The Saracens in the Thirteenth-Century Chansons de Geste and Romances

by

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Abstract of Thesis

As the twelfth century progresses, there is a tendency to show the Saracen of the chansons de geste in a better light. The aim of this thesis is to decide whether the tendency continues and develops in the thirteenth century, and, if so, how and why.

A study of the Saracens in the chansons de geste of the thirteenth century reveals tolerant and sympathetic treatment by the French writers. Several characters are favourably described, who remain pagan.

An examination of the general relations between Christian and Saracen strengthens the feeling that the Saracens have been accepted as a people with a code of honour and chivalry. The agreements reached between the two sides are described, and the way in which they were respected.

In contrast, a survey of the religious, social, and military details reveals little change. There is hardly any evidence of first-hand knowledge of Moslem habits. Some comments are accurate,

probably because of the similarities between French and Moslem culture, but many are inaccurate and come from the earlier chansons de geste.

This would seem to indicate that the poet kept the stock epithets and traditional formulas of the early chansons de geste for general background material, but that he allowed himself to be influenced by the period in which he was living for his characters. The West was beginning to appreciate the Moslem and desired to convert him by peaceful means.

The romances tend to bear out this hypothesis. They too contain many examples of agreements between Christian and Saracen, and in some, though not all, religious fanaticism has abated, and the two peoples have clearly learned to accept each other and to tolerate the religious differences between them.

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Introduction

Much has been written on the chansons de geste, whether in general histories or in articles on specific subjects. In comparison with the early poems, those of the thirteenth century seem to me to have been neglected, and yet they contain a great deal of interesting material.

During the thirteenth century, the chansons de geste enjoyed a temporary re-appearance into favour. Almost all of the old ones were re-written, and in many cases it is the new version which has survived rather than the original. It is extremely likely that the poet, when adapting these works, would include something of his own times. Although the main outline of the story might remain the same, one might legitimately expect some of the details and additions (for the adaptations were always much longer than the originals) to reflect contemporary ideas and opinions. The romances have been included for this reason. They were a new form of literature, and, though the number of Saracens occurring in them is small, I was interested to see whether those which are found would be differently described from their compatriots in the chansons de geste. Except in the chapters on the army and on society, the romances have, in general, been treated separately.

We gain various impressions of the Saracens from writers on the medieval period. To help the reader, I shall give, in order of publication, brief summaries of the arguments in the books and articles to which I have most frequently referred.

W.W. Comfort's article unfortunately deals only with the character-types in some of the chansons de geste, (i) which rather limits its usefulness. In his section dealing with the heathen character- types, Comfort first discusses the historical reasons for the presence of Saracens in epic poetry, and points out that, in spite of the French having other enemies, ~~for the French~~ it is:

> 'the Saracens who continue to represent the typical enemy, the uncompromising foe of the true God and of the French warriors alike.'(ii)

Despite this, he is of the opinion that:

> 'In their essential traits and in their ethical code Christians and Saracens are identical.'(iii)

Because of knowledge of the splendour of the East, and of the courage of its people, much of the uncompromising bitterness found in La Chanson de Roland has disappeared; but however worthy the Saracens are shown to be, the religious distinction is maintained. Comfort speaks of the religious fervour in the racial conflicts, and of the vigour put into mass conversions or killings. He then discusses the

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(i) W.W. Comfort 'The Character Types in the Old French Chansons de Geste' PMLA XXI (1906) 279-434.

(ii) Ibid. p. 407.

(iii) Ibid. p. 410.

Saracens who, in later poems, are presented in a 'grotesque, marvelous or romantic light'.(i) Apparently, these grotesque characters are often found in the Crusade cycle. After a discussion on the presentation of the religion of the heathen in the chansons de geste, Comfort turns his attention to the women characters, and reveals his admiration for them. He compares Orable, in La Prise d'Orange, Mirabel, in Aiol and Rosamunde, in Elie de Saint-Gille, with Aude, in La Chanson de Roland and Jacqueline, in Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople. He praises the vigour and initiative of the first three women, and points out their good qualities. Comfort concludes:

> 'In other words, the Saracens conform to the new literary demand of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. No longer exclusively represented as the enemies of the Most High, to be slaughtered or converted on a grand scale, they are to be respected and converted if possible, in any case to be met on equal terms.'(ii)

M. Skidmore's thesis is even more limited in some respects than Comfort's article, because he treats a single aspect of the Christian and Saracen characters - the moral aspect.(iii) After a brief discussion of the history of the period, Skidmore gives a 'general view of the pagan'. He decides that no great knowledge of the Moslem world is shown, and that the descriptive adjectives applied to the opponents of the French yield little information of value:

(i) Comfort art. cit., p. 418.

(ii) Ibid. p. 430.

(iii) M. Skidmore The Moral Traits of Christian and Saracen as portrayed by the Chansons de Geste (Colorado Springs 1935)

> 'They serve to emphasize that, for the authors, singers and audiences of the chansons de geste, the Saracens were pagans, fetid, villainous, Arab and Berber enemies, wicked, vile and inferior.'(i)

A detailed examination of the Saracens in La Chanson de Roland, La Chanson de Guillaume and Gormont et Isembart leads to the conclusion that in these poems:

> 'The Saracen is treacherous, tricky, often cowardly:...(ii)

In other chapters, there are details of cruelties done against the Saracens and those done against the Christians (the latter chapter being only a quarter the length of the former!), and then follows a short chapter on Christian and Saracen generosity; generosity shown not to the other side, however, but to fellow-believers. Skidmore mentions none of the agreements, made and honoured by Christian and Saracen alike, which to me seem an important feature of the thirteenth-century chansons de geste, and which surely should be included in a treatise of the Christians and Saracens.

In conclusion, Skidmore tells us that the medieval poet:

> 'believes the Saracen to be unreliable, cowardly, mendacious and cruel, and we are expected to agree with him.'(iii)

He maintains that the poet has been unable to make good these claims, and that the Saracen often appears in a better light than the Christian.

The thesis is interesting, but one feels that much has been

(i) Skidmore op. cit., p. 30.

(ii) Ibid. p. 65.

(iii) Ibid. p. 124.

left out, especially as far as the thirteenth century is concerned, because only eleven chansons de geste of that period have been used for reference.

C. Meredith Jones, in his article, tells us of the Christian Church's unrelenting struggle against heresy and disbelief, and maintains that this struggle is clearly reflected in the chansons de geste.(i) He then gives us the portrait of the conventional Saracen, which he has built up from numerous quotations. It will be useful to quote this passage in its entirety, to provide a contrast with some of the thirteenth-century characters we shall read of later:

> 'They [the Saracens] are frequently presented as physical monstrosities; many of them are giants, whole tribes have horns on their heads, others are black as devils. They rush into battle making weird noises comparable to the barking of dogs. They are intensely emotional and excitable people, readily giving way to tears of joy and anger, always going from one emotional extreme to another. Socially, they are the embodiment of foul practices, simply because they lack the one thing necessary in Christian eyes for perfection - belief in Christianity. Thus they use slaves, they eat their prisoners, they buy and sell their womenfolk; and they practice polygamy, which latter, of course, they did in reality. The poets invent for them a host of insulting epithets and periphrases ... to emphasize the unbelief which is the secret of all their wickedness.'(ii)

Meredith Jones sees little deviation from this pattern, and assures us that what there is serves only to accentuate the wickedness of those who conform. He goes on to discuss the religion of the Saracens, as described in the chansons de geste: the 'mahommeries', the images, the prayers and feasts. The conclusion he draws from his study is that

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(i) C. Meredith Jones 'The Conventional Saracen of the Songs of Geste' Speculum XVII (1942) 201-225.

(ii) Ibid. p. 205.

the Saracen characteristics rarely correspond with those which are known to be historically accurate, and that the portrait is:

> 'based on hate, on a deliberately false propaganda. Its object was to disfigure, and the few instances, in which there is a more or less faithful representation of reality are accidental.'(i)

J. Crosland, in her chapter on 'The Heathen in the Old French Epic'(ii), discusses the Saracen in La Chanson de Roland and La Chanson de Guillaume, and shows how Rainouart prepares the ground for the 'good heathen' who appears in later poems.(iii) She traces this different attitude from the middle of the twelfth century, suggesting that the Pseudo-Turpin is a kind of signpost.(iv) Aumont, in La Chanson d'Aspremont, is quoted as an example of a fine Saracen.(v) He is killed, however, because he refuses to be converted, but Balant, in the same poem, is favourably described and becomes a Christian:

> 'The case of Balant is fairly typical of a number of good pagans who from their first appearance on the scene are marked out in some way as potential converts.'(vi)

A few more examples are quoted, such as Forré, in Les Narbonnais, and Fierabras, in the chanson de geste of that name.(vii) The latter leads on to his sister Floripas, whose brutal actions are described.(viii)

(i) Meredith Jones art. cit., p. 225.

(ii) J. Crosland The Old French Epic (Oxford 1951) pp. 138-166.

(iii) Ibid. pp. 150ff.

(iv) Ibid. p. 153.

(v) Ibid. p. 159.

(vi) Ibid. p. 161.

(vii) Ibid. pp. 162ff.

(viii) Ibid. p. 165.

The female characters receive very little attention apart from this description.

It is clear that these authorities hold widely differing opinions about the Saracen in medieval French literature. Meredith Jones sees no good side at all and presents the pagan as cruel and treacherous. None of the others is so biassed. Skidmore points out that the Christians show more cruelty than the heathens, and, in general, despite the fact that the poets are trying to run down the Saracens, they make the latter seem more agreeable than the Christians. Crosland stresses the fact that there is a trend towards the 'good heathen', but she gives examples only of those who are eventually converted. Comfort also tells us that if sympathy has been aroused for a pagan, it is sure that he will be converted.(i) As I said earlier, the thirteenth century tends to be neglected, and, although one or two references may be made to it, important new developments are totally ignored. Even the increasing rôle played by women is ignored, except by Comfort. Crosland dismisses them in a paragraph;(ii) Skidmore hardly mentions them, and Meredith Jones, whilst he describes them,(iii) does not trace the increasing importance of the part they play.

(i) Comfort art. cit., p. 417.

(ii) Crosland op. cit., p. 165.

(iii) Meredith Jones art. cit., pp. 219ff.

Yet these developments are important, and reflect contemporary ideas. Surely here the writers of the chansons de geste are showing us how the attitude towards the infidel has changed? People were tired of fighting, and contact with the Moslems had dispelled many false impressions. The Christians realised that here was a civilisation from which they could learn a great deal, even if the people did not hold quite the same beliefs as themselves. The development of the part played by women also shows the influence of the times. Barely mentioned in the early Chanson de Roland and La Chanson de Guillaume, in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste, their features, emotions, and actions are fully described, in a manner befitting the position they had come to hold in society.

For anyone studying western social history of this period, the chansons de geste are a useful source for details regarding the feudal system, the pastimes and education of the nobles, the changing position of women in society. This raises the question whether this usefulness may be extended to cover eastern civilisation, or whether the poets rely upon the old formulas and traditional material to provide the background for their songs. Unfortunately the latter would seem to be the case, but closer examination of the texts reveals a certain amount of knowledge regarding eastern beliefs and customs. At times the poets must deliberately have ignored the knowledge they had of the Moslems, but at other tines they have allowed it to guide them and balance their religious fanaticism.

With these points in mind, I shall attempt to study the Saracens, their religion, their way of life, as shown in the chansons de geste

and romances, and then briefly sketch what we know of the real facts and compare the two.

The main source of information for Moslem society was E.W. Lane. His two books on Egyptian and Arabian society have been extremely useful.(i) The title of the first is rather misleading however and should perhaps be explained. The book was written over a hundred years ago. At that time, Egypt was still a medieval country, although:

> 'straining to emerge from behind the hitherto impenetrable edifice of traditions,...' (ii)

Lane's remarks are therefore as applicable to the middle ages as they were to the Egypt of the first half of the nineteenth century.

For the purposes of this study, the word 'Saracen' has been taken to be synonymous with 'Moslem'. I have not included texts where the word was used to apply to Saxons or other Northern or non-Islamic races. The chansons de geste of the crusade cycle have not been included either, because the Cycle de Guillaume and the Cycle du Roi provided sufficient material, and the scope of the thesis had to be limited. Also, it is the traditional type of Saracen whose evolution I wish to trace.

It cannot be denied that the tendency, already found in the twelfth century, to give the Saracens fair treatment, continued in the thirteenth century. In order to see whether it is a progressive tendency, I have attempted to compile a chronological list of the

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(i) E.W. Lane Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (London 1908) and Arabian Society in the Middle Ages (London 1883)

(ii) Lane Mod. Egypt. op. cit., p. vi.

chansons de geste and romances read. It would be impossible to do this entirely accurately, as the dating of some of them is so uncertain. To establish the date, I have had to rely on the evidence of those with much more specialised knowledge than I. In general, I have consulted R. Bossuat (i), U.T. Holmes (ii) and R. Levy (iii) and, where differences occurred, the editions of the texts concerned. If some of the dating is unexpected, it is where the evidence was inconclusive, but there seemed a strong possibility that the chanson de geste was thirteenth century. In this case, it has been included.(iv)

Approximate Chronological List of

Chansons de Geste.

SECOND HALF OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

LA CHEVALERIE OGIER DE DANEMARCHE: Used for comparison with Les Enfances Ogier.

LE SIÈGE DE BARBASTRE: Used for comparison with Bueve de Commarchis.

(i) R. Bossuat Manuel bibliographique de la littérature française du moyen âge (Melun 1951) and Suppléments (Paris 1955 and 1961)

(ii) D.C. Cabeen (General Editor) A Critical Bibliography of French Literature (Syracuse, New York 1947)
Vol. 1 The Mediæval Period ed. U.T. Holmes,Jr.

(iii) R. Levy Chronologie approximative de la littérature française du moyen âge Beiheft 98 Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie (1957)

(iv) I have also included here, for the convenience of the reader, references to summaries of the chansons de geste and romances to which I have most frequently referred.

FIRST HALF OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

AIOL: 'Aiol, formé de deux parties distinctes, dont la plus ancienne fut composée avant 1173, et dont l'autre remonte à la première moitié du XIIIe siècle.' (Levy op. cit., p. 55)
Summary: SATF edition pp. iv-viij.

ANSEIS DE CARTHAGE: About 1200
Summary: L. Gautier Les Epopées françaises (Paris and Brussels 1878-1882 2nd ed.) Vol. III, pp. 637-647.

AYMERI DE NARBONNE: 'La chanson d'Aymeri... n'a pu être composée avant 1205; d'autre part, elle ne paraît pas être postérieure au premier quart du XIIIe siècle.' (ed. L. Demaison Vol. I, p. lxxxi.) (i) Summary: SATF edition pp. vii-xxiv.

BUEVE DE HAUMTONE: Levy dates all the versions in the thirteenth century. Bossuat dates the Anglo-Norman version in the twelfth, and the two French fragments in the thirteenth century. A. Stimming, the editor of the Anglo-Norman version, which is the version I have used, states that the story certainly existed earlier in the twelfth century, but from a study of the language of the Anglo-Norman text deduces: 'Demnach wird die Entstehungszeit unserer Fassung in die erste Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts zu setzen sein.' (ed. A. Stimming p. lviii.)
Summary: In edition pp. lix-lxxvi.

DOON DE MAIENCE.
Summary: In edition pp. xvij-lv.

ELIE DE SAINT-GILLE: Bossuat places this in the twelfth century, Levy at the beginning of the thirteenth. The editor, G. Raynaud, thinks that the form we have is a thirteenth-century adaptation. (ed. G. Raynaud p. xvii.)
Summary: SATF edition pp. iii-ix.

LES ENFANCES GUILLAUME.
Summary: SATF edition pp. ix-xiii.

LES ENFANCES VIVIEN: Bossuat and Levy agree in placing this work in the thirteenth century. The editor, A. Nordfelt, also places it in the thirteenth century, but G. Paris is not impressed with his reasoning, and prefers the third quarter of the twelfth century.(ii) U.T. Holmes remarks: 'Nordfelt's argument, however, seems rather more persuasive.'(Holmes op. cit., p. 66.)
Summary: Histoire littéraire de la France (afterwards referred to as HLF) (Paris 1835-1873) Vol. XXII, pp. 503-507.

(i) Full details of the editions used for the chansons de geste and romances are to be found in the bibliography.

(ii) G. Paris Romania XIX (1890) p. 127.

FOULQUE DE CANDIE.
Summary: In edition Vol. 21, pp. xi-xxviii; Vol. 38, pp.vii-xxi.

GIRART DE VIENNE.
Summary: HLF op. cit., Vol. XXII, pp. 448-460.

GUI DE BOURGOGNE.
Summary: In edition pp. xv-xlij.

GUIBERT D'ANDRENAS.
Summary: In edition pp. v-xviii.

HUON DE BORDEAUX: Bossuat and Levy place this work in the thirteenth century. The editors, F. Guessard and C. Grandmaison, conclude: 'C'est donc à la fin du XIIe siècle, de 1180 à 1200, dix ans plus tôt dix ans plus tard, si l'on veut, que notre poëme a été composé.' (ed. F. Guessard and C. Grandmaison p. viij.)
Summary: In edition pp. lv-cxxv.

LA MORT AYMERI: The editor, J. Couraye du Parc, tells us: 'Aucun indice ne permet de dater la Mort Aymeri; M. Paulin Paris, dans l'Histoire Littéraire, XXII, p. 501, et M. le marquis de la Grange, dans son édition de Hugues Capet, p. XLIII et ss., ont cru pouvoir fixer la date de sa composition à la fin du XIIIe siècle et même au XIVe siècle. Nous croyons qu'il faut reculer cette date plus loin et la fixer vers la fin du XIIe siècle.' (ed. J. Couraye du Parc p. xxij.) Levy also places the work at the end of the twelfth century. Skidmore, however, having quoted Couraye du Parc, adds: 'But the poet of the Mort Aymeri knew the Aymeri de Narbonne, which Demaison, in his edition of the latter poem , places in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.'(i)
Summary: HLF op. cit., Vol. XXII, pp. 501-503.

LES NARBONNAIS.
Summary: SATF edition Vol. II, pp. xvi-xxii.

OTINEL.
Summary: In edition pp. xv-xxiv.

LA PRISE DE CORDRES: The dating of this poem seems to be a very vexed problem, depending mainly upon whether there was an earlier version of the Guibert d'Andrenas than the existing one. The editor, O. Densusianu, supposes that there was, and therefore suggests that the poem should be dated between 1190 and 1195. In the notes, he informs us: 'M. Gautier croit que notre poème ne remonte guère plus haut que 1200... M. Rohde se

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(i) Skidmore op. cit., p. 12.

prononce pour 1200-1210.' (ed. O. Densusianu p. CXLIV, Note 1.) J. Melander, however, in his edition of Guibert d'Andrenas, refutes the suggestion that there was an earlier version of Guibert d'Andrenas: '...par suite nous ne pouvons accepter la date assignée par M. Densusianu à ce dernier poème [i.e. La Prise de Cordres]: comme la chanson de Guibert d'Andrenas, la Prise de Cordres appartient au premier quart du XIIIe siècle; en tout cas elle est postérieure à 1210.' (ed. J. Melander p. LXVII.)
Summary: See Appendix.

SECOND HALF OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

BUEVE DE COMMARCHIS.
Summary: In edition pp. 9-16.

CHARLEMAGNE.
Summary: G. Paris Histoire poétique de Charlemagne (Paris 1865) pp. 471-482.

LES ENFANCES OGIER.
Summary: In edition pp. 9-18.

LES ENFANCES RENIER.
Summary: M.J. Runeberg Etudes sur la Geste Rainouart (Helsingfors 1905) pp. 64-78.

GAUFREY.
Summary: In edition pp. xiii-lxviij.

LA CHANSON DE GODIN.
Summary: In edition pp. xxii-xxviii.

OCTAVIAN: According to Bossuat, the octosyllabic version should be dated in the thirteenth century.
Summary: HLF op. cit., Vol. XXVI, pp. 303-335.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY, EXACT PERIOD UNKNOWN

SIMON DE POUILLE.
Summary: Gautier op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 346-352.

SYRACON.
Summary: J. Richard 'La Chanson de Syracon et la légende de Saladin' Journal Asiatique (1949) p. 156.

Approximate Chronological List of Romances.

FIRST HALF OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

AUCASSIN ET NICOLETE.
Summary: CFMA edition p. vii.

LE COMTE DE POITIERS.
Summary: In edition pp. 9-13.

L'ESCOUFLE.
Summary: SATF edition pp. iv-xxii.

LA FILLE DU CONTE DE PONTHIEU.
Summary: SATF edition pp. xvii-xxi.

FLORENCE DE ROME.
Summary: SATF edition Vol. I, pp. 31-41.

GUI DE WAREWIC.
Summary: HLF op. cit., Vol. XXII, pp. 841-851.

GUILLAUME DE DOLE.
Summary: In edition pp. ix-xii.

ROMAN DE PALAMEDES.
Summary: E. Löseth Le Roman en prose de Tristan, le roman de Palamède et la compilation de Rusticien de Pise: analyse critique d'après les manuscrits de Paris (Paris 1891) pp. 433-468.

ROMAN DE LA VIOLETTE.
Summary: SATF edition pp. xxxvi-xl.

SECOND HALF OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

BLANCANDIN ET L'ORGUEILLEUSE D'AMOUR.
Summary: HLF op. cit., Vol. XXII, pp. 765-778.

LE ROMAN DU CASTELAIN DE COUCI ET DE LA DAME DE FAYEL: Levy places this poem at the end of the twelfth century. Holmes favours the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The editor, M. Delbouille, comments: 'L'étude de la langue du poème a rendu vraisemblable qu'il avait été composé... à la fin du XIIIe ou début du XIVe siècle.' (ed. M. Delbouille p. lxxiv.)
Summary: SATF edition pp. xxxviii-xlvi.

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI.
Summary: HLF op. cit., Vol. XVIII, pp. 779-786.

FLORIANT ET FLORETE: Levy places this work in 1260, Bossuat in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In his preface, the editor, F. Michel, states: 'The romance... is one of those numerous tales composed in the fourteenth century.' (ed. F. Michel, p. ix.)
Summary: ll.6584-7557, in edition pp. xxv-xxvii.

RICHARS LI BIAUS.
Summary: See Appendix.

SONE DE NANSAI.
Summary: In edition pp. 568-581.

ROMAN EN PROSE DE TRISTAN.
Summary: Löseth op. cit., pp. 1-422.

Chapter 1

Historical Background to the Thirteenth Century

A detailed historical background would be out of place in this study, but clearly the general movements of western and eastern civilisation have to be kept in mind when discussing the reasons for the changes we find in the chansons de geste. I considered a brief outline of the main events essential therefore. At the same time, I have attempted to show the forces at work which could have influenced thirteenth-century writers. Details on western background have been taken from E. Lavisse (i) and S. Runciman (ii), and on eastern background from G.E. von Grunebaum (iii), B. Lewis (iv) and various articles.

(i) E. Lavisse and A. Rambaud Histoire générale du IVe siècle à nos jours Vol. II L'Europe féodale: les croisades 1095-1270 (Paris 1912)

(ii) S. Runciman A History of the Crusades (Cambridge 1951-1954)

(iii) G.E. von Grunebaum Medieval Islam (Chicago 1953 2nd. edition)

(iv) B. Lewis The Arabs in History (London 1958 Revised edition)

At a first glance, the thirteenth century would seem to be very actively involved in the crusading movement, as five crusades took place during that period. A closer study shows us that this number is misleading. Interest in the crusades had been waning in the twelfth century, but the loss of Jerusalem in 1187 caused great consternation among the Christians, and inspired the third crusade 1189-1192. The coastal towns were re-taken, but not Jerusalem, and the new Pope, Innocent III, elected in 1198, was convinced that it was his duty to regain it.(i) Accordingly a new crusade was preached and took place from 1202-1204. Significant of a different attitude was that no rulers took the cross for this expedition, as they were too involved in personal wars. The original plan had been to attack Egypt, but the leaders of the crusade, when they were unable to pay the sum necessary for the journey, came into the power of the Venetians, who for economic reasons preferred Constantinople as the object of the attack. In spite of the Pope's disapproval, Constantinople was besieged and taken in 1203.

Innocent III persisted in his attempts to regain Jerusalem, and in 1213 three kings responded and took the cross: Andrew of Hungary, who set off at the appointed time, 1217; John of England, who died before he could fulfil his vow; and Frederick II, emperor and King of Sicily.(ii) Here again, the leaders were turned from the original purpose of the crusade, the re-taking of Jerusalem, and were persuaded to attack Egypt. Having refused the Sultan's offer of

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(i) Lavisse op. cit., p. 331.

(ii) Ibid. p. 333.

the True Cross and what he owned of Jerusalem if Damietta were left to him, Andrew of Hungary and John of Brienne laid siege to the town and took it in 1219. They were very slow in following up their advantage and delayed two years, during which time the Sultan built a fortress and reunited his army. The Christians attacked again in 1221, and again refused the Sultan's offer of Jerusalem in exchange for Damietta. Their retreat was cut off, and the army almost wiped out. The pointlessness of this loss is underlined by the fact that the leaders had twice refused very reasonable offers from the Sultan. This crusade is also noted for the first missionary effort, that of Saint Francis.(i)

The third ruler who took the cross, Frederick II, delayed starting for ten years, by which time he was excommunicate, so we have the peculiar situation of an excommunicate leading a crusade forbidden by the Pope! Frederick came to Syria, but gained his ends by diplomacy rather than fighting. A great admirer of arabic learning and culture, he already enjoyed friendly diplomatic relations with the Sultan, al-Kamil. The latter was involved in family troubles and therefore ready to make terms. The treaty of Jaffa was made in 1229. Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth were to be restored to the Christians, with the lordships of Toron and Sidon. At first, the Christians were disgusted that Frederick should make agreements with the Moslems, but Gregory IX eventually ratified the treaty. Contemporaries might criticize Frederick's actions:

(i) Runciman op. cit., Vol. III, p. 159.

> 'mais, autour de l'empereur, plus d'un jugeait comme lui qu'il était chimérique de rêver encore la destruction des infidèles et que la sagesse conseillait de s'entendre plutôt avec eux.'(i)

Jerusalem fell again in 1245, and Innocent IV ordered peace for four years in which to organize a grand crusade. This and the final crusade were led by Louis IX. Egypt was again the object of the attack, but the seventh crusade repeated the mistakes of the fifth and was as disastrous. Runciman points out that this time no one could say that the defeat was due punishment for the crimes and vice of the leader. People therefore began to wonder whether it was possible that God was against the whole movement.(ii)

Gregory X persisted and never lost interest in Palestine. Louis also determined to return to Africa and prepared the eighth crusade, but many knights refused to join him:

> 'L'enthousiasme pour la croisade s'était refroidi en France; Joinville même refusa d'accompagner saint Louis; la plupart des chevaliers ne partirent qu'avec une solde du roi.'(iii)

Louis' brother, Charles d'Anjou, wanted tribute from Tunis and suggested that it be the object of the crusade, rather than Syria or Egypt.(iv) The army landed at Carthage in 1270, but plague broke out, and Louis himself died of it. Charles d'Anjou hastily brought to an end the ill-fated war.

No further enthusiasm could be raised for the crusades, despite

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(i) Lavisse op. cit., p. 199.

(ii) Runciman op. cit., Vol. III, p. 281.

(iii) Lavisse op. cit., p. 338.

(iv) Ibid. p. 339.

the attempts of papal legates to stir up the feelings of the people. Indeed defence rather than attack became necessary, especially in the fourteenth century.(i)

As I suggested earlier, this loss of interest was by no means a new thing. Even when the French in general showed great eagerness to fight, because of the regaining of Jerusalem by Moslems in 1187, the dissenting voice of the cleric, Ralph Niger, could be heard pointing out that there was a great deal to be done at home, and also that it might not be God's will that the Saracens be killed.(ii) During the thirteenth century, this feeling grew, and the French no longer wished to fight in the East. Runciman, commenting on the reports made to Gregory X, in the middle of the century, explains this lack of interest:

> 'These reports were tactful. None of them touched on the essential trouble, that the Crusade itself had become debased. Now that spiritual rewards had been promised to men who would fight against the Greeks, the Albigensians and the Hohenstaufen, the Holy War had merely become an instrument of a narrow and aggressive Papal policy; and even loyal supporters of the Papacy saw no reason for making an uncomfortable journey to the East when there were so many opportunities of gaining holy merit in less exacting campaigns.'(iii)

Instead of fighting the infidel, the aim became now to convert him. The mission of Saint Francis and the example of Jacques de Vitry and Ramón Lull help to prove this point. There was also a plan for teaching oriental languages in the University of Paris and a suggestion that Christian girls be sent out as missionaries to marry

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(i) Lavisse op. cit., p. 340.

(ii) G.B. Flahiff 'Deus non vult: A Critic of the Third Crusade' Medieval Studies IX (1947) 162-188. pp. 162ff.

(iii) Runciman op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 338f.

the Moslems and convert them.(i)

Possibly this new attitude came from better knowledge of the Moslem. Lavisse very optimistically says:

> 'Les premiers Croisés les [les Sarrasins] croyaient sauvages et idolâtres; ils prenaient Mahomet pour une idole; plus tard, ils l'ont pris pour un hérétique. Au XIIIe siècle, les chrétiens savaient enfin ce qu'est l'islamisme et avaient reconnu dans les musulmans des peuples plus civilisés qu'eux-mêmes.'(ii)

The first part of the statement is true, but the Christians, even in the thirteenth century, did not understand Islam. The Koran had been translated in the middle of the twelfth century, but it was used to perpetuate the false beliefs already held. Accurate knowledge was available as early as the time of Saladin, therefore the writers must have known more than they show in the chansons de geste, yet they keep to the old ideas as far as religion is concerned. How much this conservatism is due to contemporary propaganda will be discussed later.(iii) Glimpses of a better feeling show through in the desire for peace, the better relations described, and the more worthy Saracen characters. There is recognition of the fact that a Saracen can be upright and honest, even while persisting in his supposed errors of belief, but the accuracy of French knowledge of these is not questioned.

Undoubtedly the last part of the quotation is correct. The recognition of Moslem superiority may have helped to bring about the

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(i) D.C. Munro 'The Western Attitude towards Islam during the period of the Crusades' Speculum VI (1931) 329-343. p. 339.

(ii) Lavisse op. cit., p. 346.

(iii) See below pp.123ff.

new attitude towards the Saracens. Runciman tells of the dilemma of the Westerners, who were proud to be Christians, yet had to acknowledge that the Moslems had a civilisation superior to their own.(i) Von Grunebaum also mentions this point:

> 'Not only were the contemporaries conscious of the higher standard of living of the Muslim world and its material superiority in general...but those that did come in contact with Arab thought and Arab manner often responded with reluctant admiration and not infrequently found themselves imitating Muslim ways.'(ii)

The Franks who stayed in the East had to adopt eastern customs if they wanted to remain alive, but their apparent tolerance of the infidel, and their rich way of living appalled newcomers. Runciman compares the two civilisations - western and Outremer:

> 'Beneath the feudal superstructure, Outremer was an eastern land. The luxury of its life impressed and shocked Occidentals. In western Europe life was still simple and austere. Clothes were made of wool and seldom laundered. Washing facilities were few... Even in the greatest castle furniture was rough and utilitarian and carpets were almost unknown...The Frankish East made a startling contrast... There were carpets and damask hangings, elegantly carved and inlaid tables and coffers, spotless bed-linen and table-linen,..'(iii)

During the crusades, it must be realized that the Franks learned to know their rivals. They received each other with honour and appreciated each other's acts of gallantry and chivalry. In times of peace, lords from either side of the frontier would join together in hunting expeditions.(iv) The romantic reputation of Saladin probably enhanced western ideas of eastern rulers. There is a theory that he was knighted, and several instances are known

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(i) Runciman op. cit., Vol. I, p. 88.

(ii) Von Grunebaum op. cit., p. 56.

(iii) Runciman op. cit., Vol. II, p. 316.

(iv) Ibid. Vol. II, p. 319.

of his noble behaviour towards Christians.

A brief glance at the social background in West and East will help us further appreciate many points in the chansons de geste. The feudal system in thirteenth-century France was weak. There were numerous petty wars between individual lords, who were firmly kept in place by Philippe Auguste and Blanche of Castille, the regent, so that Louis IX inherited great and unquestioned power, when he came to rule in 1236. Towns were freeing themselves from the rule of their lords, and the Chartes de commune, stating the agreements made with former rulers, were preciously guarded. Trade was extending; the transport of pilgrims was important, and sugar, spices, medicines and perfumes were popular commodities. But peace was essential for trade, and the eagerness to fight of some of the rulers ruined economic relations for years, as well as creating fanatical bad feeling.

While the western vassal formed part of a hierarchy of fief-holders, in the East, direct dependence of the fief-holder on his sovereign was maintained.(i) This system led to a great number of petty internal wars, especially as there was no question of direct inheritance. These wars, coupled with the menace of the Mongol invasions, which wiped out the Ayubbid dynasty (Saladin's) in 1240, explain the desire of the Sultans to treat with the French in the fourth, fifth, and sixth crusades.

There was no separate legislative power in Islam, because of the nature of the Moslem religion:

(i) Von Grunebaum op. cit., p. 10.

> 'Islam... was not only a system of belief and cult. It was also a system of state, society, law, thought and art - a civilisation with religion as its unifying, eventually dominating, factor.'(i)

Trade was as important to the East as to the West; therefore the Moslems were eager for peace with the French, all the more so, because their religion preaches tolerance. The very diversity of Islamic society makes this necessary:

> 'Unlike his Western contemporaries, the mediaeval Muslim rarely felt the need to impose his faith by force on all who were subject to his rule. Like them, he knew well enough that in due time those who believed differently would burn in Hell. Unlike them, he saw no point in anticipating the divine judgement in this world. At most times he was content to be the dominant faith in a society of many faiths.'(ii)

In conclusion, as Lewis aptly says:

> '...in the history of the Near East the Crusades were essentially an early experiment in expansionist imperialism, motivated by material considerations with religion as a psychological catalyst.'(iii)

The French in the thirteenth century begin to realize that religion is no longer the main motive for a crusade, and that they can gain the same spiritual benefits of absolution by fighting the heretics nearer home. It also occurs to them that perhaps it is not God's will that they fight the infidel, and that conversion is better than extermination. This feeling probably arose from the discovery that the Moslems were not a wild and idolatrous people as they had thought them to be, but that, on the contrary, they enjoyed a civilisation from which the French could learn a great deal.

(i) Lewis op. cit., p. 133.

(ii) Ibid. p. 140.

(iii) Ibid. p. 150.

These were the main trends of thought in the thirteenth century, and we shall see how often they are reflected in the chansons de geste and romances, albeit sometimes even unconsciously.

Chapter 2

The Male Characters in the Chansons de Geste

The type of Saracen we meet in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste is very varied. There are races of unusual appearance and habits, but there are also princes and leaders of great character, and the tendency of some of the twelfth-century chansons de geste to depict the Saracens as worthy opponents, for example Aerofle in Aliscans and Aumont in La Chanson d'Aspremont, grows stronger in the thirteenth century. Skidmore perhaps comes near to the truth when he asks:

> 'Is this more generous representation of the Saracens, coming as it does in fairly late and purely fictional poems, an indication of a waning religious fanaticism and better knowledge on the part of the Christian poets?'(i)

The poets had ample opportunity of getting to know the Saracens quite well, either through travelling with their patrons or through meeting traders. Whatever the reason, it is certainly true to say that the representation of Saracens in the literature of this period is much more realistic and generous than hitherto. Crosland notes this

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(i) Skidmore op. cit. on p. 6, p. 120.

tendency to portray the Saracen characters more sympathetically.(i) In her examples, however, she quotes only those who eventually become Christian. Possibly in the twelfth century, from which she draws her examples, it is only in these circumstances that we find more realistic representation of the pagans, but in the thirteenth century this is not inevitably so.

To facilitate discussion of the different types, I have divided them into the converted and the unconverted, with further sub-divisions according to the motive which persuaded them to embrace the new faith or stand firm by the old.

Let us consider first the Saracens who, remaining faithful to their gods, were prepared to die for their religion if necessary. Some were ~~reluctantly~~ albeit reluctantly, killed by the French because they refused to be converted, but martyrdom was not always their fate. Several were allowed to live and keep their faith.

Three really outstanding characters belonging to this category of unconverted Saracens should be mentioned. They are scrupulously fair in their dealings with the French; they fight bravely, and are feared and respected by their opponents. These characters are Limbanor, in Bueve de Commarchis, Froiecuer, in Foulque de Candie, and Carahuel, in Les Enfances Ogier.

Limbanor is perhaps an unfair example because Adenet le roi, the author of Bueve de Commarchis, does not continue the story as far as his model, Le Siège de Barbastre, in which he is eventually converted. In Bueve de Commarchis, there is no suggestion of conversion as far

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(i) Crosland op. cit. on p. 9, p. 153.

as the story goes. Limbanor remains faithful to Mahomet, and we see him as a fiery, knightly character, beloved of his people. He brings reinforcements for the hard-pressed Saracens at Barbastre, and his arrival is greeted with enthusiasm. Proudly, he offers to kill Christians to prove his love for Malatrie (ll.2263-2265) and, faithful to his promise, he rides out to seek a joust the following morning. Girart sees the pagan with Malatrie and offers combat. They fight, and then, unhorsed and knocked into a stream, Limbanor accepts Girart's generous offer of help. He refuses to continue the fight, frankly confessing his weariness and, regaining some of his confidence, magnanimously tells Girart:

2648 "Ne vous vorroie avoir espandu le cervel,
Car par vous sui issus de perilleus ruissel."

Back amongst his own people, although defeated by Girart, Limbanor praises the latter and insists that the pagans speak well of him(ll.3159-3165). The overall impression we gain is of a generous and spontaneous person, full of confidence, yet willing to acknowledge another's superiority.

A comparison with the same incident in Le Siège de Barbastre illustrates the different attitudes of the authors and shows how Adenet makes Limbanor more lifelike and likable. Before the joust begins, when Girart teases Limbanor about Malatrie, the author of the twelfth-century poem makes the Saracen seem very taciturn; he merely says:

2007 Qant Libanor l'oï, ne dist ne o ne non;
Il broche le destrier, destort le confanon...

In Bueve de Commarchis, Adenet adds much more detail. Girart tells

Limbanor that he will take Malatrie when he has won the combat:

2580 Quant Limbanors l'entent, plus iriés ne fu hons,
D'ire et de maltalent rougi conme charbons,
La bataille desire k'ains fameilleus lions
Ne desira autant ne aigniaus ne moutons;

When Limbanor has been thrown into the stream, the author of Le Siège de Barbastre shows little sympathy:

2041 Se ne fust une estache, Libanor fust noiez,..

and he praises Girart's forbearance in not killing him on the spot:

2045 Girart fu molt cortois, qui plus nel vost tochier;

In Bueve de Commarchis, as we saw, Girart quickly dismounts in order to help Limbanor, and then offers to continue the fight when he has remounted. Adenet adds further details which do not occur in the earlier text, but which emphasize Limbanor's nobility and make us feel sympathetically towards him. When his people see the end of the fight, they rush out to help Limbanor. Adenet tells of their joy when they find him alive (l.3155), and of Limbanor's gratitude to his opponent (ll.3161ff.). Thus Adenet creates an impression of sympathy and understanding which is entirely lacking in Le Siège de Barbastre, and at the same time, he makes the character of Limbanor forceful and generous.

Froiecuer, a Saracen prince in Foulque de Candie, is a character who at once arouses our sympathy and respect. Comfort tells us:

> 'that poetic justice is uniformly done to every Saracen hero, for whose personality and fate the sympathy of the audience has been aroused, by converting him at the end of the poem.'(i)

Bearing this statement in mind, the introductory description of

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(i) Comfort art. cit. on p. 5, p. 417.

Froiecuer would make us immediately suspect that he will eventually be converted:

13158 Le prince qui tous ceus avoit a gouverner
Fu chevalier si bon c'om ne savoit son per
Pour bon ostel tenir et pour avoir donner;
Et bien sot .i. estour comencier et finer,
Ses amis avancier, ses anemis grever
Et les bons chevaliers chierir et honnourer,
Les orgueilleus abatre et les felons danter.
Il fu courtois et sage por raison escouter
Et en fes et en dis se sot amesurer,...

Nevertheless, Froiecuer firmly refuses conversion and remains impervious to Foulque's pleadings:

13560 "Sire", dist Froiecuer, "por noient en plaidiez,
Quarançois me leroie coper en .ii. moitiez
Qu'envers Mahon mon dieu me fusse renoiez."

Throughout the fighting, Froiecuer proves himself to be an excellent leader. He encourages his men, and it is only his presence which keeps them together. He shows great courage when his town is betrayed by Corsabrin and, although aware that they must lose, he urges his men to fight bravely against the French and traitor Saracens. After slaying many of the French, he is struck down by Bertrant and killed, without the insult implied in a second attempt at conversion.

Carahuel, in Les Enfances Ogier, is the 'noble Saracen' par excellence, admired alike by his own people and the French. Adenet le roi bases his story on the twelfth-century La Chevalerie Ogier. There we have in outline Carahuel's actions, but Adenet, as we shall see in a moment, adds much more detail, and succeeds in making Carahuel a very striking figure.

In Bueve de Commarchis, Carahuel's arrival is announced at a good psychological moment, when the Saracens are down-hearted at the defeat of Danemon, King Corsuble's son. The barons assemble to meet

him, and the people greet him as their saviour. That he is worthy of this reputation is shown by the successful sortie he makes before the main battle. Strong in the knowledge of his capabilities, Carahuel is confident and eager to test himself. He boasts to his fiancée, Gloriande, that the French may be full of courage...

1519 Mais n'i iert nus d'armes si bien vestus
Ni n'avront glaives ne dars si esmolus
Que a no loi ne soit chascuns rendus;

His arrival in the French camp as a messenger is described in detail. The French seem genuinely to admire his finery and physique, and inevitably regret:

2108 C'est grans meschiés qu'en cors si souffisant
Comme cis a n'a cuer en Dieu creant;

Meanwhile Carahuel proudly delivers his message and receives Charles's reply, which forces him, in his turn, to acknowledge the worthiness of his opponents:

2173 Quant Carahués l'oÿ ainsi raisnier,
Dedenz son cuer l'en prist moult a prisier;
Cis roi, pens'il, n'a pas le cuer lanier.

Two single combats are arranged between Carahuel and Ogier, and between Sadoine and Charlemagne's son, Charlot. When the Saracen Danemon interferes during the combats, Carahuel does all he can to help the two Frenchmen. He succeeds in getting Charlot away, but Ogier is captured. Unable to save Ogier's life by pleading, Carahuel rides to the French camp and gives himself as hostage for Ogier to Charles, who for this action:

3195 Dedens son cuer moult forment l'en prisa.

Naimon, when he enters and hears the news, is so impressed that:

3217 Entre ses bras Carahuel acola,
Pou s'en failli que il ne le baisa,
Mais pour sa loi a baizier le laissa.(i)

There is a difference here between the two versions. In La Chevalerie Ogier, Carahuel has to be dissuaded by his men from attacking his lord, Corsuble, because the latter refuses to return Ogier. He pleads once again and, when unsuccessful, rides over to the French. They admire him for his action, but less effusively than in Les Enfances Ogier (ll.2031ff.). Carahuel is determined to keep his word and free Ogier, to such an extent that he asks the French:

2210 Por quoi laissiés Sarrasins séjorner?
Alés à Rome, cascun jor assallés
Tant que par force vos soit Ogier livrés.

One cannot imagine the Carahuel of Les Enfances Ogier planning to fight his lord and people in this manner.

In the final battle of the poem, Bueve de Commarchis, it is interesting to note the 'gentleman's agreement' between the two heroes, Ogier and Carahuel:

6126 Onques Ogiers celui jour ne guenchi
Vers Carahuel, ne il vers lui aussi,
Car moult estoient li uns vers l'autre ami.

After a French victory, Ogier again shows friendliness by protecting Carahuel, Gloriande and Sadoine (also a very notable Saracen warrior). This agreement is not found in La Chevalerie Ogier at all, nor are Ogier's attempts to protect his friends after a Christian victory.

(i) A correspondingly noble gesture by Ogier shows that he appreciated Carahuel's action on his behalf. Because of his voluntary surrender, Carahuel is accused of treachery by certain Saracens, notably Brunamon, a rival for Gloriande. Ogier, through Gloriande, challenges this attack on Carahuel's honour and offers to be his champion. In La Chevalerie Ogier, Ogier similarly offers to fight for Carahuel, because he feels that Brunamon has wronged him (ll.2505ff.).

Unlike many of his compatriots in other chansons de geste, Carahuel does not curse Mahomet when the battle has been lost, but acknowledges Christian prowess:

6764 Fait Carahués, "ce est chose passee.
Gent crestïenne doit bien estre honoree,
Car tant sont preu de prouece affinee
Que par gent nule qui puist estre trouvee
N'iert ja sor aus leur terre conquestee."

Charles begs him to consider baptism and calls in the priests to try and persuade him, to no avail. Finally, Carahuel is granted permission to return to his own country and he leaves, giving this last message to Naimon:

7506 "Par ce seigneur a cui je me souplie,
C'est Mahonmés, ou je du tout m'afie,
Ains ne vi gent en trestoute ma vie
Qui de touz biens fust si comble et garnie,
Ne si courtoise ne si bien ensaignie
Com crestiien sont, n'en mentirai mie,
Et ont seignour en cui cuer s'est logie
Haute prouece de sens parafaitie;
Ç'ont maintes fois seü gent paiennie.
7515 Ma loi eüsse pour s'amour renoïe,
Si ne doutasse que m'ame en fust perie."

This last sentence of Carahuel's reminds us of Saladin's attitude, as described by Runciman:

> 'However kindly he felt towards his Christian friends, he knew that their souls were doomed to perdition. Yet he respected their ways and thought of them as fellow men.'(i)

Adenet presents Carahuel realistically and convincingly. Nowhere does he detract from his character because he is a Saracen; rather does he emphasize his noble actions and the admiration he receives from the French. The character has more unity than that in La Chevalerie Ogier. Carahuel is faithful to his people, despite provocation, and

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(i) Runciman op. cit. on p. 19, Vol. III, p. 78.

would not dream of fighting against them, or even suggesting it. His return to the Saracen camp, after his voluntary surrender to the French, is effected naturally, and his subsequent reluctance to fight Ogier is understandable. In La Chevalerie Ogier, the French see Ogier's victory over Brunamon, immediately attack the Saracens and put them to flight, keeping Carahuel as a prisoner. In Les Enfances Ogier, Carahuel tends Ogier's wounds, gives him a sword, prevents his being killed in an ambush and escorts him back to the French camp. There, Carahuel and his Turks are entertained by the French. The battle between Christian and Saracen takes place only after all this, and Ogier and Carahuel again have the opportunity of showing their nobility of character.

These three characters are outstanding and perhaps even become a little larger than life. Many others however are portrayed with all the qualities and weaknesses of ordinary human beings. In the earlier chansons de geste, the fate of any important male Saracen was either death or conversion. By the thirteenth century, this fanaticism was being replaced by a more realistic representation of the actual relationship between Saracen and French. Clearly it would be impossible to describe the sixty or so characters who are sympathetically drawn. For the sake of brevity and interest, I have chosen one or two as examples to represent the whole. It is significant that, although all the characters remain faithful to their religion, only just over half are killed. The rest live on, firm in their

beliefs.(i)

One of the outstanding characters in this latter category is Tiebaut, in Foulque de Candie. He is also found in Les Enfances Guillaume and Les Enfances Renier. Tiebaut by no means achieves Carahuel's standard of excellence, but he is faithful, and respected and trusted by the French. In Foulque de Candie, Tiebaut, having lost his wife and the town of Orange to the French, is eager to do battle and kills many Christians. He fights courageously and despite his own fear urges on his men:

3096 Quant Tiebauz vit dan Guillelme venir,
Lores ot honte et talent de fŏir,
Mes li corages ne li porra soffrir
Qu'encor n'i vueille dė l'espee ferir,
En aventure de perdre o/de morir,
Ainz c'om li voie la bataille guerpir.

Many times badly wounded, he is cured and returns to battle. Twice, when captured, he procures escape by reminding his captors of their

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(i) Some of the more important of these characters who are sympathetically drawn are:
Aiol: Mibrien.
Anseïs de Carthage: Marsile, Agoulant, Felix, Alestant, Sinagon, Absalom.
Bueve de Commarchis: L'Amustant dė Cordres, Corsolt.
Charlemagne: Galafre.
Les Enfances Guillaume: Tiebaut, Clarion.
Les Enfances Ogier: Corsuble, Sadoine.
Les Enfances Renier: Brunamont, Marbrien, Butor, Corsabrin, Tiebaut, Grandoce.
Les Enfances Vivien: Bramon.
Foulque de Candie: Corsabrin, Desramé, Mauduit de Raimès, Tiebaut, Le Soudan de Persie.
Gaufrey: Gloriant, Quinart.
Gui de Bourgogne: Emaudras, Boïdant, Maucabré.
Guibert d'Andrenas: Judas, Butor.
Huon de Bordeaux: Gaudisse.
Les Narbonnais: Cornuafar, L'Emir de Babyloine.
Otinel: Clarel, Florient, Garsile.
La Prise de Cordres: Judas, Butor.

former allegiance to him (ll.8497-9620, ll.11102-11143). Althgugh he curses and derides Mahomet on occasions, he attempts to bring the French to believe in his gods, and refuses Christianity. Yet, despite his firmness in his beliefs, he shows a very tolerant attitude towards Povre-veu, who has leanings towards becoming a Christian. When Tiebaut's uncle is worried lest Povre-veu be converted, Tiebaut assures him:

9965 "Beax oncles", dist Tiebauz, "tot est chevalerie;
Se nul i a meillor, Mahomez me maudie.
Quel part que il se tort, tex est sa compaignie:
El plus espes des rens ert la presse envaïe;
Au trenchant des espees iert la guerre fenie.
Qui'n puet avoir, s'en preigne; c'est nostre mieldre vie".

In the story, Tiebaut has many dealings with the French, and in spite of his unfortunate family circumstances is clearly admired by them. When he is believed to have been killed, Louis regrets that the noblest of their enemies is dead. A Turk reveals that the news was false however:

9606 Ot lo li rois, Damedeu en mercie:

The poet's eulogy of Tiebaut is a fitting conclusion:

9883 Mout fu preudom Tiebauz, si sot bien guerroier,
Son anemi grever et son ami aidier.
Bien sot joster de lance, quant il ot buen destrier,
Et ferir de s'espee granz cox senz menacier.
Füir sot et guenchir et torner et chacier,
Ne ainz por grant estor nel vit l'an esmaier,...

He continues to praise Tiebaut's generosity and abilities, ending with:

9902 Et ge que vos diroie? N'i ot que affaitier.
S'il crëust Damedeu lo verai justisier,
Mieldres princes de lui nen ot terre a baillier.

In Les Enfances Guillaume and Les Enfances Renier, Tiebaut is similarly described as a man of character. Always he is regarded as

a worthy opponent, yet he remains faithful to Mahomet.

Grandoce, in Les Enfances Renier, is also a good example of this new type of Saracen, that is, one who is faithful to his beliefs, is honestly portrayed, and is accepted by the Christians despite religious differences. Although afraid of the French champion, Maillefer, Grandoce challenges him to battle, but is forced to flee. Later, captured by Renier, he offers enormous sums to be released, but the news that his cousin holds Jerusalem is of more interest to Renier, who promises to free Grandoce, if he will take him safely to the Holy City:

19375 Et dist Grandoce: "Ce fet a mercier.
Bien vous i puis et conduire et guier."
Dont li fiance a loiaute porter.
Contre sa dent a fet son doit hurter:
Ce senefie ne li voudra fausser.(i)

The journey to Jerusalem is accomplished, but on the return Renier and Grandoce are attacked by the latter's cousin, Corsabrin. They face almost certain death, unless help arrives, yet Grandoce remains faithful to his vow and stays to help Renier fight. This is as far as the story goes, but we already have a clear picture of Grandoce. He hated the Christians and was fighting them bitterly for revenge, yet, having once given his word to them, he is not prepared to go back on it, although keeping it means death.

Such descriptions of Saracens make a refreshing change from the descriptions in earlier chansons de geste of wild, ugly people, such as Corsolt, in Le Couronnement de Louis, who had no finer feelings,

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(i) Meredith Jones, art. cit. on p. 8, p. 217, note 2, suggests that this custom of knocking the finger against a tooth may have been elaborated from a gesture of the Moslem prayer ritual.

and who inevitably died at the hands of the French champion. Not all the characters stand out as much as Tiebaut and Grandoce, but even the less important ones are portrayed honestly and sympathetically.

The many Saracens who still suffer death do so mainly because they wish to remain faithful to Mahomet. Butor, in La Prise de Cordres, is to some extent an exception, as he is killed more because of his galanterie than because of his faithfulness. At any time, he could have ransomed himself, but preferred to avenge the insult which he felt Judas had suffered when Guibert married the latter's daughter, Agaiete. In the single combat, Butor is killed by Guibert.

Often the Saracens are offered the chance of conversion and are killed only if they refuse it. Marsile, in Anseïs de Carthage, inevitably has to die because of his part in the battle of Ronceval, but not before an attempt is made to convert him. An angel prevents Charles from killing him in the battle with the words:

"Jhesus vous mande, ke vous ne l'adeses;
Prendes le vif, avuec vous l'en menes!
Si dieu vuet croire, mout iert bons eüres,
Et si dieu croit, si le crestïenes!"
Li rois Marsiles a les mos escoutes,
Un petit s'est vers Karlon aclines,
Son brant li tent, puis li a dit: "Tenes!
En dieu kerrai, si iert mes avoës;
Mais anchois vuel, se vous le comandes,
Veoir, coment che vostre dieu serves."

The scene which follows is very similar to that when Agolant is at the French court, in the Pseudo-Turpin.(i) Marsile, when he sees the

(i) Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi ou Chronique du Pseudo-Turpin ed. C. Meredith Jones (Paris 1936) p. 136, Ch. XIII: "De ordinibus tredecim qui erant in convivio Karoli et de pauperibus; unde Aigolandus scandalum sponsit, renuens baptizari."

divisions in the French court and camp, rejects their religion and prefers to die.

The killing of Absalom in the same poem is most unexpected and is contrary to the general trend towards offering conversion before killing one's opponent. Described throughout as noble, brave, and worthy, he is struck down by Anseïs, with no word of regret and with no attempt at conversion.

Judas, in Guibert d'Andrenas, dies for his faith, although he is not actually killed by the French. He is captured and refuses to be converted. Convinced of Mahomet's power, he makes a bargain with Aymeri: he will jump from the window of the high tower; if he is protected by Mahomet, Aymeri is to allow Judas to go free (ll.2266ff.). Mahomet does not hear his prayers, and Judas is killed, to the great amusement of the French!

Although the French are undoubtedly here trying to prove the superiority of their God over those of the Saracens, the faithfulness of the Saracens impresses one, and one feels a certain amount of admiration for these martyrs to their faith. A few Saracens curse Mahomet when they have been mortally wounded, but do not even then become Christian. Such are Clarel, in Otinel (l.1525,p. 53), and Butor, in Les Enfances Renier (ll.13692f.).

Very few thoroughly wicked Saracens occur, but some do still exist, and such a one is Corsuble/Corsolt in La Mort Aymeri, who is proud and treacherous. He promises Hermenjart that he will return Aymeri alive and well if she hands over Narbonne, but he has no intention of doing so (ll.1512-1522); he suggests a single combat between himself and Aymeri, but,at the same time, tells his men to be ready to come and help him (ll.965ff.); he refuses to have Hermenjart

killed, when she is at his mercy besieged in the keep of Narbonne, and we wonder if at last Corsuble is going to show some decent human feeling, but we learn:

1718 "Que leenz ont vitaille povrement,
Jes en trerai afamez et dolenz;
Si avrai la tor saine."

Eventually he is killed in front of his tent by Aymeri, disguised in the clothes of a Saracen woman (l.2628).

Another most unsympathetic character is Danemon, in Les Enfances Ogier. From the start we are warned that he is treacherous (l.590). He makes Carahuel appear to have broken his word by interfering in a duel, and later attempts to dishonour him. He plans to ambush Ogier, insults his father, and although he fights bravely in the combat we cannot lament for him as his men do. Brunamon, in the same chanson de geste, might be classified here, but Adenet makes us feel much more sympathetic towards him than we do towards his twelfth-century counterpart in La Chevalerie Ogier. We are made to realize that he is motivated by jealousy. He dearly loves Gloriande, but his love is not reciprocated and, in his anguish, an otherwise noble character is driven to besmirching his rival's name and is killed in the ensuing combat.

Others, such as Aubigant, in Doon de Maïence, and the spy, Danebron, in Les Narbonnais, could be mentioned, but it would be wrong to lay too much stress on these unsavoury characters, who actually form only a very small proportion of the Saracens described.

Having considered those who remain faithful, let us now consider those who become Christian. Despite Comfort's comments, it is not always obvious that a certain character is to be converted.(i)

(i) See above p. 32.

A generous description does not necessarily mean that a person will become a Christian; often, people whom we may despise receive baptism. The conversion of Otinel, in the chanson de geste of that name, emphasizes this point. Sent as a messenger to Charlemagne's court, he is so rude and insultingly arrogant that only a guarantee from Roland and Charlemagne himself, plus the fact that a messenger can claim immunity, prevent his being killed. Finally he goes too far and insults Charlemagne about his age, whereupon a combat is arranged between the Saracen and Roland. Otinel scorns any attempts to convert him, and his scorn and haughtiness seem justified when Roland is losing in the battle. The French watching the fight see their hero's plight and pray for him:

574 A ces paroles vint .i. colon [volant];
p. 21 Karles le vit et tote l'autre gent.
Saint Espirit sus Otinel descent,
Le cuer li mue par le Jhesu commant.

Nor does Otinel impress us favourably after his conversion. A fanatical Christian, he immediately goes to fight the pagans, showing mercy to none, not even his own relatives. Seeing Arapater in the battle, he pursues him and kills him with the words:

1217 "Fiex à putain, tu ieres mon parant,
p. 43 Por ton service ton guerredon te rent."

Many of the converts play only small parts, and are not mentioned sufficiently often for us to form an opinion of their characters. Of the ordinary townsfolk and soldiers, the majority are coerced into Christianity. Often do we read a sentence similar to the following in Foulque de Candie. The city of Aquilee has been seized by the Christians:

14371 La dedenz n'ot paien qui ne perdist la vie,
Se il ne crut en Dieu, s'eüst sa loy guerpie.(i)

Again, if the lord of the town is converted, his people are expected to follow his example. In La Prise de Cordres, the emir has only become a Christian to save his life, but he tells his people in Cordres to surrender the town and be baptized (ll.2215ff.).

Some Saracens voluntarily become Christian, often out of loyalty to their master or, more often, mistress, although in two cases we are told that the servants are following their own inclinations. Malaquin, in Bueve de Commarchis, confesses to his longing for conversion, and Baufumet, in La Prise de Cordres, says:

794 "Bien a .vij. ans ge l'avoie enpansé,
Que ge voloie Damedeu aorer,
Mais ne l'osoie por paiens demostrer."

Other voluntary converts are those who recognize the uselessness of Mahomet. This conviction may come upon them extremely suddenly, particularly when death is imminent if they persist in their mistaken beliefs! Thus, Auquaire, in La Mort Aymeri, rejects Mahomet when he is about to be killed:

2091 -Aymeri sire," dit Auquaires li ber,
"Bien ai Mahom essaié et prové;
Hui main lo vi par terre craventé
Et a François trebuchier et verser,
Onc nel soi tant par besoing reclamer
Que me peüst secorre n'aïder;
Je crerai mès en vostre Damedé...

Discussions, like the one in Le Couronnement de Louis between Guillaume and Corsolt (ll.791-866), take place on matters of religion, but, as in this twelfth-century example, they are normally followed

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(i) Other examples are to be found in Huon de Bordeaux ll.6657ff.,p. 199. and in Les Enfances Renier ll.1069ff. and ll.5884f.

by the refusal of the Saracen champion to be converted, and his death. Clarel, in Otinel, has a long discussion with the converted Otinel, but is eventually killed by him (pp.44ff.), and even Otinel, in the same chanson de geste, is converted by the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit (i), not by the discussion which he has with Roland during their combat.

Inevitably these Saracens who are prepared to forsake their religion merely to avoid death cannot impress us as much as those we have just been reading about. Fortunately some of the converts are more worthy and redeem to a certain extent the reputation of Christianity. Morant, in Charlemagne, is favourably described. He looks after Mainet in Spain and fights alongside him against King Galafre's enemies. So impressed is he by Mainet's courage that he wishes to believe in the same God, because no other could be as powerful (f.47).(ii)

Of necessity the men are more reluctant to become Christians than the women. The latter, helped by their love for a Frenchman, are quickly convinced of God's power. The men hesitate and prefer to remain faithful. (Indeed if they did not, there would be little point in continuing the story!) It is from this group of Saracens who are determined to keep their religion that we get the better and more fully described characters. Forré and Clargis, in Les Narbonnais, insist at first that they wish to remain pagan, therefore before their

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(i) See above p. 44.

(ii) Girart d'Amiens Charlemagne, MS. Bibliothèque Nationale fr. 778, ff. 22v-169r.

conversion, we are able to read more about them and see what kind of people they are. Forré is a doctor, who is captured by Aymeri. In the French camp, he cures Aymeri and Guibelin and many other French wounded because he pities their sufferings (e.g. ll.4304ff.). Clargis, Forré's cousin, is also captured. He makes an agreement with the French to take their messengers through Saracen lines, on condition that they will not try to convert him (ll.5381ff.). He does promise, though, that he will become a Christian should the emir ever be conquered, which he doubts. The situation arises: Clargis keeps his word and at the same time succeeds in converting his cousin.

Similarly, the character of Povre-veu, in Foulque de Candie, is interesting and well-drawn because, although destined to become a Christian, he refuses to entertain the idea at first. Born of a Saracen mother and a French father, Povre-veu is determined to remain a Saracen. Tiebaut, rather unwisely considering the circumstances of Povre-veu's birth, takes the boy to the parley between himself and Louis. Povre-veu is impressed by the French, and prays to God that:

10381 Hastivement li doint qu'il ait lor compaignie
Et loiaument se parte de celx qu'il n'aime mie,
Si que François nel tienent a nule vilanie.

After the unsuccessful parley, Povre-veu sends for Saligot, who tells him about some of his relatives. Povre-veu rides off, pensive, praying that God will make him become a Christian . In the battle following the parley, he and his men make the decision and from then on fight for the French. Povre-veu does not betray the impression that we have gained of him, and continues to be loyal, humane and courageous.

The Saracen converts thought of as typical by Crosland and

Comfort (i) have yet to be discussed. From the start they are described in glowing terms, and in the eyes of the French can do no wrong. Often their actions do not seem very praiseworthy to us now, for example, Clarion, in Bueve de Commarchis, is converted in order to have Bueve's help to avenge himself on the emir. He betrays and kills his own people without compunction and suggests the most bloodthirsty plans for achieving a French victory. Thus, although these converts are highly praised by the French, we feel more disgust than admiration. It may be appreciated that the converts felt insecure and had to prove themselves to their companions, but their methods of doing so are not attractive.

The converts, for whatever reason they become Christian, remain faithful, on the whole. They are called upon to fight their fellow Saracens, but rarely to suffer torture. Baufumet, in La Prise de Cordres, is the exception. Recaptured by the Saracens, he is condemned to death by crucifixion. His prayer that he might remain faithful to Christianity is granted, and he is saved by Guillaume and Bertrant.

The faithfulness of the converts is shown by the fact that we meet them in the French courts. Baudus, in La Prise de Cordres, although he became a Christian because abandoned by everyone else, is chosen as a messenger (ll.2290ff.), and Saligot, in Foulque de Candie, is ably defended by Guillaume and Bertrant when his loyalty is in question (ll.9836ff.,9865ff.).

In two cases only do we find converts betraying their faith.

(i) See above pp. 30 and 32 respectively.

Salabrun, in Les Enfances Renier, is thoroughly despicable. He brings help to the Saracens, but seeing they will be defeated he flees (l.8596). Later, he rescues Ydoine from burning, but only to try and persuade her to marry him; he treats her very cruelly when she refuses. Yet the next time he is mentioned, he is described by Bertrant as noble and worthy, and is a Christian. He seems a reformed character, until the strength of the pagans in battle brings out his cowardice again, and he betrays both his religion and his lord, Bertrant, who finally kills him (ll.14729ff.)

Baudus, in Guibert d'Andrenas, is the other example, and is much more likable than Salabrun, though weak and vacillating. Captured by Aymeri, he agrees to become a Christian and hand over his town of Balagué, provided that his wife, family and thirty friends are saved (ll.909ff.) Then, overcome with remorse at the death of his townspeople, he does not fulfil his promise, but goes to his cousin for help and continues to fight the French. Later in the battle, he promises to protect from death Aymeri (ll.1980ff.), who then, in his turn, after being freed by Guillaume, saves Baudus's life. Baudus this time embraces Christianity permanently (l.2229).

The characters in this section on converts seem to follow the traditional style of the chansons de geste more than do those who remain Saracen. We are not often prepared for the sudden conversions which take place, or else we are only too well prepared by the enthusiastic, flattering descriptions! In very few chansons de geste does the character develop gradually and realistically, except for the ones mentioned earlier, like Povre-veu, in Foulque de Candie.

To me, this shows a significant change in emphasis. The real characters emerge as those who are strong enough to keep their own opinions and whom the threat of death does not frighten into acquiescence. The conventional types are the converts, who act contrary to all Christian principles, and who from cowardice accept Christianity as their faith.

In this chapter on male characters, there remains to be discussed a strange miscellany of people, some of whom may be more sympathetically or realistically drawn than others. In general however only types are portrayed, and they rarely show individual characteristics.

In this category should be classed the spies, most of whom suffer terrible disfigurement or even death. Fabur, in Anseïs de Carthage, is typical. Chosen for his knowledge of languages and of Christian customs, he is sent to Charles's court to spread false rumours (ll.8048ff.). Recognized by a fellow Saracen, Felix, at that time helping the French (l.9089), he is duly punished. Occasionally the French themselves recognize the spies, for example, a chamberlain, Maugis, recognizes the Saracen Escotar, in Foulque de Candie, (l.7093).

Similar to the spies, and sometimes in as much danger of their lives, are the messengers and interpreters. From contemporary histories and from the chansons de geste, we learn of the messengers' supposed immunity, and the various precautions they had to take to ensure that they gained protection.

Messengers were chosen for their capabilities and their knowledge of languages and terrain. Often for this reason converts were sent as messengers. Piecolet, in Les Enfances Renier, agrees to take a message to Butor, and claims:

2292 Bien sai parler et latin et ronmans,
Sarrazinois grieiz et popeliquans,
Pour vint langages n'iere ge ja doutans.

In Syracon, Matalie promises her husband, Syracon:

58 Un messagier aureiz, ainz que seit la vespree,
Qui set tot le pais d'oltre la mer salee,
Rome e Costentinoble e Cologne e Pavee
E France e Normandie qui tant est renommee
→E Bretagne e Le Mans...

In Les Enfances Ogier, we learn also that a messenger should be of noble blood, although this does not always seem to be the case, as Piecolet, mentioned earlier, was not noble:

2054 Une coustume a celui tans estoit
Que grant message nus garçons ne faisoit:
Puis que de guerre la besoigne mouvoit,
Et que la guerre de roial gent naissoit,
Roi, duc ou conte, itel gent s'en melloit...

Adenet goes on to tell how to recognize a messenger:

2060 Et la raison pour quoi on connoissoit
K'ert messagiers, c'estoit ce qu'il portoit
Devers le fer sa lance et paumoioit;

Whether messengers should be armed is not clear. In Les Enfances Renier, it is stated that they should go without arms, wearing a cloak (l.9189), but in Gaufrey we read that they ought to be armed (l.3752,p. 114). The latter would seem more reasonable as the messengers were often in great danger, despite the protection they could claim. Tornebuef, in Aiol, is a typical example, narrowly escaping death both from his own master and the French. In the French court, he claims his rights and is washed and fed, but when he delivers his message, it is only Aiol's intervention which prevents his being badly disfigured (ll.4087ff.). On his return to his own court, he is accused of not having delivered his message faithfully, and Mibrien, his lord, is only with difficulty prevented from striking him down (ll.4139ff.).

Various doctors, diviners, traders and minstrels figure from time to time, giving a general impression of what the French knew of the Saracens. The Arab doctors were certainly famous and considered to be much cleverer than the French doctors. Reading from the stars and practising black magic were attributed to the pagans, and, as for trade, a great deal was carried on between the Orient and the western world. Music was also a feature of eastern life, and minstrels went to houses and played in the squares, just as their French colleagues would.

Very little is learnt of the ordinary people. We are told of their courage and their great faithfulness to their leaders. We read also about the full-scale massacres and conversions, but little can be gleaned from the texts about the everyday life led by the pagans.

A class apart are the leaders and giants and champions, the last two often being synonymous. The leaders and kings are all very similarly described, and only one or two examples need be cited. The emir, in Les Narbonnais, amazes us by his tenacity and courage in the face of overwhelming odds. Again and again, he encourages his men and saves the day. Eventually he is forced to flee, but whilst in flight, he makes plans for gathering another army (ll.7646ff.). The leaders tend to fight bravely and keep their men together well, being killed by the French when they become too dangerous. Another essential aspect of a leader's character - faithfulness - is shown by Guitant, in Gaufrey. Guitant loses his town through treachery, and is offered conversion. He argues that Jesus could not save Himself, therefore how could He be of any use to him (l.2453, p. 74)? He prefers to trust Mahomet. The French take him then, cut him in

pieces and throw him in a marsh (ll.2465ff.,p. 75).

Champions occur frequently, as single combats, both in real life and in the poems, were often used as a method of ensuring justice or ending a war. In this group, we find what people have called the typical Saracen.(i) Typical he certainly was in the earlier chansons de geste, but, as we have seen, he is no longer so in the thirteenth century. However, here we find ourselves again in the unreal world of hideous, fearsome giants, more like devils than men. Here is the description of Buffant, in Doon de Maience, but it could easily be one of many another character:

9449 Atant es .i. serjant par la sale venu;
p. 285 Onques plus outrageus mès Sarrazin ne fu.
Chiere ot de traïtour et couleur de pendu;
Le nés ot rebifé et le menton lavru,
Et fu noir comme pois; tout le cors ot velu,
Le carcois grant et lons et par derier bochu,
Et porta à son col .i. merveilleus escu,
Et tint en l'autre main .i. grant baston cornu.

Not all the giants are described as champions, but this is usually their rôle. All, without exception, are described like Corsolt, in Le Couronnement de Louis. They are huge, black, hairy and ugly, with eyes glowing like fires. In Gaufrey and Octavian, there are armies of giants. The poets seem to consider the giants to be a race apart, not as a type in any race. This is obvious from many quotations, and is found from La Chanson de Roland onwards.(ii)

The giants are always regarded as being extremely courageous

(i) See above p. 8.

(ii) La Chanson de Roland 1.3253.

fighters, very sure of themselves and their gods. In turn, they are humbled by their valorous opponents and killed, though the French may have to resort to unorthodox methods because of the size of their victims. In addition to their great physical advantages, the giants often resorted to magic. Thus, Corbon, in Les Enfances Renier, changes shape, (11.8435ff.) much in the manner of Proteus in Georgics IV (11.440ff.); Amorant, in Gui de Warewic, is so made that if he can moisten his lips, he fears no danger (11.8662ff.); and Butor, in Les Enfances Renier, doubles his strength at midday (11.5494ff.).(i)

As we have just read, the physical descriptions of the giants are horrible and unrealistic, although possibly containing some grain of truth. Other tribes with peculiar physical features and habits are described. Some are influenced by tales made up from classical sources, some by details from knowledge of armour, some by travellers' tales. The description of Escopart, in Bueve de Haumtone, covers most of the peculiarities given with relish by the poets and will therefore be quoted in its entirety.(ii) Comments on details will be made afterwards:

1743 Il [Bueve] se regarde un petit avant,
Par desuz un tertre vist un veleyn gesant,
Ke ben out nof pez de grant:
En sa main tint un mace pesant,
Que dis homes a peine ne portassent,
A son geron un bon branc trenchant,
Entre ses deus oyls un pe out de grant,

(i) Escanor, in L'Atre Perilleux, and Gawain, in La Mort le roi Artu, have the last-named quality.

(ii) Strangely enough, despite the unfavourable description, Escopart is converted to Christianity. Similarly, the Sultan, in Octavian, is hideous (11.1721ff.) and yet converted, and Rainouart, in the twlefth-century Aliscans is an ugly convert.

Le front out large com croupe de olifant,
Plu neyr ou la char ke n'est arement,
Le nez out mesasis e cornus par devant,
Le jambes out longes e gros ensement,
Les pez larges e plaz, mult fu lede sergant,
Plu tost corust ke oysel n'est volant.
Kant il parla, il baia si vilement,
Com ceo fust un vilen mastin abaiant.
Le veylen estoit mult grant e mult fers,
Le chivels out longes com come de destrer
E les oyls granz com deus saucers
E les dens longes com un sengler,
La boche grant, mult fu lede bacheler.
E le vilen estoit grant e metailez,
Le brace out longes e enforcez,
Les ungles si dures, ben le sachez,
Ke il n'ad mure en cristientez,
Se il fust entur un jur, pur veritez,
Ke le mur n'ust tost acravantez;

The reference to language (l.1756) is interesting. Already in La Chanson de Roland there is a comment on the noise the Saracens make (l.3526), but, according to T.A. Jenkins, this is a reference to their war-cries.(i) Here it seems a description of the way the Saracens speak, almost as though the writer has heard them and cannot understand a word. We get the same impression from Les Enfances Renier:

Braient et ullent, moult laide noise y a,
Aussi com leu qui en gestoure va,
Autre langage en Pincernie n'a.

The big mouth,(l.1762 in Bueve de Haumtone), is a negro characteristic which is often mentioned by authors, and the black skin (l.1751) of course strikes the Westerner, and is carefully acquired when a disguise is needed. For example, Josiane, in Bueve de Haumtone, stains her skin black with herbs, and Renier and Grymbert, in Les Enfances Renier, roll in a marsh as well, for extra realism:

Miex sembleront traveilliez et suant.

(i) La Chanson de Roland ed. T.A. Jenkins (Boston 1924) Note on l.3526.

There are several references in descriptions to long, hard nails (l.1765). Perhaps the Saracens were in the habit of wearing iron gloves with protruding fingers for protection, although this is not spoken of in books on the armour of the period.

A feature often mentioned, but which is omitted in the description of Escopart, is that of being horned. In Les Enfances Renier, Butor has horns (l.2075), as have the Pincenarts (l.4553), and in Les Narbonnais one race uses its horns as weapons:

7249 A lor crochez vont François acrochant
Et des chevaux a terre trebuchant,
Et puis les piqent contre terre en gisant
De lor picois qui sont agu devant.

Possibly again the horns formed part of the Saracen helmet, or may have been the normal hair style of certain races.

Other characteristics not mentioned here are sometimes attributed to the Saracens on the strength of odd rumours regarding their habits. In Foulque de Candie, we read of a race which drinks no wine and does not mount horses (ll.10928f.). The former statement is undoubtedly from rumours about the Moslem religion, which forbids the drinking of wine, but the latter is not true of the Moslems. Frequent references to the Saracens not wearing armour but 'draps' or snake-skins may be because some tribes did wear skins, or because the Moslem scale armour resembled skins.

Lastly, remarks are sometimes made about cannibalism. Nasier, in Gaufrey, is accused of roasting and eating Christians (ll.2964ff. P.90.). During the time of the crusades such rumours were rife, and it was commonly believed that Suleiman, minister of Kaikhosrau III, the Seldjuk

Sultan, was executed, and his flesh served in a stew.(i)

Naturally, more normal descriptions are found, especially when a Saracen is armed and ready for a single combat. The poets are not niggardly in their praise of the champion. Characters are usually described as handsome according to western standards, and the details of dress are also western. It is not essential to be a potential convert to be brave and good-looking. Auquaire, in La Mort Aymeri, is converted, but Clarel, in Otinel, is not, yet he is favourably described. Few of the descriptions equal that in Foulque de Candie of Tiebaut going to visit Louis to arrange a peace, but he remains a Saracen. This passage covers most of the points usually mentioned and is very detailed:

Tiebaut, le roy d'Arrabe, qui maint home a pene
Ne sembla pas le jour prince desherite;
Chaucie fu et vestu d'un drap de soie ouvre,
A la guise de France taillie et gironne;
.i. mantel sebelin ot li rois aflube,
Que fees orent fait el regne de Calde.
Bel ot le cors et grant et fu de bon äe;
Nonporquant ja avoit .xxx. anz escu porte.
Les cheveus avoit neirs et lons jusqu'au baudre,
Et il furent de cheines par liex entremelle.
N'avoit pas de toaille le chief envelope
Ainsi come ont li Turc devers mont Guiböe, (ii)
Ainz y avoit .i. cercle de fin or esmere
Dont les pierres d'entour getoient grant clarte.

Emphasis is often placed upon the rich cloaks and jewelled garments worn by the Saracens. As we shall see in a later chapter, the western people were dazzled by the magnificence and sumptuousness of the Oriental world.

(i) Runciman op. cit. on p. 19, Vol. III, p. 348.

(ii) These two lines contain a rare reference to authentic Moslem clothing. Although Tiebaut is not wearing a turban here, the fact that the headgear is mentioned at all shows that the poet knew what was worn in the East.

The preceding examples show that the tendency of the twelfth century to portray the Saracens favourably is carried on and expanded in the thirteenth century. Many who remain true to Mahomet, as well as those who are going to be converted, are likable characters. I cannot agree with Meredith Jones that the portrait of the Saracen is based on hate;(i) nor can I agree that the wickedness of the Saracens is:

> 'stressed by the occasional expressions of admiration for acts of bravery or fidelity, which normally are only displayed by a believer...'(ii)

Such expressions of admiration are far from being occasional and, from the examples quoted, we saw that 'bravery and fidelity' are often to be found in the Saracen soldier.

The characters I have described and discussed seem to fall into three main groups. They are: those who remained faithful to Mahomet and died for their religion; those who remained faithful and lived; and those who forsook Mahomet and became Christian. Bearing in mind the fact that almost all the Saracens are shown in a reasonable light, the first and last groups could be said to carry on the traditions of the twelfth century to a certain extent, but the second group, those who remained faithful to Mahomet and lived, seems to me to be a new development and a very significant one. In contrast to the crude descriptions of hideous giants and thoroughly wicked Saracens and to the over-flattering eulogies of those who will eventually be converted, we find these characters who are realistically drawn and who seem to have the vices and virtues of ordinary human beings. It is through these Saracens that the poet reveals the

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(i) See above p. 9.

(ii) Meredith Jones art. cit. on p. 8, p. 206.

contemporary feelings about the East. Contact with the Moslems dispelled many false ideas, and the poets realized that they were a people, with different beliefs it is true, but with a civilisation equal, if not superior, to their own. That the poets cannot condone these beliefs is obvious, but their increasingly tolerant attitude towards the people who hold them ~~beliefs~~ is clearly seen, and undoubtedly intentional. It is also more far-reaching than the scholars mentioned earlier seem to suggest.(i) They state that the noble Saracen is invariably converted, which is definitely not the case. Although the pagan should be converted if possible, the writers make it clear that he should be allowed to keep to his own traditions and faith if he prefers, and that he should not necessarily be killed for wishing to do so.

(i) See above p. 10.

Chapter 3

The Women Characters in the Chansons de Geste

Little has been written about the Saracen women in the chansons de geste. A few general remarks are made in histories of French literature and articles not specifically on women. Apart from that, there are three articles wholly devoted to the women in the chansons de geste, by F.M. Warren,(i) H.A. Smith (ii) and A.S. de Feo (iii). Warren is interested mainly in the origin of the legend of the enamoured eastern princess. Apparently it had already been formulated by Seneca and the Greek sophists, but, in Warren's opinion, further details come from Syrian Byzantium and stories in the Arabian Nights.

(i) F.M. Warren 'The Enamoured Moslem Princess in Orderic Vital and the French Epic' PMLA XXIX (1914) 341-358.

(ii) H.A. Smith 'La Femme dans les chansons de geste' Colorado College Studies IX (1901) and X (1903) Papers read before the Scientific Society.

(iii) A.S. de Feo 'La donna nelle 'Chansons de Geste' ed Alda la bella' Rivista d'Italia X, part 2 (1907) 469-486.

Smith makes little distinction in his articles between Christian and Saracen women. He discusses their education, social position and duties, and shows how French society has affected the details in the chansons de geste. De Feo gives us a description of a Saracen princess and tells us that it happens to be Floripas, in Fierabras, but that the description would fit any Saracen woman character.(i) She emphasizes the cunning, vigour, immodesty and cruelty of the Saracen by comparing her with la Belle Aude, in La Chanson de Roland.

Finally, Comfort and Meredith Jones mention the Saracen women, in the articles already quoted.(ii) Comfort sees the women in a very favourable light and dwells on their beauty, courage and resourcefulness. Indeed, he tends to ignore the cruelty and lack of feeling they undoubtedly show from time to time.(iii) Meredith Jones also speaks of the beauty of the eastern women, and suggests that they were a sort of dream of what the Christian soldiers wanted:

> 'the Christian ideal of loveliness and sensual attraction.'(iv)

Three main points of interest arise in connection with the women characters: firstly, the increasing importance of the part they play in the later chansons de geste, secondly, the fact that, although in the main the princesses follow a certain pattern, there are many deviations from this pattern, and thirdly, the position the women held

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(i) De Feo art.cit., p. 470.

(ii) See above pp. 5 and 8 respectively.

(iii) Comfort art. cit., pp. 420-430.

(iv) Meredith Jones art. cit., p. 220.

in society, both in reality and in the chansons de geste.

The development of the part played by women makes an interesting study. It can be seen very clearly if we consider the character of la Belle Aude in R. Mortier's edition of the manuscripts of La Chanson de Roland.(i) In the earliest surviving (Oxford) version, Aude is only very briefly mentioned. In the later versions, however, for example in the Venice IV manuscript, hundreds of lines are devoted to describing Aude, her reactions to Charlemagne's news of her brother's and her fiancé's deaths, her prayers in the chapel where their bodies were laid, and, finally, her illness and death.(ii) Aude, of course, is a French princess, but the Saracen princesses also come to be more fully described than were their twelfth-century predecessors. This can be seen very clearly if we make a comparison between the twelfth and thirteenth century versions of Bueve de Commarchis and Les Enfances Ogier.

In Le Siège de Barbastre, the model for Bueve de Commarchis, Malatrie, a Saracen princess, falls in love with Girart merely from hearsay (ll.1577ff.), and even asks her father if she can have him as her husband (ll.1721ff.). Later, resolved to see Girart, she sends a servant for him. In Bueve de Commarchis, as A. Henry, the editor, tells us:

> 'Adenet n'a plus de l'amour la même conception que le poète épique.'(iii)

Malatrie at least sees Girart before falling in love with him (ll.2656ff.).

(i) Les Textes de la Chanson de Roland ed. R. Mortier (Paris 1940-1944)

(ii) Charlemagne sends for Aude, l.4748. From then on, she figures until her death, l.5364, in the Venice IV MS.

(iii) Bueve de Commarchis ed. A. Henry, p. 25.

A confidante, Flandrine, is introduced, who, after Malatrie has discussed the situation with her, suggests sending for Girart (11.3228ff.). The character of Malatrie has become less forward and more in keeping with what was expected of women of high rank at the end of the thirteenth century.

The same change takes place in Gloriande, in Les Enfances Ogier. In the twelfth-century La Chevalerie Ogier she vacillates, turning from Carahuel, to Ogier, to Brunamon, and the characterisation is very superficial. Adenet transforms her into the faithful lover of Carahuel; she is resolute, sympathetic and tolerant, and earns our admiration and respect.

Not only are individual characters more fully described in the thirteenth century, but women as a whole play a much larger part in the development of the plot. In the twelfth century, they occur only in about a third of the chansons de geste, and even then play a very insignificant part. For example, in La Chanson d'Aspremont and Orson de Beauvais, they are only mentioned briefly. After Agolant's death in La Chanson d'Aspremont, his wife is baptized and married to Florent, and at the end of Orson de Beauvais, there is a mass conversion of women. When the women do play a more important part, we are not always favourably impressed by their actions. Maugalie, in Floovent, discovers that a trusted servant is Floovent's valet in disguise, and uses this knowledge to blackmail Floovent into promising to marry her. Revelation of the servant's identity would have meant death for both the Frenchmen. Floripas, in Fierabras, equally extracts a promise of marriage, when to refuse her would mean death.

By the thirteenth century, women occur in over two thirds of the chansons de geste, and at the same time are dealt with more fully.

The natural corollary to the increasing prominence of women in the chansons de geste is that the love element plays a much larger part. This is in keeping with the contemporary ideas regarding women in society. In the earliest poem, La Chanson de Roland, the fighting between Christian and Saracen is the main point of interest and the women are only briefly mentioned. In the later poems, they gradually come to play some part in the development of the plot, but only in La Prise d'Orange is the love element romantic rather than utilitarian. Guillaume hears of Orable's beauty and, with two companions, goes in disguise to see her. Although he later profits by her help in escaping from prison, his love was, in the first place, disinterested.(i) This is the foreshadowing of the more prominent part played by love in the thirteenth century. Whereas in the twelfth century the Frenchman seems to marry the Saracen for expediency, in the thirteenth century he tends to see her and fall in love with her; although he may benefit from her love, their relationship is based on genuine feeling.

Obviously, too, the chansons de geste have been influenced by Ovid and the romances. The descriptions of emotions are much more detailed than previously, and in some cases echo almost word for word what is said in the romances; for example, the description of Marsabile in love, in Octavian (ll.2805ff.), resembles that of Lavinia in love, in the Roman d'Enéas (ll.8399ff.).

The modes of behaviour of courtly society introduce new elements.

(i) The staunch love between Guibourc (Orable) and Guillaume, and the help and confidence she gives him after their marriage should perhaps be mentioned. It comes out very strongly both in Aliscans and in La Chanson de Guillaume. As Guibourc is a Christian then, however, it hardly seems relevant to the chapter in general.

We saw at the beginning of the chapter how they affected the treatment of the women characters,(i) and various actions also betray their influence. Gaudisse, Marsile's daughter, in Anseïs de Carthage, sends her sleeve to her lover, Anseïs (l.2002); Anfelise, in Foulque de Candie, takes back her glove from Rubyon, when he has earned her disfavour(ll.1680ff.) The warriors are expected to fight for their ladies, for example ll.2263ff. in Bueve de Commarchis, and individual combats are often fought in the hopes of obtaining their favours, for example ll.1937ff. in Octavian. The defeated opponents are their prisoners to be dealt with as they think fit. Thus Marsabile, in Octavian, orders her prisoners to be kept and bound, despite their pleas for mercy (ll.2025ff.).

The Saracen princess is generally represented by scholars as being selfish, immodest and cruel. Gautier admires la Belle Aude in La Chanson de Roland, but says of the poets who wrote the later chansons de geste:

> 'On les voit...créer un type de jeunes filles qui eût révolté profondément l'âme candide de l'auteur du Roland.'(ii)

He goes on to speak of their forward actions. Meredith Jones also emphasizes the sensuality and determination of the Saracen women, commenting:

> 'There are very few loved women in the songs, most of them are lovers.'(iii)

Crosland suggests that Floripas is:

> 'merely one of a line of repulsive females who became rather popular in the decadent period of the chansons de geste.' (iv)

(i) See above pp. 62f.

(ii) L. Gautier Les Epopées françaises (Paris and Brussels 1878-1882 2nd ed.) Vol. I, p. 163.

(iii) Meredith Jones art. cit., p. 220.

(iv) Crosland op. cit. on p. 9, p. 165.

Even Comfort, who takes a kindlier view of the women, points out:

> 'they are usually more forward in their amorous declarations than we would have them,'(i)

Some of the actions of the thirteenth-century women confirm these statements, and there is certainly a type of Saracen princess, upon which the poets base their descriptions. In the thirteenth century, the best examples of this type are Nubie, in La Prise de Cordres, and Flordespine, in Gaufrey. But there is also more variation of character than is generally assumed. In order to illustrate this, I propose to describe in detail the character of Nubie, who is a typical Saracen princess, and then try to show, by comparison and contrast, some of the ways in which the other characters differ from her.

Nubie's love for Bertrant, in La Prise de Cordres, is spontaneous and overpowering:

713 Ell ot Bertran sos lou pin esgardé:...
719 Tel deul en fait, lou sanc cuide desver,
Mais por son pere ne l'osa demostrer;
Elle en laissait lo boivre et lou mangier.
S'elle n'i puet tot maintenant parler,
De deul mora, n'en partira par el,
Tant en est adolee.

She is prepared to be baptized for his sake in order to marry him. When Bertrant is brought in as a prisoner, Nubie goes to him and tells of her love. Bertrant sees her beauty and, in turn, falls in love.

Nubie then shows her determination to help the prisoners, by acquiring food and drink for them and making a plan of escape. She goes in to her father and, having obtained his permission to serve the wine at his feast that day (l.1020), she prepares the drink very carefully. Taking a flask:

(i) Comfort art. cit. p. 422.

1031 L[e]anz destranpe et herbes et oblie
Et en après i mist de la tubie:
Hons qui la boive ne puet longement vivre,
Se maintenant n'est faite la mecine.

Having poisoned the assembled company, her father included, Nubie still retains sufficient presence of mind to tease Bertrant into thinking that she has betrayed him, by telling him that her father wishes to see the French prisoners (ll.1080ff,)! She then collects as much wealth as possible, which later serves as her dowry, and loads her father on to a cart, as he could be useful for ransom purposes (ll.1192ff.).

Nubie possesses in abundance the attributes of cunning, vigour and resourcefulness, mentioned by de Feo.(i) With admirable foresight she has prepared provisions should she and the escaping prisoners be besieged (ll.1341ff.). When, in fact, they are pursued and attacked, she drives the cattle which had been brought into a conveniently abandoned tower, and then helps in the defence by throwing stones down upon the attackers.

Nubie's new loyalty to Bertrant replaces any she might have had previously, and at times her enthusiasm makes her very cruel; for example the way she strikes the boy for refusing to give her the swan he is roasting (l.909) is not pleasant, nor is the callousness with which she treats her father. She poisons him, drags him off on a cart because he could be a useful hostage, and when he is rescued and cured, her reaction to his request to see her is not at all friendly:

1764 Cant la pucelle ot son pere paler,
"Sire," dist elle, "qui vos a meciné?
Li vif diable vos ont si repassé!"

When her father is finally captured by the French, Nubie orders

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(i) See above p. 61.

him to agree to her marriage. It is Bertrant who punctiliously states that he will not marry Nubie until her father consents (l.1938).

However quickly Nubie forgets her old obligations, she remains intensely loyal to the new, and endures a great deal for them. The poet, by his description of her arrival in Cordres, shows us charmingly how she has suffered. He begins by saying how beautiful she is:

1924 Mais que le vis ot .j. petit troblé,
Por la grant poine que elle ot anduré,
La nuit vaillier et lou jor jeüner;
Tant ot corut por la piere porter,
Qu'elle donoit as François por giter
Seu garnement sont rout et depané.

Her ready wit, however desperate the situation, enlivens the moment and makes Nubie seem a character in her own right and not a mere type. When Bertrant finds all the Saracens apparently sleeping, she explains:

1137 "Mahomez ait andormi sa maisnié[e].
C'est por sa feste qui si est halte et fiere."

Again, when Judas attempts to reconvert her, she replies:

2597 "Molt est prodons Mahomez vostre sire:
Il fait vertus, je l'ai bien oï dire:
Ceas lait morir qui plus ne puënt vivre."

As I have said, Nubie is a typical Saracen princess. She falls passionately in love at the mere sight of Bertrant; she abandons her family and religion immediately, and does all in her power to help the Christian knights; she is prepared to inflict and suffer torture for her new faith and companions. A closer examination of the women characters shows us however that there are more exceptions to this type than, for example, Crosland or de Feo (i) would suggest.

(i) See above pp. 65 and 61 respectively.

The women are often accused of seeing the French and loving them immediately, as is the way with Nubie. Esclarmonde, in Huon de Bordeaux, also falls in love straight away with the French hero, Huon (p. 170). In several of the chansons however, this is not the case. The French seem to agree to mixed marriages provided that the girls become Christian,(i) indeed, sometimes the marriage is actually suggested by the French. In Guibert d'Andrenas, Agaiete schemes to bring about her marriage with Guibert, but it had already been proposed by Aymeri (ll.489ff.). Similarly, in Anseïs de Carthage, Anseïs sends ambassadors to Marsile, asking for his daughter's hand in marriage and agreeing to end the war (ll.929ff.). Foulque, in Foulque de Candie, likewise determines to win himself a wife in foreign lands (ll.543ff.).

In other cases, love has grown up over a number of years. Ydoine, in Les Enfances Renier, marries Renier, whom she has brought up from childhood. Galienne, in Charlemagne, loves Mainet, who had taken refuge in her father's court and lived there many years. In Bueve de Haumtone, Josiane falls in love with Bueve, likewise a refuge in her father's court. Her situation is very amusingly described. The King offers his daughter and land to Bueve, if he will be converted. Naturally, Bueve refuses, but Josiane has fallen in love with him (ll.430ff.). At an opportune moment, she confesses her love, only to find herself still rejected. Thereupon she denounces him roundly, telling him that he is not worthy of her love. Later, she repents of her anger and attempts to get a message to Bueve, then goes herself. Bueve refuses

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(i) Mixed marriages were, of course, a reality, usually among the poorer Frankish soldiers, but Richard the Lion-Heart and Saladin discussed a marriage proposal between Richard's sister and Saladin's brother.

to listen and starts snoring loudly (ll.750ff.)! When Josiane declares that she will become a Christian however, he immediately accepts her proposal (ll.765ff.).

As this last example shows us, the love element is very much connected with the religious element, and it is only after a princess has agreed to change her faith that the Frenchman agrees to marry her. Nubie, from the very first, is prepared to be baptized in order to have Bertrant, in La Prise de Cordres. The only exception we find to this generality is in Huon de Bordeaux. Esclarmonde is accepted by Huon, before she has become a Christian. It is only after Huon has agreed to marry her that, in the excitement of the moment, she renounces Mahomet forthwith (l.5901, p. 176).

Mirabel, in Aiol, and Marsabile, in Octavian are interesting characters because they not only resist the Frenchman's offer of love, but try to remain faithful to their own religion.

Mirabel, eloping to Gorhan of Africa, is seen and captured by Aiol, who announces his intention of marrying and converting her:

5375 Quant Mirabiaus l'entent, por poi que n'est dervee,
Et respont la pucele: "N'en sui pas porpensee.
Dessi a molt grant pieche n'i serai atornee:
Ja la loi Mahomet n'ert par moi vergondee:
Molt ameroie miex que je fuise tuee,
A keues de ceval destruite et trainee!"

Soon, Mirabel sees help coming and is overjoyed, but yet feels that she cannot leave Aiol to be killed whilst sleeping (in contrast to her friends, who watch even their own families being killed). Naturally, Aiol then overcomes the pagans, and Mirabel, realizing his worth, agrees to be converted:

5596 Bien avés oi dire et as uns et as autres
Que feme aime tost home qui bien fiert en bataille:
Ele li escria, qu'il l'entent en l'angarde:
"Sire, venés vous ent qui preus estes as armes;
Por vous querra je Dieu l[e pere] esperitable."

Although so reluctant to become a Christian at first, Mirabel remains faithful, and is prepared to be martyred rather than pray to the image of Mahomet (ll.9678ff.).

Marsabile, in Octavian, requests a safe-conduct from the French as her tent is so near their lines (ll.1899ff.), and sends out her champion, a giant, to joust for her. He is killed by Florent, who captures Marsabile, but is forced to let her go again almost immediately, though not without first having kissed her! Marsabile rides to her father and demands vengeance, but alone in her tent she realizes that she has fallen in love with Florent. Her conversion and marriage soon take place, despite her earlier statement:

2825 "Iamais crestien n'ameroi,
Ancois ocir[e] les feroi."

These last two examples help to illustrate the point (i) that there was sometimes genuine love between French and Saracen, and that the French were not always forced into marrying the Saracens because of expediency, which is what de Feo would have us believe.(ii)

Once the princesses have accepted Christianity they all behave alike and completely ignore their former ties. This faithlessness towards their own people comes out especially where Saracen lovers are concerned. Malatrie scorns Limbanor, in Bueve de Commarchis, and Flordespine, in Gaufrey, rejects Marprin. Only Anfelise, in love with

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(i) See above p. 64.

(ii) De Feo art.cit., p. 470.

the Christian, Foulque, in Foulque de Candie, regrets that she is not going to marry her Saracen lover, Mauduit de Raimes:

3998 De plus bel Tur n'orrois ja mes parler.
Voit l'Anfelise, si commence a penser:
Se ne fust autres, mout vos pöisse amer.

Canete remains faithful to her Saracen lover in the same poem, but probably only because he becomes a Christian, and she likewise desires conversion.

Like Nubie, the women often seem unnecessarily cruel in their enthusiasm. This cruelty tends to shock us, especially when the character is otherwise attractive. Ydoine, in Les Enfances Renier, suffers so much for her religion that we cannot help but admire her, and yet she calmly orders her father to be beheaded. Esclarmonde, in Huon de Bordeaux, wishes to kill her father, and even tries to justify her action:

6238 Et le mien pere ne puis ge plus amer,
p. 186 Car il ne croit fors Mahon le dervé;
Pour çou le ha ge, si me puist Dix salver.

Huon refuses to let her carry out her plan! Others laugh and rejoice at the death of their former lovers, asking for them to be killed first if possible, for example, Flordespine, in Gaufrey, l.8628, p. 259.

One possible excuse for this cruelty and cold-bloodedness is that the girls genuinely believed, as enthusiastic new converts, that they must have nothing to do with pagan relatives and friends, for fear of compromising themselves. Another excuse could be that, in actual fact, the lives of the women, both Frankish and Saracen, in the Middle Ages, often depended upon vigorous action, and that the poet is merely describing life as he knew it. We tend to forget that, in the absence of father or lord, the women might be called upon to defend

their home. Runciman speaks of the French women helping in the defence of castles,(i) and Usāmah, in his biography, tells us how his mother and sister prepare to meet the enemy, and of a friend, who goes out to fight alongside the men.(ii) Perhaps, too, the women were moved to cruelty because of hatred, or desire for vengeance when one of their relatives had been killed, or perhaps, simply, it was a question of their life or that of the enemy. Bearing in mind this atmosphere, the actions of the princesses are more easily understood.

However fickle the Saracen women were as regards their childhood lovers and beliefs, once they have accepted Christianity, they are prepared to undergo any form of punishment rather than betray their new religion and their affianced. We saw how Nubie took part in the siege and suffered quite considerably, but compared with the sufferings of some of her companions, she had a relatively easy time. Only once do we find a suggestion that a princess would return to her former religion, nor is it under threat of torture. Esclarmonde, in Huon de Bordeaux, fears that Huon might be unjustly treated and exclaims:

9996 Mais, se Dix vuelt si grant tort endurer
p. 297 Que vous soiiés pendus et traïnés,
Dont di ge, certes, Mahons vaut miex asés.
Saciés de voir que, se vous i morés,
Jamais ne quier vostre Diu apeler,
Ains renoierai sainte crestienté.

The others, however fervently they believed in Mahomet and however reluctant they were to relinquish him, never waver. Malatrie,

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(i) Runciman op. cit. on p. 19, Vol. II, p. 317.

(ii) An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades. Memoirs of Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh (Kitāb al-I'tabār) Tr. P.K. Hitti (New York 1929) Usāmah was born in 1095, and wrote about the middle of the twelfth century.

in Bueve de Commarchis, fully realizes the punishment if she is caught, yet when taken back to her father she prays that she will receive baptism still(ll.2741ff.). Josiane is dragged to the fire, in Bueve de Haumtone, also Mirabel, in Aiol. The latter suffers imprisonment rather then renounce her faith (ll.9723ff.), and when dragged by four pagans to the image of Mahomet, she refuses to pray to it still.
In Les Enfances Renier, Ydoine loses heart a little when Renier leaves her, and regrets her haste in becoming a Christian. Nevertheless, she defies her father and resigns herself to being burned. Gonsent, her servant, reproves her for her lack of faith, justifiably so! Ydoine prays to the Virgin, and a miracle occurs. The skies grow dark, and the ash from the fire blows over the crowd (ll.11600ff.). In the ensuing confusion, Ydoine is rescued by Salabrun, who attempts to force her to marry him. Ydoine refuses, and when he tries to take her by force, she finds sufficient strength to protect herself:

11951 Ja l'esforçast, loyaument vous afi,
Mes la pucele un petit s'enhardi
Del poing senestre si grant cop le feri
Parmi le gueule que deus denz li rompi;
A grant brandon le cler sanc en issi.

She is then dragged by her hair through the wood, tied to a tree, starved, beaten and thrown into prison. Having come triumphantly through all these tribulations, she is rewarded by a truly 'Magnificat' scene, in which an angel appears to her and prophesies the birth of a son - Tancred (ll.18009-18045).

Occasionally, the girls are welcomed by friends converted earlier, for example, Agaiete, in La Prise de Cordres, greets Nubie and praises her actions (ll.2025ff.). Such faithfulness is all the more remarkable given the spontaneity of their love and the ease with which they left childhood beliefs and friendships.

Finally, two complete exceptions to the normal type of Saracen woman must be mentioned. Comfort tells us that the pagan princesses:

'end regularly by being baptized and marrying the hero.'(i)

Alfamie, in Otinel, and Gloriande, in Les Enfances Ogier by Adenet le roi, both remain indifferent to the French and keep their own religion. Alfamie is the lover of the Saracen prince, Clarel, and, although Clarel is killed, no attempt is made to convert her or to marry her to a Frenchman. Admittedly she plays only a small part in the chanson.

More important is the rôle of Gloriande. A perfect understanding exists between this princess, Carahuel, and the Christian, Ogier. She tries to convert the latter, but his refusal does not prevent her from looking after him and curing his wounds. Courageously she defends her lover, Carahuel, when he has disobeyed the King's orders by fighting, and again when Brunamon has accused him of treachery. In the latter case, Ogier offers himself as champion on Carahuel's behalf, and is promptly accepted. Only in the concluding lines of the poem is there any suggestion that Gloriande might be converted. The author tells us that some sources say that she and Carahuel became Christians (ll.7638ff.), but it is not a certainty, so he prays to God to have mercy on them:

7645 Car se valoir i pooit loiauté,
Estre devroient devant Dieu coronné.

All the above women had as their predominating motive their love, whether it be for a Frenchman or a Saracen. An exception to be noted is Marmonde, in Anseïs de Carthage. Marmonde is the mother of the giant, Canemon, and her description resembles that of the male

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(i) Comfort art. cit., p. 422.

giants, presumably because she was supposed by the poets to come from the same race.(i) Told of her son's death, she becomes almost mad with rage and sets out to avenge him. Eventually, after killing many of the French, she is unarmed by Anseïs and killed (ll.6772f.).

In addition to considering the Saracen women as types and characters in the chansons de geste, it is interesting to note other details such as their physical description and dress, their education, the rôle they play in society, and their rights. In these respects, it is clear that the writer is influenced by French ideas of women and their position, and that little or no attempt has been made to portray eastern society. As Meredith Jones says:

> 'in the songs the pictures of such Saracen women are drawn largely from the imagination. They are, in most respects, devoid of historical or sociological significance.'(ii)

A certain amount of Spanish influence may be noticed however, which is possible, as many of the chansons are set in Spain, and Spanish customs were likely to be known to the poets.

The physical description and dress seem purely western. Gloriande, in Les Enfances Ogier, is a typical beauty à la roman d'aventure:

1468 Car tant ert bele, de biauté adercie,
Que dou veoir estoit grant melodie.
Com flours de lis estoit blanche et polie
Et plus vermeille que n'est rose espanie,
Si mist au faire Nature sa maistrie
Que puis ne fu plus bele riens choisie;

(i) See above p. 53.

(ii) Meredith Jones art. cit., p. 219.

These Saracen women, as depicted by the French, differ a great deal from the standard of beauty described by Lane as being the desire of every Arab woman. Ideally, she should have black hair; red cheeks; large, black, almond-shaped eyes, whose expression is softened by long, silken lashes; thin, delicately-arched eyebrows. The forehead should be white, the nose straight, and the mouth small, with pearly teeth and lips of brilliant red.(i)

There are exceptions to the general rule of beauty. Marmonde, the giantess already mentioned in Anseïs de Carthage, is very ugly, and the giant Agropart's sister is similarly described in Huon de Bordeaux (ll.6521, p.195).

The references to dress are few and far between, but those that exist tend to confirm the theory that the poets have made no attempt to easternize the costume. Had they done so, they would surely have mentioned the veils and the voluminous gowns worn by Arab ladies whenever they left the house.(ii) Usually, in the chansons de geste, a 'mantel', a 'paile d'Aumarie' or a 'bliaut' is mentioned. We know, too, that Alimodès' daughter and Gaudisse, Marsile's daughter, in Blancandin and Anseïs de Carthage respectively, give sleeves to their lovers. As for headdresses, we learn that Orable, in Les Enfances Guillaume, had a wimple with a huge carbuncle in the front (l.1763), and Gloriande, in Les Enfances Ogier, was wearing a chaplet adorned with rubies (l.3794). This could be true of Arab

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(i) Lane Arab. Soc. op. cit. on p. 12, pp. 213ff.

(ii) Full details of dress worn inside may be found in Lane Mod. Egypt. op. cit. on p. 12, pp. 42ff.

women, as they were very fond of putting jewels in their hair and of wearing jewelled headdresses, but it is also true of the French women of this time.

Some of the women seem astonishingly well-educated. Flordespine, in Gaufrey, is particularly brilliant:

1793 Ele avoit .xiiii. ans et demi seulement,
p. 55 Bien sot parler latin et entendre rommant,
Bien sot jouer as tables, as eschés ensement;
[Et] du cours des estoilez, de la lune luisant,
Savoit moult plus que fame de chest siecle vivant.

Mirabel's knowledge of languages, in Aiol, is also exceptional:

5420 Ele sut bien parler de .xiiii. latins:
Ele savoit parler et grigois et hermin,
Flamenc et borgengon et tout le sarrasin,
Poitevin et gascon, se li vient a plaisir.

Most of the girls seem to know the uses of various herbs and to dabble in magic, but it is mentioned as a qualification, only in Les Enfances Renier:

1325 Quar la pucele savoit a grant plente
De nigromance et de divinite.

With rare exceptions, such a good education for girls would be unknown in the East. Lane tells us that the female children of Arabs were seldom taught even to read. They could go to school, but often the parents did not allow it. Needlework, spinning, and weaving were important accomplishments, none of which is mentioned in the chansons de geste. The details could be true of Spanish women, however, for in Spain the women were encouraged to take part in literary competitions. Many were proficient in poetry, philosophy, grammar and rhetoric, and excited universal admiration.(i)

(i) S.P. Scott History of the Moorish Empire in Europe (Philadelphia and London 1904) Vol. III, p. 654.

Let us now consider the rights the women seem to have had. The previous descriptions show that the poet had little genuine knowledge of eastern women, which was almost inevitable as the seclusion of high-ranking women in Moslem society was so strict everywhere. Even in Spain, the women were constantly guarded by eunuchs.(i) Yet, in the chansons de geste, the princesses have a good deal of freedom. In Les Enfances Renier, Ydoine brings up a child in her apartments, herself only a child of seven! The women watch combats and encourage their lovers, and beg permission to accompany their fathers to battle, for example, Marsabile, in Octavian, ll.1402ff. Once in the camp, they set up their tents near the enemy lines and many times send for the French to come and visit them there, for example, Malatrie, in Bueve de Commarchis, sends for Girart (ll.3234ff.). Brandimonde, in Anseïs de Carthage, does likewise. She is seen by her husband, whom she easily persuades that she was not arranging a peace treaty as he naively suggested (ll.5411ff.), but that she had been surprised by the French whilst sleeping and that they had tried to abduct her (ll.5422.)! It is extremely doubtful whether any high-class eastern women would ever be allowed such freedom; they certainly would not as far as the men were concerned, for they were allowed to be seen only by their husbands and members of the family they could not marry. Possibly the seclusion of eastern women is the very reason why the descriptions of them are so westernized. The poet had only his own society upon which to base his ideas.

Not only are the women credited with much more freedom than

(i) Scott op. cit., p. 657.

they would have had, but also with much more power. It is clear from the chansons de geste that the women were supposed to be present at important councils and offer advice. P.B. Boissonnade points out:

> 'Le poète montre qu'il ne connaît point à fond cette organisation politique musulmane, quand il attribue aux femmes... une participation effective et patente aux cours du souzerain.'(i)

Like French women, however, eastern women could inherit and hold lands, and many of the Saracen princesses are very rich and powerful; indeed, frequently they boast of their possessions and bribe their lovers with their wealth. Anfelise, in Foulque de Candie, is ordered to find a husband to help her look after her lands (a situation which arose often in the Middle Ages). She gains permission from the council to go to Candie, her town, which she promptly hands over to the Frenchman, Foulque, whom she marries.

The influence of French ideas is very clear in this chapter on the women characters. We have seen how the part assigned to them becomes larger as their importance increased in society, and how the love element is emphasized more, to be in keeping with contemporary courtly ideas. In this last section, too, on the rights of women, it is the rights of the French, not the Moslem, women that are described, although in some instances the two are similar. As I suggested, possibly the very nature of Moslem Society and the seclusion of women forces inaccurate descriptions, and then again perhaps the poet felt the need for a love interest, and sacrificed reality to art.

Despite the variations of character I have shown to exist, the characters in the chansons de geste remain, to a large extent,

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(i) P.B. Boissonnade Du nouveau sur la Chanson de Roland (Paris 1923) p. 246.

stereotyped. Rarely do they kill to achieve their desire (as Floripas did in the twelfth-century Fierabras) but their new found love and religion sometimes make them seem cold and cruel. They pursue their aims with the same relentless vigour and cunning as their predecessors. The poets, however, do not reproach them for their actions as we do, which shows that such behaviour could not have been considered too outrageous. The Saracen women are never scorned or condemned. On the contrary, they are highly praised and extravagantly honoured. Gloriande, in Les Enfances Ogier, is an admirable character, consistent and realistic. Anfelise, in Foulque de Candie, and Gaudisse, Marsile's daughter, in Anseïs de Carthage, are lively and intelligent. Clearly, the female characters profit from the fact that woman was the object of a peculiar veneration in the West at that time, and also from the fact that anything eastern evoked an atmosphere of mystery and romance. The poets praise their beauty, vigour and, after conversion, their enthusiasm for their new faith. Judging by modern standards, we may feel tempted to condemn their ruthlessness and sensuality, but, helped by the fuller descriptions of thoughts and actions in the thirteenth-century literature, we find that the Saracen princesses merit our sympathy and, at times, our admiration.

Chapter 4

General Relations between Christian and Saracen

Relations between Christian and Saracen in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste become quite varied. In the twelfth century, what intercourse there was was generally hostile, and there are few examples of good faith between the two sides. In her introduction to 'The Old French Epic', Crosland tells us:

> 'There is merit in killing a heathen, even after his baptism, if fear had been the cause of it or if danger would result from his remaining alive.'(i)

Later, in the chapter on the heathen in the Old French epic, she speaks of:

> 'The uncompromising attitude of the Christians towards the heathen in the mass, the generally unsympathetic treatment they receive at the hands of the authors, and the complete lack of chivalry evinced by the Christian knights towards their infidel foes,...'(ii)

Skidmore has a whole chapter on cruelties against the Saracens,(iii) and the Christian practice of slaying all pagans who refused to be baptized

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(i) Crosland op. cit. on p. 9, p. 6.

(ii) Ibid. p. 152.

(iii) Skidmore op. cit. on p. 6, pp. 67-83.

has already been mentioned.(i) We find it in La Chanson de Roland, ll.3669f., and in many of the later poems, for example in La Chevalerie Vivien,ll.134f. Examples of pagans being killed whilst lying defenceless on the ground are also not unknown. Gui cuts off the head of a wounded pagan king, in La Chanson de Guillaume, and defends his action to Guillaume,(ll.1963-78), and in Aliscans Guillaume himself cuts off the head of a pagan who is unable to defend himself (ll.1359ff.). Commenting on this latter action, Skidmore says:

> 'Possibly the unfair treatment of a wounded Saracen ..reflects the fanatical feeling against the Saracens when the poem was written.'(ii)

Many instances of bitterness and hatred are still found in the later chansons de geste, but I hope to show in the course of this chapter that French and Saracen have learned to be more tolerant with each other than their predecessors, and are prepared to trust each other.

That there was still emnity between Christian and Saracen is implicit in the following incident in Huon de Bordeaux. After telling Huon, who is out of favour, to take a message to Babylon, Charlemagne adds the remark:

2319 .xv. mesaiges i ai ge fait aler,
p. 70 Je n'en vi onques .i. tot seul retorner.

The journey is highly dangerous because of the lands through which the traveller has to pass. By great good fortune, in Toronde, Huon finds a fellow Christian, who warns him, however, to keep his

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(i) See above p. 45.

(ii) Skidmore op. cit., p. 55.

faith a secret:

3956 "S'on le savoit, et fuisiés avisés,
p. 118 On vous feroit tous les membres coper;"

Having arrived safely in Babylon, Huon again finds himself in danger. He asks the porter for entrance into King Gaudisse's court:

5422 Dist li portiers: "Volentiers et de gré,
p. 162 Mais tu diras de quel tere t'es nés.
Se t'ies François, t'aras le puing copé;

The acrimony existing between the two sides and their eagerness to fight each other are well-known facts; one or two examples are sufficient to illustrate the point. In Anseïs de Carthage, we read that the Saracen leaders:

2800 Destruire cuident sainte crestïente,

The Christians are no less bloodthirsty:

2882 Paiiens requierent, lor morteus anemis.

Nor are the Saracens against taking the French unawares. Guillaume, in Les Enfances Guillaume, is fighting the Saracens. Some flee, and he goes over to talk with the rest:

1062 Ce fuit folie, ansi com vos oreiz:...

1072 Uns Sarrasins, cui Damedeu mal face,
Vint per dariere sor un destrier d'Araibe;
Tint une espee ke bien luist et bien taille,
Et fiert Guillame per lou consoil des autres,
Malvaisemant ke il ne s'an prist garde.

The belief that war was inevitable and desirable (and even unending until the day of judgement, for example in Foulque de Candie, Ll.309f.) is to be found in almost every chanson de geste, and on both sides the warriors have the blessing of their religion. In Anseïs de Carthage, we read that Englebus, the priest, approves the war:

2283 "Sire," fait il, "ne te va esmaiant!
Mande tes homes, ki te soient aidant!
Vers Sarrasins cevauce ireement!
Desconfit ierent, il vont lor mort querant."

In Girart de Vienne, the Christians fight with the conviction that they are exalting God's law and name, and that their souls will be saved (ll.5916ff.), and the Archbishop preaches before the battle that whoever fights the heathen will be forgiven his sins. The pagans are always delighted to have the opportunity of fighting the Christians. In Les Enfances Ogier, Corsuble thanks Mahomet for bringing the French so that he can fight them (ll.598f.), and in Les Narbonnais the pagans are encouraged with the words:

7174 "Ferez, paien, - Mahom vos beneïe! -
Sor Crestiëns, cele gent esbaïe!"(i)

When the Saracens have been victorious, the French expect no mercy; indeed they themselves would not have given it. The townsfolk of Narbonne, in La Mort Aymeri, clearly think that they will have to relinquish their religion. They are lamenting Aymeri's death and wondering what will happen to them:

4057 "Or i vendront Paien et Esclavon;
Si aorrons Tervagan et Mahom,
N'i crera l'en Jhesu Crist ne son non;
Et nos dolant, en quel païs fuirons?
Se ci nos trovent li encriesme felon,
Ne nos garra avoir ne raençon
Que ne perdons les vies."

In Les Narbonnais, we find the same lack of faith in God and expectation of intolerance:

258 Tuit serom pris, ja n'en avrom garant,
Dieu mescrerom le pere omnipotant,
Si aorom Mahom et Tervaguant.

(i) In actual fact, the Moslem is promised the reward of a martyr if he loses his life fighting the enemies of Islam. See Lane Mod. Egypt. op. cit. on p. 12, p. 95.

Renegades are also harshly treated by the Saracens; thus fathers disown their daughters who have become Christians, and threaten to burn them or behead them. Clarion, in Bueve de Commarchis, is hated by his erstwhile friends, as is Otinel, in the chanson de geste of that name.

The intolerance and keenness to fight in no way stem from scorn of the other side. The Saracens in Girart d'Amiens' Charlemagne pay a neat compliment to French prowess. Morant has so few people fighting for him, but they are fighting so well, that Bruiant is convinced that there must be some French warriors amongst them (f.32r.)! The French poets may attempt to run down the Saracens in order to make fun of the Christians' enemy, but the French soldiers show a healthy respect for the Saracens' skill in fighting. Renier, in Les Enfances Renier, is the only French man who dares take up Corbon le Faé's challenge (ll.8048ff.), and in Foulque de Candie the French are afraid of Tiebaut's sword (l.2391). That the opponents of the French had to be worthy fighters is obvious, otherwise there would be no cause for pride in French victories; That the opponents were in fact valorous and skilful in battle is a known fact, attested by the anonymous writer of the Gesta Francorum:

> 'Quis vnquam tam sapiens aut doctus vir audebit describere prudentiam militiamque et fortitudinem Turcorum? Qui putabant terrere gentem Francorum minis suarum sagittarum, sicut terruerunt Arabes, Saracenos et Hermenios, Suranios et Graecos? Sed, si Deo placet, nunquam tantum valebunt quantum nostri. Veruntamen dicunt se esse de Francorum generatione et quia nullus homo naturaliter debet esse miles nisi Franci et illi. Veritatem dicam, quam nemo audebit prohibere. Certe, si in fide Christi et Christianitate sancta semper firmi fuissent et vnum Dominum in trinitate confiteri voluissent, Deique Filium natum de Virgine matre, passum, resurgentem a mortuis tertia die et in coelum suis cernentibus discipulis ascendentem, ac deinde consolationem Sancti Spiritus perfecte mittentem et eum in coelo et in

terra regnantem, recta mente et fide credidissent, ipsis potentiores vel fortiores vel bellorum ingeniosissimos nullus inuenire potuisset; et tamen gratia Dei victi sunt a nostris' (i)

Perhaps admiration for the Moslems, from contact with them as warriors and merchants, accounts for the more tolerant attitude which undoubtedly exists in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste despite the preceding evidence to the contrary. We have read in the poems that many Moslems were forced by the sword to accept Christianity. Charlemagne, in Gui de Bourgogne, says significantly:

13 p. 1 Conquis avons les terres en viron et en lé,
Or ne sai mès chastel, bourc, vile ne cité,
Où nos n'aions par force mise crestienté.

More and more often in the thirteenth century, however, we learn that it is better to convert than kill, and that it is better to convert by the Word than by the sword. In Anseïs de Carthage, an angel sanctifies the idea of conversion rather than killing, and Charlemagne continues his efforts to convert Marsile, even after the latter has refused to listen once:

11509 A .ii. evesques comande a sermoner
La loi, ke dex a faite comander;

In Les Enfances Ogier, the Bishop speaks to Carahuel (ll.7067f. and 7103f.), and, in Sone de Nansai, the members of a town receive instruction. They ask to be allowed until morning to consider what they have learned, and finally decide to remain faithful to Mahomet. Only then are they put to death. As further examples of this new attitude, we may quote Girart, in Bueve de Commarchis, who describes Barbastre and then prays:

(i) Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum ed. B.A. Lees (Oxford 1924) p. 20.

1853 Car pleüst ore a Dieu, le fill sainte Marie,
Que la contree fust a no loi convertie
Et que la gens fust toute levee et baptisie,...

In Gui de Bourgogne, the writer turns to speak of other matters with the unusual words:

2778 Or lerons ci des Turs, que Diex puist convertir,...
p. 85

The Christians begin to accept, as do the Moslems, the fact that each believes in his god as much as the other. King Gaudisse, in Huon de Bordeaux, takes leave of Huon as the Frenchman goes out to fight on his behalf:

6501 "Vat ent, dist il, Mahons te puist salver!
p. 194 Et se li Dieus ke tu dois aourer
Vaut miex que chil que j'ai devant nommé,
Li plus vrais Dix te puist hui ramener."

Guibert, in La Prise de Cordres, is equally tolerant, perhaps because he is confident in God's power. Speaking to Agaiete, his fiancée:

2725 "Belle," dist il, "ne vos esmaiés mie.
Ancui verrés la quex lois est plus riche,
Celle de Deu ou de la paienime."

In Gui de Bourgogne, Gui commends Maucabré, a Saracen, to his own god:

1744 -Amis, dist l'enfes Guis, à vostre Dieu alez,
p. 53 [Et] que il te [conduie], s'il puet, à sauveté."

This tolerance reached into social as well as religious matters, and we find that intermarriage is sometimes suggested by the French, provided the lady, or man, will become a Christian. In Anseïs de Carthage, for example, Gaudisse, Marsile's daughter, is suggested as a suitable wife for Anseïs, and Raimon, Anseïs' messenger, assures the Saracens:

929 S'il vos agree, la guere fineron,
D'ore en avant bon ami serons,
N'i ara mais ne noise ne tenchon,
Par mariage maint mal abaise l'on.

This attitude is in direct contrast with that found in the statement

in the twelfth-century Aye d'Avignon:

1650 Or oyez du gloton comme il desment sa loi,
p. 51 Qui a prise la fame qui Sarrazine estoit!

The Christians still believe however that there should be no physical contact between them and the Saracens until baptism has purified the latter. The instances of the French kissing their Saracen princesses before baptism are rare, and the lovers are visited with just retribution if they break the tradition. In Huon de Bordeaux, for example, Huon determines to take Esclarmonde, despite her pleas:

6785 De le pucele a fait se volenté.
p. 202 Onqes si tost n'ot son deduit pasé,
Une tempeste commence par le mer.

The two are cast on an island and separated, and it is years before they meet again and marry.

From the way in which Saracen and Christian greet each other, we can learn a great deal about the relations which existed between them. Much depends upon the attitude of the individual authors, but because of this the contemporary conflict of ideas is well shown.

The greetings are not always friendly, as we see from reading La Mort Aymeri:

1819 Trois moz li dit par contralioison:
"Otre! paien, fil a putain, gloton,
Dex destruie ta jeste!"

On other occasions, it was felt that no greeting should be made. Otinel, as messenger for King Garsile, tells Charlemagne:

67 Ne te salu, k'à dreit faire nel dei,
p. 3 Forfait en es vers Mahum et vers mei;
Cil te confunde en la ki lei jo crei,
E tuz ces altres qui sunt envirun tei...
(Otinel)

Madoc, in Sone de Nansai, likewise gives no greeting, but is less abusive than Otinel:

18801 Et Madoc est a yalz venus,
Mais ne lor rendi nulz salus.
Mais mout courtoisement parla,...

Usually the Saracens greet the Christians frankly in Mahomet's name, or simply in God's name, as the latter is agreeable to both sides. Such is the greeting made on behalf of Gaudisse, Marsile's daughter, in Anseïs de Carthage. Finaglore meets Anseïs:

6212 De par Gaudisse li rent de dieu salus.

Occasionally the greeting is made in the name of the God of the Christians. Carahuel, in Les Enfances Ogier, greets the French with the words:

2115 "Cil dieus ou sont li crestïen creant
Saut Charlemaine et tout le remanant!"

Most of the greetings are made by messengers, whose status has to some extent been discussed in the chapter on male characters in the chansons de geste.(i) The treatment they receive falls, however, within the scope of this chapter on general relations.

The messengers were supposed to be able to pass freely through either side's lines, and could claim protection and hospitality from those to whom they were bringing the message. Many times the messengers are threatened. Otinel is so abusive that the French are scarcely able to restrain themselves, and it is only the personal guarantees of Roland and Charlemagne which protect him (ll.125ff.,p. 5). Judas, in La Prise de Cordres, almost hurls a dart at his nephew Baudus, a convert who is acting as a messenger for the French (ll.2383ff.). Usually there is someone present who ensures that the accepted conventions are respected. Obviously, if the Saracens were as untrustworthy as they are sometimes said to be, they would not feel

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(i) See above pp. 50f.

compelled to honour these obligations. Only in Gaufrey and Elie de Saint-Gille are messengers actually killed. In the former, two are put to death, both of them Saracens carrying messages to other Saracens. The zealot, Lionnet, kills one (ll.6959ff., p.209.) and King Gloriant the other (ll.8430ff., p.254) The pagans around him find his action reprehensible and say so, but Gloriant remains unmoved. In Elie de Saint-Gille Louis sends a messenger for help, but he is attacked when leaving the town, and dies from his wounds (l.246).

At times the messengers are greeted very courteously, and the descriptions convince us that reasonable relations were possible between Christian and Saracen. In Les Enfances Ogier, Carahuel is extremely well received, as is the messenger sent by the Saracens during Carahuel's voluntary captivity. This man rides on towards Charles to deliver his message:

3411 Entour lui erent si baron et si dru.
Li Sarrazins li a fait gent salu,
Le salu a tres a point receü
Charles...

Similarly, in Foulque de Candie, Froiecuer receives the French very politely, although he disagrees with the import of the message (ll.13215ff.).

Agreements between Christian and Saracen become very frequent in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste. Skidmore, speaking of an arrangement between Vivien and a pagan, in La Chevalerie Vivien, says:

> 'It is one of the rare examples of good faith between epic Christians and Saracens.'(i)

We shall see in the following paragraphs that such 'good faith' is by no means as rare as Skidmore would seem to suggest. Traces of lack of confidence remain. Desramé, in Foulque de Candie, says that the

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(i) Skidmore op. cit., p. 106.

Saracens should not trust those who trust the French. Speaking of Povre-veu to Tiebaut:

9961 "Beax nies", dist Desramez, "ce tien ge a folie
D'ome de nostre loi qui en la lor se fie".

Judas, in La Prise de Cordres, is quite prepared to trust the French and, protected by a guarantee, goes to their court. It is his people who are more sceptical:

2505 De la vile issent Sarrazin maintenant.
Cil Sarrazin vont en halt escriant:
"Hé! Judas sire, con vas ta mort querant!
Car tu te maz en manade de Frans!"

Judas refuses to listen to them, and his faith is justified. He is well received:

2520 Par la main destre lou prist Naymes li dus,
Dedens lou tref an sont trestuit venu;
Puis l'ont assis desor .j. paille brun;
Por ceu qu'est rois l'ont honoré trestut.

In La Mort Aymeri, Guibelin objects to trusting Auquaire, who has just become a Christian (ll.2123ff.), and similarly Girart, and eventually Bueve, in Bueve de Commarchis, believe that Clarion must have betrayed them, but they too are proved wrong. The tendency in the thirteenth century is to trust each other's word and to accept without discussion the fact that religious beliefs are not the same.

Many of the agreements between the two sides are military, and often reflect a desire for peace. In Foulque de Candie, Madoine accepts the idea of a peace treaty rather than war (l.858), and truces are arranged whilst talks are held. Tiebaut at first assures the French that only a truce is possible and not peace, but eventually peace is made (ll.12711ff.). The French agree to fight alongside Tiebaut and crown him at Babylon. When this has been achieved, the two kings, Louis and Tiebaut, separate, but not before taking an oath to help

each other in time of need:

14907 Les .ii. rois font grant duel, quant il se desevrerent;
Leur avoir, leur service mout s'entrepresenterent.
L'un ne faudra a l'autre, de ce s'asëurerent:
Sus la loy que il ont ambedui le jurerent.

The anomaly of the French helping the Saracen to fight against the Saracen is a situation which we shall find often in the romances. It did actually occur during the crusades. The internal struggles among the Egyptian leaders made them glad to receive help where they could, and the French settlers were often in such a precarious position that any kind of help was welcome. Frederick II had 20,000 Saracens in his army when he fought the Italians,(i) and Lavisse warns us:

> 'Il ne faut pas non plus se représenter tous les princes chrétiens unis contre tous les princes musulmans. Les intérêts politiques étaient d'ordinaire plus forts que les haines religieuses. Sans cesse on combattait chrétiens contre chrétiens, musulmans contre musulmans. Souvent même un prince chrétien s'alliait à un prince musulman contre un autre prince chrétien.'(ii)

In Huon de Bordeaux, we even find the situation of French fighting against French (ll.8066ff., p. 240). Jerome had promised to fight for Galafre, and Huon for King Gaudisse. Both had come to terms with the Saracen lord. Jerome had been ship-wrecked, but arrived at a time when Galafre needed help, and therefore his confession that he was a Christian had been calmly received:

7849 Dist l'amirés: Segnor, or m'entendés:
p. 234 Saciés de voir je ne vous ferai mel,
Car, se volés aveuc moi demourer,
Par Mahomet, bien estes asené.

Jerome asks what is wrong, and,on hearing of the war, assures Galafre:

(i) Lavisse op. cit. on p. 19, p. 190

(ii) Ibid. p. 344.

7859 Nous vous edrons en fine loiauté;
p. 234 Ja autrement n'i vaurons demorer.

Huon, for his part, was King Gaudisse's prisoner, but Gaudisse was prepared to bargain with him for his help:

6401 Se me poiiés vers le Turc aquiter,
p 191 Lairai vous ent en vos païs raler,
Et vous ferai conduire à sauveté
Desqes en Acre, par Mahomet mon Dé.
Et tous les Frans que j'ai emprisonnés,
Parmi me terre et de lonc et de lé,
Por vostre amor tot erent delivré.

Gaudisse also promises to pay yearly tribute to Charles and fight for him if necessary.

The desire for peace not war is found again in Gui de Bourgogne. Boïdant the interpreter assures the French:

468 "Se mes consaus estoit oïs ne escoutez,
p. 15 On vous rendroit la vile sans traire et sans giter."

In the same poem, Maucabré is pleased to help Gui and show him a ford, because he believes him to be on a peace mission:

1720 -Par mon chief, dist li Turs, teus noveles portés
p. 53 Que je vous conduirai, puis que la pes querés."

This last quotation reminds one of a scene described by Joinville, when a Bedouin offers to lead Louis IX across a river, provided he is given five hundred besants. Maucabré offers his services for nothing.(i)

Further attempts to avoid war are numerous. In Les Enfances Ogier, Brunamon suggests sending a messenger to Charles to tell him that if he will become a Moslem there will be no war (ll.1985ff.). In Anseïs de Carthage, the idea of a peace treaty is so readily accepted that Marsile, seeing the French in his wife's tent, suggests that perhaps she had sent for them to arrange a peace (ll. 5411ff.)!

(i) Joinville Histoire de Saint Louis ed. N. de Wailly (Paris 1931) p. 90, para. 215.

This longing for peace is not found in the earlier chansons de geste and must surely come from the ideas which we saw in the first chapter were current in the thirteenth century.

Truces were also arranged, often to give time to collect and bury the dead; for example, in Foulque de Candie, there is a truce for a month (l.5920), and in La Mort Aymeri the Saracens go and ask Louis for permission to bury their dead, which is graciously granted. Louis even provides an armed escort for them:

2853 Li emperere lor a conduit livré
A .c. Francois toz d'armes conreez.
.iiii. liuées et plus les ont menez.

Safe conducts were granted, and the arrangements scrupulously observed. Thus Tiebaut keeps to the terms he agreed upon with Hermenjart, in Les Enfances Guillaume, and even does more than is necessary. He dresses Bueve richly and chooses four kings to guard him home, and pays a huge ransom as well - all in return for Espaillart, the emir's son (ll.2233ff.). Butor, in Les Enfances Renier, provides an armed escort for the renegade, Maillefer, after a single combat has been agreed upon:

12654 Le roy Butor li a conduit livre
Vint sarrazins qui l'ont as tres mene,
Chescun portoit un torsis embrase;...

When Maillefer arrives safely back amongst the French:

12710 Roy Maillefer qui fu gentil et ber
Les vint paiens fist moult bien atourner,
A chescun fist cote et mantel doner...

As a final example, though many more could be quoted, Marsabile, in Octavian, takes the precaution of sending her dwarf to the French to make terms for a safe conduct, as her tent is so near the French lines. The dwarf sings her praises to the Christians, then makes his request:

1899 Ele uous mande bonement
Sau(ue) conduit de la uostre gent,
Por ce que si pres s'est logie,
Que ne li facent vileinie;

This emphasis on truces and agreements is surely because such things were very much in people's minds. At the end of the twelfth century, Richard I made truces with Saladin, and J. Evans, commenting on this, points out:

> 'Jerusalem remained in Moslem hands, but for the first time an attempt was made to regain it by negotiation when force had failed. European influence was modifying the French idea of a Holy War, and the conflict was now one between equals in civilisation, terminable by honourable negotiation.'(i)

The Christians had come to accept the Moslem as a worthy enemy, who could be trusted. Indeed the treachery seems to be more on the side of the Christians. During a truce in 1184, Renaud de Châtillon intercepted a Moslem caravan and bound the merchants. His refusal to return the goods and people caused Saladin to proclaim Holy War throughout Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt.(ii) Richard I had 2,700 prisoners massacred, an action which roused the anger of the Moslems and caused terrific cruelty later.(iii) Usāmah speaks of the way the Christians ignored the fact that his wife had been granted a safe-conduct , good for land and sea, by their king. Her life was saved, but all her wealth and, more important to Usāmah, his books were taken.(iv)

In addition to military truces and peace treaties which affected

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(i) J. Evans Life in Medieval France (London 1957) p. 88.

(ii) Lavisse op. cit., p. 325.

(iii) Runciman op. cit. on p. 19, Vol. III, p. 53.

(iv) Usāmah op. cit. on p. 73, p. 61.

all the Saracens, many personal agreements are made, usually in return for freedom. Once the Saracens have made their promises, they carry them out fully and are prepared to make their friends respect them too. In Les Enfances Renier, as we have seen earlier,(i) Grandoce takes Renier to Jerusalem instead of paying a ransom. During the two or three days they spend there, Grandoce's cousin looks after them all well and respects Grandoce's promises:

19688 Roy Corbadas au courage adurez
A son cousin joi et honourez,
Et pour s'amour a Renier moult festez:
Richement furent serviz et conreez
Jusqu'au demain que il fu ajournez.

The whole scene reads like a sight-seeing tour. Grandoce takes Renier to the Sepulchre, and then they spend two days going round the town, seeing what there was of interest!

Felix, in Anseïs de Carthage, does not offer to help the French, whose prisoner he is, but when asked if he will guide two men through the Saracen camp he replies:

8513 "N'est riens el mont, dont jou me puisse aidier,
Ke jou ne fache pour mon cors aaisier
Et pour issir de prison sans dangier."

Felix gives his word, leads the messengers through the Saracen camp, and goes with them to Charlemagne. On the way he recognizes the two pagan spies, Fabur and Matifer, and saves his charges from death at their hands, because he has given his word to protect them.

In Les Narbonnais, Clargis, also a prisoner of the French, hears them discussing the impossibility of sending messages and offers to help them. At first the French are sceptical, but Clargis swears that he would do anything to see his wife and children again (ll.5386ff.). In the Saracen camp, Clargis entertains the French nobly, obtains a safe conduct for them from the emir, and at their departure gives them

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(i) See above p. 40.

horses, gold, silks, and the services of an interpreter (ll.5488ff.)

Not all the agreements are made verbally and solemnly sworn to. Because of their liking and respect for each other, Carahuel and Ogier instinctively avoid each other in battle.(i) Clarel, in Otinel, surrendered himself to Ogier, who protected him from his companions. In return, Clarel protects Ogier when he is later being overcome by some Saracens, and sends him as a prisoner to his friend, Alfamie, with instructions that he is to be well looked after (ll.994ff., p.35). A similar situation occurs in Guibert d'Andrenas. Baudus recognizes Aymeri, who is about to be killed, and tells him that if he will surrender, he will protect him. Aymeri shows reasonable doubt:

1985 Dit Aymeris: "Porrai m'i je fiër?"
"Oïl," fet cil, "Ne vos convient doter.
Foi que je doi a Mahomet porter,
Ne vous faudrai por tot l'or d'otre mer."

Baudus does, in fact, prevent Judas from killing Aymeri, and his kindness is rewarded in a later battle. Aymeri protects him and prevents his being killed (ll.2216ff.).

A very noble action is that of Huidelon, in Gui de Bourgogne. Although one of his sons is about to fight a single combat with Gui, he takes pity on the latter's weariness, and feeds and bathes him before the battle (ll.2213ff., p.67). The fact that incidents like these are described in the chansons de geste show that the Saracens are concerned about honour and that the French recognize this, otherwise they would not include the details. It is interesting to note that nearly all the agreements described are promises made to the French by the Saracens and not the other way round, although, as we have

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(i) See above p. 35.

just read, the French appreciate a good turn and repay it if possible.

Longer periods of hospitality were sometimes enjoyed by the Christians. Even in the twelfth century, we find examples of Christians being brought up in Saracen courts, for example in the romance Floire et Blancheflor. Blancheflor's mother was a Christian captive, whose life was saved because she was obviously of noble blood. The Saracen king gives her to his wife as a companion, and their two children, Floire, the King's son, and Blancheflor, the Christian's daughter, are brought up together. The Christian child receives everything from the Saracen king. In the thirteenth century, examples are more numerous. In three out of the four examples we have in the chansons de geste, the Christian children are stolen as babies. Renier, in Les Enfances Renier, is sold to Gyre the merchant, who gives him to Brunamont, King of Sicily. The child is thrown to the lions, but is rescued by a servant and brought to the king's daughter, Ydoine. She looks after him, educates him and later marries him. In Bueve de Haumtone, Bueve is sold to merchants by the servant ordered to kill him. He is brought to King Hermyne in Africa and, despite his refusal to become a Moslem, Hermyne promises to look after him, and even to make him a knight:

406 "Emfes," ceo dist li rois, "mult as estable quer,
E pus ke tu ne veus Mahun honurer,
Tu me serveras le jour de ma coupe a manger.
Kaunt tu serras de age, jeo te frai chevaler
E en bataile mon gomfanoun porter."

The children, somehow, always manage to keep their faith. Bueve insists on remaining a Christian, although he was very young when he was sold abroad, and in Les Enfances Renier, the boy learns his religion from the Christian prisoners in Brunamont's gaol. In

La Chanson de Godin. I was interested to see that, although the child, Godin, was baptized, he used Mahomet's name, for example l.8790, and even after he has told his father that he believes in God because he has been baptized, he continues to swear by: 'Mahomet, mon dé' (l.18497). In the remaining example, Mainet, in Charlemagne, who has taken refuge in King Galafre's court in Spain, remains a Christian.

In the two romances in which we find this situation, one of the Christians is stolen as a child. He is Gui's son, Reinbrun, in Gui de Warewic. but in La Fille du Conte de Ponthieu, the Count's daughter is brought by merchants to the Sultan's court, after having been rescued from the sea by them. She does not remain faithful to God. When the Sultan offers to marry her if she will become a Moslem, rather than suffer hardship, she agrees (p.23, ch.11).

The instances of a Saracen child being brought up by a Christian are rare. The only approximation to this situation in the twelfth century is when Guillaume, in La Chanson de Guillaume, offers to take Rainouart from King Louis and take care of him, but Rainouart can hardly be considered as still a child at this stage. Only once in the thirteenth-century literature used for the purposes of this study do we find it. Nicolete, in Aucassin et Nicolete, was bought as a child from Saracen merchants, and brought up by the Viscount of Biaucaire. There is no question of her remaining a Saracen, however, for we are told that she was baptized and brought up as a Christian.

These examples of hospitality shown by Saracens to Christians and vice versa, and of the agreements made between French and Saracen, and of the trust they place in each other's word, should certainly make us refute Meredith Jones's statement regarding the conventional Saracen, for he says:

> 'Being an infidel, the Saracen in our poems is always presented as a treacherous enemy, ready at all times to perjure himself and to betray a trust.'(i)

Nor is he alone in saying this. Skidmore tells us that agreements were rare, and that the early Saracen was treacherous and tricky,(ii) and Crosland speaks of the :

> 'uncompromising attitude of the Christians towards the heathen in the mass.'(iii)

As we saw at the beginning of the chapter, the new enlightment did not always penetrate into the chansons de geste; tradition was stronger than the truth; but then we read of the faithfulness of the Saracens in keeping their word, of their hospitality and tolerance, of the agreements they make with the Christians. Such details are not found in the twelfth-century poems, and, in my opinion, they reveal the new attitude towards the Moslem, which became prevalent in the thirteenth century. Not only are the Saracens portrayed as upright, noble people, but their actions show how much the French have learned to trust them and to accept them as people with ideas about honour similar to their own.

(i) Meredith Jones art. cit. on p. 8, p. 216.

(ii) See above pp. 91 and 7 respectively.

(iii) Crosland op. cit. on p. 9, p. 152.

Chapter 5

The Religious Element in the Chansons de Geste

It has already been suggested that the French had ample opportunity of getting to know the Moslems and their way of life, but it is clear that, as far as religion is concerned, the writers ignored what information they might have had about Islam and preferred to spread the traditional false ideas. In this chapter I propose to consider first what was written in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste about Mahomet and the other gods attributed to the Saracens, and then what the Saracens were alleged by the French to believe. In the main, the material corresponds fairly closely to that found in the early chansons de geste. We must also consider the changes in the matter of conversion and tolerance. These are significamt and reflect new feelings in society towards the Saracens.

Before turning to the chansons de geste, a brief survey of what Islam is, and what the Moslems really believe, will help us appreciate the greatness of the errors into which the French fall, and will aid clarity. In compiling this survey, I have used mainly

Lane (i) and Ameer Ali.(ii)

The word 'Islam' means resignation to the will of Allah, and that is the main tenet of Moslem faith. Everything is as Allah wills; whatever happens man can do nothing; life is in the hands of Allah. The biography of Usāmah brings out this point very clearly. After a year in prison, Usāmah manages to escape:

> 'When Allah (worthy of admiration is he!) decrees that relief should come, then how easy become the causes which bring it about!'(iii)

Or again, when a friend has just died, he calmly remarks:

> 'What happened to him was nothing but the ending of his predetermined days.'(iv)

The confession of the Moslem faith is briefly made in these words: There is no deity but God: Mohammed is God's apostle. (As we shall see, this one sentence shows how false French ideas about Mohammedanism were!)

There are six points of faith in the Moslem religion. Firstly,the Moslems must believe in God. Secondly, they must believe in the Angels, the Genii (or Jinn) and the Devils. Thirdly, they must believe in God's prophets and Apostles. Lane makes Mohammed's and Jesus' position very clear:

> 'Jesus is held to be more excellent than any of those who preceded him, to have been born of a virgin, and to be the Messiah and the word of God and a Spirit proceeding from him, but not partaking of his essence

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(i) Lane Arab. Soc. op. cit, on p. 12.

(ii) Ameer Ali The Spirit of Islam (Calcutta 1902)

(iii) Usāmah op. cit., p. 110.

(iv) Ibid. p. 76.

> and not to be called the Son of God. Mohammed is held to be more excellent than all, the last and greatest of prophets and apostles, the most excellent of all creatures of God.'(i)

Mohammed made no claim to be divine, and the Moslems do not therefore regard him as a god. They may pray to him for his intercession, but their prayers would not be addressed to him as to God.(ii)

Fourthly, Moslems must believe in the Scriptures (that is the Koran). Fifthly, they must believe in the general Resurrection and Judgement; none but Mohammedans will enter into a state of happiness. Lastly, they must believe in God's predestination of all events, both good and evil. Some believe that God may be induced to change certain of his decrees, at least those of happiness and misery.(iii)

Ameer Ali tells us the four main duties the Moslem religion imposes. They are: prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage.(iv)

Three hours daily are to be devoted to prayer and devotional exercises, which are the individual responsibility of each Moslem because:

> 'The Islâm of Mohammed recognises no caste of priesthood, allows no monopoly of spiritual knowledge or special holiness to intervene between man and his God... Each human being is his own priest;'(v)

Fasting was ordered to chasten the spirit by chastening the body. Speaking of the obligation to give alms, Ameer Ali tells us:

(i) Lane Arab. Soc. op. cit., p. 2.

(ii) Id. Mod. Egypt. op. cit. on p. 12, p. 92.

(iii) Id. Arab. Soc. op. cit., pp. 2ff.

(iv) Ameer Ali op. cit., p. 138.

(v) Ibid. p. 144.

> 'No religion of the world prior to Islâm had consecrated charity, the support of the widow, the orphan, and the helpless poor, by enrolling its principles among the positive enactments of the system.'(i)

Finally, the pilgrimages, which were obligatory not voluntary, kept the eyes of the Moslem world on one central spot - Mecca.

Whether Mohammed intended Islam to spread as far as it has is a moot point. Certainly he did not intend it to wipe out other religions, and stated that Islam must not be the aggressor in any wars. If the Moslems are attacked they may retaliate, but they may not themselves start a war.

> 'By the laws of Islâm, liberty of conscience and freedom of worship were allowed and guaranteed to the followers of every other creed under Moslem dominion. The passage in the Koran, "Let there be no compulsion in religion," testifies to the principle of toleration and charity inculcated by Islâm.'(ii)

From what the Moslems genuinely believed, let us turn to the details we find in the chansons de geste and firstly, to those concerning Mahomet and the other so-called gods of the Saracens.

> 'It is hardly necessary to say that these gods of the Mohammedans were pure inventions, for the followers of the prophet were and are monotheists. The Christians, in their racial and religious hatred, attributed the sin of idolatry to their formidable enemies in addition to their unquestionable errors of belief.'(iii)

This quotation from K. Ward Parmalee's article seems to sum up the medieval attitude to the Saracens. The Christians knew that the Moslems did not accept Jesus Christ as God, therefore they were pagans,

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(i) Ameer Ali op. cit., p. 148.

(ii) Ibid. p. 173.

(iii) K. Ward Parmalee 'The Mohammedan Crescent in the Romance Countries' Romanic Review VII (1916) 338-345. p. 345.

therefore they were represented in the blackest terms possible as enemies of Christianity, as sinners and idolaters, condemned to everlasting punishment. Actually, the French do not always succeed in denigrating the Saracens, because we cannot help but admire those people who are prepared to die for their faith (whatever the Christian opinion of that faith may be) and those who attempt to convert Christians, so convinced are they that Mahomet is the most powerful of gods.

For the authors of the chansons de geste, Mahomet is the main personality of the Saracen religion. His name appears much more often than those of the other deities and saints ascribed to the Saracens. Possibly, realizing that reverence for Mahomet was the chief difference between themselves and the Saracens, the Christians attributed to him far more importance than the Moslems did and certainly claimed more for him than the Prophet ever did for himself.

What the Saracens are alleged to believe of Mahomet comes out very clearly in the oaths, greetings, and exclamations made in his name, for the Saracens swear by Mahomet and the other deities as the Christians swear by God.

Very often Mahomet is raised to the status of a god. Forré, in Les Narbonnais, swears by Mahomet, his god (l.4297), and Danemon, in Gui de Bourgogne, exclaims:

2311 Par Mahomet, mon dieu, où ma créance apant,...(i)
p. 70

The writer of Les Enfances Guillaume is not under this misapprehension. He makes a careful distinction between God and Mahomet. For example, Clarion exclaims:

(i) Some other examples are to be found in: Bueve de Haumtone l.1793; Les Enfances Renier l.2871, l.6780; Gui de Bourgogne l.419, p.14.

1685 Car, per Mahon ne per Saint Tervagant
Ne per le Deu ou la moie airme apant,...(i)

From the oaths also we learn many other alleged attributes of the Prophet. In both Anseïs de Carthage and Les Enfances Renier, he is said to have made the Saracens. Anseïs de Carthage reads like the Bible. Compare Genesis I. 27: 'So God created man in his own image..' with line 1258 of the poem:

1258 Mais par Mahom, ki me fist a s'image.

Butor, in Les Enfances Renier, swears to kill Renier:

12427 .....par Mahom qui fet m'a,...

Nasier, the giant, in Gaufrey, prays:

3288 Par icheli Mahom qui m'a l'ame donnée.
p. 100

In Les Enfances Renier, Mahomet is alleged to have made the world:

11387 Cil Mahomet qui le monde fourma...

3013 Cil Mahomet qui fet croistre le ble.

and in Doon de Maience, an oath is sworn:

10467 Par le saint Mahommet qui la loy nous donna.
p. 315

It is clear from these quotations that the writers have the Christian religion uppermost in their mind and tend to refer to it, probably quite unconsciously, when describing another religion. Further examples of this will be mentioned later.

(i) Meredith Jones, art.cit. on p. 8, p. 207, warns us not to draw unreasonable conclusions from the repeated oaths of the type: 'Par Mahomet et nos dieux' and explains that such expressions are simply evidence of the persistence of a traditional epic style. Actually, the phrases in which a single god is mentioned do not occur often, and it is really impossible to say what the author has in mind, except by considering the context and his attitude in the rest of the poem. I have tried to do this here, and later, for the poems of Adenet le roi.

Many of the oaths show also the relationship the French thought must exist between Mahomet and his people. He is the god: whom they must obey (Les Enfances Ogier 1.1504), to whom they should pray (Huon de Bordeaux 1.4151,p.124), to whom they should render service (Bueve de Commarchis 1.2302), and to whom they are subject (Les Enfances Ogier 11.3769,4694). Curses and blessings are made in his name.

That the Saracens had great faith in the extent of the power of Mahomet is very evident in the chansons de geste. A prayer for protection is on every champion's lips. Carahuel, in Les Enfances Ogier, commends himself to Mahomet before his battle with Ogier, and Tiebaut's speech, in Foulque de Candie, is typical. Although in great danger, unhorsed and surrounded by Christians, he retains his faith in Mahomet:

8392 Li rois s'escrïe: "Mahon, Mahon! Bongis!
Gardez ne soie afolez ne maumis,
Ne Frans ne soit de moi pöestëis!
Gitiez m'en, sire, qu'en grant peril sui mis."

Similarly, the Saracens believe they will be successful only if it pleases Mahomet. Corsuble, in Les Enfances Ogier, is confident that he will gain Paris that summer:

612 Se a Mahom plaist,...

When success appears to be in the heathens' grasp, praises and thanks are given to Mahomet. Mirabel, in Aiol, gives thanks to him when she thinks that she is about to be saved from Aiol (1.5494), and in Les Enfances Guillaume Clarion praises Mahomet for a victory (11.728ff.). Whenever people have accomplished a journey safely or their lives have been spared, Mahomet is thanked for his protection.

Not only the leaders and champions but the ordinary people trust in him and pray for his help. In Otinel we read:

1462 Paien s'escrient, entre eus vont glatissant,
p. 51 Et Mahomet doucement depriant
Qu'il soit Clarel hui en cest jor aidant,...

or in Les Narbonnais:

7273 François reclaimment Jesu le roi puisant,
Et Sarrazin Mahom et Tervagant,
Qu'i lor soit en aïe.

If things are going badly, then again the Saracens believe it must be Mahomet's will. Judas, in Guibert d'Andrenas, asks how Narbonne can be defended if Mahomet is not concerned about it (ll.1477ff.). In Foulque de Candie, Tiebaut, because he has lost his lands, complains that Mahomet must hate him (ll.1644ff.).
These last examples could be said to represent the fatalism of the Moslems. Adenet le roi, perhaps unintentionally, or perhaps through more intimate knowledge gained from accompanying his patron on the last crusade, certainly stresses this fatalistic attitude. In Les Enfances Ogier, written at the bidding of Gui de Dampierre, Adenet's patron, on his return from Africa, Sadoine is lamenting his inability to fight because of a broken leg:

4882 "Mahom," fait il, "que m'est il avenu
Que sanz moi s'ierent Sarrazin combatu
A crestïens! Las, or ai trop vescu,
Laidement m'a mescheance abatu;
Se Mahoumés face a m'ame salu,
Tout mon roiaume vorroie avoir perdu
Et ne m'eüst meschiés si sus coru;
Et puisqu'il plaist Mahommet et Cahu,
Je les graci quant il m'est mescheü."

In the same poem, Carahuel tries to assuage Gloriande's grief at the loss of her father and brother:

6732 "Bele," fait il, "laissié soient vo plour;
Puisque il plaist a nostre Sauveour
Que meschief aient eü gent paiennour,
Gracïons l'ent, je n'i voi autre tour."

In these cases it is permissible to read into the statements a genuine knowledge of the Moslem religion, but in general it is a dangerous practice, because the writers were probably more affected by rumours and gossip than realities, and in any case were more interested in entertaining their audience than in presenting the true facts.

Feasts held in Mahomet's honour are often mentioned in the chansons de geste. In Aymeri de Narbonne, many people are assembled for a feast to celebrate Mahomet, and the poet indulges in a description of the wonders of the East, the golden trees and the coloured birds (ll.3499ff.). In Gaufrey, Gloriant promises to reward Marprin:

1523 Quant la feste Mahom estera celebré,...
p. 47

The decision to fight the French after the feast is also taken:

1566 Nous mouvrons à la Pasque, à l'entrée d'esté,
p. 48 Après chen que Mahom estera celebré.

The Moslems have two important feasts, both movable, one after the period of fasting known as Ramadan and the second when the pilgrims perform their sacrifice.(i) At these feasts, praise is given to Allah, not Mohammed. Easter has, of course, no significance in the Moslem religion, as they believe that Jesus was a prophet only and not the son of God. Clearly the Christian writers have imposed their own standards and habits of worship upon the pagans they were seeking to represent.

(i) Lane Mod. Egypt. op. cit., p. 94.

The strangest misrepresentations of Mahomet are found in the legends of his career and death. The theological theory popular at the time was that Mohammed was:

> 'an ambitious and frustrated Roman Cardinal, who, having failed to obtain election as pope, sought an alternative career as a false prophet.'(i)

A. d'Ancona writes at length on this legend,(ii) and E. Renan, in presenting an extract from d'Ancona's article, remarks that there was surprising unity amongst medieval writers where this legend was concerned.(iii)

The legend concerning Mahomet's death is already found in the twelfth-century chansons de geste, for example in Le Couronnement de Louis, ll.851ff. The same story still continues into the thirteenth century. Robastre, in Gaufrey, taunts Nasier for placing his faith in Mahomet:

3580 ..... Bien estes assotés,
p. 108 Qui cuidiés que Mahom resoit resuscités,
Que pourchiaus estranglerent l'autr'ier en .i. fossés.

(Incidentally, this is a further analogy with Christianity because Mohammed never claimed that he would be resurrected.) In Les Narbonnais, Guillaume laughs at Mahomet and says that the pigs ate him, at which Danebrus, a spy, attempts to draw his sword, in order to defend his god. In Louis' court, still undaunted, the same spy praises and exalts Mahomet:

(i) Lewis op. cit. on p. 19, p. 48.

(ii) A. d'Ancona 'La Leggenda di Maometto in Occidente.' Giornale storico della letteratura italiana XIII (1889) 199-281.

(iii) E. Renan 'La Leggenda di Maometto in Occidente' Journal des Savants (1889) 421-428. p. 422.

"Sor totes choses doit Mahom estre chier,
Qui fet soëf et oré et tampier
Et si nos done le boivre et le mengier."
Et dist Guibert: "Vos mantez, paltonier.
De Mahomet ne doit nus hom pledier.
Verité fu, nostre sire l'ot chier,
O les profetes l'envoia preeschier,
Par lui nos dut nostre loi ensegnier;
Mes i but bien de fort vin un setier,
Puis se coucha dormir en un fumier,
Tant que porciau l'i alerent mengier."

This story of Mahomet's death is found even in the chronicles of the crusades, for example in that of Guibert de Nogent. Considering the unlikeliness of the legend, one is astonished to find it given in the latter, all the more so as Boissonnade tells us that Guibert de Nogent is the only writer to notice that the Moslems are monotheists and that Mohammed is their prophet and not their god.(i) Needless to say, the legend is not known amongst Moslem writers, and Meredith Jones ascribes its origin to:

'a combination of ignorance and wilful misrepresentation.(ii)

Having seen what was believed about Mahomet, let us now consider how the Saracens were supposed to visualize this god and prophet whom they worshipped and to whom they ascribed so many powers. It is very clear from the descriptions that they have great images of Mahomet, and there are occasionally details regarding shape and size. In Aiol, we learn that the images were hollow, because someone climbs into one, ready for a conversion ceremony, which will be described later.(iii)

(i) Boissonnade op. cit. on p. 80, p. 248.

(ii) Meredith Jones art. cit., p. 209.

(iii) See below pp. 115f.

In Guibert d'Andrenas, the images are described:

1455 Gros ont les braz et les poinz bien quarrez,
D'or et d'arjent estoit chascuns mollez.
De lor granz haches les ont François copez
Et toz les membres debrisiez et froez,
Si les ont toz departiz et donez,
A un la janbe, a autre les costez.

From this we gather that the image had a human, if somewhat distorted, form. In La Prise de Cordres, this is not so. It is described as being:

2808 Trestos en aires, a piere d'aïment,
La gole baie en guise de sarpent.

Perhaps the writer had in mind the serpent of the Israelites, made of brass, which is described in Numbers XXI. 9.

These images are endowed with the same powers as Mahomet himself. For example, in Les Narbonnais, the emir asks:

3527 Se j'ai mon ost et mendé et bani,
Et nos soiom de bone gent garny,
Et Mahomet face porter an my,
Porront il estre ne tensé ne gueri?

Wherever the Saracens go the images are carried with them, and a temporary 'mahommerie' or mosque is set up, usually in the leader's tent. In Octavian, the Sultan has one set up in his tent as soon as it is pitched, and his daughter, Marsabile, has an image on top of her tent, placed there presumably for the French to see it:

1829 Deseur la tente a la pucele,..
1831 Estoit l'image de Mahon;
En sa main tenoit un baston,
Par art fu fais en tel(e) semblant
Que les Francois ua manacant.

In some cases the image is connected with Mecca and, in Foulque de Candie, Tiebaut speaks as if there were only the one image, at Mecca:

1657 Mahomet sire, com nos as oblïez!
Se je a Meque estoie retornez,
Tant te batroie les flans et les costez...

We find many examples of an image being painted on shields or pennons.(i) In some cases, the image is said to offer protection, for example, that on the emir's shield, in Les Narbonnais:

6855 Un roi li tent son fort escu bandé;
El mileu ot Mahomet pointuré
D'or et d'azur par grant nobilité;
Quant i l'esgarde, plus en a de fierté.

The Saracens seem to feel that Mahomet owes them this protection because of all the adoration and wealth they lavish upon him. That the images were very costly, often made of precious stones and gold, is borne out by many descriptions, usually those of Saracen mosques rather than those of the image itself. To cite only one of many possible examples, in Bueve de Commarchis, the converted Clarion leads Bueve and his friends to the mosque:

1432 N'avoit plus riche lieu deça ne dela mer:...
1436 Mahons ert d'or massis c'on ot fait afiner,
Maint kamahieu i ot qui moult fist a amer
E mainte riche rubi qui reflamboie cler
Et tant d'autre richoise c'on nel porroit esmer. (ii)

The descriptions of cameos and jewels stuck on the idol is again probably an analogy with French practice. The 'Majesté' of Sainte Foy de Conques is adorned with them.

(i) Some other examples are to be found in: Aiol l.9996; Anseïs de Carthage ll.3579, 4333; Gaufrey ll.553,p.18, l.3012,p.91.

(ii) It is interesting to note that,although Adenet's description is much shorter than that in the twelfth-century Le Siège de Barbastre, it includes the suggestion that the mosque would make a good place for worshipping God. In Le Siège de Barbastre, the author concentrates more on the breaking up of the images, and no mention is made of turning the place into a Christian Church, ll.970ff.

Despite their adoration of Mahomet and their faith in his power, the Saracens are represented as thinking that they can bargain with him and use him for their own ends. For example, the sultan in Octavian duly consults the image of Mahomet, by sending a slave in to the image to ask its opinion (ll.1750ff.). The slave returns and gives the relpy he knows the sultan wants. In this way, the sultan is never wrong, and all the blame is laid on the image! Similarly, Tiebaut, in Les Enfances Guillaume, and several other leaders offer to add more gold to Mahomet's image, if they win their battles.

The leaders at times show little respect for Mahomet. We read earlier how the Saracens thought that they must be in disfavour, or that Mahomet was asleep, if they were losing in battle. More often, however, they accuse him of lacking power; for example, in Foulque de Candie, the poet writes:

11046 Nes pot garir Mahons ne la söe vertuz;
Iluec fu laidangiez des vielz et des chenuz:

This cursing and lack of faith occurs frequently, as is only natural in poems where the writers are attempting to exalt Christianity. In some cases the threat of beating the image is carried out. The leaders order the images to be brought, and then revile them. In Octavian, the Sultan hears of the loss of his men and beats the image (ll.3501ff.), and does so again when he hears of the death of his horse (ll.4365ff.). In Les Enfances Guillaume and Anseïs de Carthage, Tiebaut (ll.1571ff.) and Marsile (ll.5915ff.) respectively

reject Mahomet and knock over the images. In these cases, on the advice of the people around and the barons, they afterwards plead for mercy and forgiveness. This attitude contrasts with the great faith generally placed in the images, and the consternation caused if they are captured or broken by the French. It lowers the quality of the Saracen religion considerably, making it seem purely mercenary. Admittedly this consideration is more striking to a twentieth-century mind and would not appear to a medieval Christian mind in the same light.

These lapses into cursing the image are momentary, and more generally we read of the respect shown to it and of the great ceremonies which take place around it. In Les Enfances Guillaume, for example, the French:

1533 Voient Mahon an mileu de la place,
Environné l'ont paien d'un vert paile
Et devant lui trante lanpes i ardent
Et vint lanternes ke reluisent com brame
A chieres pieres, mastices et stoupasce.

Or again, in Huon de Bordeaux, the ceremony for the feast of Saint John is described:

5626 Emmi la sale fu Mahons aporté;
p. 168 Il estoit mis sour .ii. pailes roé,
Par devant lui ot .iiii. candelers,
Et sor cascun ont .i. cierge alumé.
Là ne pasoit Sarrasins ne Escler
Ne l'enclinast, voiant tot le barné;

The most lengthily described and unusual ceremony is that for the conversion of Macaire, in Aiol. The image of Mahomet is hollow, and a Saracen climbs inside, unknown to Macaire. Then Macaire is made to show his allegiance to Mahomet (ll.9626-9657). The whole

scene is quite coarse, presumably to amuse the French audience and to show them how much superior their God is to this heathen deity.

The other gods and devils whom the Christians believed the Saracens to worship are numerous. After Mahomet, Tervagant, Apolin, and Cahu occur in the greatest number of poems. Then, less frequently, we find Baraton, Burgibus, Cain, Jupin, and Pilate. In only one or two cases do we find Barraba, Margot, Berit, Lucifer, and Platon.

Like Mahomet, they are reputedly worshipped as gods, and their images are painted on shields and pennons. We are told of Bauduit, in Foulque de Candie:

18 En son escu ot .iii. nons d'Apollin;

Perhaps this is by analogy with the Holy Trinity.

> 'In general, the negative concept of Deu is much more vague and indistinct than the positive concept. It lacks unity. The names of gods, derived from classic Latin and from Saracen, Hebrew, Christian, and popular sources, lack individual color, and when they are described at all, are modelled on the ~~Christian~~ concept of the Christian God.'(i)

The Christians believed that the Saracens were protected by these devils; when a Saracen has temporarily been spared, we may read:

5339 Li vif diable, cui il ot fait homage,
L'ont garandi de mort;...
(Anseïs de Carthage)

Dying Saracens commend their souls to Tervagant or other devils in the same way as they commend them to Mahomet, and the Christian writers tell us that the devils eagerly carry off their dead.

The origin of these gods and their names has given rise to a great deal of controversy. P. Casanova attempts to show the derivation of Mahomet, Apollo, Jupiter, and Tervagant from four

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(i) M. Gildea Expressions of Religious Thought and Feeling in the Chansons de Geste. (Washington 1943) pp. 209f.

Arabic phrases,(i) whereas M.S. David-Beg confidently suggests Armenian sources.(ii) For the origin of the name Tervagant, Boissonnade suggests Scandinavian sources,(iii) whereas Ward Parmalee prefers a classical explanation.(iv) Most credible of all the suggestions are those of L. Sainéan.(v) Perhaps a little too inclined to favour French sources, he nevertheless gives convincing reasons and explanations. His argument is that the fantastic names are due purely to poetic licence and good imagination on the part of the epic poets.

> 'L'onomastique des Chansons de geste, à la fois abondante et vide, est puisée presque exclusivement aux sources indigènes....Non seulement les noms des personnages orientaux sont puisés dans la Bible, le latin et les idiomes vulgaires,- seules ressources dont pouvaient disposer les clercs du Moyen Age, - mais certaines divinités ou idoles attribuées aux Sarrasins portent des appellatifs remontant aux mêmes origines.'(vi)

That the names are greatly altered is undeniable. We have only

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(i) P. Casanova 'Mahom, Jupin, Apollon, Tervagant, dieux des Arabes' Mélanges Hartwig Derenbourg (Paris 1909) 391-395.

(ii) M.S. David-Beg 'Le Mot Tervagan dans les chansons de geste' Revue des Etudes Arméniennes II (1922) 65-83.

(iii) Boissonnade op. cit., p. 248.

(iv) Ward Parmalee art. cit. on p. 105, pp. 343-345.

(v) L. Sainéan Sources indigènes de l'étymologie française Vols. II and III. (Paris 1925,1930)
and also

L. Sainéan Autour des sources indigènes:détudes d'étymologie française et romane (Florence 1935)

(vi) Sainéan Autour des sources op. cit., p. 354.

to consider Mahomet, which becomes Mahon or Bafomet.(i) Apollo and Jupin are clearly classical, and Tervagant, in Sainéan's opinion, represents Mercury. Attempting to explain why the name Mercury itself was not used, he suggests that there was a Saint Mercury of Caesarea, therefore it would not have been proper to use the name of a Christian saint to represent a heathen saint or god. The epithet Trismegistus, for Mercury, was well-known in the Middle Ages, however, and the changed form becomes Tervagant, 'trois fois errant'.

Sainéan also gives his explanations for the names of the other less important gods:

> 'Cahu or Chahu, prétendu dieu sarrasin,...n'est autre chose que le nom du chat-huant (encore vivace en normano-picard) et considéré comme oiseau démoniaque.'(ii)

Margot reminds him of Magog or Margot of the Bible. Baraton is used both for the name of a Saracen king and hell, the latter being its original meaning. As the name of a god, it occurs frequently in Les Enfances Vivien, which is dated fairly early in the century. Otherwise it is found only in late chansons de geste, such as Gaufrey and Les Enfances Renier.

That names of classical and biblical origin are said to be used by the Saracens should not surprise us, and these origins are much more likely than are Armenian and Arabic sources, because the writers always tend to describe their own traditions and superstitions. It is unlikely, too, that they would have sufficient knowledge of Arabic to derive names from it. No proper names come from that language; only

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(i) Notice how often the name comes to resemble a derogatory French word; for example, Bafomet means 'le bafoué', Desramé means 'broken-down, Butor means 'churl'or 'lout'.

(ii) Sainéan Autour des sources op. cit., p. 354.

the titles such as 'aumaçor' and 'amustant' may be traced back with any certainty to Arabic words. Then, too, the loose use of the word 'saracen', applied as it is to any of the antagonists of the French, whether eastern Christians, Greeks, Saxons or Moslems, shows how little importance was attached to race, and Sainéan explains the attitude of a contemporary cleric:

> 'N'étant pas chrétiens, suivant la conception simpliste des clercs du Moyen Age, ils devaient être païens et par suite adorer des dieux et des idoles. De là, le transfert des divinités mythologiques aux Musulmanes d'Espagne et d'Orient.'(i)

Not all the beliefs held by the Christians of the Middle Ages are as erroneous as those concerning the worship of idols and of Mahomet by the Saracens. The fatalistic attitude brought out by Adenet le roi in Les Enfances Ogier has already been mentioned,(ii) and the distinction made in Les Enfances Guillaume between Mahomet and God.(iii) In Foulque de Candie, the Saracen, Tiebaut, is rightly accused of not believing in the Holy Trinity (l.12607), for Islam certainly believes in Jesus as a prophet, but not as God, and therefore the two aspects of the Trinity concerning the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are not acceptable. That the Moslems have no baptism follows logically, and the Christians reproach them for that, again in Foulque de Candie:

2268 ..... la paiene gent
Qui ce ne croient c'on dit bautizement.

The Christians accused the Saracens of not believing in Christ's virgin birth, but in fact the Moslems do recognize this, and venerate Mary.(iv)

(i) Sainéan Sources indigènes op. cit., Vol. II, p. 388.

(ii) See above pp. 108f.

(iii) See above pp. 106f.

(iv) The Koran tr. N.J. Dawood (London 1956. Revised edition 1959) pp. 32ff.

The chief argument of the Saracens against Jesus being God is said to be that He could not save Himself from the Cross. This is used particularly in Les Enfances Renier, and in Gaufrey. In the latter poem, Nasier replies to Robastre's attempts to convert him:

3454 "Veillart, dist le paiens, bien savés sarmonner;
p. 105 Je croi que tu es moine, quant sés si bien parler,
Le déable t'a fet de ton lieu remuer.
Bien me veus, par Mahom! orendroit assoter,
Qui veus que je guerpisse Mahom, qui tant est ber,
Pour crerre en Jhesuet, qui se lessa pener,
En une crois pourrie lessa son cors pener:
Comment m'aideroit il quant il ne se pot sauver?

The ritual of worship in many respects parallels the Christian ritual, although odd details betray a certain, if inadequate knowledge of Moslem practice. That the Moslems were supposed to pray regularly and often was probably well known to the French as there are frequent references to prayers; for example, Aiol, in Anseïs de Carthage:

8405 Vit Sarasins, ki vienent de preer,...

The reference in Bueve de Haumtone is interesting.

876 Boefs entra en la cité od le corage fer
E dedens un temple oit il chaunter,
Kar paens furent cel jour Mahun a honurer,
Prestres de lur lei i out plus de un miller.

There is definitely western influence here, as the Moslems would not sing in their mosques, although there is a chant to call them to prayer.

Nor do they have any priests, a leader, or 'imám' being appointed to lead the prayers. The western idea of having images in a Church and showing them respect is possibly the reason for the following statement in Les Enfances Guillaume. Tiebaut has made a bargain that he will give the idol more gold if he wins the war:

1558 Sarrasin cuident si soit per sa vertu,
Tuit se coucherent a terre contre lui,
Batent les corpes si li randent salus.

The description of the men prostrate on the ground could be a description

of Moslems worshipping, but 'batent les corpes' suggests analogy with the Christian religion. Indeed, the very emphasis on mosques and 'mahommeries' is an analogy with Christianity. In the East, weddings take place in the parents' homes, not in the mosque, as is said in Gaufrey (ll.854lff. p.257), and the Moslems more often than not say their prayers in their own homes:

> 'It is seldom that a person goes from his ~~own home~~ house to the mosque to pray, except to join the congregation on Friday.'(i)

A further instance of this imposition of the practices of the Christian faith is to be found in King Gloriant's pilgrimage to Mecca, in Gaufrey. The Christians probably realized the importance of Mecca to the Moslems, since it is mentioned in the chansons de geste as being a centre where the image of Mahomet is kept, and where feasts are held in his honour. In Aymeri de Narbonne, the Saracens are said to be going to a feast at Mecca, where Mahomet is buried (ll.3594ff.). Mohammed's tomb is actually at Medina, but the fact that the Holy Sepulchre is at Jerusalem would be sufficient to cause the writer to assume that Mohammed must be buried at Mecca. The likening of Mecca to Jerusalem is even clearer in the example, in Gaufrey, of Gloriant's pilgrimage, which I have just mentioned. Gloriant vows to go to Mecca to give thanks for deliverance from a sword-blow by Robastre (ll.5984ff., p.180). This corresponds exactly with the Christian idea of making a vow to go to Jerusalem either as a penance or to give thanks. Its parallel does not exist in Islam. As we read in the introductory paragraph to this chapter,(ii) every Moslem is expected to make a

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(i) Lane Mod. Egypt. op. cit., p. 81.

(ii) See above p. 105.

pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his life-time; it is his duty as a Moslem and has nothing to do with praying, giving thanks or feasting, although he may time his arrival to coincide with one of the feasts. Mohammed's tomb is also a place of pilgrimage, but again the pilgrimage is a duty, not a voluntary act.

In one or two places, I have suggested biblical references which could have been in the writer's mind,(i) and it is clear that Mahomet is described by the same epithets as the Christian God, and credited with the same powers. Greetings, blessings and curses are made in his name. He gave the law, made man, watered the earth, and brought forth its fruits. In Guibert d'Andrenas, Judas prepares to cast himself out of the window to show his faith in Mahomet:

2287 Lors a son cors de Mahomet seignié. (ii)

In Bueve de Commarchis, Corsolt de Tabarie accuses Clarion, the renegade, of having sold his lord (l.1366), a phrase which reminds us of the traitor, Judas.

The idea of confession occurs in Foulque de Candie. Tiebaut, trying to bring back Saligot to the Saracen faith, tells him:

8601 Fai te confes, frere, si te repent!

Confession in the Roman Catholic sense of the word, i.e. of confessing to a priest and receiving absolution, is not a part of the Moslem religion. Indeed, as we saw earlier, there are no priests in the Moslem faith.(iii)

(i) See above, for example, p. 107.

(ii) Lane, op. cit., Mod. Egypt., p. 229, note 1, tells us that the only place where a cross is found is over the door into the public baths. The cross is supposed to frighten away devils. In the appendix F, p. 592, he suggests probable Coptic influence for the sign.

(iii) See above p. 104.

Other attitudes and beliefs of the Christians are described. We have already discussed the images and the fact that the Saracens were considered to be idol-worshippers. The French attitude towards the idols is one of scorn, but the faith they place in the power of relics is very similar to the faith the Saracens are made to place in their images. The fact that they are said to worship them at all is probably because the French thought that all pagans worshipped idols. Idols were, of course, strictly forbidden by Mohammed,(i) and the makers of them warned that they would be cast into eternal darkness at the Judgement.

It is often said of the writers of the chansons de geste that they must surely have been better acquainted with the Moslem religion than would appear from a study of the texts. This is not necessarily so. By analogy, one might say that,with all the opportunities people have today of travelling and meeting other people, we should all know a great deal about Islam, yet this is not the case. Lane explains:

> 'I have spoken thus fully of Muslim worship because my countrymen in general have very imperfect and erroneous notions on this subject; many of them even imagining that the Muslims ordinarily pray to their Prophet as well as to God.'(ii)

I think we must also remember that, at this stage, the material for the chansons de geste was traditional, and, although we have seen a great many changes in the Saracens portrayed, many of their sayings are mere formulas. Then, too, deliberate propaganda was afoot to rouse the people against the East, and the writers were employed as

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(i) The Koran op. cit., pp. 417ff.

(ii) Lane Mod. Egypt. op. cit., p. 92.

propagandists to re-write the chansons de geste and to stir up people's feelings. Adenet le roi, in an attempt to fire his contemporaries with enthusiasm, speaks admiringly, in Les Enfances Ogier, of the French in days gone by:

7713 Qui pas n'amoient tant or fin ne argent
Ne nul avoir k'a guerroier souvent
Ceaus qui n'amoient le roi omnipotent;

A. Henry, the editor of Adenet's works, suggests that the choice of Bueve de Commarchis was governed by the times in which Adenet lived:

> 'Le souvenir de saint Louis et des croisades d'Afrique et les préoccupations politiques du moment, orientées surtout vers l'Italie, l'Espagne et la Méditerranée, ont probablement déterminé le rapsode.'(i)

That the Church encouraged this propaganda is certain. Although there was a great increase in missionary activity in the thirteenth century, Munro tells us that:

> 'the attitude of the majority of the clergy remained unchanged... The Popes were working for a new Crusade and encouraged the propaganda against Islam.'(ii)

Even if the poets did have accurate knowledge about Islam, the attitude of the Church would explain their reluctance to depart from epic tradition, and for the poets who did not have information about the East, as Meredith Jones points out, their:

> 'conception of Islam was based on ecclesiastical authorities, whose interest it was to disfigure the beliefs and customs of the infidels.'(iii)

In addition, it has to be admitted that the poets were probably more

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(i) Bueve de Commarchis ed. A. Henry p. 17.

(ii) Munro art. cit. on p. 24, p. 343.

(iii) Meredith Jones art. cit. on p. 8, p. 203.

interested in keeping their audience stimulated and amused than in presenting the Saracens as they were in reality.

Nevertheless despite the ignorance, voluntary or involuntary, about Moslem beliefs, it is a fact that more tolerance is shown towards the Saracens in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste than in the twelfth- century poems, and there is a marked change of attitude in the matter of conversion. The Christians seem to begin to appreciate that the Saracens have as much faith in their gods as they themselves have in God. This is a vast improvement if we consider Boissonnade's remark on line 1015 of La Chanson de Roland: 'Paien unt tort e chrestiens unt dreit':

> 'Pas un instant, comme les historiens des croisades et comme les héros eux-mêmes de ces expéditions, il n'admet la bonne foi de l'infidèle et du païen. La païenmie n'est formée que de traîtres, de félons, qui refusent de reconnaître la doctrine du vrai Dieu...'(i)

Possibly it is the realisation of the sincerity of the Saracens which causes the poet to allow them to live and remain faithful to Mahomet. It is possibly also because of this realisation that the Christians ask the Saracens to swear oaths on their own gods, in order to make the oaths seem more sacred in their eyes. In Bueve de Haumtone, for example, Bueve asks Yvori, his prisoner, to swear to bring his ransom:

3279 Vus moi jurez sur vos deus Apolin,
Mahom e Tervagant e Baratron ausin...

The Christians are conscious that the pagans are living in a state of mortal sin. In Guibert d'Andrenas, we find the situation described after the death of Malagu:

(i) Boissonnade op. cit., p. 281.

1582 D'Andrenas crient Sarrazin et Persant:
"Mahomet sire, l'ame soiez garant,
Que por vos est li cors mis a tormant!"
Mes la priëre ne li valut neent,
Que li pechiez l'enconbre.

They are in no doubt at all that the Saracens go to Hell when they die, and many times we read of devils carrying off the soul of the defeated champion.(i) It is interesting to read however that Adenet, in Les Enfances Ogier, puts exactly the same feeling into Carahuel's words; conversely, he would become a Christian, but he fears that he would thereby lose his soul (ll.7515f.). That the Moslems do believe that only they will be received in Paradise has already been mentioned.(ii) We saw in the chapter on general relations how, rather than cause bad feeling, greetings were modified so as to be acceptable to either side, and how a Saracen would be commended to his own god rather than to the Christian God.(iii) Gui, in Gui de Bourgogne, takes leave of Maucabré with the words:

1744 -Amis, dist l'enfes Guis, à vostre Dieu alez,
p. 53 [Et] que il te [conduie], s'il puet, à sauveté."

Similarly some messengers give greetings in the name of the god worshipped by the people to whom they are carrying the message. Carahuel, in Les Enfances Ogier, greets the French:

2115 "Cil dieus ou sont li crestïen creant
Saut Charlemaine et tout le remanant!"

Forbearance is equally shown by the Christians in Gui de Bourgogne. Huidelon feels that his son, Dragolant, has betrayed him by going to

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(i) Some examples are Otinel l.1174, p.41; Bueve de Haumtone l.3606; Gaufrey l.9944, p.299; Les Enfances Renier ll.8543ff., 16924f.

(ii) See above p. 104.

(iii) See above pp. 89f.

help his other son, Dragolant's brother, in a single combat. He therefore gives himself up to the French and asks them to judge him. Naimon hears the case and states his opinion:

2986 Li hons qui ains ne fu bautisiés ne levés,
p. 91 Ne onques ne crut jor sainte crestienté,
Se il aida son frere, n'en fait mie à blasmer;
Certes, on li en doit le mesfait pardoner,
Por qu'il voille reçoivre sainte crestienté."

The French, in the thirteenth century, make an effort to convert the Saracen rather than kill him. There is an example in Anseïs de Carthage where an angel prevents Charles from killing Marsile (l.10735). Not often is an important character killed without being given the chance to embrace the Christian faith, hence our surprise when Absalom is killed in the same poem.(i) Despite threats to kill, which are still found, as Skidmore says:

> 'What the poet makes his Christians and Saracens actually do will be of greater value in judging them than any general expression of praise or blame.'(ii)

In some cases, preachers are called in to help convince the wavering heathen, for Marsile in Anseïs de Carthage (ll.11509ff.), for Garahuel in Les Enfances Ogier (ll.7067ff.), and for the townsfolk in Sone de Nanásai.(iii) These examples show that the Christians did realize that their faith was sufficient to attract people, without the help of the sword. Meredith Jones states categorically:

> 'Conversion was never regarded by either side, in fact or in fiction, as the result of faith, of reflexion, or of instruction. It never occurred to these medieval minds that the articles of belief might have in themselves a force sufficiently compelling to convince the heathen.'(iv)

(i) See above p. 42.

(ii) Skidmore op. cit. on p. 6, p. 7.

(iii) See below pp. 180ff.

(iv) Meredith Jones art. cit., p. 223.

Bearing in mind the examples just quoted, 'never' is clearly too sweeping a word.

The attitude of the French towards the converts seems to be one of rejoicing, whatever their character previously. Otinel, in Otinel, is welcomed with high praise and Auquaire, in La Mort Aymeri, who had earlier suggested horrible methods of killing Aymeri (ll.1313ff.), is no less joyously received.

Understandably, the Saracens are more bitter about the people who have deserted their religion. Clarion, in Bueve de Commarchis, is hated by the Saracens, and Otinel and the heathen Clarel have a fierce discussion, in Otinel. At times a strange tolerance is shown, for example, Salatré, in Foulque de Candie, seems to continue to speak freely with Saracens and command their respect, and likewise Madoc, in Sone de Nansai. Despite his conversion, Madoc addresses his friends and moves amongst them without receiving any caustic comments or blame. Tiebaut's tolerant attitude towards Povre-veu, in Foulque de Candie, has already been mentioned.(i)

In conclusion, Saligot's words to Tiebaut when attempting to convert him, in Foulque de Candie, seem to me to hold great significance:

8547 ..... "Tiebauz, or m'entendez!
Une rien saches et si est veritez:
Por ce es tu des Frans deseritez
Et de ta feme honiz et vergondez
Que Deu nen aimes, ne de lui n'ies amez,
Ne ce ne croiz qu'il fust de mere nez
Ne en apres baptisiez ne levez
Ne en la croiz travailliez ne penez
8555 Ne el sepulcre surrexiz ne posez.
Por c'es perduz et toz tes parentez
Et a deables otroiez et donez.

This explanation seems to hold the very important fact that religion

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(i) See above p. 39.

was the only cause the French had for complaint against the Saracens. Contact with the East had taught the Christians to respect and admire their foes in all other spheres. In the histories, for example in the Gesta Francorum, their courage in fighting is admired,(i) and from remarks in Joinville, we learn that some of the French prisoners had good cause to be grateful to their captors.(ii) Trade and commerce brought about contact with the Moslems, and the settlers had to rely on natives for building, agriculture and medicine, in the latter case even preferring Moslem doctors to the French ones:

> 'With such conditions in the Holy Land, and with the constant going and coming of the pilgrims from the West and the building up of an active trade between the Orient and the Occident, the feeling about the Muslims became very different.'(iii)

The thirteenth century saw a great increase in missionary activity. William of Tripoli suggested sending missionaries to the East rather than soldiers.(iv) In this, he was following the example of Ralph Niger, who already in the twelfth century had advocated that the Saracens:

> 'gladio verbi Dei percutiendi sunt ut veniant ad fidem voluntarie.'(v)

Saint Francis actually accompanied the fifth crusade and went on a peace mission to the Sultan.(vi)

(i) See above p. 86.

(ii) Joinville op. cit. on p. 94, pp. 134f., paras. 324 and 325.

(iii) Munro art. cit., p. 336.

(iv) Runciman op. cit. on p. 19, Vol. III, p. 340.

(v) Flahiff art. cit. on p. 23, p. 182, Appendix XI.

(vi) Runciman op. cit., Vol. III, p. 159.

The emphasis on conversion in the chansons de geste reflects these contemporary opinions, as do the favourably described characters and the friendly relations between Christian and Saracen. Yet it must be admitted that on the whole it is the traditional ideas which prevail, the false stories regarding Mahomet and the idols. It is almost impossible to tell how much the poets did, in fact, know about Islam, and, as Skidmore suggests:

> 'Any information they may have had was probably colored by military and religious propaganda which sought to create a sentiment unfavorable to the Saracen.'(i)

Undoubtedly too the poets are influenced by their own religious beliefs and practices. We saw earlier (ii) how they tended to impose their own ideals and rituals, and,if occasional remarks appear to reveal knowledge of the Islamic faith, more often than not they tend to be true of the Christian faith as well, or to be happy coincidences.

Finally, in addition to the attitude of the Church and the poet's possible lack of knowledge, we have to take into consideration what the writer has set out to do in his poems. His audience had doubtless listened to other chansons de geste and loved to hear of the excesses of the pagans and of their evil doings. Religion was, after all, the reason for the emnity between Christian and Saracen. To omit the traditional insults and practices therefore might cause the poet to weaken the point of his poem and to lose some of his popularity. He has to choose between what his audience, and the Church, expect, and what he may know of reality. In my opinion, he resolves this conflict

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(i) Skidmore op. cit.,p. 94.

(ii) See above pp. 120ff.

by retaining the old religious formulas, religion being the raison d'être of the chansons de geste, while introducing favourably described characters and a tolerant attitude in the matters of conversion and of general accord between Christian and Saracen.

Chapter 6

The Military Aspect of the Chansons de Geste and Romances.

As war is the main subject of the chansons de geste and of those parts of the romances where Saracens are found, one would expect to collect a great deal of information about the pagans as warriors. In fact, several new facets of their character are revealed, especially where the ordinary Saracen is concerned, of whom normally we find little mention. Their courage, persistence, and endurance, are admired by the French, and if at times we deplore their actions, comparison with the behaviour of the Christians shows us that they act in the same way, and serves to remind us of the times with which we are dealing. Obviously some of the points mentioned will be equally applicable to the Saracens in the earlier chansons de geste, since their valour has always been recognized and praised, and to the French. Nevertheless the military details are an important aspect of Saracen life and character, which must be discussed in order to present a complete picture of the pagan in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste and romances.

The leaders of the Saracens must have had very commanding personalities. Whatever the circumstances they are to the fore, encouraging their men, rallying them, urging them to fight to the last. The French writers admire their courage and describe them well, for

example, Corsuble, in Les Enfances Ogier:

4844 On puet bien dire, a ce que il aloit
Si liement et qu'il se maintenoit
Tres noblement et fier samblant faisoit,
Que rois poissans et de valour sambloit.
Et par raison bien sambler le devoit,
Car sagement sa gent amonnestoit
Comment chascuns se maintenroit,
Et de ce faire a point les semonnoit
Que au droit d'armes et d'onnour aferoit,
Car a son tans rois paiens ne vivoit
Plus preus de lui, si com chascuns disoit.

They are quick to join in a fight. In Bueve de Commarchis, the emir goes to help his men as soon as he receives the warning from a wounded Saracen (l.3858), and Gloriant, in Gaufrey, having turned aside for a short rest, returns:

762 Il n'atendi pas tant que son elme ait fremés,
p. 24 Venus est à l'estour, si s'est dedens boutés.

Even if they themselves have been rescued from near-death a moment before, they are immediately exhorting their men to fight, realizing that on their example depend the lives of the rest of the army. Akilant, in Les Enfances Guillaume, was rescued from Aymeri:

398 Ja an preïst la teste maintenant,
Qant lo recousent Sarasins et Persant.
Lai li ramoinne un bon destrier corant;
Per son estrier i montait Aquillant;
A vois s'escrie: "Sarasins, or avant!"

Sometimes the men are forced to retreat. (It is interesting to note that if the Saracens retreat, it is assumed they are being cowardly and fleeing, yet if the French make the same move it is the best possible tactics, and in no way reflects upon their courage or lack of it!) Never do the leaders give in, however. They persist and make immediate preparations for returning. Quinart, in Gaufrey, flees from Robastre back to camp, but there orders 60,000 men to arm (ll.2854ff,p.86)

Rubyon, in Les Enfances Renier, similarly sounds a retreat but tells his men:

2870 "A cest assaut n'avons gueres conquis;
Mes par Mahom, le grant dieu posteis,
N'en partirons si iert li chastiauls pris,..."

This tremendous persistence and courage show too in the Saracen leaders' determination to give the French a hard fight, and on several occasions we are told that, but for the leader and his resoluteness, the battle would have long since ended. Thus, Froiecuer, in Foulque de Candie, prolongs the battle by his bravery (l.13488), and similarly Corbon, in Les Enfances Renier (ll.7749ff.). Examples showing the respect the French had for their opponent are far too numerous to quote, and outnumber the occasional disparaging remarks, which are obviously unjustified. M. Gildea is of the opinion that:

> 'To the Christian knight who relied on God for his strength in battle, the knight who did not believe in God, or who believed in a god other then the Christian God was certain to be defeated; hence, he became a more or less despicable figure in the eyes of Christians and was considered not only as an unbeliever but as a coward as well.'(i)

This is certainly not the case from the incidents we find described in the chansons de geste. Froiecuer, for example, in Foulque de Candie, realizes that he has been betrayed and that there is little hope of winning, yet he rallies his men and tells them that they are on home ground and therefore hold the advantage; also, they are good fighters:

13811 ..... Ne penssez mauvestie,
Mes nous defendons bien com chevalier proisie,...

There is a rare example of cowardice in Les Enfances Renier. Oeillart, the giant, sees the French attacking and, without daring to

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(i) Gildea op. cit. on p. 116, p. 46.

leave the castle himself, urges his men to fight:

9152 Quant le jaiant voit ses genz empiriez
Lors a tel duel a poi n'iert esragiez;
N'ose issir hors hors le jaiant desfaez
Quar trop y voit de noz genz haubregiez.

That cowardice is despised we gather from the comment on Desramé, in Foulque de Candie, when the latter has not been fighting:

4735 "Rois Desramez, hui est requenëue
La mauvestiez, par vostre boche issue,
Quant por paor vos est raisons faillue;
Si n'en fu onques vostre broigne vestue,
Ne en bataille t'enseigne quenëue.

Courageous themselves, the leaders expect their men to be so. Morant, in Les Narbonnais, applies tactics actually used in the crusades to prevent men fleeing:

6965 La gent fuiant est a lui arestee.
Qant i les voit, s'a la color muëe;
I sone un grele, s'a sa gent escriëe:...
6972 "Par Mahomet, a qui m'ame est voëe,
Cil qui fuirra la teste avra colpee,
Trancherai lui maintenant a m'espee."

Whilst relying a good deal upon their own skill and judgement, the leaders have generally decided upon policy in council beforehand. Discussions among divisional leaders and lords occur in most chansons de geste. R.R. Bezzola, in an article dealing with the chansons de geste up to Raoul de Cambrai, tells us that the pagan councils consist of a great number of vassals, who merely carry out the orders of an absolute sovereign.(i) The following description from Foulque de Candie shows us that in the thirteenth century the Saracens have become more democratic. The King of Cordres calls his vassals together and explains the situation to them, then says:

4634 Conseil vos quier, dites que vos löez:

Then, in turn, the leaders stand and give their advice:

(i) R.R. Bezzola 'De Roland à Raoul de Cambrai' Mélanges de philologie romans et de littérature médiévale offerts à E. Hoepffner (Paris 1949) 195-213 p. 199.

4637 Dist Josuanz, uns rois de Montarsie:

4652 Apres parla uns amirauz d'Alis:

4671 En piez se drece Rodulz de Valesfuz,

4688 Apres Rodul a parle uns aufages.

The king listens to all the various suggestions, and then the decision is taken on policy.

The Saracen soldiers are much encouraged by their leaders and have a great love and respect for them. Whatever the cost to themselves, they rush to their help when necessary and generally succeed in rescuing them. Admittedly it was their duty to do this, as we learn when Tiebaut was unhorsed, in Foulque de Candie:

10910 Por ce que Tiebaut tinrent a naturau seignor,
Il lo refont monter en un blanc correor;

Yet often a great deal more then duty shows through their actions. Their grief at the death of a leader and their praise of his qualities are spontaneous. Although the readers or listeners might not have a very good opinion of Corsolt, in La Mort Aymeri, his men felt differently:

2717 "Hé, riche ber, nobiles conbatanz,
Larjes donerre et mieudre conqueranz
Qui onques fu en cest siecle vivant!"

So grieved are they that they go to Louis and beg for mercy, and also for the right to bury their lord:

2846 Looys l'ot, si a lo chief crollé:
"Certes," fet il, "je l'otroi et le gré,
Et tuit franc hom vos en doivent amer:
Car son seignor doit l'en bien enorer;"(i)

(i) The importance the Turks attached to proper burial is shown in the Gesta Francorum. After a particularly fierce battle, the Turks collected their dead and buried them. The Christians ordered the corpses to be exhumed and, cutting off the heads, threw the bodies into a ditch or the sea: 'Quod videntes Turci doluerunt nimis fueruntque tristes vsque ad necem. Nam cotidie dolentes, nihil aliud agebant nisi flere et vlurare.' Gesta Francorum op. cit. on p. 87, p. 40.

Sadoine, wounded in his fight with Charlot, in Les Enfances Ogier, is carefully looked after by his men, who carry him off on a shield. This was only to be expected as Sadoine was their lord, but when he was later being transferred to safer quarters, Adenet adds the details:

7459 Le roi Sadoine aportoient sa gent
Seur une couche si debonairement
Que il pooient et au plus doucement.

Whatever the situation they remain faithful to their leaders and swear allegiance. Froiecuer's men, in Foulque de Candie, reply to his exhortations with:

13706 ..... "Qui de ce vous faudra,
Perdre puist cors et ame et tout ce que il a".

Likewise, in Les Narbonnais, Gaudelin de Moncloie replies to his lord, Malprin:

3746 ..... "Mal oit qui ne l'otroie!
Par Mahomet que l'en aore et proie,
Mielz voill avoir percié et cuer et foie,
Que l'amiranz male novele en oie!"

This determination to be faithful to the leader and to save his life at all costs is perhaps more easily understood when we realize how essential was his presence for the morale of the men. Again and again they are fighting well, but as soon as the leader is captured or killed they flee or surrender to the French.(i) An example of the leader's importance is to be found in Gaufrey. The French spread the rumour that Guitant is dead, and his town is then taken without any attempt at resistance (pp. 69f.).

The courage of the rank and file when they have a strong leader

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(i) Examples of this may be found in La Mort Aymeri ll.2837ff.; Anseïs de Carthage ll. 10744ff.; Foulque de Candie ll.14870ff.; Les Narbonnais ll.6933ff.; Aymeri de Narbonne ll.4060ff.; Richars li Biaus ll.2893ff.

is to be admired. Although they often turn in flight, they will respond to the leader's rallying call and fight on. During a siege, the towns are well defended; everyone joins in, including the women. In Octavian, supernatural help is required for the French to win. Saint George appears to help them, and the Saracens decide:

4725 "Encontre ceste blanche gent
[Nous] ne porons durien noient."(i)

Praise by Charlemagne is a fitting conclusion. In Les Enfances Ogier:

6139 -La mere Dieu", dist Charles, "en graci,
K'ains en ma vie, si ait m'ame merci,
En un seul jor tant preu paien ne vi
K'en cest estour en ai huy veü ci;
Tres asprement ont esté acueilli
No gent des leur et souvent envaï."

The humaneness of the Saracens, their desire to tend the sick and their skill at healing, their grief at the loss of their leaders and their desire to give them proper burial, should not blind us to the cruel side of their nature, which is also fully described in the chansons de geste. Often apparent kindness conceals a desire to inflict worse punishment. Corsolt refuses to have Hermengart killed, in La Mort Aymeri but only to avoid spoiling the tower in which she has taken refuge.(ii) Marprin, a Saracen in Gaufrey, begs for Garin's life to be spared, but only to reserve him for a worse fate:

(i) This was actually supposed to have happened during the crusades. Runciman, op. cit. on p. 19, Vol. II, p. 417, refers to the story of Saint George fighting at the side of the two brothers, Baldwin of Ibelin, lord of Ramleh and Balian, lord of Ibelin.

(ii) See above pp. 42f.

1112 Ne l'ochies tu pas, pour Mahom le puissant,
p. 34 Mès emmenons lai pris dedens Perse la grant,
A la feste Mahom de Mesques le puissant,
Que seront assemblé tes hommes et ta gent.
Et il demanderont, tes hommes et ta gent
Qu'amenas avec toi quant tu en fus partant,
Si leur deliverras, s'en feront leur talent.
Dirés que pour chesti se perdirent lor gent.
Tel justise en feront, par Mahom le puissant,
Qu'on en orra parler en Franche la vaillant.

The massacring of all the inhabitants of towns occurs, but this is done more frequently by the French than by the Saracens. Punishments and suitable tortures are discussed with great relish but are rarely carried out, although Guibert, in Les Narbonnais, is actually put on a cross (ll.5015ff.). Fires are lit for the women, for Josiane, in Bueve de Haumtone, and for Ydoine, in Les Enfances Renier, but both heroines are rescued.

Prisoners were generally bound and perhaps blindfolded and beaten, then thrown into dungeons full of serpents. A small ration of bread and water (the latter, in Gaufrey, to be from the fish-pond,l.1609, p.49) is allotted daily. Few prisoners suffer this treatment for long, especially if the emir's daughter is interested in one of them. Then either she or a faithful servant looks after them well. Agreements are sometimes reached concerning a prisoner. Ogier, in Les Enfances Ogier, is well-treated by Gloriande, and also by Alfamie, in Otinel, until the latter hears that her lover, who ordered Ogier to be well looked after, is dead. The importance of the prisoner or his family may also lead to an improvement in his condition. This did occur, as we know from Joinville.(i) In La Prise de Cordres, Guibert is well treated by his captor, Judas:

(i) Joinville op. cit., pp. 133ff., paras. 321ff. A Saracen saved Joinville by pretending that he was the King's cousin, and then cured him of his illness.

669 [D]edens Sebille en ont Guibert moné.
Molt lou fist bien li rois Judas garder/
A grant honor, que ne l'ossa muër,
Car molt redoutet Aymeri lou barbé
Et lou lignage et lou fier parenté.

If the prisoners were considered valuable as hostages, they might also receive better treatment. Malaquin, in Les Enfances Renier, pleads for the lives of Maillefer and Bertrant on these grounds. If Butor wins, then he can do as he likes with them, but if Girart should win:

7010 "Et s'il avient, riche roy posteis,
Que Gyrart soit d'auques de gens garnis
Qu'avoec li fust le soudoier hardis
Et qu'a bataille soit contre vous partis
Que s'il prenoit aucun de vos amis,
Pour Maillefer les ravres sains estris
Et pour Bertran ou quatre ou cinq ou sis."

That the Saracens were willing to use hostages is clear in many cases, since they could bargain with them both for men and money.(i)

The cruelty of the Saracens may seem to belie the impression we have been trying to give of the Saracen as a noble and courageous man, but we must remember that instances of French cruelty are, in fact, much more numerous than those of Saracen cruelty, and, as Skidmore points out:

> 'The Saracen King cannot slay his Christian son, though the proselyted Christian takes fiendish satisfaction in annihilating his own blood and kin.'(ii)

In a comparison, the pagan Saracens tend to show up in a better light than the Christian, 'civilized'French.

Having considered the leaders and the courage of the Saracen soldiers, I feel it is necessary to glance at the general discipline

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(i) Other relevant references are : La Prise de Cordres l.2432; Foulque de Candie ll.1135, 14308.

(ii) Skidmore op. cit., p. 126.

of the army, and what the chansons de geste reveal of Saracen camp life and tactics. A brief outline of Moslem military tactics and organisation will help show how realistic many of the details are.

The warriors are taken from any race without any distinction of colour or creed. We realize that there is some truth in the French descriptions of hideous opponents when we read, in Levy, of the Maṣmūdīs from North Africa, who were:

'Men of good stature but of hideous appearance.'(i)

In general the troops receive little specific training, except for the Mamelouks. These were slaves, specially trained from childhood. Until puberty they learned to read the Koran, the duties of religion and the ritual of prayer, but after then, they learned horsemanship, archery, manipulation of the lance, and the throwing of the javelin.(ii) As in the West, the warriors formed a privileged class and were amply rewarded in money and in kind.

For battle and parade, the army was in five main divisions, sub-divided into tens, each of which was in the charge of a man of the same race. The leaders, in order of preference, were the emir, the commanders of the divisions, the commanders of the tenths, the standard-bearers, and, lastly, the tribal chiefs.(iii)

The Saracens attached importance when attacking to 'speed and mobility'. Lot gives a graphic description of a Moslem attack:

(i) R. Levy The Social Structure of Islam (Cambridge 1957) p. 445.

(ii) Ibid. p. 450.

(iii) Ibid. p. 426.

> 'Le grand danger pour les gens d'Occident ce fut la tactique des Musulmans, la tactique 'parthique', l'éternelle tactique de l'Asie. Des nuées de cavaliers, armés de la lance, du sabre, de l'arc, dépourvues de ces armes défensives sérieuses, mais lourdes qui gênent les libertés d'action, tourbillonnent autour de l'adversaire, l'étourdissant sous une pluie de flèches, puis se dérobent à l'attaque. Si l'ennemi se lance trop loin à la suite des prétendus fuyards, il est perdu. La cavalerie asiatique, quand elle voit ses unités dispersées, disloquées, se reforme, se concentre et fond subitement sur les imprudents, les accablant séparément.'(i)

Single combats took place and were the accepted method of ending wars, but in actual combat the commander-in-chief might not himself go out against a champion from the enemy side.(ii) The Moslem champion carried only a sword and shield.

Levy tells in detail the importance of the flags and trumpets in the Moslem system, and of how the army marched to the beating of drums.(iii) Camps were carefully chosen, and the women went with the army because they were considered more of an encouragement than a drawback.(iv) Because of the fear of night attacks, guards were on duty all the time, and the camps were carefully fortified to prevent being taken by surprise.(v)

Turning now to the chansons de geste, let us first consider the camps of the Saracens. Partly from the amount of booty taken when a camp was captured and partly from descriptions, we gather that they were

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(i) F. Lot L'Art militaire et les armées au moyen âge en Europe et dans le Proche Orient (Paris 1946) 2 vols. See Vol. I, p. 205.

(ii) Levy Soc. Struct. op. cit., p. 456.

(iii) Ibid. p. 444.

(iv) Ibid. p. 443.

(v) Ibid. p. 444.

quite sumptuous. Normally the leader's tent is described, and has a huge 'pommel d'or' or eagle or dove to distinguish it from the other tents. Conditions were perhaps not as good as the wealth of the camp would indicate, since Brandimonde, in Anseïs de Carthage, asks for her tent to be set far from the camp, because:

4921 La punaisie de l'ost ne le flairier
Ne soferroie pour les membres trencier.

The noise in the camp and during attacks must have been tremendous at times. It was certainly a feature which impressed French writers as references to it occur so often.(i) Horns and trumpets were used to call the men to battle, for retreats and warnings, and also to frighten the enemy. Otherwise messages were cried through the army. In Foulque de Candie, the men are encouraged by criers and told that help will arrive on the morrow (ll.3522ff.). In the same poem, camp details are called out regarding short provisions and prices (ll.13882ff.).

The great numbers of the enemy are often commented upon by the French. Discussions on their accuracy are numerous, it being generally agreed that they are far too high. Epic vision was probably the cause of the exaggeration, and the fact that the French could not get reinforcements easily would make even a small group of the enemy seem large to a few survivors, especially if that group were endowed with the confidence and persistence which seemed to be a characteristic of chansons de geste Saracens.

These great armies were divided into battalions, led by various chiefs, as we see from Gaufrey (ll.2985ff., p.90), and the order and discipline of the army are described in Les Enfances Ogier as being

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(i) Gesta Francorum op. cit. on p. 87, p. 17: 'Continuo Turci coeperunt stridere et garrire ac clamare excelsa voce, dicentes diabolicum sonum nescio quo modo in sua lingua.'

impressive:

4804 Quant Sarrazin furent venu aus chans,
Tous li païs estoit resplendissans
De gonfanons et de hiaumes luisans
Et de banieres, de penons fretelans.

5191 Les os chevauchent d'ambes pars noblement,
Si ordenees qu'il n'i failloit noient.

When a battle was anticipated, the Saracens always made adequate preparations. Ships were got ready as a line of retreat, provisions were laid in for the camps and towns, and spies, sometimes disguised as merchants, were sent into the French courts and camps.(i) The country around was burned, and the buildings destroyed. (This latter strategy was always used by the Turks and was highly successful.(ii)) Battles were usually planned in council beforehand, and knowledge of the land put to good use, for example in Anseïs de Carthage ll.3925ff.

If withstanding a siege, the Saracens trusted to their good buildings and defences. (The Christians learned a good deal from the Moslems about the art of defence, notably the use of the stronger round keep instead of square towers.(iii)) Many times one reads of how strongly the Saracens built, and how treachery was the only means of acquiring a town. Thus, of the defences of Andrenas, in Guibert d'Andrenas, it is said:

1310 Vez la tor haute sor la roche naïe!
La forterece est fete par mestrie,
Ne dote assalt une pome porrie,
Qu'onques si fort ne vit nus en sa vie.

If, however, the Saracens were themselves besieging a town, they would

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(i) Runciman op. cit., Vol. II, p. 149.

(ii) Ibid. Vol. III, p. 450.

(iii) S. Toy A History of ~~the~~ Fortification from 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1700 (London 1955) p. 104.

settle in, for years if necessary:

2112 Sarrazins furent a luserne sor meir
Sument laiglant, les vignes font planter...
(Les Enfances Vivien)

7545 Et li paiien se sont bien arami,
N'en partiront, s'aront le mur saisi;
Mais puis i sisent .vii. ans et un demi.
(Anseïs de Carthage)

When telling of actual attacks some of the descriptions are very vivid, as though the writer had assisted at or witnessed sieges, although a Saracen siege would much resemble any other. Two passages especially stand out. In La Prise de Cordres, Baudus approaches the castle with his army:

1699 Devent la porte oient l'asalt livrer:
Ceus de fuers traire et la dedens geter,
Et les uns braire et les autres criër.
Ja lor dut trop li secours demorer,
Que Sarrazin sont antré an fossés,
Si ont les murs en .iij. leus es[f]rondés
Et par la fraite sont el chastel antré.

In Les Enfances Renier:

2809 Sarrazins corment, l'assaut ont establi,
Entour le murs furent grant li estri;
As pis d'acier ont maint perron croissi
Le grant fosse ont rase et empli;
Eschieles drescent li paien malei,
A mont monterent tant se sont enhardi...

Apart from skirmishes and sieges, the general way of ending a battle was by single combat. It was very rare for either side to attempt to break the understood rules, and in two cases attempts to do so brought out the nobility of character of other Saracen rulers. Carahuel, in Les Enfances Ogier, gave himself to the French in exchange for Ogier, who was overcome by superior numbers and captured, and, in Gui de Bourgogne, Huidelon also gave himself to the French.(i)

(i) See above pp. 126f.

Only in La Mort Aymeri does Corsuble arrange to have help at hand.(i)

The armour of the Saracens is described almost as French armour would be, although there must be some differences, because Tiebaut, in Les Enfances Guillaume, is said to be armed 'a la loi de sa terre'(l.2937), and also armour is sometimes used as a disguise. In La Prise de Cordres, Vivien states that he failed to recognize Bertrant:

1907 -[M]o conoissoie, certes," dist Wiviiens:
D'armes des Turs estoit aparailliés."

Like the French, the Saracen knights wear halberk and helmet, and often one or other is said to have magic properties. One description is adequate, as they are so similar. Agoulant, in Anseïs de Carthage, prepares for the combat:

1366 Ses cauches lache, plus blances d'argent mier;
En son dos vest .i. blanc haubert doublier,
Fort et tenant et merveilleus legier;
Chil ki le fist, mist un an au forgier.
Et lache l'iaume, ki fu roi Aucibier,
El nasel ot un escarbuncle cier.
Chainte a l'espee a son flanc senestrier.

He also takes his lance with its pennant and shield. Some of the Saracen champions are less moderate and carry many more weapons, such as darts, arrows, 'fauchards', axes and a mace. Colebrant, in Gui de Warewic, is very well supplied:

11121 En sun poig tint un trenchant dart;
Depré li furent, a destre part,
Set gleives trenchanz e acerees,
Set darz aguz, ben enpennez,
11125 Fortes lances a chevaler
E longes lances a pouner
E aguz guivres enpennez

(i) See above p. 42.

11128 E altre dars aguz assez
E ces grandes haches pur decolper
E ces coignez pur fer trencher,
Maçues de fer, gibecz d'ascer,
Gisarmes pur grant colps doner.
Cent falsarz e cent arcs turkeis;
A merveille l'esgardent les Engleis.

The giants tended to favour maces as their weapon, but amongst the soldiers, bows were most regularly used.

The only unorthodox armour is that worn by giants and various tribes. In these cases, either their own skins are reputedly thick enough, or they are wearing serpent skins.

From the outline given earlier, we see that the writers are influenced by knowledge of western armour and fail to contrast the heavily-armed Frank with the quick, lightly-armed Turk. The weapons, apart from the alleged number of them, are more accurately described, as lances and bows, especially the latter, were the most usual weapons in the East.

Earlier in the chapter,(i) mention was made of ships being prepared by the Saracens as a line of retreat. This was often referred to in the chansons de geste, probably because the Saracens had the rule of the Mediterranean Sea at that time. The Moslems and the Byzantines were the only seapowers until Italy challenged them. Boissonnade mentions the importance of the navy in Moslem warfare.(ii) Perhaps also ships were spoken of because, by the thirteenth century, they had become the usual method of transport for crusaders. The land routes were abandoned, and the warriors and pilgrims sailed most of the way.

(i) See above p. 144.

(ii) Boissonnade op. cit., pp. 258ff.

Often, too, the only means of attacking the French was by sea, The writers seem to emphasize the skill and knowledge of the pagans where ships are concerned. Tiebaut's ship, in Foulque de Candie, is described:

12966 Aussi sëur puet estre par dedenz aaisie
Com s'il estoit a terre a plain ou en vergie.

The gathering of the fleet is described in Les Enfances Guillaume:

218 Sus la marinne fut l'asanbleie faite;
Lai veïsiés tante neif a rivaige,
Chalans, dormons et galie corsauble.
Les veule furent an mainte guise faite;
La neif Thiebaut est plus riche des autre,
Blanche est et perce et vermoille et puis jaune,
Sus an la neif un dragon et trois aigle.
A chief devant premerains de la barge
De Mahonmet i asistre l'imairge,...

We are then told of the jewels and lamps on the ship and of the richness of everything. The business of getting under way is reported in Octavian:

1435 Li marroiniers [se] desancrerent,
Et li Sarrazins esquiperent.
Plus d'une grant liue(e) enterrine
Durent les nes par [la] marine,
A dis estoiles si corrurent.
Li marroiniers qui dedens furent,
Bon uent orent et bien sosi,
Li uent en uoiles se feri.

Not all shipping was military. ~~There are~~ Many merchant ships and also pirate ships, ~~both of which~~ are mentioned in the chansons de geste and romances. Merchants rescue Escopart, in Bueve de Haumtone (ll.2087ff.), and bring Bueve to a Saracen court (ll.376ff.). Renier is brought by a merchant to Sicily, in Les Enfances Renier (l.580), and ~~it is~~ in this same poem ~~that~~ we find the pirate ships of Piecolet and Oeillart. In Aucassin et Nicolete, Nicolete is brought by the ships of the pirates who invaded Torelore, to Carthage, which she remembers is the town of her birth. The heroine, in La Fille du Conte de Ponthieu,

is rescued from drowning by merchants (p. 19, ch. 10).

Long voyages by sea are described in Blancandin (ll.2795ff., and ll. 5670ff.), and a pilgrimage over land and sea in L'Escoufle (ll.358ff.).

In this chapter we have read of the good leadership of the Saracen lords and of the courage and faithfulness of the men. In the military sphere they are the equals of the French, and their intelligent tactics are given full emphasis. Little that is new has been added. The courage of the Saracen has been appreciated from the earliest chansons de geste onwards, and the single combats, sieges and pitched battles are traditional. In a way, this lack of change is inevitable, as the qualities of leadership and courage do not alter.

A few details reveal genuine knowledge of Moslem tactics, for example the use of bows and arrows, and their practice of desolating the countryside and sending out spies; yet we might have hoped that more details would be included. The eastern method of attack is very different from the solid western attack, and the lighter weapons used should have been worthy of note. In the chansons de geste and romances, however, the descriptions are often traditional, with emphasis on the hideous giant champions and the horned tribes who fight with axes, or even with their horns. The other descriptions of sieges and encounters are true of warfare anywhere. Nevertheless, despite this conservatism, the courage of the Saracen, his faithfulness and his persistence, and the skilful, heroic leadership of the Saracen rulers support and increase the favourable impression we have of the pagans in the thirteenth century.

Chapter 7

Saracen Society as Portrayed in the Chansons de Geste and Romances

The French in the Middle Ages knew a certain amount about Moslem society; they knew of the richness of the Moslems, ~~of~~ their skill in necromancy and medicine, and ~~about~~ the organisation of their society. The writers of the chansons de geste and romances use this knowledge as a basis for their descriptions of the East, but inevitably fill in the picture with details from their own civilisation. In this chapter, I hope to show what impression we get of Saracen society in thirteenth-century French literature, and to discuss how much is really true and how much is only a reflection of the French way of life.

The wealth of the East was a source of wonder to the West in the Middle Ages and undoubtedly existed in reality. Runciman compares and contrasts the two civilisations, western and eastern, and shows how travellers confirmed the rumours of eastern wealth,(i) and Lewis, speaking of the highly developed southern Arabic society, founded on agriculture, mentions the cereals, myrrh, incense and other spices and aromatics they exported and suggests:

(i) Runciman op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 316ff.

> 'These last were their main export, and in the Mediterranean lands the spices of southern Arabia, often confused with those arriving via southern Arabia from more distant lands, led to its almost legendary reputation as a land of wealth and prosperity.'(i)

Descriptions of the fantastic wealth of the East are numerous in the chansons de geste, and implications of richness are to be found in many remarks. In Bueve de Haumtone, Yvori has fifteen kings under him (l.994), and in Les Enfances Guillaume Akilant has much land and twice as many kings in his power (ll.536ff.) The wealth of these lands is immense, as can be told from the amounts offered as ransoms. Grandoce, in Les Enfances Renier, says:

19348 Si vous donrai mile mars de besans
Et cent mantiaus de soie tramans,
Mil espevriers et mil chevaus courans,
Et chescun an serai vo redevans
De deus mulez qui bien seront amblans
A frains et seles a fin or reluisans,
Et deus puceles qui sus seront seans;
Quar j'ai grant terre dont je sui roy tenans:

Nubie, in La Prise de Cordres, fleeing to join her French lover, robs the treasure-house at Cordres. Seeing the amount she has brought, the French are absolutely overwhelmed, and Guillaume says frankly that:

1163 ..... "Or poés oïr gas:
Ne cuidai pas c'au sicle tant en ait."

The amount of booty obtained when a town or camp has been captured also impresses the French, for not only are the rulers wealthy, but the cities in which they live. When 'la tour Grellemont' is captured, in Gaufrey, the French:

4487 L'avoir ont assemblé, Gaufrey le quemanda;
p. 136 Nus hons n'en vit autant ne jamès ne verra,
Miex vaut que .vii. chitez, qui à droit le nombra.

(i) Lewis op. cit. on p. 19, p. 25.

In Bueve de Haumtone, we are told that every tower and battlement in Damascus is covered with gold or silver (ll.867ff.), and there is a description in Aymeri de Narbonne of the city of Narbonne. First, the defences and towers of the town are described and praised, then the poet continues:

Sus as estages del palès principer
Ot .j. pomel de fin or d'outremer;
Un escharbocle i orent fet fermer
Qui flanbeoit et reluisoit molt cler,...
A granz dromonz que la font arriver,
Font marcheant les granz avoirs porter,
Dont la cité font si bien rasazer
Que riens n'i faut q'an sache deviser
Qui mestier ait a cors d'ome ennorer.

The reference to wealth coming from trade is to be found again in the description of Cordres, in La Prise de Cordres (ll.2169ff.), and is quite accurate. Several remarks are made about trading and fairs in the chansons de geste, for example, in Les Enfances Vivien l.1494, in Les Enfances Renier ll.530ff.; and in Bueve de Haumtone, l.376. The last two references are in connection with child slavery, which was quite common in those days.(i) The merchants, in Bueve de Haumtone, bought Bueve for four times his weight in gold, and then presented him to the Saracen king, Hermyne, in the hopes that they would receive better treatment from him, nor were they disappointed:

Lui roi lur set bon gre de cel enfaunt.

In Les Enfances Renier, Gyre, the merchant, owes tribute of one male Christian child, annually, to Brunamont, King of Sicily, and Renier is bought by him to pay this tribute (ll. 564ff.). In La Fille du Conte de Ponthieu, merchants rescue the count's daughter from the sea and, although they have safe conducts, they agree that a little present to

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(i) Runciman op. cit., Vol. III, p. 143, tells of the merchants of Marseilles who sold the children on the 'Children's crusade' to African slave-dealers.

the Sultan will not come amiss and decide to give him the lady (p. 22,ch. 11).

The outsides of the towns are of gold and silver, but the descriptions of apartments show us that the insides of buildings were no less rich. Clearly much time, wealth and craftsmanship were spent upon the living-quarters. Canete's quarters, in Foulque de Candie, demonstrate this point. She leads Povre-veu, her lover:

12226 En une chambre painte du tens ancïenor;
Onques nus hons ne vit plus bele ne meillor:
Des pierres et de l'or qui est mis tot entor
Reluist tot le pales et par nuit et par jor.

An even more magnificent description is to be found in Aymeri de Narbonne:

3507 En mi la sale del palès principer
Avoit .j. arbre q'an i ot fet ovrer;
Fet fu de coivre, si l'ot en fet dorer,
Et en un molle si fondre et tresgiter,
Soz ciel n'a home, tant seust porpanser
Et la maniere des oisiax esgarder,
Qu'il ne poist sor cel arbre trover
De toz oisiaus la figure prover;

The poet describes how the maker has used stones and enamels to decorate the birds and completes his description:

3520 Par nigromance i fait le vent entrer,
Encontremont par le tuel monter;
Qant li vanz sofle, les oisiax fet chanter,
En lor maniere, seriement et cler.(i)

This richness is not left behind in times of war. In a previous chapter I have commented on the wealth of camps, and especially of the tents of the emirs and of their daughters.(ii) In Les Narbonnais, it is said that the gold tent-ropes alone were worth the city of Pavie (l.3688), and Tiebaut, in Foulque de Candie, gives Bertrant his

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(i) This description closely resembles that of the tree in the Palace of the Tree in Baghdad. Von Grunebaum op. cit. on p. 19, pp. 27ff. tells us how some ambassadors, who went from Constantinople to Baghdad, in 917, were dazzled by the splendour of everything and especially by this wonderful tree, covered in birds, of every sort, who piped and sang.

(ii) See above pp. 142f.

tent:

12819 Dont tuit ierent a or li pan et li giron
Et les cordes de soie et d'argent li peçon.

Finally, their wealth shows in the excessively rich garments the Saracens are said to wear and in the caparisoning of their horses. Flordespine's mule is prepared and described in Gaufrey:

2021 Une moult riche mule li ont appareillie,
p. 62 La sele fu d'ivoire, s'est à or entaillie;
U frein ot une pierre de moult grant segnorie
Dont l'en voit clerement par la nuit oscurie:
Ja qui l'ara sus li n'i ara maladie.
Sus la sambue monte, qui feite iert par mestrie;
.xxx. sonneites ot par derier la cuirie:

The bells ring so sweetly that anyone, however ill, is soothed by their sound. Marsabile, in Octavian, also decks her horse very richly for the journey with her father (ll.1739ff.).

The mention of the magic qualities of a precious stone is not surprising, only that in the lines quoted we have not met more references:

> 'The strange or rare stone has the same interest for a primitive being as it has for a child, and consequently human curiosity concerning the properties of the stones we still call precious was aroused long before the dawn of history.'(i)

The carbuncle is the stone most usually named. In Bueve de Haumtone, a ring set with a carbuncle is described, which allows a man to see into the future (ll.1593ff.). In contemporary lapidaries this property is not attributed to the carbuncle, but many others are. It stops infectious diseases, and its owner will never be killed in battle or wrongfully condemned in a court case.(ii) It is also said to shine in the dark. Probably the stone on Flordespine's bridle would be a carbuncle as it was described as having the latter property and also that of preventing disease (l.2024 and l. 2025 respectively in Gaufrey). Possibly too,

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(i) P. Studer and J. Evans Anglo-Norman Lapidaries (Paris 1924) p. ix.

(ii) Ibid. p. 89, ll. 555/6.

the stone which protects the wearer from death unless he be a traitor, in Les Enfances Renier, ll.7081ff., is a carbuncle.

Often, as well as stones, various pieces of armour afforded magic protection and were forged by fairies (see, for example, Les Enfances Renier, ll.5323 and 12437f., and Foulque de Candie, ll.2737 and 9916).

There are also many instances of necromancy. Orable, in Les Enfances Guillaume, exercises her magic power and terrifies Tiebaut at their wedding feast when she conjures up apparitions, causing three thousand monks to appear, singing, throwing flames, and each carrying a dead body (ll.1930ff.), and causing lions and bears to leap out of the woods (ll.1959ff.). The most unusual magic figure is that of Tabardin, in Les Enfances Renier, who appears at the command of Grymbert, the magician. Tabardin is a devil, who can assume terrifying shapes and forms and has supernatural powers of divining. Although made use of by Christians, he is frightened and angered by the signs of Christianity, as is shown when Renier and Grymbert are riding him. Tabardin has temporarily taken the shape of a horse, and Renier, amazed at the speed with which they have travelled, crosses himself:

12166 Renier se seigne quant si tost se voit la,
Et Tabardin s'esqueut, tant s'aira
Andui a terre si forment les geta
Poi s'en failli que il ne les greva.

That the Saracens are reputed to believe in devils is clear from the remarks made in Les Enfances Renier, to the effect that Renier is a spirit, brought back to life by black magic (ll.3592ff.), and in La Prise de Cordres, when the pagans assure the emir, Nubie's father:

1749 ..... "Tos estes anchantés;
Li vif diable vos i ont aporté."

The Moslems did believe in magic and devils and spirits, but

were not as superstitious as the French regarding stones. The properties of the carbuncle to which I referred were described in contemporary French lapidaries; this shows that the writer has, more probably, French society in mind than Moslem.

Another form of magic was prevalent in the Middle Ages however, which was an eastern cult, although obviously known in France, and was recognized as such in the chansons de geste: that of reading the fates and divining from the stars. Usamah tells us that his father: 'was well-versed in the science of the stars', adding:

> 'in spite of his great piety and religion.'(i)

The editor has a note to the effect that:

> 'Moslem theologians, under the influence of a rigid monotheistic conception of the deity and the Aristotelian philosophy, have been almost unanimous in their condemnation of astrology, yet this science has always been deeply rooted among all lay classes of Islam.'(ii)

In Les Enfances Renier, Otran de Limes is sent for to encourage the men with his prophecies. The scene is described at length:

6707 Otran de Lymes, s'il vous plest, manderez,
Cil set des ars de nygromance assez,
Sages hons est et bien enlatinez:
Bien vous dira toutes vo volentez....

Otran arrives and hears what is required:

6721 Atant s'en tourne, en un vergier entra;
Tant fu iluec que la lune leva
Le temps iert biax et la lune esclera
Et mainte estoile luist et estincela;
El firmament et el trosne esgarda
Et le paien tout son sort atira
Et tout le cours des estoiles esma:
Si vit tout ce qui fu et qui sera
Ce qui doit estre et ce qui avenra;

(i) Usāmah op. cit. on p. 73, p. 85.

(ii) Ibid. p. 85, note 57.

Learning the course of the stars and thereby divining seems to have been part of a woman's education too. Flordespine, in Gaufrey, was skilled in astrology, as was Ydoine, in Les Enfances Renier.

The women are also skilled in the art of healing. In La Mort Aymeri, one of the maidens, Clarissant, is said to be a doctor (ll.2284f.). She does in fact cure Bernaut de Brubant, but in an odd way, considering what we know of Moslem beliefs and the fact that she was not a Christian:

1986 "Seignor François," dist ele, "ne dotez:
Je l'avrai ja gari et respassé."
Entre ses bras li conte soef,
Dist .iii. paroles de sainte Trinité
Et de la croiz de la crestienté,
Dont estanchierent les plaies criminel;(i)

King Louis thinks highly of her and is determined to take her with him to France (l.2291). Most acts of healing in the chansons de geste are done by Saracens, and Aymeri, in Aymeri de Narbonne, prizes the doctor he has captured, Forré, and makes good use of him. The usual cures were very potent herbs, which healed wounds quickly, and restored a man's strength after a remarkably short rest. Examples are to be found in Otinel ll.1052ff, p.37, and in Les Enfances Guillaume ll.685f. That the Moslems were renowned for their skill in medicine is a well-known fact. Joinville tells us how he is quickly cured of an illness. He was despairing of life:

> 'Lors uns des chevaliers sarrasins dist à celi qui nous avoit garantiz, que il nous reconfortast; car il me donroit tel chose à boivre de quoy je seroie gueriz dedans dous jours; et si fist-il.'(ii)

(i) The poet infact is using an established French charm, and is either unaware of, or forgets about, the differences of belief.

(ii) Joinville op. cit. on p. 94, p. 135, para. 324.

Runciman tells us that medicine in Outremer was left entirely in native hands,(i) and Usāmah seems horrified at some of the methods employed by the Franks, so crude compared with those of the eastern doctors.(ii)

As far as general education is concerned we learn very little, apart from comments on the number of languages known. The only descriptions we have are of Bueve's upbringing, in Bueve de Haumtone, by Hermyne, of Godin's in La Chanson de Godin, and of Renier's in Les Enfances Renier. The latter is brought up by the Saracen princess, Ydoine. A comparison of his education with that of the French Aiol, in Aiol, however, shows us that the poet has described a French education. Compare the two passages:

1575 Quant ot cinq anz moult savoit bel parler,
Quar un sien mestre le sot bien escoler
Des geus de tables et aprendre et danter.
Et a sept anz moult bien mener
Un fort cheval et courre et galoper,
1580 Et a dix anz escremir et geter;
O les enfanz s'en va souvent jouer,
Trere et lancier et saillir et ruer;
Quant il resgarde un oiselet voler
Il tret si droit ne li puet eschaper;
1585 Nul sarrazin ne puet a lui riber,
Luitier, saillir, qu'il ne face mater....

1687 La fille au roy, Ydoine avoit a non,
Chescun matin venoit au valleton,
D'art d'yngromance li lit une leçon;
(Les Enfances Renier)

and Aiol:

259 Il n'ot valet en France mieus dotriné(s),
Ne mieus a .i. preudome seust parler.

(i) Runciman op. cit., Vol. III, p. 490.

(ii) Usāmah op. cit., p. 162.

261 Del ceval et des armes seut il assés,
Si vos dirai comment, se vous volés:
Car ses peres l'ot fait sovent monter
Par la dedens le bos ens en .i. pré
Et le boin ceval core et trestorner,
De dit et de parolle l'en a moustré,
Aiols le retient bien comme senés;
Et des cours des estoiles, del remuer,
Del refait de la lune, del rafermer,
De chou par savoit il quant qu'il en ert.

Actually, the education of knights in both France and the East would probably be very similar, as we may gather from remarks made by Usamah, and the pastimes were certainly similar. Hitti lists the ones popular during the Abbasid Caliphate, which is earlier than the period with which we are dealing, but there is no reason to suppose that great changes took place. He tells us that, as indoor sports, chess, back-gammon and dice were popular, and, as outdoor games, archery, polo, ball and mallets, fencing, javelin-throwing, horse-racing and, above all, hunting. Falconry and hawking were introduced to the West from Persia; both became very widespread during the period of the crusades.(i)

The pastimes described in the chansons de geste correspond closely to those just mentioned. Even during battles, the chiefs ask for their dice or their chess-board, only ceasing play if their presence is really necessary in the battle.(ii) The other sports are described as being hawking, for example Foulque de Candie, l.2755, and hunting, Bueve de Commarchis, l.341. In Huon de Bordeaux, there is an interesting description of Saracens' activities at King Gaudisse's court, when Huon arrives there:

(i) P.K. Hitti History of the Arabs (London 1956 6th edition.) pp. 339ff.

(ii) Runciman op. cit., Vol. II, p. 216, tells us how two French knights, Raymond of Poitiers and Joscelin of Courtenay, spent their time playing dice instead of helping the emperor.

5399 .M. paiens trove qui viennent d'oiseler,
p. 161 Et autres .m. qui i doivent aler.

Mil en trova qui ferent les cevaus,
Et autres .m. qui traient es travaus.
.M. en trova qui juent as escas,
Et autres .m. qui del ju furent mas.

.M. en trova, saciés à ensiant,
Qui as puceles juent à lor talant,
Et autres .m. qui del vin sont bevant.

.M. en trouva qui el palais s'en vont,
Et autres .m. qui repairié en sont.

At times of general rejoicing, the Saracens are said to amuse themselves listening to minstrels and singing to the lute and harp. Sometimes the women lead the singing or send for players, who are called to pass the time pleasantly for those who are ill, or to celebrate a feast or a wedding. These references, whilst probably based on French social habits, are applicable to Moslem society. Musicians are invited into the houses at times of rejoicing, and music plays a great part in the festivals and rites, although frowned upon by Mohammed.

In this chapter, there remains to be discussed the system by which the society was governed. A little was said in the chapter on the historical background to the period about the differences between the French and Moslem feudal systems.(i) Bearing this in mind, let us consider what we learn of the feudal system of the Saracens in the chansons de geste and romances.

The custom of lord and liege-man prevails. There are many examples of Saracens offering to become liege-men, even to the French. King Gaudisse, for example, in Huon de Bordeaux, tells Huon that, if he wins the single combat for him, he, Gaudisse, will become Charles's

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(i) See above p. 26.

liege-man (l.6419, p.192), and in Foulque de Candie, Povre-veu offers himself, to save his uncle's life:

10655 Vostre hom en serai liges senz plus de tenement.

A liege-man's life is in his lord's hands, and he is expected to die, if necessary, for his sake. Thus Carahuel, in Les Enfances Ogier, no longer wishes to live when Corsuble, his lord, has died. He explains to Ogier:

6485 "Puisque Corsubles mes sires est ocis,
Mieus vueill morir k'estre si vieus honnis
Que je sanz lui fusse de champ partis."

Military service was due to one's lord,(i) and many times the call was sent out to muster all available men. Leaders, themselves very powerful and with men in their charge, must obey the call of a higher authority. King Gaudisse, in Huon de Bordeaux, dare not harm Huon after he has seen Orgueilleux's ring on his finger. If the giant had offered Huon his protection, it was not for Gaudisse, his liege-man, to harm him (ll.5666ff., p.169). Galafre, who disobeyed Yvorin, his lord, in the same poem, says:

8227 "Tenés m'espee, la teste me copés,
p. 245 Et de moi faites toute vo volenté,.."

The leader's rule is absolute and his advice must be carried out, even if it is thought to be wrong advice. Rubyon, in Les Enfances Renier, tells Tiebaut frankly:

694 ..... 'Toutes vos volentez
Nous couvient fere, soit bien soit foletez."

He may take advice from a gathering of his vassals, and frequently does so, but it is not absolutely necessary, and his will prevails. The

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(i) Boissonnade op. cit. on p. 80, pp. 244ff.

leader must, however, be bodily whole to rule his lands. Brunamont, in Les Enfances Renier, has to give up his lands when he loses an arm (ll.12502ff.).

Unless the bond has been broken, a man must continue to serve his lord. Renier, in Foulque de Candie, has left his lord, Tiebaut, and is fighting with the French. When Tiebaut is captured, he sees Renier, reminds him that he left without defying him, and forces him because of this to help him escape:

11113 "Se ne me lais aler, ta foiz sera mentie."

The custom of levying rent and taxes is often mentioned, and the taxes merchants had to pay to cross a land or to do trade there. Usually, merchants are spoken of in connection with stolen children. For example, Gyre, a merchant in Les Enfances Renier, has to pay tribute to Brunamont, a Saracen king, and Renier is bought for this purpose (ll.564ff.).

Internal wars between petty rulers are also mentioned often and may have been so because of knowledge of the actual situation. It is these wars, in the chansons de geste, which cause French to fight French, when they have agreed to fight for different sides. The example of this in Huon de Bordeaux has already been quoted.(i) Quarrels and personal wars were, however, well-known in France also, witness the attempts to establish the 'paix de Dieu', so, once again, the writers need not look as far as the East for their material, and probably did not. The system described could easily represent the Moslem system, but the main differences from that of the French are not noted, which they surely would have been if known;(ii) therefore we are led to

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(i) See above pp. 93f.

(ii) See above p. 26.

believe that it is the French system transferred.

Lastly I should like to glance at the smallest component of society, the family, from which we learn one or two points of interest.

Family ties in Islam are very strong, especially those between father and son. The practice of burying female children at birth had been condemned by Mohammed, but girls still tended to be despised. A son was the greatest blessing and privilege that Allah could grant. The love of father for son is often stressed in the chansons de geste, usually in the grief shown by the father for the death of his son. In Les Enfances Ogier, clearly an affectionate relationship exists between Corsuble and his son, Danemon:

587 Corsubles a roi Danemon mandé,
C'estoit ses fieus, moult l'ot en grant chierté,...

When Danemon was unhorsed in battle, we learn that:

5481 Roi Danemon, son fill, qu'il amoit tant
Que plus ne puet amer peres enfant,
Vit remonté, s'en ot le cuer joiant,...

The relations between father and daughter are more difficult to describe, because love for a French knight overcomes family feelings. The daughters pay lip-service to their father's wishes, but add angry asides and plan their escape. Gaudisse, Marsile's daughter, in Anseïs de Carthage, provides an amusing example. When the arrangements for her marriage with Anseïs come to nothing, Ysoré asks for her hand and is accepted as suitor by her father. Gaudisse, much displeased, whispers to Finagloire, a trusted servant:

2134 "Or os," fait ele, de chest viellart pulent,
Con il porcache son mal encombrement!"
Puis dist en haut, k'on l'oï clerement:
"Pere", dist ele, "n'i ait prolongement!
Mandes vos homes sans nul atargement!
Puis si faires de nous l'ajoustement,
Car jou l'ai mout desire longement."

Many times fathers threaten to have their daughters burned or hanged because they have embraced Christianity, but not without inward regrets. Brunamont, in Les Enfances Renier, hears that Butor is willing to take vengeance on Ydoine:

11410 Brunamon l'ot, vers terre s'embroncha,
Quar pour sa fille son cuer s'atendria.

Between brother and sister, relations are again affected by religion. Anfelise and Tiebaut, in Foulque de Candie, are estranged when the former becomes a Christian, but they are finally reconciled, although Tiebaut refuses to change his faith (ll.12877ff.). In Elie de Saint-Gille, Caifas accuses his sister, Rosamonde, of lying with Elie, and actually strikes her (ll.2162ff.). He feels that she has betrayed their cause by looking after and curing a Frenchman. In Charlemagne, Galienne's father has agreed quite happily to her marriage with Mainet, but her brother, Marsile, disapproves, and attempts to kill the Christian.

The husband and wife relationship is scarcely mentioned at all. The only partnership of any importance is that of Brandimonde and Marsile, in Anseïs de Carthage. Nor is that an example of conjugal bliss. Brandimonde helps her daughter against her husband's wishes, and chooses a new husband for herself from amongst the French. Ostensibly, religion is the reason for her faithlessness, because she would have been compelled to return to Marsile, had he become a Christian. After his refusal and subsequent death, Brandimonde hypocritically weeps for her husband, but is soon consoled by Raimon and is married to him (l.11555). Widows did, in fact, often suffer the fate of immediate re-marriage, especially where it was essential to have a man in charge of the lands or fighting. Thus, Gloriant's

wife, in Gaufrey, is married immediately to Robastre (l.10278, p.309), and Ydoine's mother and Gonsent, in Les Enfances Renier, marry Robert Ricart (l.17883) and Drue de Gresce (l.17881) respectively. Desramé, in Foulque de Candie, is amusing because of his desire to be with his wife rather than fighting. He is old, and prefers home and its comforts to battle (ll.7945f., 8763). Other Saracen marriages are mainly forced ones between a Saracen suitor and an unwilling princess. These marriages rarely last long and usually end in the untimely death of the husband.

Another interesting relationship is that of connections by marriage. Once a marriage has taken place between French and Saracen, both sides try to accept their new relations. Desramé, in Foulque de Candie, warns Tiebaut that if he dies his lands will go to Guillaume, not to Tiebaut; that is to say that, whether he approves of the match or not, he follows the normal conventions (ll.8278ff.). Tiebaut later makes peace with the French and promises to try and be friendly to Guillaume and his family:

12731 Quar ge les doi amer, puisqu'il sont mi parent.

In La Prise de Cordres, Guibert agrees to do Judas's will because he is married to Agaiete, Judas's daughter (ll.2257ff.), and the emir, in the same poem, is well-treated, because his daughter is married to Bertrant:

2047 Nostre François li portent grant honor,
Por la pucelle qui est gentis et pros,
Et por Bertran ques en a proiés toz.

The relationship most often emphasized is that of uncle and nephew. This connection was probably important in Moslem society,(i)

(i) Indeed, we learn from Usāmah, op. cit., that he was brought up by his uncle, until the latter had sons of his own.

but in medieval France it was especially highly regarded. Therefore, although it could be Moslem society which is being portrayed, it is much more probable that the poets are being influenced by the French outlook:

> 'The number of cases of this relationship among the pagans, the extreme care which the poet takes to point it out and to repeat his statements, and the consistency with which he follows out this partial genealogy, all these points tend to indicate the general importance which the uncle-nephew tie assumed in his mind.'(i)

A few quotations suffice to prove the truth of the preceding statements. In Foulque de Candie, Tiebaut points out to his uncle, Desramé, who wishes to leave the field:

8184 Dist li nies: "Oncles, ja mes n'avroiz honor,
S'el champ laissiez lo fil vostre seror.

The emir, in Les Narbonnais, grieves bitterly and curses his gods when his nephew, Clargis, has been captured (ll.7589ff.), and, in La Prise de Cordres, Butor undertakes a single combat because he feels that Judas, his nephew, has been insulted (ll.2139ff.). Farnsworth quotes many examples of uncles bringing up nephews, of mutual affection, of rewards, and of their desire to avenge the nephew's death.(ii)

This last section on relationships between uncle and nephew shows how much the French way of life imposed itself upon the writers of the chansons de geste and romances, and confirms what has already been suggested, namely, that it is French manners and customs which are described in the main. In fact we learn little of Moslem society. That the Moslems were skilled in magic and medicine was an accepted fact, and also that they were extremely wealthy. Many details given could be

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(i) W.O. Farnsworth Uncle and Nephew in the Old French Chansons de Geste (New York 1913) p. 175.

(ii) Ibid. pp. 176-191.

true of Moslem civilisation, but this is probably more by chance than by any conscious effort to describe it. Nevertheless, although we have found little evidence of a more intimate knowledge of the Saracen way of life, the general atmosphere of the poems gives the impression of being much more friendly towards the pagans than does that of the twelfth-century poems. It would seem therefore that this difference lies in a more favourable delineation of character, rather than in any more realistic portrayal of Moslem society and beliefs.

Chapter 8

The Saracens in the Romances

The romances have been included in this study because it was hoped that they would offer a means of comparison. As they were a new form of literature, I was interested to see whether the attitude towards the Saracen was greatly different from that found in the chansons de geste; whether it reverted to the twelfth-century ideas of the heathen, or whether it followed the tendency in the thirteenth-century chansons de geste to show tolerance and to accept each Saracen on his own merits. In fact, it would appear that the writers of the romances often turn to the chansons de geste for names of characters and descriptions of battles, and share with the epic poets the common, though false, ideas on the Saracen faith, although the latter is only rarely mentioned. But there is also liberal treatment of characters, and relations between Christian and Saracen are generally good.

This may be due in part to the different emphasis of the romances. We pass from the world of fanatical religious fighting into that of knights and tournaments. To some extent, religious barriers are down, and a Christian knight will fight willingly for a Saracen ruler. The

emirs, in their turn, reward the Christians generously for whatever they may have achieved, despite the differences of religion. In Gui de Warewic, for example, Triamor offers Gui great wealth and a third of his lands if he will stay (ll.8905ff.).

The knight will also fight for his lady. In Blancandin we read:

1245 L'uns des parens Alimodes
Se fist del tornoier engres
Por la pucele qui l'esgarde;
Dist qu'il fera l'arriere garde.

Instances of the effect of courtoisie on the chansons de geste have already been quoted.(i) Examples are to be found in Bueve de Commarchis, when Limbanor offers to kill Christians to prove his love for Malatrie (l.2263), and in Octavian, when Marsabile's champion goes onto the field to capture or kill Christians to present to his lady (ll.1960ff.). Examples are much more frequent in the romances however, as will be shown later.(ii)

This emphasis on the courtly element rather than the religious is the main reason for the difference between the chansons de geste and the romances. The Saracen characters in the latter are shown as knights who have the same courtly ideals as the French, and not as opponents, however noble, of the Christian faith.(iii)

(i) See above pp. 62f.

(ii) See below p. 175.

(iii) The abatement of religious fervour in fighting is shown clearly by a comparison of examples from La Chanson de Roland and Joinville. In the former, Turpin tells the French:

1134 "Se vos murez, esterez seinz martirs,
Sieges avrez el greignor pareïs."

The men kneel to receive his blessing, and prepare for the fight. In Joinville op. cit., p. 132, para. 319, the same argument is used. He and his men are being attacked by the Sultan from the river, and by forces on land. They agree to give themselves to the former so that they may stay together. When one dissenter suggests:

"Je m'acort que nous nous lessons touz tuer; si nous en irons tuit en paradis." Joinville remarks: "Mais nous ne le creumes pas."

Palamedes li mesconneus, the only important Saracen character of interest to us in the Arthurian prose romances, illustrates this point admirably. He will be considered separately, however, as it is difficult to compare him with characters either in the chansons de geste or the non-Arthurian romances.

The Saracens occur only rarely in the romances, and the situations in which we meet them are often different from those in the chansons de geste. In La Fille du Conte de Ponthieu, we meet with the Sultan of Aumarie and his court at a time when he is at peace. The daughter of the Count of Ponthieu has been sealed in a barrel and thrown into the sea, as a punishment for trying to kill her husband. She is picked up by merchants and taken to the Sultan's court (pp. 21f., ch.11). The Sultan falls in love with her and asks her hand in marriage if she will change her religion. This the countess agrees to, and lives there happily until eventually rescued by her husband and father. Her husband, Tiebaut, towards the end of the story, actually fights for the Sultan against the latter's personal enemies (p. 40, ch.18), but there is no fighting between Christian and Saracen.

It is in connection with the crusades that the Saracens are mentioned in four out of the fourteen romances in which they occur.(i) The references to the crusades at once bring the romances into line with contemporary feeling, as appeals were still going forth to people, although they were meeting with little response. In the chansons de geste considered in this thesis, we do not find references to the crusades at all, although there are occasional references to Jerusalem and

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(i) For a complete list of the fifteen romances, see above pp. 17f.

pilgrimages there.(i) In La Chastelaine de Vergi, the Duke, in repentance, becomes a Templar and goes abroad to fight, and in Guillaume de Dôle, service in the Templars is meted out to the wicked seneschal as punishment. In Le Chastelain de Couci, the crusade is actually named, and is that led by Richard I. In L'Escoufle, no crusade is mentioned, but Richard de Montivilliers decides:

125 D'aler outre mer sauver s'ame.

He and the other pilgrims arrive safely at Jerusalem, and offer their services to the King of Jerusalem when he is attacked by the Turks.

In the remaining romances, religion plays little part, and we read mainly of knights and tournaments and champions. In Richars li Biaus, Richard is doing the round of tourneys and helps the Frisians, who are being attacked by the Sultan of Carsidoine and his men. The reason for the battle is not religious; the Sultan is attacking merely because his request for the hand of the King of Frise's daughter has been refused, and he is determined to win her by fair means or foul. In Gui de Warewic, Christians fight for Saracens and vice versa, for the honour of fighting and from no other motive. In Blancandin, Sadoine expresses this attitude well when he begs leave from his father to go and find a land at war. With the help of Blancandin he has brought peace to his father's lands:

2573 Sadoines remest en l'ombrage
Et Blancandins qui mult fu sage;
Sovent parloient de jouster
Et de pris et d'armes porter,
De sens et de chevalerie.

(i) In Les Enfances Renier, Grandoce takes Renier to visit Jerusalem. See above p. 97. In Gaufrey and Anseïs de Carthage, Guitant and Fabur respectively show that they knew the importance of Jerusalem in the Christian religion.

2578 "Trop tost est la guerre finie,
Ce disent li dansel de pris;
"N'ara mais guerre en cest païs
Ne cose ù on puist gaaignier.
Li rois est trop boins justicier."

Longing for greater glory, Sadoine goes to his father:

2720 "Peres, fait il, entendes moi.
Vous aves vostre terre en pais,
Se n'i ares guerre jamais.
Or voel aler, à mes soldées,
Pris conquerre en autres contrées."

Again, in the delineation of character, religion is less important than it was in the chansons de geste. Few of the Saracens we meet are converted, though two exceptions are Madoc, in Sone de Nansai, and Sadoine in Blancandin. Madoc is a warrior and a good knight, and it is he who acts as messenger between the Saracens and the Emperor. He proposes to the Emperor a combat of three Saracens to one Christian, and is himself chosen as one of the three. When his companions are killed, he conveniently realizes that Mahomet is no use if he cannot defend him:

18923 Madoc qui sages hons estoit
A Jesucrist pensé avoit
Et voit qu'il ne porra durer,
Se il ne va mierci crïer.
S'espee a l'emperëour rent
Et li dist: "Tenes me[n] convent.
Car je me vorrai batisier.
18930 Mahommes ne me wet aidier."

Sadoine, in Blancandin, is noble and generous, and bent on gaining honour in the field. As we have just read, he begs for permission to go abroad because there is peace at home. This is reluctantly granted, and men and ships are prepared. The images of Mahomet, Apollon, Cahu and Baratron are carried on board, and a 'mahommerie' set up. A storm blows up while Sadoine is at sea, and Blancandin, a Christian but Sadoine's sworn companion, craftily uses the elements to persuade his

friend that there is a storm only because he does not believe in God. Sadoine and his men hastily see the error of their ways and are converted. The storm dies down, and a safe landing is made (ll.3171ff.).

The Saracens who remain faithful to their religion are described in friendly tones and seem to be prepared to have dealings with the Christians and treat them kindly. They accept help where they can, and religion does not enter into the agreement. Thus Triamor, in Gui de Warewic, is prepared to accept Yon (who is actually Gui in disguise) as his champion, and agrees to free the Christians in his power if Yon wins (ll.8349ff.). Persan the emir, in the same romance, shows a similar disregard for religious differences and says he would have been ready to forgive Gui, whom he hated, if only he had been there to help him. In the final battle he is very generous to Heralt, who has fought on his behalf, and to Reinbrun, and tries to persuade them to stay. When they insist on leaving, Persan gives them gifts and prepares a ship (ll.12148ff.).

Arguz and Amorant, in Gui de Warewic, and Daire, in Blancandin, are cruel, and the latter, cowardly, characters, but in general even fairly insignificant Saracens are favourably described. Escladard, in Gui de Warewic, is described as being very chivalrous (l.3054); Cosdrein, the emir's nephew, is worthy and full of fighting-spirit (l.2987); Rubyon, in Blancandin, is said to be renowned for his courage. Of the more important characters, the Sultan of Carsidoine, in Richars li Biaus, stands out. His skill and bravery are praised, and he fights on despite the death of his companions. Richard tries to persuade him to be baptized, but the Sultan scorns Richard because he is a bastard, and the 'gods' of the Christians because they are useless, and therefore

refuses conversion. The battle continues, and inevitably the Sultan is killed. Richard laments the death of a brave opponent:

2869 "Ahi!" dist il, "bon cheualier
Trouue uous ay et fort et fier!
De uostre mort fust grans damages,
S'a dieu fust tournes uos corages;
Iamais mieudrez en uo contree
De uous n'i chaindera espee."

The hideous Saracen still exists in the romances with Amorant, the champion in Gui de Warewic. We are told that he comes from Ethiopia and that he is ugly, but the writer does not dwell on the details as a chanson de geste writer would; he merely emphasizes the great size of the man:

8052 Grant ert e leid e hidus,
Plus ert neir que un tisun,
De regardeure semble dragun,
Espés out les espalles e grant le cors,...
8059 Quatre pez ert il greindre e demi
Que chevaler que estust pres de lui;

Gui's reaction to this champion on the field is spontaneous and frank:

8444 Cist n'est pas home, ainz est diable.

The hideous tribes described in the chansons de geste are not found, and, as we have just read, the terrifying champions are more realistically portrayed.

There are few Saracen women in the romances. Nicolete, in Aucassin et Nicolete, was born a Saracen, but was captured in childhood, baptized, and brought up as a Christian. Nothing in the description of her reveals her eastern origin however:

V,7 Ele avoit blonde la crigne
p. 4 Et bien faite la sorcille,
La face clere et traitice.

La Bele Caitive, in La Fille du Conte de Ponthieu, was the daughter af a French lady and the Sultan of Aumarie. She married a Turk,

Malakin de Baudas, and had a son, reputed to be Saladin. The daughter of Alimodès, in Blancandin, is the only genuine Saracen, and unfortunately is drawn from the more extravagant type portrayed in the chansons de geste. At the beginning of the story she has given her sleeve to a noble Saracen, Rubyon. She falls in love with Blancandin as soon as she sees him, but when this love is not returned decides that Sadoine is really the one meant for her and agrees to become a Christian for his sake. When her father returns to the city, she defies him and forces a siege to be started. Sadoine eventually arrives and rescues her. Alimodès, her father, pleads for mercy, but beyond that his fate is not known. At least his daughter is not represented as demanding his death or his conversion, as occurs once or twice in the chansons de geste.

Because of this paucity of women characters, it might be expected that the courtly element would be missing from the romances. This is not so. The woman has taken a more important place in society than previously, and her influence is felt, even if she is not present. In L'Escoufle, the Turkish champion rides out wearing a magnificent sleeve, embroidered by his lady. Thinking of her encouraged him in battle:

1164 L'amors s'amie li enorte
K'il soit prex et frans et hardis.

Rubyon, in Blancandin, demands:

1796 "Bataille, por l'amor m'amie,"

The ladies watch the fighting, much as they would a tournament, and as they do in the chansons de geste:

1858 Et les puceles sont montées
As fenestres et as doignons
Por esgarder les .ii. barons.
(Blancandin)

These examples show the current attitude towards the lady and the high position she held in society. Indeed, if we study the romances in which we find Saracens mentioned in connection with the crusades,(i) we see that the crusades are not brought in to stress religious feeling, but to provide a means of penance for sinful love, or for sins which stemmed from jealousy or indiscretion. Only in Richard de Montivilliers' case, in L'Escoufle, is the motive religious. He intends:

125 D'aler outre mer sauver s'ame.

In Le Chastelain de Couci, the lover takes the cross only because he believes that his lady and her husband have done so. The husband feigns illness and, along with his wife, is released from his vow, but the unfortunate lover is forced to fulfil his promise, and leaves for the Holy Land, where he dies. In La Fille du Conte de Ponthieu, the Count takes the cross in a fit of repentance for having, as he thought, killed his daughter, (p.24, ch.12) and in La Chastelaine de Vergi, the Duke of Burgundy takes the cross in remorse for having indirectly caused the death of his niece and her lover, and for having killed his wife. (ll. 939ff.)

If we now consider the relations between Christians and Saracens, we find that in some romances the traditional hatred still exists, whilst in others a new spirit is abroad.

The old eagerness to fight the pagan remains. The King of Jerusalem explains to Richard de Montivilliers, in L'Escoufle:

820 Et se je puis par vos abatre;
L'orguel des felons mescreans,
A tos les jors de vos vivans
En arés mais honor et pris.

(i) See above pp. 170f.

In Le Chastelain de Couci, the people of Acre are glad to see reinforcements, because they have been needing help to fight the unbelievers (ll.7409ff.). The army had been gathered by the English King Richard I, who had caused a crusade to be preached after a tournament; Many took the cross. Then again, we know that prisoners are still held, because of the promises to set all Christians free, in Sone de Nansai, (ll.20157ff.) and in Gui de Warewic (l.8349). The messengers are on the whole well-treated, although Gui, in Gui de Warewic, is so arrogant that the Sultan forgets convention and attempts to imprison him (ll.3955ff.). In Sone de Nansai, the Sultan offers a large sum of money to the Christian messenger, who refuses it haughtily but still takes the message (ll.20077ff.). The descriptions in the romances seem much more in keeping with the spirit of the age than those in the chansons de geste. The latter have been adapted to some extent in order to preach the crusade, but they are bound by tradition, despite the more realistic details which are found in the later ones. The romances are a newer form and present the subject-matter more in accordance with the feelings of the time. If a man went abroad, it was more probably because he had been roused by a good preacher, or because he hoped to win land for himself, or because he had been deceived in some way. The hatred of the infidel, which is found in the chansons de geste, is not an instinctive feeling by the thirteenth century. It needs to be fostered and encouraged.

This eagerness to fight the Saracens should not be stressed too much. As we have said earlier, a different attitude exists in the romances. The Christians sometimes form alliances with the Saracens and help them fight their enemies. The alliance may be made by the Christians for personal reasons, for example, to gain their freedom,

but such a compromise, even for that reason, would have been unthinkable in earlier writings. Thus Tiebaut, in La Fille du Conte de Ponthieu, goes with the Sultan of Aumarie and conquers (p. 40, ch. 18). Gui, in Gui de Warewic, is prepared to help the Saracen King, Triamor, for the sake of a Christian pilgrim prisoner (l.8199), and, earlier in the story, he was ready to go over to the Sultan with all his men because the Christian Emperor's seneschal had been plotting against him (ll.3363ff.). Clearly it is fighting and honour which are important, not religion.

As in the chansons de geste, truces are made and agreements drawn up. Some of these truces are purely military. In Blancandin, the people besieged in the castle ask the Saracens for a truce (ll.2031ff.), and in L'Escoufle, a truce is arranged with the Turks for three years (ll.1316ff.). Lands and cities are handed over, provided quarter is given (Blancandin, l.5505; Sone de Nansai, ll.19169f. and 19021ff.).

Many other agreements are religious. In Sone de Nansai, the emperor sends a message to the Sultan of Damas telling him that he has gone too near the Sepulchre (ll.20043ff.). The Sultan calls a council; it is decided that, if a bailiff is sent, everything will be given into his power:

20107 Si lor laissies lor loy tenir.
Car la welent vivre et morir.
Et vous la vostre bien tenes
Et qui mesfait, si soit dampnés.

This is agreed upon. The Sultan joyfully receives the bailiff and, at the latter's request, frees all the prisoners he has:

20159 Li soudans les a mis en mer
Et a son coust les fist passer.

Triamor, in Gui de Warewic, promises Gui that if he wins:

8349 Tut les Crestiens qui en prisun sunt
Par mi delivrez serrunt;
N'ert Crestien, petit ne grant,
Home ne femme ne neis enfant,
Desk'en Inde la maur,
Que nel delivre a grant honur.

He also promises a truce to pilgrims during his lifetime:

8355 E tele pes par tote la terre ferai,
Tant cum je vivre purrai,
Que Crestiens i purrunt aler,
Sains e salf e sanz encombrer.
Ja ne troverai nul si vaillant
8360 Qui lur mesface tant ne quant
Que nel feisse pendre erralment
Arder le cors e pudrer al vent.

The romances seem to fall into three groups as far as religion is concerned. In the first group are the romances where the plot may be affected by the religion of the characters, but there are no discussions about the differences between the Christian and Saracen faiths, and no details regarding the latter. Such romances are Aucassin et Nicolete and Floriant et Florete. In the second group are the romances which refer to actuality.(i) It is interesting to note that, in these romances, the writers keep to reality and make no mention of Mahomet and the supposed gods and idols of the Saracens. In the third and final group are the romances which, as far as religious details are concerned, most resemble the chansons de geste. They are: Richars li Biaus, Gui de Warewic, Sone de Nansai and Blancandin. The Saracens are still reputed to worship idols and to have many gods. Prayers are made to Mahomet and success comes only if he allows it. Thus, in Blancandin, when Alimodès hears the news of Blancandin:

5362 Mahon reclaime et Apolin,
Baratron, Margot et Cahu,
Que a li monstrent lor vertu
Et li aident à cest besoing.

(i) See above p. 171.

Similarly, the idols are beaten and reviled if the Saracens are losing. The Sultan in Gui de Warewic angrily demands that his gods be brought to him, and then curses and beats them (ll.3643ff.).

No new names of gods are added, but almost all the ones mentioned in the chansons de geste are found in the romances. Mahomet is named in five out of the fifteen romances which we are considering : Sone de Nansai, Blancandin, L'Escoufle, Gui de Warewic and Richars li Biaus; Tervagant is named in L'Escoufle, Gui de Warewic and Richars li Biaus; and Apolin in Gui de Warewic and Blancandin. The other gods such as Jupin, Baraton, etc. are mentioned in only one romance each.

Some converts are made, but very few, although if there is any question of death, every effort is made to preach the Gospel and save the Saracens. The Sultan in Richars li Biaus is interesting, and his case seems to parallel that of Marsile in Anseïs de Carthage. Marsile refuses Christianity because of the divisions he sees amongst the believers; the Sultan because of Richard's birth and the inadequacy of the Christian 'gods'. He prefers to die rather than embrace such a faith. In Sone de Nansai, even the townsfolk are given a chance to hear the Gospel before being put to the sword:

19037 Sones les a araisonné,
De la foy lor a demandé,
S'il kerroient en Jesucrist
Qui la nouvielle loy escrist.
Et lors fu qui les prëecha,
La nouvielle loy lor moustra....

19051 Paijen se sont d'unne part trait
Et li pluisour grant duel ont fait.
A lor loy ont estudijé,...

19071 Uns autres lor ot prëechié
C'a lor loy les a ravoyé.
Si dïent que lor loy tenrront
Et la vivre u morir vorront.

The emperor orders their death:

19076 En telle loy plus ne vivres.

In the same romance however Blaton offers to give up his land but not his religion, and is allowed to sail away free:

19164 "La loy c'ay tenu jusqu'a chi
Ne sera ja par moy guerpie.
Mais la tierre ne wege mie.
Awec mes anchisseurs irai
Et la loy qu'il tienent tenrrai.
Or m'en laist on en pais aler
19170 Et toutes mes coses mener.
En (m)autre tierre irai manoir
De cesti fache son voloir."

Often remarks about religion show an amazing tolerance. Triamor, in Gui de Warewic, blesses Gui in Mahomet's name because the Christian has agreed to fight for him. When Gui replies that he prefers to trust in the Son of Mary, because Mahomet is useless, Triamor is not angry, but quite calmly states that if Gui wins he will pay great honours to the Christian God (ll.8337ff.). In earlier writings, Gui would probably have struck Triamor for daring to bless him in Mahomet's name, and Triamor would have retaliated on hearing Mahomet derided.

Naval and military details have been included in the relevant chapter on the chansons de geste because very little is added to what has been said there. Possibly in some cases the poets have used as prototypes the descriptions of battles in the epic poems. Occasionally a strange mixture of realism and gentleness is found, as in Blancandin:

1134 Devant les murs, sor le fossé,
Fu la praerie mult bele;
L'erbe i estoit fresce et novele.
Là sont les joustes comencies,
Quant les batailles sont rengies.
Sovent i pert on et gaaigne,
Car bien saves, tel est l'ovraigne.

After this idyllic description of the field, the poet continues with

a vigorous description, stressing the noise, the horrors and the heat of the battle. The main difference from the military point of view is that, already mentioned, of fighting for one's own honour and glory rather than for one's religion. This attitude is especially prominent in Gui de Warewic, Richars li Biaus and Blancandin. We have earlier quoted the speech of Sadoine, in which he complains that there is peace at home and therefore no honours can be won.(i)

In the romances, much stress is laid on the internal wars of the pagans. They are the reason for the fighting in, for example, Gui de Warewic and Blancandin.

One should be careful not to draw too many conclusions from the romances, because Saracens occur so rarely, and in concentrating on the small area where they are found, a false impression may be given. In general they seem to support what we have found in the chansons de geste, namely that the characters are realistically drawn and that they follow the same codes of behaviour as the French. Religious fanaticism is waning, though from the very nature of a romance religion plays a less important part. Conversions are made and beliefs discussed from time to time, but the earlier vindictiveness has disappeared. Even in the romances where the crusades are mentioned, religious zeal is no longer the chief motive for taking part in them, and in the other romances it is the courtly ideas which predominate. Christian and Saracen live together for the most part amicably, and each respects the other's wish to keep his own religion. Personal valour is of the utmost importance, and chivalry and honour the main theme of the romances.

(i) See above pp. 171f.

Chapter 9

Palamedes li Mesconeus

The Saracens who figure in Arthurian literature fall mainly outside the scope of this thesis because the authors, as for example in Les Prophécies de Merlin, were using the term to denote pagans in general, to describe non-Moslem ones like the Saxons, or to express the deepest disapproval, for example:

> 'Dont je vueil que li Sages Clerc mete en escrit
> que il devendront pires que Sarrazins,...'(i)

One notable exception occurs however, in the knight Palamedes the Saracen. Along with those of his father, Esclabor li mesconeus, and of his eleven brothers, his name figures throughout the thirteenth-century Prose Tristan, and from then on he stands as an example of nobility and courtoisie, despite the fact that he is a pagan. He is also found in the Roman de Palamedes, the Prophécies de Merlin, Rusticien de Pise's compilation, and the English versions, especially Malory's Morte d'Arthur.

(i) Les Prophécies de Merlin ed. L.A. Paton (New York 1926) Vol.I, p. 243.

Palamedes first appears in the Prose Tristan:

> 'A new character, Palamède, is added, whose unrequited love for Iseult introduces a sombre note in an otherwise idyllic picture of chivalric life. Palamède is Iseult's faithful knight, doomed never to be loved in return, and yet invariably generous and loyal to his successful rival, Tristan.'(i)

The truth of this statement is amply borne out by a study of the texts in which we find Palamedes mentioned.

The main content of this chapter regarding Palamedes has been taken from the more easily accessible manuscripts, those in the British Museum, namely, Harley 49, for some of the first part of the Prose Tristan, and for the second part, Additional 5474 and Royal 20. D. ii. For the Roman de Palamedes, Additional 12,228 was used. E. Löseth has proved invaluable throughout.(ii)

The Roman de Palamedes, so called:

> 'por ce que si cortois fu toutevoies Palamedes que nul plus cortois chevaliers ne fu au tens le roi Artus.'
> (Addit. 12,228, f. 3r., col. 1)

in actual fact contains very little regarding Palamedes himself, but gives interesting details of the life of his father, Esclabor li mesconeus, and tells how Palamedes came to Britain. According to C.E. Pickford, the Roman de Palamedes was written after the first, but before the second, or expanded, version of the Prose Tristan.(iii)

(i) E. Vinaver 'The Prose Tristan' pp. 339-347 in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History ed. R.S. Loomis (Oxford 1959) p. 343.

(ii) E. Löseth Le Roman en Prose de Tristan, le Roman de Palamède et la Compilation de Rusticien de Pise: analyse critique d'après les manuscrits de Paris (Paris 1891)

(iii) C.E. Pickford 'Miscellaneous French Prose Romances' pp. 348-357 in Loomis op. cit., p. 348. Vinaver art.cit. p. 339, dates these two versions of the Prose Tristan from 1225-1235 and the second half of the century respectively. The manuscripts used contain the latter version.

No attempt had been made in the Prose Tristan to explain Palamedes' presence in Britain, nor that of his father and brothers. Clearly the author of the Roman de Palamedes intended his work to explain the Prose Tristan and the Prose Lancelot, and to elaborate them. As often happened in the chansons de geste, the father's story was written after that of his son had become popular.

Some details about Palamedes are to be found in Les Prophécies de Merlin, but on the whole they add little to the impression we have of him from the Prose Tristan.

From the very first in the latter work we are introduced to Palamedes as an accomplished knight. In Ireland, the knights are preparing to attend a tournament at the Château de la Lande, when they see:

> 'un chevalier qui portoit un escu noir.... Et sachiez qu'il portoit ii. espées.' (Harley 49, f. 63r.)

The fact that the knight carries two swords is significant and reveals his skill, because it means that he is prepared to fight two other knights simultaneously.

The same knight, still unnamed, appears at the tournament and:

> 'tout maintenant qu'il se fu torné de vers cels del chastel, il le commença si bien a fere de toutes pars, que nus ne le veist qui tout ne s'en esbahisist. Il abat chevaliers et trebuche et arache hialmes de testes et escus des cox, et le fet si bien que nus ne le voit qui bien ne die qu'il doit avoir le pris et le lox de cest tornoiement.' (Harley 49, f. 64r.)

The prize is the Dame des Landes and her domain, but the knight states that he is unable to marry and therefore refuses it. He does agree to go back and stay with the King of Ireland, Yseult's father, as long as he is in the country. At this point, the author reveals the knight's name, having thoroughly aroused the reader's curiosity and interest:

> 'Et se alcuns me demandoit coment li bon chevalier avoit a non, ge diroie que ce estoit Palamedes le cortois. Onques n'avoit esté crestiens, et si cuidoient li prodom entor qui i reparoit que il fust crestiens. Et il avoit xi. freres, molt bons chevaliers, et pere molt prodom, qui estoit apelez Esclabor le mesconeuz.' (Harley 49, f. 64v.)

Having been introduced to Palamedes' great bravery and capabilities as a knight, we are immediately shown the second main facet of his character, his love for Yseult and his resulting actions. His love is born during his stay with the King of Ireland. Yseult was serving at table:

> 'Palamedes qui la regardoit en est touz esbahiz et bien dit en son cuer que ce est tote la plus bele chose que onques voist (sic).(i) Si li chiet si el cuer et tant li plest et atalente, qu'il n'a riens el monde qu'il ne feist por lui avoir mes (sic) sa loi guerpir, et ce estoit la chose el monde qu'il feist plus a enviz, mes totevoiez le leroit il por avoir Yselt si pooit estre.' (Harley 49, f. 65r.)

It is not until Tristan sees Palamedes' love for Yseult that he resolves to have her:

> 'Tristan avoit molt regardé Yseult et molt li plesoit, mes son cuer n'i avoit pas mis dus qu'a amer granment. Et neporquant, puis qui (sic) (ii) vit que Palamedes i entendoit si merveillosement qu'il dit qu'il l'avra ou il morra, Tristan dit a son meesmes (sic) que ja Palamedes, pooir qu'il ait, ne l'avra.' (Harley 49, f. 65r.)

So grows up the rivalry between Tristan and Palamedes:

> 'Palamedes, qui molt estoit apercevant, n'ot pas esté leienz iiij. jors qu'il aperçut bien que Tristan amoit Yseult et qu'il le haoit mortelment por Yselt.' (Harley 49, f.65r.)

Thus at the first meeting with Palamedes, we see his three main characteristics: firstly his reputation as a knight, his courtoisie and gallantry, secondly his unreturned love for Yseult, and lastly his rivalry with

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(i) Possibly equals 'veist.'

(ii) Possibly equals 'qu'il'.

Tristan. Dealing with the three in this order, let us see how they develop.

It would be impossible to cite every instance of Palamedes' courtoisie and bravery. A few will suffice.

Palamedes, having undertaken to avenge the Knight of the Red City's death, sets out on his adventure, but meets a second knight, who claims to be on the same mission. In the ensuing joust, the knight acknowledges Palamedes' superiority and asks his name:

> 'Or sachiez bien de voir que jou ai non Palamedes. Ne sai se vous onques mais oistes parler de moi?" Ha! Sire!" ce dist li chevaliers, "vous soiés li tres bien venus! Certes de vous ai jou maintes fois voirement oi parler. Vous estes de si haute proueche que se nus chevaliers pour bonté de chevalerie doit cesti fait mener a fin, vous l'i merrois. Ce sai je bien"' (Addit. 5474, f. 96v., col. 1)

Yseult herself, though angry with Palamedes at the time, refers to his noble reputation:

> '"Bien sachiés que li mondes si dit que vous estes li plus courtois de tous autres"' (Addit. 5474, f. 123v., col. 1)

The greatest compliments come from Lancelot. Tristan and Palamedes, temporarily reconciled, are riding together when they meet Lancelot, whom Tristan recognizes by his sword. They exchange pleasantries, then Lancelot turns to Palamedes:

> 'Grant joie fait Lancelot a Palamedes et li dist: "Sire, se diex m'ait, vous vous maintenés plus honorablement que nus hom que jou sache. Vous avés passé de renon de chevalerie uns et autres." Tristan, qui mout est liés et joians, respont en sousriant et dist: "Commant, mesire Lancelot, ore avés vous aprises noveles de Palamedes?" "Mesire Tristan," fait mesire Lancelot, "jou ne puis venir en lieu ou aventures soient achievées que quant jou demande qui la fist que tuit ne dient que ce fist Palamedes. Palamedes enprent tout et tout met a fin meesmement. Jou n'oi mie tant parler de vous con de Palamedes. Il met a fin toutes les aventures et toutes les chevaleries de sa main. Jou ne puis en lieu venir ou on ne paraut de Palamedes."' (Addit. 5474, f. 208r., col. 1)

Tristan himself appreciates Palamedes' prowess, despite his hatred of the pagan. At the tournament of Louveserp, he exclaims:

> '"Ha! Diex! Quel chevalier chi a ! Come il est preus et vaillans plus que nus autres, et com est poissans de son mestier! Com est hardis! Com est seurs et enprenans a tous besoins! Con jou tieng a grant damage qu'il n'est de la nostre loy! Ha! Palamedes, chevaliers preus et vaillans plus que nus autres, que on te devroit hounourer pour la boine chevalerie qui est en toi!"' (Addit. 5474, f. 106r., col. 1)

Another touching example of Tristan's admiration for his rival is when he fears that he has been killed in a joust:

> '"Ha! Diex!" fait Tristan, "Que est ce que jou voi? Est dont Palamedes mors, li mieudres chevaliers du monde? Toute chevalerie est morte s'il est mors."'
> (Addit. 5474, f. 209v., col. 2)

Palamedes' love for Yseult seems to bring out the best and worst in him. It tempts him to fight Tristan in situations he would normally avoid, for example, when he is wearing disguised arms, or when Tristan is wounded. In general, however, it serves to bring out his innate nobility and prowess. Tristan is a little dubious as regards Palamedes' capabilities, but the latter warns him of the power of love:

> '"Tristan, jou crois bien que vous estes mieudres chevaliers que jou ne sui et plus poissant; mais mes cuers me maine a ce que de tant comme mes anemis est plus fors de moi, de tant doit estre ma force plus grans.... Vos troverés Palamedes autre que vous ne quidiés."' (Addit. 5474, f. 21r., col. 1)

Indeed, his feats in front of Yseult at the tournament of Louveserp are so praiseworthy that all agree that the knight 'a l'escu vert' should have the prize.

Palamedes meets Tristan on his way to Camelot and refuses to fight him as he is not properly armed:

> 'Quant Tristan entent la frankise que Palamedes li fait, il le tient a trop grant merveille. Il ne peust mie devant croire qu'il le feist ensi, car ce savoit il bien por voir, que Palamedes le haoit morteument. "Tristan," ce dit Palamedes, "or sachés que jou nel fais mie por toi, ne por

grant bien que jou te voeille. Ains le fais por m'onor garder."' (Addit. 5474, f. 143v., col. 1)

He then asks Tristan where he is going, and proceeds to offer him his horse, as it is the better of the two.

It is at this point of the story that Malory states that Palamedes was baptized, with Tristan and Galleron as godparents. In the Prose Tristan, however, it is not until after Tristan's death that Palamedes becomes a Christian.

A strange incident is Palamedes' attempted kidnapping of Yseult, likened by Vinaver to the abduction of Yseult by the anonymous harper, in the Harp and the Rote incident in Thomas' Le Roman de Tristan.(i) The harper asks for Yseult as his reward, after having moved the court with his singing. The place of the anonymous harper is taken by Palamedes in the Prose Tristan; he likewise asks for Yseult, having indebted her to him by returning Brangain, the maidservant whom she wrongfully condemned to death. Palamedes tells King Mark, Yseult's husband, of his wife's promise to reward him with anything that it is in her power to give; the King agrees to abide by it as well. Reluctantly, therefore, he has to tell Yseult to follow Palamedes. She escapes, however, when Lambègue challenges Palamedes, and remains in a nearby castle until Tristan rescues her.(ii) Thereafter Palamedes seeks to hide his love for Yseult.

From the preceding paragraphs, it may be inferred that Palamedes, despite the fact that he is a Saracen, is regarded as being a worthy

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(i) Le Roman de Tristan by Thomas ed. J. Bédier 2 vols. SATF (Paris 1902-1905) Vol. I, Ch. XIX, pp. 168ff.

(ii) Harley 49, f. 120r.

knight. (In this respect he reminds us very much of Carahuel, Sadoine, Froiecuer and Limbanor. All are regarded as worthy and courageous, and are respected by the Christians.) Like other Arthurian knights, Palamedes went in search of adventures. As he says to King Mark:

> '"Un chevalier estrange, sui del roialme de Logres et ai ja auques repairiée (sic) en la cort le bon roi Artus. Chevalier errant sui qui vois querant aventures et merveilles del monde, par les estranges terres."' (Harley 49, f. 120r.)

Like all knights also, he has his quest, the quest 'de la beste glatissante'. We learn from a remark by Gaheriet that he has followed the beast for fourteen years (Addit. 5474, f. 301r., col. 1). Like other knights, Palamedes helps maidens in distress, defends his friends in jousts and puts honour above all things.

The fact that he is a pagan is never concealed, but undoubtedly he had the advantage of being brought up in a Christian country. This is disclosed during the adventure of the Red City. Palamedes undertakes to avenge the Knight of the Red City's death, and therefore he is the one to take the letter from the dead knight's hand:

> 'Il se met maintenant devant les chevaliers [Tristan and Dinadan] et prent le brief et le moustre a mon seignor Tristan et li dist: "Sire, lisiés, qui miez savés lire de nous." Et sachiés que tout fust Palamedes paiens, si avoit il plus esté entre crestiens, puis qu'il vint el roiaume de Logres. Che fu en s'enfance, et sachiés, Palamedes n'avoit mie plus de xiiij. ans quant ses peres l'amena el roiaume de Logres avoec ses autres enfans.' (Addit. 5474, f. 90v., col. 1)

The reading in the Royal manuscript is slightly different here:

> 'Et sachiez que tout eut esté Palamedes paiens, si avoit il apris letres latines entre crestiens puis qu'il vint el roiaume de Logres. Mais ce fu en enfance, et sachiez que Palamedes n'avoit pas plus de v. ans...' (Royal 20. D. ii, f. 119r., col. 1)

Presumably, therefore, he was brought up like any Christian knight, if we take into account the previous remarks and his father's reputation as

a knight.

Nevertheless, some interesting remarks occur in connection with Palamedes' religion, and there are some situations described, which make the epithet of 'pagan' seem more realistic. We learn that Palamedes:

> 'en nule guise ne s'acordoit a crestiens fors de chevalerie et de compaignie. A loi crestiene ne se pooit il acorder. Pour coi, si frere carnel en laissoient sa compaignie et si faisoient maint autre chevalier et, neporquant, Tristan ne Lancelot ne l'avoient onques lassié pour la haute chevalerie qu'il savoient en lui; ains se tenoient a bien paié quant il le pooient avoir aucune fois." (Addit. 5474, f. 133r., col. 2)

Another time it is pointed out that he cannot enter holy places. Esclabor, Artus, Palamedes and Galahad are asked to attempt an adventure in a nearby abbey:

> 'Lors vienent en l'abeie et descendent. Palamedes remest en la court pour çou que il n'osoit entrer en l'eglise, car il n'iert mie crestiens.' (Addit. 5474, f. 271v., col. 2)

At the very beginning of the Prose Tristan, he states that he cannot marry the Dame des Landes, perhaps because of his religion, for at this time he was not yet in love with Yseult. Being unbaptized, he would be unable to marry a Christian princess, although we have seen earlier (i) that Palamedes would have been prepared to change his religion if that would have enabled him to marry Yseult.

While accepting the fact that he is a pagan, the knights nevertheless regret this and try to convert him. After the tournament at Louveserp, Tristan admires his skill and says to himself:

> '"Con jou tieng a grant damage qu'il n'est de la nostre loy!"' (Addit. 5474, f. 106r., col. 1)

Again, Palamedes leaves Galahad and Tristan, having helped the latter:

(i) See above p. 186.

'Et quant il les ot un poi eslongiés, Galaad dist a Tristan: "Qui est chil chevaliers?" et il l'en conte tout çou que il en sot et qu'il en ot veu, et que c'estoit li chevaliers qui sievoit la beste glatissant. "Certes," fait Galaad, "mout est vaillans et mout fist grant courtoisie quant il vous secourut entre si grant gent et si savoit que vous le haiés de mortel haine. Jou le plaing trop pour çou qu'il n'est crestiens." "Et jou ausi", fait Tristan.'

(Addit. 5474, f. 263v., col. 1)

Galahad does not refuse to ride with Palamedes, but does refuse to let him fight for him. Arthur, attacked by Mark, is in sore straits when Galahad, with Artus le petit, Esclabor li mesconeus and Palamedes, arrives at Camelot. Galahad says:

'"Faisons le bien si lor alons aidier, et se nous ne somes que troi, nostre Sire sera li quars en nostre conpaignie, qui plus nous vaura que ne feroient c. mil chevalier." "Comment!" fait Palamedes, "ne somes nous que troi?" "Nenil," fait Galaad, "Vous n'estes mie de nostre conpaignie, puis que vous n'estes crestiens."'

(Addit. 5474, f. 273r., col. 2)

Palamedes, excusably annoyed, fights on Mark's side until he sees his father being attacked and returns to defend him. Galahad, mollified by this act of filial loyalty, comes in his turn to help . Presumably Esclabor has been baptized, as Galahad accepted his offer of help, and also he entered the abbey in the adventure mentioned previously, when Palamedes remained in the court-yard.

We are told definitely that all the brothers of Palamedes were baptized. Two knights in full armour approch him; one is a relative of Segurades:

'et li autres qui sour lui venoit estoit freres carneus Palamedes, et estoit apielés Seraphar, non de paien, mais il estoit crestiens, car tuit li frere Palamedes estoient crestiens, fors Palamedes seulement.'

(Addit. 5474, f. 133r., col. 2)

Palamedes himself seems definitely to object to baptism, although

no specific reasons are given for his continued refusal to accept Christianity.(i) At Arthur's court, after the battle of Camelot, he again categorically refuses to be baptized, and remains impervious to the king's pleas:

> 'Li rois regarde Palamedes et le voit si bien taillié̊t de tous menbres qu'il le loe mout et dist que bien deveroit estre preudom. Si li demande son non, et chil li dist la verité: "Ha! Palamedes," fait li rois, "Estes vous chou? Par sainte crois, jou vous ai mout oi loer a maint preudome que jou vous pris sour tous les preudomes qui en Dieu ne croient. Ne jou ne sai en vous que blasmer ne que reprendre, fors chou seulement que vous n'estes mie crestiens. Pour Dieu et pour le sauvement de vostre arme, recevés baptesme." Cil respont adont et dist: "Sire, jou ne ving pas chi pour ceste chose, ne ce ne feroie jou en nule maniere.."'
>
> (Addit. 5474, f. 275v., col. 2)

Others at the court also attempt to persuade him:

> 'Si fu Palamedes molt priés des uns et des autres qu'il recheust baptesme, mais onques n'en vait (sic) parole entendre et se mist a la voie.' (Addit. 5474, f. 275r., col. 1)

Eventually success attends the knights' efforts. After Tristan's death, there are nine sections in the manuscript Additional 5474, of which the sixth describes Palamedes' baptism. Palamedes jousts with Lancelot and then goes to Arthur's court:

> 'Et tant i demoura que li rois et la roine et tout li baron de la court li proierent que il devenist crestiens et compains de la Table Reonde, tant qu'il lor otroia. Li rois fist apieler barons et chevaliers et dames et les fist vestir ricement de dras de soie. Quant il vint a l'endemain au matin, li rois ala a la maistre eglise de Camaaloth. Illeuc ot mout grant conpaignie de barons. Li rois vint devant le maistre autel o grant barounie et Palamedes avoec, a qui il demanda s'il voloit redevoir baptesme. Il dist: "Sire, oil." Quant li rois l'oi, il en ot grant joie. Lors le fist baptisier el non du Pere et du Fil et du Saint Esperit. Lors fu la joie grans en Camaaloth con se diex i fust descendus.'
>
> (Addit. 5474, f. 301r., col. 2)

(i) See for example above p.191.

Palamedes then takes the oath like the other knights and becomes a member of the Round Table. He later asks if he may join in the quest of the Holy Grail with the other companions; the king grants his request.

When Palamedes' companions hear that he has become a Christian, their reaction is spontaneous and sincere:

> 'Galaad et Perchevaus en font grant joie et beneissent Dieu de cele boine aventure qui est avenue a Palamedes, car li sieucles en vaut mieus.' (Addit. 5474, f. 301v., col. 2)

The idea of accepting a pagan as a person, and realizing his merits, is relatively new at this period, but is admirably portrayed, and is much less crudely expressed than in some of the contemporary chansons de geste, although the same feeling may be traced there. 'Conversion rather than extermination' is the new theme, and the knights do make persistent efforts to persuade Palamedes to become a Christian. Nothing is said in the Prose Tristan of the errors of belief of the Saracens, nor are the gods and idols and Mahomet, so popular in the chansons de geste, mentioned. Palamedes prays to God, as any Moslem would. As in the verse romances, it is personal chivalry which is important. It seems to become increasingly important, depending upon the status of the Christian himself. Palamedes' brothers, converts to Christianity, ignore his chivalry and refuse to be seen with him.(i) Tristan and Lancelot, both highly-regarded knights, are able to overlook Palamedes' religion to a certain extent and seek to be with him because of his great gallantry.(ii) Finally, King Arthur shows us that he prizes Palamedes, despite the latter's faith, and further, implies in

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(i) See above p. 191.

(ii) See above p. 191.

the same remark that there are other non-Christians whom he admires.(i) There are no long discussions on religion. Palamedes is admired for his courage and skill, although the knights regret that so noble a knight should be pagan, and feel it incumbent upon themselves to persuade him to receive baptism.

Unfortunately, Palamedes is not destined to live and enjoy Christianity. During a long joust with Lancelot, who did not realize that Palamedes was now a knight of the Round Table, Palamedes is severely wounded, although he acquits himself admirably. Lancelot and Hector ride off, and Palamedes, left alone, is approached by Agravain and Gawain:

> 'qui plus haoient Palamedes que nul autre.'
> (Addit. 5474, f. 303v., col. 2)

The reason for this hatred is not given, although Palamedes has had the better of the family in jousts from time to time, and the brothers are reputed to be treacherous.

Gawain fights Palamedes, who has revealed that he is now a knight of the Round Table, in defiance of his oath to keep the rule forbidding these knights to fight each other. Both knights attack him, Agravain less willingly than his brother, and when they have overcome Palamedes he does prevent Gawain from cutting off their victim's head. Gawain instead:

> 'li souslieve le pan du hauberch et li boute l'espee u cors.' (Addit. 5474, f. 304r., col. 1)

Agravain is stricken with remorse, but:

(i) See above p. 193.

'Messire Gavain fu mout liés de cele mort, car mout haoit Palamedes.' (Addit. 5474, f. 304r., col. 1)

Lancelot and Hector, hearing Palamedes' cries, return, but are unable to help him. He dies nobly, praying that God will pardon Gawain, and declaring Agravain's innocence. Realizing that he will never see the court again, he asks Lancelot to greet the knights on his behalf, and to defend his honour:

> 'Apres ceste parole, comence a batre sa coupe et a plourer trop durement, et puis dist: "Jesus Chris, fontaine de pitié et de mesericorde, aiés merchi de moi. Si voirement com jou vous ai loiaument servi et de boin cuer puis que jou rechui baptesme, si aiés merchi de moi, car jou n'ai ore mestier fors de ta mesericorde...Ha! Jesus Chris, pere de pitié, en tes mains commant jou mon esperit!" Lors met maintenant ses mains en crois sour son pis, et maintenant li part l'ame du cors.' (Addit. 5474, f. 304r., col. 2)

Esclabor rides by and asks the brothers who the dead knight is. Not realizing who it is, Lancelot and Hector tell him of Palamedes' death:

> 'Quant il entent que c'est ses fiex, la riens el monde que il plus amoit, il n'a pooir de dire mot. Ains li faut li cuers, et maintenant le convient cheoir a tere de si haut come il estoit.' (Addit. 5474, f. 304v., col. 1)

Esclabor determines to die, because he feels that he is not worthy to live after the death of such a good knight. He has his son buried in a nearby abbey, and has a silver tombstone laid over him. Those in the abbey suggest that the tomb be inscribed, and the king fully agrees with the suggestion. Esclabor then rides out to a mountain, where he stabs himself, having first ordered his squire that the inscription on the tomb must be written with the blood he is about to shed. At the same time, he asks to be buried beside his son. Esclabor's actions and his devotion to his son are beautifully described, and make a touching farewell to Palamedes, whose death is regretted by everyone.

King Arthur, on hearing of Palamedes' death, adds a fitting conclusion:

> 'Par la mort d'un seul home n'averroit mais a pieche si grans damages el roiaume de Logres.'
> (Addit. 5474, f. 304v., col. 2)

Esclabor, Palamedes' father, is mentioned from time to time throughout the story. He is obviously known for his chivalry and fine deeds, as are all Palamedes' brothers, who have become Christian. It is with Esclabor's arrival in England that the Roman de Palamedes opens. Presumably the author felt that there should be some explanation for the family's presence in Arthur's kingdom.

At the time of Arthur's coronation, Esclabor, or Escalibort, was brought from Babylon, his birthplace, to the emperor at Rome, as part of the 'treusage' due to the latter. His noble birth and standing in his own land are stressed, to account for his courtoisie and Palamedes' nobility of character. To the emperor himself, Esclabor says:

> '"Si sui ge nez des plus gentill de la contree dont ge ving."' (Addit. 12,228, f. 11r., col. 1)

This statment makes interesting comparison with Palamedes' remarks, when faced with Lancelot's lavish compliments, and indicates the hand of a different author. Palamedes tells the Christian knight:

> '"Jou sui uns povres chevaliers de petite chevalerie. Jou ne sui mie estrais de rois si con vous estes. Onques en moi n'ot gentilleche se d'aventure ne me vint. Jou sui tous estrais de vilains et vous de rois."'
> (Addit. 5474, f. 208r., col. 1)

Freed from slavery by the Emperor because he saved his life, Esclabor is envied by the other barons, who seek his death. Unable to achieve this, they succeed in having him imprisoned and charged with the murder of the emperor's heir and nephew, Gracïen. Finally, convinced

of Esclabor's innocence, the Emperor wishes to restore him to favour, but Esclabor prefers to leave the country, realizing that the barons will never be satisfied until they are rid of him. Because he has heard so much of Arthur's court, he resolves to go there and sets out on the long sea voyage to England, with his brother, wife and family; the arrival in England and subsequent difficulty with the language are quite amusingly described.

When he lands in northern England, Esclabor immediately impresses himself upon King Pellinor, King of Northumberland, by his courtoisie in offering a horse during a hunt. Eventually he sets out for Camelot and there explains to Arthur why he has come:

> 'et il estoient et de fait et de paroles si cortois ambedui [Esclabor and his brother] que li rois Artus les prisoit molt et il cuidoient (sic) tout veraiment qu'il fussent andui cristyens.' (Addit. 12,228, f. 18r., col. 2)

Palamedes himself is referred to occasionally in the Roman de Palamedes, mainly in order to mention his greatness as a knight, but the reason for naming the book 'Palamedes' was certainly not because he figured in it as an important character. Because of this, the printed editions often ignored the earlier title and printed the romance in two parts, entitled Meliadus and Guiron le Courtois.

The only other eastern Saracen in the Prose Tristan is a magician from Barbary. He tells his life-story when his magic fails in the presence of Galahad, and an explanation is required:

> '"Jou sui uns hom nés de Barbarie. Gentieus hom sui, asses plus que tu ne quides, et estrais de toutes pars de Sarrasins. Mais aventure m'aporta en cest pais plus povre que mestiers ne me fust, si rechui baptesme de la main Nassïen."' (Addit. 5474, f. 264r. col. 2)

Soon the pagoian sold his soul for riches and practised the black arts, but

faced with Galahad's goodness he becomes helpless. When Galahad retires, he is carried away by demons to Hell.(i)

The fact that Palamedes and the magician are both found in the one work is interesting, showing as it does two attitudes prevalent at this time. The Saracens were thought by Westerners to have dealings with the Devil and to dabble in necromancy. This idea is found side by side with the more realistic attempts to accept them as normal people, and to try and live at peace with them, helping them to conversion by deeds and words.

Apart from the information that Palamedes is slightly less handsome than Tristan and that he is 'bien taillié't',(ii) there is no physical description of him in the Prose Tristan. It would have been interesting to note what colour the authors imagined him to be. Despite this omission, however, we are able to build up a glowing picture of Sir Palamedes the pagan, from the descriptions of his loyalty, skill, honesty, and his undying love for Yseult. The only pagan of any note mentioned in Arthurian romances, he nevertheless makes a deep impression on the reader and represents admirably the type of the 'noble Saracen', which started in the twelfth century and was developed more fully in the thirteenth.

(i) References to magic are frequent in the chansons de geste. See, for example, above p. 156.

(ii) See above p. 193.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I stated that my aim was to see whether the tendency in the twelfth century to show the Saracens in a better light continues and increases in the thirteenth century, and whether contemporary trends were reflected by the writers. Examination of the evidence has shown this to be so. The chapter on male characters reveals that the wild, ugly Saracen is in the minority. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find good and upright Saracens. This in itself would not be very remarkable, as there are some estimable pagans already in the twelfth century. What is significant is that these latter were invariably converted, whereas in the thirteenth century, it often happens that these honest, likable characters remain Saracen. This shows a great change of attitude. The French no longer felt compelled to kill the pagans if they refused conversion. They had begun to appreciate the Moslems for their own sake and to regard them as people and not merely enemies of God. From contact with them, it is clear that the French had come to know their opponents and to admire them, not only for their courage (which they appreciated from the earliest times) but also for their loyalty and uprightness of character. However many conventional insults or disparaging remarks we find, rarely do we read of a Saracen breaking his word once it has been given, even if to keep it will cost him his life. Nor is this because agreements are few and far between: rather is

one astonished at their frequency. Let us for a moment consider the evidence.

Ten of the chansons in the Geste de Guillaume fall within the period which we are discussing and in them there are many examples of tolerance, especially in Foulque de Candie where the Saracens are favourably described on the whole, and sympathetic portraits are built up. Of the twelve Saracen characters, four are converted, Povre-veu being the most important and destined to become a Christian because his father was French, although his mother was a Saracen. Four are killed, Froiecuer and Desramé being the most notable. These last two are fully and realistically drawn. The remaining four characters live. One of them, Corsabrin, helps the French, and Tiebaut makes peace with them provided they will help him fight the Sultan of Babylon. The French agree, the town is won, and the poem ends with the crowning of Tiebaut and the sorrow of the two kings, Louis and Tiebaut, at parting. Such agreements and descriptions would be inconceivable in the Chanson de Roland, yet by the thirteenth century this poem is by no means an exception.

In Les Narbonnais, Forré cures Aymeri out of pity and refuses to accept money to do so. Clargis agrees to guide the French messengers through the Saracen camp and protects them and provides them with a trustworthy interpreter. In four other chansons, we find examples of kindness or mutual trust. In La Mort Aymeri, Louis allows the Saracens to come and take their leader that he may have proper burial. In La Prise de Cordres, Judas puts himself into French hands and trusts in their promise of a safe-conduct. In Guibert d'Andrenas,

Baudus protects Aymeri from death. Finally, in Les Enfances Renier, the Saracens promise a safe-conduct to Maillefer which they honour, and Grandoce, in lieu of ransom, takes Renier to Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre.

The Geste du Roi is equally rich in examples of tolerance. Anseïs de Carthage is especially notable. Intermarriage is suggested between Anseïs and the Saracen King's daughter, Agaiete. When war does break out because of Ysoré's treachery, a new spirit may be detected when an angel prevents Charles from killing Marsile, and advocates conversion. Esclarabin, the interpreter, protects two Francks through the Saracen camp, and Felix, true to his promise, guides the French and has them looked after. Several of the leaders are described as courageous, praiseworthy men. In Gui de Bourgogne, Huidelon feeds and bathes Gui before the latter enters into single combat with his son. When his younger son sends help, Huidelon hands himself over to the French, considering that he has betrayed his word, although the help was sent without his knowledge. In this poem, there seems a great desire for peace by negotiation. Boïdant tries to persuade his lord to hand over the land without fighting, and Maucabré offers to lead Gui over a ford, if he is on a peace mission. In Huon de Bordeaux, the French agree to fight for the Saracens. In Charlemagne and Bueve de Haumtone, Galafre and Hermyne respectively bring up French youths in their courts and have them knighted. In Otinel, Ogier protects Clarel in battle, and, later, Clarel saves Ogier's life. Les Enfances Ogier, by Adenet le roi, stands out in this cycle. Carahuel's actions and the reasonable attitude of both Saracen and French are praiseworthy. Each side seems able to

appreciate the virtues of the other, and the best in everyone's character is thus revealed.

Despite the number of agreements made and the frequent examples of mutual understanding, they are nevertheless a thirteenth-century development. It is rare in the twelfth century to find an example of good relations between Christian and Saracen. There is nothing progressive in this development however. One might expect the Geste de Guillaume, as it is the most recent cycle, to depict the Saracens more favourably than the other cycles. This is not so. The Doon de Maïence cycle is of little importance to this study, but the earlier Geste du Roi contains as many examples of tolerance as the Geste de Guillaume. Much more seems to depend upon the individual writer than upon the cycle from which he chooses his model, or upon the time at which he was writing. Thus we found Anseïs de Carthage to be exceedingly tolerant, but it is dated 'vers 1200'. Similarly, Gui de Bourgogne is as early as 1211, and Foulque de Candie is in the early 1200s. Bueve de Commarchis and Les Enfances Ogier, however, are much later. In these last two cases, the contents are clearly affected by the writer's opinion and experience. Whether Adenet's descriptions are more favourable because of his travels is difficult to say, but we can assume that he would not have given Carahuel, Sadoine and Gloriande as much nobility of character as he did, had he been adversely affected. Then again, the possibility that this and other poets are being influenced by their patrons has to be taken into consideration. The patrons have probably fought in the Crusades and met these 'Saracens'; their attitude would naturally be mirrored by the writer in their pay. It is clear, however, that the poets are reflecting contemporary thoughts

and opinions. Perhaps these agreements were known to have been made, or, perhaps, along with the examples of noble relationships between Christian and Saracen, they were a longed-for dream.

The chapter on the women characters in the chansons de geste reveals the influence of contemporary ideas, rather then of knowledge of the East. The women are generally favourably described, and one may conclude that this stems from tolerance on the part of the poet, but it is much more likely to come from a combination of the esteem in which women were held in the West, and the mystery and romance which surrounded anything eastern. Despite the more important parts the princesses have to play, they are not any more eastern than were their predecessors, and are built up from the poet's imagination rather than from reality. This is understandable because of the strict seclusion of females amongst Moslems; but the poet must surely have met travellers and merchants who had been entertained in Moslem families and who had therefore information to pass on.

It would be unrealistic and misleading to conclude that the poet has benefitted as fully as he might from the information which must have been circulationg about the East. Throughout the century there are poems which show little tolerance and few attempts at negotiation; such are Aymeri de Narbonne, Les Enfances Guillaume and Gaufrey. We must not ignore the existence of these poems, nor the fact that some of the Saracens are shown as detestable people, or described as being ugly giants, or horned, furry animals, or cannibals. It is only natural that there should still be some wicked pagans, as all prejudice has not yet disappeared, and there are villains present even amongst the French. The hideous Saracen has probably been

introduced for effect, or copied unthinkingly from earlier models.

Then, again, the chapters on the army, Moslem society and religion are rather disappointing in the information they yield. As far as the army is concerned, one would expect little change, and in the religious sphere, admittedly there is a change in the attitude towards conversion. In other respects, however, the poet clings to the traditional material, so that we still read of the idols and images of the Saracens, and of their god, Mahomet. How much the poet keeps to tradition for the sake of his audience, and how much for his own sake, it is difficult to say. Church propaganda against the infidel was still strong, and the poet had perhaps been paid to write against the pagans, or dared not go against the Church's wishes.

Again, the poet adds little that is new to his remarks on Moslem society. The chansons de geste are not intended as a social history, however, therefore it is less surprising to find that no attempt has been made to describe society accurately, than it is to find that little attempt has been made to describe religion accurately.

The romances seem to confirm the tendencies shown in the chansons de geste. The hideous Saracen has, to all intents and purposes, disappeared, and, although the subject matter is still concerned with fighting, it is not usually between Christian and Saracen. When the latter is the case, few characters are fully developed, because the subject is mentioned only briefly. In the cases where the Saracen characters are fully developed, the fighting is between pagans. These people are shown as having the same chivalric ideas as the French knights at that time. All honour is to be gained in fighting. If the land

is at peace, the knights feel there is little point in staying there, as we saw in Blancandin. The Christians help one side or the other for personal glory and tangible rewards. Some of the agreements are purely personal, but others often involve the release of Christian prisoners, in the event of victory.

Much less emphasis is placed on religious matters. Discussions do not often occur, and people are given the chance of learning about Christianity before being converted or killed. Yet the false ideas remain regarding the numerous gods of the Moslem religion and the worship of idols. The Prose Tristan is interesting because there are no remarks, disparaging or otherwise, about pagans. The knights deplore the fact that Palamedes is not a Christian, and, in one or two cases, he is prevented from taking part in adventures because of his faith, but, on the whole, they admire him for his bravery and chivalry. It is the new converts, his brothers, who refuse to be seen with him; Lancelot and Tristan are proud to fight with such a knight.

The Prose Tristan, of course, adds nothing to what we have learned about Moslem society, because the story takes place in England, but some of the verse romances confirm what has already been said about the chansons de geste, that a few details are accurate, but that it is mostly French ideas that are described.

It would seem that the conclusion to be drawn is that the poet was only concerned in keeping the interest of his audience. Whether he presented the Saracen truthfully was of little importance to him. Historical accuracy was not yet considered a necessity, and every race was interested only in its own affairs. Because of this attitude, the poet could feel entitled to add one or two details that he might

have heard or noticed, whilst keeping mainly to the traditional material his audience knew and appreciated. In his portrayal of characters and their actions, however, the poet felt he had to acknowledge the new attitude towards the East. People knew more of the Moslems, having met them trading and fighting. It was no longer possible to tell of their cruelty, cowardice and dishonesty, when people knew them to be otherwise. Then again, Saladin's reputation doubtless had done a great deal to dispel illusions about Moslems. The poet is conscious of all this, and therefore presents the Saracen in a better light than did his predecessors.

It is to the Saracen as a person and to his actions that we must look for an expression of the poet's enlightened attitude, not to the descriptions of religion and society. The traditional epithets may be applied to the pagan, but his noble bearing and honourable deeds leave a more lasting impression on the reader or listener. In the discussion of the historical background of the period, I mentioned some of the influences at work which undoubtedly affected the poet: the missionary attitude towards the heathen, the better knowledge of the East and the desire for peace not war. All these lead to the more friendly descriptions of the Saracen, while, at the same time, the poet provides his audience with the traditional entertainment it had come to expect.

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(i) In each case, the edition used is the most readily accessible, not necessarily the most recent.

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Appendix

Summary of La Prise de Cordres

The poem opens with descriptions of the general rejoicing at Guibert and Agaiete's wedding (1-57). A Saracen spy sees this and escapes to tell his king, Judas, with the result that the pagans make a successful surprise attack and capture Guibert, Bertrant, Guillelme and Hernalt (58-164). Aymeri arms and retaliates by capturing Butor. Agaiete recognizes the latter and tells him to return Guibert or die. Butor offers his wealth but refuses to go until he has fought Guibert (165-586).

Judas, meanwhile, unsuccessfully tries to persuade Guibert to make peace and sends the other three prisoners to Cordres, with the Aumaçor. Nubie, the Aumaçor's daughter, falls in love with Bertrant and promises to rescue the prisoners if he will marry her (587-883). Bertrant agrees, and Nubie effects their escape by drugging her father and the court. She pillages the treasure-house, binds her father to a cart and flees along with the French (884-1245).

In flight, they meet Galerien de Perse, Nubie's proposed fiancé, and prepare to defend themselves in a nearby deserted tower (1246-1641). While this is going on, the French leave Salorie and, hearing that the pagans have come from Cordres (in pursuit of the prisoners), attack the Saracens (1642-1709). Meanwhile, the Aumaçor has been found by his men, and Baufumet, who fled with his mistress, captured. The pagans prepare to crucify him, but the French arrive and he is rescued

along with the others in the tower. The pagans flee, but the Aumaçor is captured, and brought to Cordres by the French (1710-1929). The Aumaçor refuses to allow Bertrant to marry Nubie, but then agrees to abide by Aymeri's decision if the matter be referred to him. A message is sent to Salorie and Aymeri arrives. Then, all return to Salorie, where there is great joy at the Aumaçor's conversion, and the triple baptism takes place of Nubie, Baufumet and the Aumaçor (1930-2087)

After the marriage of Nubie and Bertrant, the decision is taken to return to Cordres, where the Aumaçor tells his people to be baptized. On the fourth day, the French leave for Sebille (2088-2228). Judas and Guibert hear the noise and see the French. Baudus is sent as a messenger to Judas, accompanied by Bertrant. Eventually, Judas agrees to free Guibert, if Butor may fight a single combat with him (2229-2432). He asks Bertrant for a safe-conduct from the French, which is granted. Guibert and Butor arm, and Judas chooses his hostages (2433-2753).

The battle starts. The pagans pray to their idols, and Agaiete to God. A terrific combat ensues, ending in Butor's death. Guibert returns, and Aymeri asks for the return of the hostages (2754-2948).

Summary of Richars li Biaus

Richars li Biaus is touring the continent in tourneys and arrives in Frise to find the land on the point of being attacked by the Sultan of Carsidoine, because his suit has been rejected by the King of Frise' daughter (1-1870). Richard agrees to fight on the Frisians' behalf, and, soon after his arrival, there is a general call to arms, as the Sultan has prepared his army (1871-2169).

The battle is described. The Sultan fights well and almost

succeeds in killing the King of Frise, but Richard intervenes in time. The Sultan is rescued by his men, and the retreat sounded (2170-2247).

During the night, the pagans make a second attack. Richard arrives, and he and the Sultan fight. The latter falls from his horse and almost agrees to baptism, but then refuses because of the Christian 'gods' and because of Richard's birth. The fight continues, ending inevitably with the Sultan's death. The other pagans flee as soon as they see their leader's head, held up by Richard (2248-2893).

Erratum

In the numbering, page 108 has been duplicated, therefore there is page 108 and 108a.