) 97) and has added the cedilla, although its use is somewhat problematical: "The mixture of Picard and Francien forms occasionally obstructs the distinction between a dental and palatal sound for *c*; the cedilla is put in, however, to represent Francien pronunciation" (xlvii).

The glossary and summaries provide helpful information, and the notes and variants reflect the painstakingly conscientious scholarship characteristic of the series. In particular, Grillo's use of the interrogative forms in the 204 notes creates a tone which, though confident, lacks presumption and invites the reader to participate actively in the editing of the text: "Does this line . . . look forward . . . to Dodekin's eventual conversion. . . ?" (note 58); "Did the scribe convert and then transpose a second hemistich. . . ?" (note 195). Note also his unassuming vocabulary: "The additions from **I** *appear* [my emphasis] necessary" (note 22); "[these] lines, introduced from **I**, *seem* [my emphasis] necessary because of the objective case" (note 73); [the] emendation is conjectural" (note 161).

Grillo has produced an edition which clearly demonstrates his longstanding acquaintance with the text—he first prepared an edition of this text in connection with his doctoral dissertation eighteen years before the publication of the present work. Like the OFCC series as a whole, Volume VII, Part 2 represents a significant and meaningful contribution to medieval French scholarship.

Noel Fallows
University of Georgia

MATTHEW BAILEY. *The* Poema del Cid *and the* Poema de Fernán González: *The Transformation of an Epic Tradition*. Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1993. Pp. 144.

This book is a welcome addition to the study of epic poetry in medieval Spain. A concise yet informative study of the *Poema de Mio Cid (PMC)* and the *Poema de Fernán González (PFG)*, the book consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, four appendices and a brief list of works cited.

As a point of departure Bailey points out that Parry and Lord's definition of formulaic diction, while applicable to the Homeric and South Slavic poetic traditions, is too broad, and indeed fails when applied to other poetic traditions. Ironically, however, many studies on Castilian epic poetry written after Parry and Lord first postulated their theories in 1960 are too narrow in their attempt to differentiate between *juglaría* and *clerecía* poetry in Castile, and often fail to recognize the many similarities between the two. In the introduction, Bailey sets forth the purpose of his study, which is to elucidate aspects of the peculiar forms of expression of the *PMC* in comparison to the *PFG*, with emphasis on "the syntactic traits of the two poems in relation to formula, lexis and poetic form"(8). Following Hans Robert Jauss, Bailey calls for a reexamination of epic poetry according to which "certain universals in medieval literature must be recognized before attempting more narrow determinations that can serve to distinguish genres"(7). Bailey's aim is to show that, paradoxically, what might seem to justify disparity between the *PMC* and the *PFG* will in fact contribute to the sense of continuity between the two. Thus each chapter of Bailey's study focuses on aspects the *PMC*

and *PFG* apparently have in common, namely, figurative language, prayer, the justification of war, and the portrayal of the hero. Each of the four appendices provides sundry examples from the texts which buttress Bailey's claims in each chapter.

In the first chapter ("Figurative Language") Bailey emphasizes that the *PFG* contains an abundance of similes, metaphors and analogies throughout, which in turn suggests that the anonymous author consciously exploited figurative language purely for effect, often even suspending the main action in favor of literary decoration. The *PMC*, on the other hand, offers no examples of such devices. Through solid analysis of the various metaphors and analogies in the text, Bailey shows that in the *PFG* figurative language serves to justify the reasons for the characters' actions. In the *PMC*, the question of whether or not to act is irrelevant; what matters is what action to take. According to Bailey, this could explain the almost total lack of figurative language in the *PMC*. Moreover, Bailey's analysis of the figurative language in the *PFG* reveals an abundance of references to God and the Devil, which, the author suggests, is evidence of the narrator's intention to lead his audience into a separate, spiritual level of action, which Bailey calls an "invisible war of wills" (42). The "new" dimension to the poem leads Bailey to postulate an existing *PFG* epic poem, written before the *PFG* as we now have it, not unlike the *PMC* in language and style. Thus the abundance of figurative language could be an interpolation explaining the spiritual level of action to an audience already fully aware of the deeds and exploits of Fernán González, but as yet unaware of the spiritual battles between God and the Devil.

Chapter 2 ("The Tradition of Prayer") focuses on the "illusion of truth" (43) in the *PMC*. Here Bailey is at his most cunning. He proposes to go beyond separating historical truth from fiction in the *PMC* and to discuss instead the way in

which the poem creates the illusion of historical truth. The chapter focuses primarily on one of the most famous and controversial passages of the *PMC*—Ximena's prayer. Bailey suggests that even though critics such as Ian Michael have argued for the applicability of Ximena's prayer, insofar as her invocation is of a type common in thirteenth-century Spanish narrative poems, Ximena's prayer is nonetheless reminiscent of later medieval narrative poems (such as the *PFG*) in that it reveals metaphorical thought patterns that are uncharacteristic of the discourse development in the *PMC*. By dint of meticulous analysis of the vocabulary and religious context of Ximena's utterance, Bailey shows that Ximena's prayer can indeed be explained in relation to the *PFG*. Yet given the force with which Bailey argues his point in this chapter, it is a little disappointing that he should be so reserved in his conclusion that Ximena's prayer is "different from the rest of the poem," and that he only hints at the possibility that "it may now be impossible to determine if [the passage] . . . were added to the *Cid* by later hand" (52).

Chapter 3 is entitled "Political, Social, and Religious Factors in Making War." Bailey's point here is that whereas in the *PMC* the emphasis tends to be on the warriors and those who make war, vanquish the enemy, win and distribute booty, the emphasis in the *PFG* tends to be on the spoils and the importance of wealth. Bailey suggests that the importance of the booty, coupled with repeated mentions of the final destination—the San Pedro monastery—of the spoils of war in the *PFG* is due primarily to the author's intention to establish a clear spiritual connection between Fernán González and the monastery. In the *PMC*, on the other hand, the spoils of war are the very means of survival for the Cid and his men, who, unlike Fernán González, are forced into a position of aggression through being exiled. Once again, the difference between the two may be explained, according to Bailey, by the fact that the Castilian war in the *PFG* has two dimensions: territorial expansion for Castile and spiritual

expansion for Christendom. Both themes are stated explicitly in the *PFG* through the poet's use of language. Thus in the description of battle in the *PFG*, bellicose language appears alongside the language of prayer. In the *PMC* the language used is exclusively that of war and aggression since survival is the issue.

The following concise chapter is entitled "The Portrayal of the Hero." Bailey argues that while both the Cid and Fernán González may be considered heroes "in the sense that the success of their military campaigns legitimizes their behavior, which in turn serves as a model for the poets and the audiences" (79), in fact the two heroes have little in common. For example, while both protagonists receive divine assistance in their endeavors, only Fernán González presents arguments to support his request for assistance, thereby revealing "the modus operandi of Fernán González, who employs argumentation to persuade others to participate in his campaign [concerning] Castile" (82). Again, lexical analysis reveals that Fernán González must use similar argumentation to persuade and manipulate his vassals for he sees himself as a man in a privileged position, a warrior who possesses knowledge not available to others. The Cid, on the other hand, receives the advice of Gabriel without question, just as he confides in and consults with his own vassals for success in the field. The difference between the two heroes, Bailey argues, is due primarily to Fernán González's "patronizing paternalism," (94) which reflects the attitudes and mores of the *clerecía* poets and their relationship with their audience. The poet of the *PFG* thus advocates the monastery and the monks as a source of privilege. The ideas in this chapter might have been strengthened by reference to Michael Harney's study, "Movilidad social, rebelión primitiva y la emergencia del estado en el *PMC*" (*Mythopoesis: Literatura, totalidad, ideología*. Ed. Joan Ramón Resina. Barcelona: Anthropos, 1992. 65-101). In all

fairness, however, I can only presume that Bailey did not have the chance to see this article before press time.

Bailey's is a provocative study. He shows clearly that while certain episodes of two apparently similar poems may bear a resemblance in theme and style, close textual and contextual analysis often reveals striking differences. When taken out of context, formulaic expressions common to both poems may appear to be more significant than they actually are. Bailey shows how context is indeed worthy of consideration. He attributes the "transformation" of the epic tradition for the *PMC* to the *PFG* above all to the attitudes and mores of the *clerecía* poets who derived much of their learned experience from the University of Palencia and the monasteries, as opposed to the community and the environment in which epic poetry had traditionally developed. Thus, rather than simply regurgitate familiar formulae, the *clerecía* poets consciously manipulated them to their own propagandistic ends. His argument is logical, coherent and certainly persuasive. To be sure, Bailey's book attests to the enduring attraction of the enigmatic epic tradition in medieval Spain: Never out of fashion, always controversial.

Two final—minor—details. There is a typographical error on p. 77, line 3 (read: suggests *that*); and, on p. 142, line 21, *Real Academia de Español* should be *Real Academia Española*. Otherwise the presentation is impeccable.

Larry S. Crist
Vanderbilt University

*Le redazioni C e D del Charroi de Nîmes.* Edizione critica a cura di Salvatore Luongo. Romanica Neapolitana, 28. Napoli: Liguori Editore, 1991. Pp 432. L. 48,000.

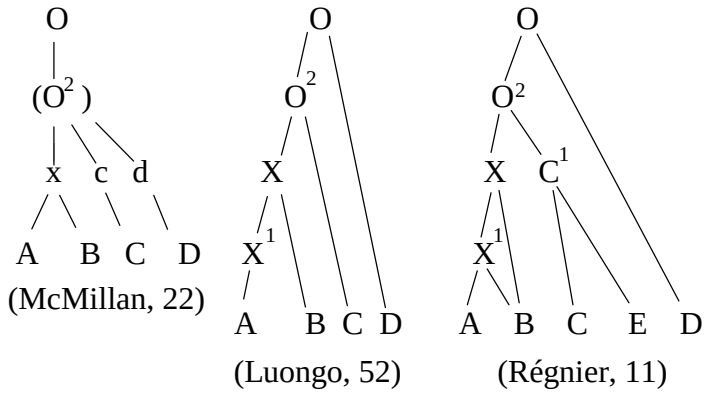
Years ago, when American/Canadian scholars in French of, alas, my age were beginning their graduate studies, we were universally required to have a reading knowledge of German, in order to use the many studies and—especially in medieval French—editions, produced by scholars of that linguistic persuasion. Today it is clear that Italian is just as necessary, not only for the many and superb Italian editions of the troubadours, but for northern French texts, especially epic, as well. I refrain from any side comment on what has happened to the formal language requirements since the time of the first Sputnik, but the practical necessity stands.

Twenty-two years ago, Duncan McMillan, in his edition of the **AB** redaction of the text in question,[1] expressed what seemed to be his regret that he had not been able, in his *editio minor*, to publish the "triptyque des trois rédactions *AB*, *C* et *D* (ce projet se réalisera-t-il jamais. . .?)" (p. 7). Salvatore Luongo, a professor at Potenza (Università della Basilicata), has eminently answered the question posed by the "studioso scozzese" (p. 46), in a fine production of "old philology."[2] It is a handsomely produced volume, logically organized, clearly argued, with well-edited texts, and a largely useful critical apparatus. Such criticism as I may make of the work lies in faults of omission much more than of commission.

Part I of the "Nota ai Testi" (= introduction; not to be confused with the "Note critiche" = critical notes on particular readings of the text) describes the manuscripts, the four **A**'s (plus a fragment) and the two **B**'s briefly, with **C**

and **D**, as to be expected, in more detail. The former copy was dated by its scribe 16 April 1295 (11), but the latter is more vaguely placed in the last half of that same century (14).

Part 2 (17-52) meticulously establishes a stemma somewhat different from McMillan's, in that it is totally binary, with no question mark on $\mathbf{O^2}$, and an additional intermediary for **A**. He readily admits (18) his debt to Tyssens[3] and to McMillan; but, although Luongo himself does not note it, a glance at Régnier's edition of the *Prise d'Orange*,[4] shows that Luongo's stemma is closer to Régnier's than to McMillan's.




The apparent paradox, that the **A** and **B** manuscripts, although having at least one more intermediary betweenthem and the (always) lost original, are more faithful to the original, is resolved by a study showing their nonetheless "conservative" nature and by a close analysis, in part 3, of **C** and **D**. The first section of this part is a helpful breakdown of the narrative by episode and by *laisse* in **AB, C**, and **D** (53-62). The next section examines, with many long parallel citations, how the tendency to move from

assonance to rhyme in **C** characterizes and thus changes this version. Part 3.2 takes up **D**, answering in the affirmative the question whether this version is "un caso di restituzione memoriale" (84), and showing in great detail how this can be noted. The language of the scribes is examined in part 4; the various aspects thereof, fully noted, are unfortunately crowded together: everything is there, but it is not immediately apparent just what is there. **C** is localised quite generally in north-eastern France (117). After a ten-page analysis of **D**, Luongo follows Régnier (and, as he notes, going back as far as Jeanroy), in placing this version in southern Lorraine (128). Part 5 takes up the versification, concluding by dating version **C** shortly before its writing down (136), with **D** more vaguely situated after the mid-13th century (141). The particular discussion of the versification is full, but not nearly as helpful or as clear as it could—or should—be. Each assonating (and/or rhyming, as in **C**) vowel is given a separate paragraph, with listings by *laisse* and commentary on particular aspects of the assonance/rhyme. All this is traditional. But any statistics must be worked out by the reader; it would have been much more useful—and easy to do with the aid of even a simple hand-held calculator—if the editor had given a thorough and basic statistical study (I know my strictures here are *déjà dit* all over again).

Indeed, the editor has not done the most elementary calculation, wherein we will find that **C**, with 1510 verses, has an average of 24 verses/*laisse*, whereas **D**, at 1464 ÷ 56 = 26 verses/*laisse*, and **AB** (without the microcalculations necessary to separate **A** [which one?], and **B** [ditto]) gives us 1486 ÷ 59 = 25 verses/*laisse*, a remarkable coincidence, given the divergences between these three groupings noted by Luongo.

Let us take the case of the first vowel, **e,** in **C**. The numbers are given for each *laisse*, but then one must tease out the specific manifestations of the vowel (and, where present, the following consonant[s]) as specified by the editor, but without any aggregated numbers. There are 15 **e** *laisses*, with a total of 648 verses, giving an average of 43 verses/*laisse*, well over the overall average (and leaving only 15 verses/*laisse* for the other vowels). If we leave off the longest (118, 109 verses) and the shortest (9 verses) of the **e** *laisses*, the 12 others (ranging from 17 to 54 verses) give an average of 32 verses/*laisse*, much closer to the general average. The micro- results are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| **é** | 349 (54% of the lines; predominant, but not necessarily the majority, in 8 *laisses*, including the two longest in the poem: I - 118 (**e**, 92), LII - 109 (**e**, 73); one *laisse* with **e** only (LVI, 31 vv.) |
| **er** | 156 (24%; predominant in 4) |
| **és** | 121 (19%; predominant in 3) |
| **ei** | 6 |
| **ers** | 6 |
| **el** | 4 |
| **ef** | 2 |
| **ier** | 2 |
| **et** | 1 |
| **iés** | 1 |

My point here is that it is regrettable that the editor—who, I admit, is simply giving the *laisses* the standard editorial analysis (cf. McMillan's edition, pp. 36-37, which furnishes even fewer numbers than Luongo)—has not given a full account, which is surprising in view of the detailed and meticulous analyses elsewhere in the edition. My accounting here—from Luongo's figures, and not from a recount—took less than an hour. Such a full analysis would have made things much clearer (and would have made for a

much more attractive section) and more helpful for the eventual users of the edition.

As to the editing itself, and the careful notes to specific problems of readings of the text, short of sitting down with the mss. themselves, and redoing the job, I have no quarrel. Luongo is a quite conservative editor. I give but two examples. In **C**, verse 578 begins *S'en trairai*, producing a hypometric hemistich (Luongo precedes all hypo/ hypermetric verses with an asterisk). Since there is no variant reading for *Si en*, Luongo merely notes this possibility in the notes.[5] But for verse 617, he gives *Mes sires <estes>*, since **AB** can provide the missing word. All such attested additions are so marked *à l'italienne* (instead of using the [ ]); verses or parts thereof to be taken out are noted > [text] <, but such verses are counted in the line numbering; clear lacunae of verses in the text are noted <...>, and are *not* counted. The critical notes are quite thorough, and even "evident" items are noted: v. 600 - * *Ves la Guill*elme has the note "Iato risolto in *Ves*." My only remark here would be that such notes (with the exception of the asterisked verses) are not signaled in the text and, once more, the compulsive note reader must keep a finger stuck in the back pages or else go through beforehand and insert a sign at the appropriate verses. This is a minor point, however, and, in a text with a very large number of notes, perhaps makes for a less cluttered text.

The glossary "raccoglie integralment il materiale lessicale dei testi" (341), and was produced from a computerized concordance. It is thoroughly lemmatized, as in the listing **sel** ◊ **se**[1], **si, la**[1] e **le**[1]. There are complete cross-references; for example, we have the listing **atende** ◊ **atente**, the latter word following immediately. Verb forms are full (see **avoir, estre**). Numbers are fully listed, both in their spelled-out forms (even if such numbers only occur in Roman form), and alphabetized under their Roman numeral form. In this sense the glossary is exemplary. I have found only three items where all the occurrences are not listed: **a**,

**de**, **por**; this is too bad, for a complete listing would not have taken up much more space.

There is one major remark—perhaps "plea" would be a better word—that I will make. Linguistic nationalism can be accepted in most parts of an edition of a text not in the same linguistic domain (and provided that the commenting language is one of which scholars of the "target" language can reasonably be expected to have some knowledge), but it just seems most proper and, to use the word once more, helpful, that the glossary of, say, a Lithuanian text should be glossed in Lithuanian (and, if published in Finland with a Finnish introduction, etc., a Finnish gloss in addition would be quite fine). I simply find it logical that "linguistic politeness" should require that German texts be glossed at least in German, French in French, Swahili in Swahili. One may object that the Tobler-Lommatzsch is glossed in German; quite. The Anglo-Norman dictionary produced by the ANTS is glossed in English, but this is for texts written in that dialect used to the north-west of the Channel, which are therefore culturally English texts as well as being written in a dialect of the French language.

The eight-page Index nominum is complete except, once again, for some of the most frequent names (**Deu**, **France**). Here again, the editor might have gone just a bit further in order to be quite complete (it would not have added more than two or three pages). The proper nouns are all given in expanded form only in the glossary, and are not sorted out by case use, so that one cannot get a hold on the real use of cases except by returning to each occurrence in the text. Thus under the headword **Mahomet**, we can eventually sort out that, of the three-syllable form, all of the three used as subject (and expanded as **Mahomés**), are abbreviated as **Mah'**; of the eight used obliquely, four are spelled out as in the headword, the other four are abbreviated. In **D** all of the three-syllable forms are abbreviated (two function as subject, two as oblique). All seven of the two-syllable forms function

as oblique, only one unabbreviated (by the nasal bar). The quarrel here is not with the case expansions, since other noun usage justifies the regular case endings, but from the index nominum one can conclude nothing; in fact, of the twenty-two forms in both redactions, only five are unequivocally marked (although one could argue that the six **Mahõ** are clear, since one would expect the two- syllable form as subject to be either **Mah'** or **Mahõ**). No subject forms of this name are written in full.

As I stated earlier, this careful and clear edition is well done. As for the versification and index nominum sections, the treatment is traditional and, from that point of view, they are well done. But much more could have been done there, at the cost of not much time on the editor's part and not many added pages. Perhaps the day will come when, with the help of one's computer (does anyone do text editing anymore without that splendid tool?), glossaries will be as complete as this one's, and the other parts of the study will be just as thorough.

These quibbles notwithstanding, we can welcome this fine edition, which completes the kernel of the Guillaume cycle, with all three poems now available in their tripartite variety.[6]

## NOTES

[1] *Le Charroi de Nîmes, chanson de geste du XII^e^ siècle*, éditée d'après la rédaction **AB** avec introduction, notes et glossaire, Bibliothèque française et romane, **B**: 12 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972).

[2] Not to enter into the recent quarrel, I must yet note that those secular Marcionists who seem to scorn the work of the early philologists in medieval French ("dinosaurs" is one of the terms of endearment used by the former in regard to the latter) and who write in praise of "the variant," are noticeable by their abstention from the perhaps unglamorous work of producing critical variorum editions. The irenic position

(Marcion was opposed by Saint Irenaeus, who upheld the orthodox position that the Old [Hebrew] testament was not to be rejected, and that the New one builds upon the earlier one) is that critical theorizing would look quite funny without careful and complete editions upon which to build (a sort of "air guitar" without the background music). But I digress.

[3] Madeleine Tyssens, *La Geste de Guillaume d'Orange dans les manuscrits cycliques*, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, 178 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1967). This monumental tome, though not editing any text, remains as the indispensable starting point for editorial work on all the poems of the Guillaume cycle.

[4] *La Prise d'Orange, chanson de geste de la fin du XII*[e] *siècle*, éditée d'après la rédaction **AB** avec introduction, notes et glossaire par Claude Régnier, cinquième édition, Bibliothèque française et romane, **B**: 5 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977) [= editio minor] 11.

[5] The whole note reads: "Ipometro (-1) il primo emistichio (improbabile *traïrai*), cfr. **AB** 511: S'en giterai (B: *Jeter en vueil*); leggere *Si en*." That is to say that Luongo, no new philologist he, realizes that there is a difference between *traire* < *TRAGERE (<TRAHERE) and *trahir/ traïr* < TRADERE, and that the variants, precisely, semantically support the former verb (2 syll. [vs. the 3-syll. verb]); Guillaume is not going to *betray* his opponents, he is going to *get* them *out* of Nîmes.

[6] *Les rédactions en prose de la Prise d'Orange*, Claude Régnier (Paris: Klincksieck, 1966) [editio maior]. *Les rédactions en vers du Couronnement de Louis*, édition avec une introduction et des notes par Yvan G. Lepage, T.L.F., 261 (Genève: Droz, 1978).

Jody Enders
University of California, Santa Barbara

Peter Haidu. *The Subject of Violence: The Song of Roland and the Birth of the State*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993. Pp. 257.

For anyone who first encountered Peter Haidu via his extensive semiotic ventures into *Aesthetic Distance in Chrétien de Troyes* (Geneva: Droz, 1968), brace yourselves for a riveting intellectual ride. This is a challenging, polemical Haidu who forcefully demands a vast socio-cultural re-evaluation of the subject (and more properly), the subjectivities of violence.

Haidu's *Subject of Violence* is a highly sophisticated, painstakingly conducted inquiry into the semiotics of the *Song of Roland*. Sadly, its extended lexicon of aporias, epiphenomena, evenementiality, cathexis, captations, castrations, and ideologemes, along with its exclusive focus on a *Roland* assumed from the outset to be highly familiar to all readers will render *The Subject of Violence* inaccessible to undergraduates, many graduate students, and, I dare say, most generalist scholars--unless, of course, they share Haidu's propensity for the "discipline of narrative semiotics" of which, he claims, the "major texts have appeared in English only during the last few years" (9). However, for the specialized medievalist, Haidu's elaborate circumnavigations of the paradoxes of violence are well worth it, especially in his urging that we distinguish our own moral association of violence with transgression from the medieval association of violence with norms: "the rough, injurious, or unjust use of force did not invariably bear coded, moral disapproval, however much individuals may have suffered from it. Our term 'violence' perforce bears a seme of disapproval, of condemnation: our culture assumes peace as the desired and

desirable norm, and negativizes its opposite" (3). These notions emerge with dazzling energy and clarity in his introductory and concluding sections, the latter of which sweeps the reader up in a spiraling global vision of medieval textuality, Freudian psychoanalysis, nomadism, Nazi ideology, the imperialistic foundations of the nation-state, and the hypocritical (if well-intentioned) contemporary denials of our participation in these violent subjects through the act of literary criticism. For those who persevere, *The Subject of Violence* is a fascinating read.

Composed of an Introduction, nine chapters, and a lengthy conclusion, the book shows Haidu at his best in the elaboration of his two major ideological cruces: the eloquent debunking of what I can only think to call the myth of alterity; and the deft bridging of the perceived ideological gulfs between Christianity, Marxism, and psychoanalysis. As far as alterity is concerned, Haidu extrapolates effectively from historian Marc Bloch's insight that violence was "deep-rooted in the social structure and in the mentality" of the Middle Ages in order to protest that "we will not begin to make headway with our own versions of the issue [of violent transgression] until we grasp the continuity between those contemporary versions and the bases laid down in the Middle Ages upon which our struggles with violence are founded" (195). He does retain the concept of alterity, but prefers to reconstruct it by means of an Althusserian Marxism: "ideology, considered as the lived relations of individuals to their conditions of material existence and labor, operates in and through works of art, literature, and the intellect, as a perpetual negotiation of oppositions and contradictions and as constitutive of subjectivity" (15). Not all medievalists will accept Haidu's application to the *Roland* of the theme of culpability as "a nomothetic, proto-legal term bound to the hypothesis neither of a shame culture nor a guilt culture," in which Charlemagne would incarnate the guilt of the "paternal function in the Oedipal relation, rather than the filial" (192).

But few can fail to be impressed by his insightful perception of nascent medieval subjectivities emerging from what he views as the primordial conflict of the Roland between feudalism and monarchy along a vast expanse of history: “the Christian crux rejoins the Marxist crux” at a crossroads at which “both have attempted to articulate the thirst for an implementation in daily life of ideals of justice and sustainability which would cohere with charity” (16). In fact, in one of the few conciliatory gestures of the study, Haidu sees other medievalists as his “fellow travelers” in that quest for knowledge (16).

Otherwise, and regrettably so, Haidu’s attitude throughout this book toward those “fellow travelers” is at best, disdainful and, at worst, insulting, as in the following searing indictment of an ‘old guard’ who is indexed but, disingenuously, never named: medieval textuality or representation prompts “an unease that affects not only the old guard of medievalism, from which one would expect nothing other than the sly and arrogant self-defensiveness it has displayed, often in the violence of passive academic aggression; it can be seen among the specialists in other, more recent periods of European literature, most of whom work in willful and often boastful ignorance of anything medieval” (5). Ordinarily, it should not be necessary to comment on authorial tone in a book review--all the more so in that such issues of professional decorum have already been rehearsed in the pages of *Olifant*: but since Haidu indulges in a veritable smear campaign throughout this study, his rhetoric cannot be overlooked. If, indeed, there is evidence in *The Subject of Violence* of “sly arrogance and self-defensiveness,” it is in Haidu’s own posturings which occur as early as his own Acknowledgements, a normally courteous venue which he transforms into a condemnation of the “institutional violence allowed and encouraged by the bureaucratized university” (x). To compare the haunting violence of the Middle Ages with the “personal rigidities and the

shortsighted institutional politics which block serious efforts of interdisciplinary research and teaching" bespeaks an aggrandizement of the role of the individual modern critic that does no credit to the sophistication of Haidu's arguments, which otherwise proceed as follows:

In Chapter 1, "The Semiotization of Death: Open Text or Closed?," Haidu is concerned with Roland's staging of his own death as tragic, but in a revitalized 'non-bourgeois' vision of tragedy (which might have profited from some account of Friedrich Nietzsche or George Steiner, both of whom are absent from the bibliography). The analysis is close, linguistic, and textual, ending with a plea that scholars situate the *Roland* in a socio-cultural context that includes the *failles* of Christianity and feudalism alike. Be that as it may, Haidu succinctly dispenses with Robert F. Cook, Karl Uitti, Hans-Erich Keller, and Stephen G. Nichols (who have been exploring those very *failles* for the past two decades) in the opening paragraph of the chapter: they "all concur that the *Chanson de Roland* is a 'historical metanarrative of Christian triumph and hegemony,' whose semiosis is monological, whatever variations may be allowed for in the relative weight accorded feudal, monarchical, and religious values" (17). In a work whose principal mission is the discernment of very subtle differences, Haidu's own monologizing of his most suitable interlocutors is alarming.

Any book has problems and, in Haidu's case, they are serious problems of research and of bibliography. Eugene Vance, Homi Bhabha, Brian Stock, R. Howard Bloch, Lee Patterson, and Evelyn Vitz all find a place in a Bibliography which spans a scant 10 pages. But, with precious few exceptions, the critical articles on the *Roland* he chooses to reference date from the seventies or earlier and only sporadically from the mid-eighties. It is as if, over a period of almost twenty years, no one has said anything noteworthy about the *Song of Roland* except Haidu himself, whose

bibliography features ten entries for his own work. Similarly, he is interested throughout the work in textuality: indeed, the kind of close semiotic analysis he practices could not be carried out in the context of orality, as he willingly acknowledges. So, while one might readily anticipate his allusions to Brian Stock's *Implications of Literacy*, conspicuously absent from Haidu's treatment of his topic are other crucial works in orality, literacy, and textuality by such authors as Sylvia Huot, James J. Murphy, George Kennedy, and Walter Ong. He finds that the semiotic ambiguities of Charles's role as destinator anticipate some of the subjectivities of the twentieth-century novel (133): but appears unfamiliar with any of the learned essays in Brownlee and Brownlee's *Romance and the Transformation of Genre.*

Chapter 2, "The Gaze of the Other," is eight pages long and contains a reading of the pagans as the "negativized other" of the Franks. It also houses the curious statement that only one early critic read the poem closely enough to be justifiably repulsed by its imperialistic political ethos. Haidu maintains that the modern anthropological vision of cultural diversity yields the following unsatisfactory result: "what is more difficult to mentally encompass is the ease with which modern scholars and critics, who benefit from that cultural relativism continue to embrace without hesitation the crude, aggressive nationalism and religious absolutism which they continue to identify with the grotesque enterprise of the Crusades. There is something profoundly repugnant not only about the cultural and political ethos displayed by the text--an ethos which has occasioned the entirely admirable indignation of only one scholar to my knowledge: Jean Charles Payen--but about the *acceptance* of an ethos which was historically so grossly destructive" (37). Here, one can only wonder if Haidu has engaged either orally or textually with Robert F. Cook, Stephen G. Nichols, or Gérard J. Brault, who have long pondered the problematic

juxtaposition of imperialist politics with the *folie de la croix*. The function of Chapter 2 is to consider how an interpretation of *Roland* will be affected by varying degrees of emphasis on textuality or history, which then lays the foundation for Chapter 3, "Excursus I: Aesthetics, Economics, Politics."

For the most part, Chapter 3 is a re-rehearsal of the socio-cultural transition from feudalism to the bourgeoisie via such writers as Michel Foucault and Georges Duby. Among other things, Haidu explores the beauty of bloodshed and weaponry, how negation requires a "prior affirmation of value" (49), the importance of vengeance and revenge, the vocabulary of monetary exchange (as when Aude refuses the commodified switch of fiance's before her death (58), and some speculation about the meaning of the text's twelve peers. In Chapter 4, "The Subsystem of the Professional Warrior: Courage, Contradiction, Irascibility," he turns to the somewhat oxymoronic subject of "public subjectivities" (77), a concept that, again, can be intuited from D.W. Robertson's *Preface to Chaucer*, Nichols's *Romanesque Signs*, Cook's *Sense of the Song of Roland*, or Larry Crist's early articles--although Haidu does not acknowledge their insights. Instead, he reminds his readers of the ideological valences of heroism vs. treason and explores Ganelon's status as a "second class citizen" during the first nomination scene (71). This prompts him to conclude that internal contradictions within the institution of knighthood are responsible for the "annihilation of the flower of knighthood in the Frankish rear guard" (84). Of Roland, Oliver, Turpin, Ganelon, and their compatriots, Haidu believes that "it is their specific systematicity, that degree of identity and diffraction of the same set of values, that brings about the disaster at Roncevaux. . . . The structure of the structures of narrative recursively repeats Oliver's analysis of Roland's tragic pattern: it is the strengths in question that lead to disaster" (84)

Chapter 5, "The Destinator's Multiple Roles: Syncretism or Contradiction?," takes us through a semiotic interpretation of the role of Charlemagne as a "culpable guarantor" (85), seen here through the lens of another re-reading of the two horn scenes and the Baligant episode. Haidu determines that the arguments between Roland and Oliver on the battlefield are not really about Roland's culpability at all, but about Charles's (90). Thus, it is feudalism that is at stake in a highly politicized poem whose primary function would be to stage conventions of guilt and protection as a means by which to question the institutions that perpetuate them (100). That realization leads Haidu to "Excursus II: The Play of Absence and Presence in Medieval Kingship," where readers will find a history lesson about the Capetian Kings designed to elaborate social and semantic contradictions in the concepts of nobility, emperor, royalty, and kingship. Subscribing here to a controversial view of medieval 'fragmentation' not unlike that proposed by Brian Vickers in his *In Defense of Rhetoric* (but that does not benefit from the more nuanced analysis of Caroline Walker Bynum's *Fragmentation and Redemption*), Haidu finds that, "as lexeme and actor, then, 'Charles' is a sliding signifier, producing vague and ambiguous significations" (119). This is a key point for him that will dominate the second half of the book: namely, that kingdoms, empires, and States are highly unstable entities (as are the Old French terms that commonly point to those entities): but that, through its manipulation of guilt, vengeance, and history, the *Roland* is a text that creates the illusion of stability.

Feminist and cultural critics will doubtless take issue with Chapter 7 on "Funerary Rituals," which explores the practices of mourning and communities without the slightest nod to the important work of such critics as Louise Fradenburg and David Aers: "the episode of funereal ritual and the death of Aude were two subsidiary parts of the same

narrative syntagm whose topics were the collective and individual griefs and the rituals of reintegration and exclusion that follow upon the death of the culture-hero, the icon of the warrior society" (129). That assertion is part and parcel of Haidu's more englobing vision of a staged Christian ethos that has more to do with emerging nation-states than with Christianity--although I dare say most *Roland* scholars will be surprised to learn that, when God stops the sun for Charles to have time to avenge the dead, "'religion' makes a striking entry into a text which is anything but religious or Christian in its fundamental content" (122). Chapter 8, "Textual Coherence and the Dialectics of Ideology" is the place where, oddly enough, Haidu offers concise definitions of the crucial terms that have informed his analysis: "textuality" is the *trace* "which is only a partial aspect of the semiosis of the original event inscribed in the text" (137). And, in a definition that sounds as much like rhetoric as it does semiotics, he makes this observation of Russian Formalism:

"Rather than being explained in terms that are both psychological and temporally sequential according to a pattern A ◊ B ◊ C, which is the pattern of explanation characteristic of mimetic and realistic fiction, Formalism, and after it semiotics, conceives of narrative as a textual process oriented toward achieving certain ends. As a result, the pattern of explanation is no longer psychological or mimetic but operational: actors, actants, narrative programs, all the paraphernalia of narrativity are selected and deployed in such a manner as to achieve certain predetermined ends. As a result, it is the end which explains the beginning, rather then the other way around (C ◊ B ◊ A), the proviso being, of course, that the A/B/C sequence still adhere to the principle of the inescapable verisimilitude, much broader than an earlier sense of psychological vraisemblance" (140-41).

According to this pattern, Haidu reads the "overarching program' of the *Roland* as one designed to "install a new political order," an end which justifies the violent means of loss, death, sacrifice, and vengeance.

Finally, in the very interesting reading supplied in Chapter 9 of "Ganelon's Trial, or the Monarch's Revolution," Haidu posits a fundamental conflict not only between noble vengeance and ignoble treason but between monarchical and feudal values. Once again, he ignores recent bibliography in the ever-burgeoning field of the theatricality of jurisprudence and torture, contenting himself with a few references to Foucault, Howard Bloch, Edward Peters, and Elaine Scarry. A fascinating Conclusion then reveals more unsubstantiated denunciations of the "unmapped mis-readings" of other medievalists as Haidu fulminates anew against their failure to recognize medieval indeterminacy: "[missing] the point for so long, preferring rather to invent cheap and sentimental narratives to 'explain' such medieval openness" (180-81). Were Menendez-Pidal alive, he would probably be among the first to puzzle over why Haidu would so deliberately alienate the most likely readership of this book. Apparently that eventuality also escaped the notice of the editors of Indiana University Press who published all this polemic unchecked.

The dust jacket of *The Subject of Violence* features two generous testimonials by R. Howard Bloch and Larry Crist praising Haidu's book. Their praise is warranted: this is a challenging, original, and highly interesting revision of the politics of the textuality of *Song of Roland*. For that reason, it is all the more unfortunate that the verve and the genuine intellectual excitement of Haidu's gifts as a reader of medieval texts are so mired down in needless venom.