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La Chanson d'Aspremont and the Third Crusade *

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On Saturday, 4 July 1187, the Holy Cross fell into the hands of Saladin's army at Hattin, not to mention King Guy of Lusignan and his brother the Constable Amalric, Reynald of Chastillon and his stepson Humphrey of Toron, the proud Master of the Temple, the aged Marquis of Monferrat, the Lords of Jebail and Botrun, and many of the lesser barons of the realm.¹ Not to mention, *a fortiori*, the bodies of the Frankish army which had been butchered - all but a few who escaped to Tripoli and others who were captured - on the twin Horns of Hattin. On Friday, 2nd October, Saladin rode victoriously into Jerusalem, where indeed he showed more mercy and magnanimity than had the first Crusaders 88 years earlier, and from which many ransomed inhabitants escaped the sale into slavery which awaited the majority. 'The Holy Cross was lost. And the victor was lord of the whole Muslim world'²

With so many survivors and refugees from both these events, the news of disaster reached Europe quickly. There is no need here to summarise later events, except to point to the speedy reaction of the Norman king William II of Sicily, who at once sent 300 knights to strengthen the gallant Conrad of Monferrat. The latter had, almost by chance, arrived in Tyre in time to take its defence in hand, so effectively that Saladin twice withdrew from besieging the port. I pick out King William and his Normans because the *Chanson d'Aspremont* is set, rather unexpectedly at first sight, in Calabria, where Charlemagne and his barons take on a highly fictitious host of Saracen invaders; and because there is every likelihood that this epic was composed as part of the reaction to the disasters of 1187 and even that it was sung in Sicily to the overwintering Crusaders in 1190-91. It seems likely that particular motifs which form part of its inspiration are the direct reflection of some of the events leading to the Third

Crusade and some of the obsessions, as one might almost call them, of those who were moved to take the Cross in 1188.

Let us first look at the evidence concerning the singing of this poem in Sicily. It can be dated to some extent by comparison of its data with other late twelfth-century poems and its knowledge of the famous letter of Prester John (1165), but there would be some circularity in this argument in the present context, so I will not press it. The main evidence, adduced by van Waard in 1937,³ comes from Ambroise's *Estoire de la guerre sainte*, much quoted, in spite of its being in verse, by modern historians.⁴ Ambroise, in describing the surroundings of the Crusaders in 1190-91, makes frequent references to the depredations of the fictitious Saracen Agolant in Sicily during Charlemagne's time and, lest we think this might be the similarly-named Muslim prince who figures in the *Pseudo-Turpin* of ca 1150, he mentions also (4181), among a rather mixed bag of alleged *chanson de geste* episodes, the unreliability of which he contrasts with the veracity of his own account, the 'message de Balan'; this must refer to our poem (188-555). At 8479 ff., he contrasts the discord among the leaders which characterised the Third Crusade with the unity of Christendom in a holy cause (one of the themes of *Aspremont*) at the imaginary time of Charlemagne's conquest of South Italy (mentioned among other more or less fictitious exploits of the Emperor).⁵

Conversely, *Aspremont*⁶ itself contains precise - and more general - references to Calabria and Sicily, which would be of little interest to people in France. The difficulties of climbing Aspromonte, as it is still called in Italian, are vividly evoked; but there are also precise indications such as the claim that you can see the tomb of Agolant in the palace at Reggio, near a pillar: 'quil volra querre illuec le puet trover' (10585). A very important argument is drawn from the role played by the Holy Cross, in conjunction with celestial aid from Saints George, Dominus and Mercurius. We will return to this point, which argues powerfully for a date close to the disaster of Hattin. Van Waard makes a number of other points also, but they seem to me to be inconclusive in themselves, though they may serve as corroborating evidence in the context of the points summarised above.⁷

Maybe it is not *proved* that *Aspremont* was actually sung in Sicily to the overwintering troops,⁸ but certainly the poem was known to Ambroise and may be said to be closely linked to the Third Crusade and inspired by the major concerns and traumas which caused it to be mounted.

Most of the *chansons de geste* may of course be said to be inspired by the Crusades in a more or less vague sense. Most specialists would accept, I think, that the *Roland* - incidentally an important model for our poem, which is in part an *Enfances Roland* - shows signs of the

enthusiasm engendered by the First Crusade, and earlier events of the *reconquista* in Spain. There are precise references dateable in time: the Saracens' use of camels and drums called *tabours* seems to have made a particular impression after the disaster of Zalaca in 1086, while the allusion to the relic of the Holy Lance in the handle of Charlemagne's sword would seem to reflect the 'invention' of the Lance at Antioch in 1098. More generally, the take-it-or-leave-it choice of sword or font for Saracens and the slaughter of the refuseniks well mirrors the Crusaders' attitudes described in the *Anonymi Gesta*. Most of the *chansons de geste* are about offensive or defensive campaigns against the Saracens, with scarcely a mention of the Holy Places or Jerusalem⁹ and with a generally - though, as time goes on, not exclusively - contemptuous attitude towards the enemy.¹⁰ This is well illustrated by the ignorant propaganda, to be found in many epics - about the death of Mahomet, who is alleged to be one of three or four Saracen 'gods', falls in a drunken stupor onto a heap of refuse and is eaten by pigs (no prizes for spotting the Goebbels-like inversions of the truth in this).¹¹ Even if a *chanson de geste*, like *La Chevalerie Ogier* or *Girart de Roussillon*, is mainly concerned with civil warfare, the moment generally comes when this is seen as a diversion from the crusading ideal, and when the reunited armies, peace having broken out, turn back to the slaying of the Infidel in reasonably perfect harmony.

But one feels that most *chansons de geste*, dealing as they do with far-off legendary figures like Charlemagne or Guillaume d'Orange, are really more interested in the human and feudal problems raised by engagement in warfare.¹² The Saracen enemy is as convenient an excuse for fighting (and thereby illustrating the heroism of the protagonist) as another - with the advantage of offering an ideological motive for the campaign - rather than being the target of an exemplary, didactically inspired crusading campaign, intended specifically to inspire or arouse the hearer to his Christian duty to take the Cross.

The poems of the First Crusade Cycle, several of which, in their extant forms, date from around 1180, correspond to this second description: they at any rate purport to deal with relatively recent history, rather than legend, in a much more consciously exhortatory way, and they have a rather different moral climate, though they are formally and stylistically very similar to 'ordinary' *chansons de geste*.¹³ They use similar sources to those used by the chroniclers of the First Crusade, and contain a good deal of recognizable historical material alongside a very great deal of fiction. Their interest and focus are more contemporary, and they may grind a very local axe at times, like the author of the *Chanson de Jérusalem*,¹⁴ who constantly picks out for idealisation before the walls of Jerusalem that very nasty piece of

work, Thomas de Marle, the real-life robber baron hunted down in 1123 by Louis VI. (I suspect an author from the Coucy area trying to whitewash the local boy made bad.)

It is possible to argue that *Aspremont*, though set in the legendary time of Charlemagne and wholly without any historical foundation (other than the claim of Charlemagne and his Ottonian and Swabian imperial successors to rule over the whole of Italy as part of the Empire, and the fact that there were Saracen invasions and occupations to be countered in South Italy at various times up to the Norman conquest of Sicily) shows something of the same actuality and up-to-dateness in some of its recurring themes, motifs and obsessions.¹⁵

The *Chanson d'Aspremont* is quite a long epic - 11,376 lines in the version edited by L. Brandin. It is in the normal Old French epic form of irregular monorhymed *laissez* of decasyllabic lines. There are 533 such *laissez*, so the average length is about 21 lines, which compares with 14 for *Roland* but 30-40 for many poems of the last twenty years of the twelfth century, though others around this period are returning towards 15-20 lines; rhyme is becoming common, in place of assonance, in the last third of the century. Thus nothing about its form militates against a dating of around 1190 in principle. As the poem is not well known among non-specialists, I give here a résumé of the content, stressing the parts particularly relevant to this article.

Résumé

Charlemagne's Whitsun feast at Aix-la-Chapelle is interrupted by a Saracen emissary, Balan, who defies Charles on behalf of his lord, the Muslim king Agolant, who has just invaded Calabria. Charles replies that, within four months, he will lead an army to fight Agolant at Aspremont (Aspromonte in Calabria, near Reggio = *Rise* in the poem). Charles summons his vassals from all parts of France, all coming willingly except for Girart d'Euftrate (Girart *de Fraite* or *Frate* in other poems). Girart, who has his seat at Vienne on the Rhône and rules over Burgundy and Auvergne, receives his cousin Archbishop Turpin, who goes personally to summon him in Vienne, violently, and claims to hold his lands from God alone (1181-4).¹⁶

Returning empty handed, Turpin leaves young Roland and three other youngsters locked up in Laon, as being too young to go on Crusade. But when the army has left for Calabria, Roland and the others escape and join the army, as does Girart, whose wife has convinced him of his duty to join Charles, partly to expiate his many sins by going on such an expedition.

When the army reaches the heights of Aspremont, the decision is taken to send a messenger to Agolant who will use the opportunity to

reconnoitre the Saracen army. A young man called Richier tries to climb the mountain, but is beaten back by the terrible conditions and the attacks of birds of prey including an enormous griffon. Naimon, Duke of Bavaria and the Emperor's most trusted counsellor, takes his place and manages to get through after terrible struggles (1916-2091), taking Charlemagne's defiance to Agolant. Threatened by the Saracen, he receives protection from the noble Balant, who secretly converts to Christianity. In a very typical scene for second generation epics, the Saracen queen offers herself to Naimon, but is politely refused (2615 ff.).

After Naimon's return, the fighting begins: in one skirmish, Girart d'Eufrate deprives Agolant's proud son Eaumont of a castle; when he meets Charles and reports this, there is a reconciliation in which the two men embrace: the Emperor's hat falls down and Girart picks it up and, bending low, returns it (4142 ff.); Turpin makes an instant note of this in a 'charter', to the effect that Girart d'Eufrate has bowed in homage to Charles.

The middle of the poem is full of interminable combats and skirmishes, clearly to the taste of the listeners. At one point, Rolandin and his three young friends come to the rescue when their seniors are hard pressed: they have only cudgels from the kitchen in Laon, but soon exchange them for weapons taken from the dead knights all around. There are affecting moments when Balan, fighting loyally for his Saracen lord but praying to survive till he can be baptized, sees his son killed (5699 ff.) and hurls himself at Charlemagne for vengeance, only to be taken prisoner and threatened, until Naimon frees him on his promise to be baptized.

Eaumont is surprised drinking at a spring, and unarmed, by Charlemagne, who chivalrously allows him to arm, only to find himself sore beset. Roland arrives and rescues Charles by killing Eaumont, winning the latter's horse Viellantif, his sword Durendal and his horn, the Olifant (6076-8).¹⁷

At Reggio, Agolant lengthily tries and executes (6790 ff.) those who had left his son Eaumont on his own, and then organizes his army; he does not yet know Eaumont's fate. Meanwhile the Pope baptizes Balan as 'Guitekin' - after which he disappears from the somewhat episodic story. Roland is knighted, along with Girart's sons Milon, Ernaut, Girardet *junior* (*le menor* 7554) and Renier.¹⁸

In the course of an exchange of threats with Muslim messengers, Girart suggests sending bits of Eaumont back as a present to Agolant instead of the four idols captured by the Christians and demanded by the Saracen king. Agolant mourns for his son and launches the final battle (8366 ff.).

The Pope entrusts Archbishop Turpin with the True Cross (8481 ff.); as the battle starts, three knights on white chargers ride down a mountain slope; the first identifies himself as Saint George and allows Roland the first blow (normally his own privilege); he advises him to use 'Saint George' as his battle cry (8516 ff.). The first blow is described in detail (8557-85), and the three Saints, George, Mercurius and Dominus (*Domiste*, *Domistres* and *Domins* in the *W* text), give Roland an effective hand.¹⁹

The battle is described at great length: the Saracens fight hard.²⁰ (From *laisse* 438 to *laisse* 478, manuscript *W*, published by Brandin, has an illogical order which does not occur in other manuscripts or the Old Norse *Karlamagnús saga* translation, but I am summarizing very rapidly here.) Among the Christian warriors are Clairon and Beuvon, two nephews of Girart de Fraite, who are on the whole more prominent in defence of christianity than his sons. The Pope encourages the Christians (9291 ff.) not only with the fairly standard promise of salvation for those who die in such a cause, but with the comment that the True Cross on which Christ died for all of them is resplendent and flaming with light, so that the Saracens dare not approach. Turpin, anxious to get into the fight, hands it back to him, and the battle reaches new heights in *laisse*s 457 and 458: after a motif, which recurs in this poem and was implicit in the Pope's words, namely that the Christians should be willing to die for Christ as He has for them, there is a new intervention by the Saints aforementioned (9361-6) and the Saracens cower before the True Cross whose light is blinding them (9399-9413). They flee; or some of them do: the battle goes on - with Christian morale very high, and vice versa. What with regular reference to the three invincible Saints sent by God, the True Cross (which, by 9756 ff., is explicitly said to appear to touch the sky as well as out-shining the sun), and the precocious valour of Roland and his young friends, the Saracens have little chance. The poem gives the impression of a triumphant progress by relatively few Christians against 50,000 Saracens (cf. 9609, 9649-50, 9693-5). The greatest worries for the Christians consist in episodes such as Roland getting away from the experienced Ogier, who has been told to keep an eye on him - but he soon returns. An optimistic picture of crusading is created, which includes two references to men of servile status being ennobled by Charles (9656-63, 9725-30) for this day's work.

At *laisse* 479, where the manuscript returns to a logical order, we return to emphasis on 'Girart le Borgegnon', his nephews and sons and their exploits. The battle becomes more equal around line 10000, with some temporary reverses for the Christians; the reverses are soon reversed again. Agolant's nephew Uliens is killed at this point

(10266).²¹ Charles orders some of his men to go and help Girart: the combination causes the Saracens to flee pell-mell (10407). Agolant makes an heroic final stand, regretting his invasion of Calabria, but stoically resigned to dying. Girart offers him conversion (10452ff); when this is rejected, Girart's nephew Clairon kills the Saracen king (10480-2) after a short man-to-man fight. His head is presented to Girart.

The poet praises Girart for his piety in raising an abbey at Reggio for the dead and even giving decent burial to Agolant!²² Charles relaxes with his men in his tent on the field of battle and stresses his purposes merely of 'helping God' (10620); he receives Agolant's head, sent by Girart from Reggio: it still has its helmet on. Charles gives thanks to God and to Girart; he offers to crown the latter king. Clairon takes the message back to his uncle Girart, who meanwhile treats Agolant's widow and her ladies well (10927 ff.) and organises their baptism.

Charles sends for the Pope and for Girart, who brings the new Christian ladies. The queen is reminded by Naimon of the pass she once made at him. Girart marries her to Florent, the Hungarian brother of his own wife (whose Hungarian origin we had not suspected but whose wisdom and influence on Girart are recalled here, 11119 ff.). Florent and his bride are married and crowned after a long homily by Girart on the duties of a good king.

Confusingly, Charles does not return to his idea of crowning Girart, but invests 'one of his sons' (unnamed) with Apulia and Sicily (11158-9).²³ Even more oddly, at first sight, Girart suddenly returns to his claims of independence, turning a further homily to Florent into a declaration that any service done for Charles was to serve God and must not be held against him, and that he will never be Charles's vassal. Shaking his head and smiling slightly, the Emperor says between his teeth that, if he lives long, the pride of one of them will be brought low.

The poem ends with a *laisse* of brief summary, a restatement of the happiness of those who die on such campaigns and a prayer for mercy on them and all of us.

In spite of its medieval popularity - some 24 manuscripts or fragments in Old French or Franco-Italian alone, with important derivations in Italian and Old Norse in particular, and prose versions of various sorts, relatively few scholars have much to do with *Aspremont* today. Its manuscript tradition was studied in a number of slim Ph.D theses from Germany, there was a fairly universally condemned book in 1931 by S. Szogs²⁴ and the much more respected one by R. van Waard in 1937, which dealt with Szogs pretty comprehensively and put down important markers of its own; but the main output on

Aspremont in the last decade or so has been from M. André de Mandach. Whatever else one may think of this scholar's contribution, he is right to begin his multi-volume new edition with these words:

'Bien que la *Chanson d'Aspremont* ait vécu bien longtemps une vie de cendrillon littéraire, elle mérite de retenir l'attention. C'est une oeuvre fougueuse, flamboyante et vive, c'est une chanson de guerre et une chanson de croisade, un appel brûlant à la défense commune de l'Europe contre la menace afro-asiatique ...'

He might have added that the qualities he describes are in fact watered down by dreadful prolixity, but otherwise he categorises the poem well.

For de Mandach, the poem originates in Anglo-Norman territory, though not perhaps in England, and is designed to glorify the Plantagenets. I find this view implausible. The earliest extant manuscripts may be Anglo-Norman as he claims - his base manuscript shows some insular graphies, though not all the most characteristic ones - but the language of the *poet*, which de Mandach does not subject to any rigorous examination, does not appear to be insular (he appears to admit "un Français", IV, p.13). He claims that the English warriors are a particularly important group in the Christian army, but this does not seem to be the case either, and the idea of calling the English King *Ca(h)oër* (he is mentioned seven times in over 11000 lines!) and making him dependent on, and sycophantic to, Charlemagne (888, 901) does not appear to be the best way to flatter Richard the Lionheart!

In his second volume, M. de Mandach's ideas become a little more focussed. He recognizes that the chief character apart from Charlemagne is Girart d'Euftrate, whose legend (that of Girard de Vienne) is of course basically Burgandian, though he is credited, like the real Richard I, with including Gascony and Auvergne in his domains. So de Mandach opts for a subtle 'chanson-clé' in which Girart represents a well camouflaged Richard Lionheart. As a 'pro-Plantagenet' ploy, this remains unconvincing: Girart is, on the evidence of his wife and his own admission (1438-1511), a pretty hardened old sinner, guilty of major tyranny and ill-use towards his people, who decides to change his mind and go to Charlemagne's aid as a form of penance and to save his soul (a notion to which we must return below). Karl-Heinz Bender²⁵ has drawn attention to the parallels, but they are scarcely the stuff of a pro-Plantagenet poem!

If, however, we consider it another way, as a crusade poem (even though lacking the Holy Land dimension), there may be something in the parallels between Girart d'Euftrate and Richard. The proud

independence of Girart towards Charlemagne is certainly not unlike the attitude of the Anglo-Norman kings of England towards their nominal feudal lords, the kings of France, and specifically of Richard towards Philippe-Auguste; seen from a continental French point of view, parallels between Girart's past vices and those attributed to Richard would make more sense than from a pro-Plantagenet angle. If we consider the likely attitudes of a French poet fired by the events of Hattin and Jerusalem, the example of an inveterate claimant of independence like Girart, who nevertheless, desirous of remission of his sins (1511, cf. 1500-2), bows to the exigencies of the moment and joins the Crusade, is a telling one and makes good propaganda. It seems clear, from other versions (mainly Italian and of later date) that there was a *Chanson de Girart de Fraite*, now lost, whose hero was a particularly fierce and probably treacherous exponent of the claim to allodial status which is at the root of the triple Girart legend.²⁶ The *Aspremont* poet seems to have seized on this personage and brought him, as van Waard saw in 1937, into his crusading epic for the greater glory of the crusading ideal: even notorious rebels join up for the duration (note 10696-700). This may be intended, at the same time, as an allusion to Richard Lionheart, and thus far I may go along with de Mandach (modified). But I am really more interested in using this as the first item in an attempt to see how far *Aspremont* may be used to develop further the taxonomy of the crusading epic as a type. What other characteristics can be added to this first potentially defining trait, that all, even the most rebellious, sink their differences for the duration of the Crusade? It will be seen that *Aspremont*, though set in Charlemagne's day, not only shares some of the features identified by Bender for the crusade epic typified by *Antioche*, as has already been suggested, but exhibits others which are perhaps also significant in this context.

It is of course a matter of tendencies and of balance rather than of absolute differences from 'ordinary' *chansons de geste*. But what has been called *Kreuzzugsbegeisterung* ('Crusade enthusiasm' or even 'rapture') seems to me to characterise *Aspremont* as it does, for example, the *Chanson de Jérusalem* or *Antioche*. It is expressed in quite small, but immediately up-to-date, anachronistic ways like 4408 in the following quotation:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 4398 | Et l'apostole, par l'ost esperonant,
Le braç Saint Piere va trestot nu mostrant, |
| 4400 | Envolepé d'un vermel bogerant;
De renc en renc en vait no jent segnant:
'Bon crestïen, or cevalciés avant.
Paradis est overs des l'ajornant, |

- 4405 La nos atendent li arcangle en cantant.
 Adont se vont François resbaudissant.
 Dont vont le pais l'uns a l'altre prandant,
 Par ce seront lor ames a garant;
 De roges crois se vont trestot croissant,
 Par ce ira l'uns l'altre conissant. ²⁷

This comes in a passage such as might be found in part in *Roland* and elsewhere (the promise of immediate access to heaven is fairly standard - see below); but here it is brought about by the public displaying of a holy relic and, most interestingly, it results in the the passing of the Peace and the immediate assumption of real red crosses - details I cannot remember from any other *chanson de geste*.²⁸ A general theme, which recurs throughout the poem, is expressed by 4777 'por nos morustes et nos por vos morron',²⁹ addressed of course to God by Girart, who is weeping *caudes larmes*. The whole speech, 4768-83, is worth noting ('Ja ving jo, Sire, *por toi* en Aspremon', and the idea that he is handing over to God those he has trained to war). Then there is the recurring idea, exemplified by 1500 'Al mien pooir Demeldieu vengerioie' (Girart reacting to his wife's objurgations) - of *avenging* God (cf., e.g., 4064-8). This is not, I think, the fairly common and repulsive idea of *vindicta Salvatoris*, which is after all directed against the Jews, but rather vengeance on the Saracens. For what? Such a phrase - subject to further research - seems unlikely except in the context of the lost Jerusalem, the captured Holy Cross: most traditional epics concentrate on the extirpation of Islam for doctrinal reasons, but this is perhaps a rare, characteristic note for post-1187 crusading epic, to which I shall return.³⁰

Perhaps more conventional, but certainly emphatic and explicit, are passages promising Heaven to all who die, like one which is quoted by van Waard :

- 3885 Et dist Girars: "Ne l'ai pas redotee [sc. la mort].
 Franc chevalier, ves la cosse aprestée.
 De paradis est overte l'entree;
 Dex nos apele en sa joie honoree;
 Or sons venu a la sainte jornee.
 3890 Cui Dex avra ici la mort donee
 De tant bone eure fu sa cars engenree;
 Et qui vivra, ce est cosse provee,³¹
 Si grans riceche li iert abandonee
 Tele ne fu veüe ne trovee.

The whole of Emmeline's discourse to her husband (1456-1503) has been seen as a crusading sermon, comparable *mutatis mutandis* with those of Pope Urbain and Bernard, at least as they were understood by contemporaries. The emphasis on saving one's soul by going on Crusade (and especially getting killed) seems stronger here than is my impression from standard Old French epics. It is of course very typical of crusading propaganda as described by Morris and by Gosman, though analogous beliefs antedate the crusading period.³²

But we have seen already that the consolation prize of booty receives mention (3892-4, above), and not just once. Karl-Heinz Bender has made the point that, where worldly reward is mentioned, it is hardly at all in terms of fiefs and honours, the abiding interests of the magnates even in poems like *Roland*, but rather in terms of movables - armour, horses, gold etc. - which he sees as being more realistically the preoccupation of the petty nobility and others who may have heard the poem, and who would be thicker on the ground in reality than the hierarchy of magnates in conventional poems.³³ There are also rather strange references to Charlemagne's ennobling, and giving very high rank to men of low birth, even serfs, who are willing to fight for God (7270-86, 7442-54, 9725-30) - a practice condemned in most Old French epics and indeed implicitly within *Aspremont*, much later, during Girart's *speculum principis* for Florent.³⁴ I do not yet fully understand the contradiction between these passages, but it may be significant that, in the earlier passages, the word used is *serf*, whereas Girart speaks of *vilains*; it is possible that a moral distinction, akin to the courtly topos of the distinction between *cortois* and *vilain*, is implied in Girart's condemnation.³⁵

Finally, on the matter of 'crusading rapture', I would suggest that there is a generally triumphalist approach, whereby there is no real hint of disaster for Christians or, if danger threatens, fortuitous human rescue or miraculous help from Saint George and his colleagues or the True Cross intervenes in good time. There never seems any doubt that the Saracen cause is doomed³⁶ and there is not really any of the agony suffered by Christians in poems like *Roland* or *Guillaume*, or even many of the Guillaume Cycle epics, in which there is generally an emphasis on *les granz peines* suffered by Guillaume in his struggles. It is interesting that the atrocious detail of a warrior holding up his entrails tumbling out of an abdominal wound, which we see Vivien and other Christians doing in Guillaume Cycle poems, is here (9833-4) applied to a Saracen; the precipitate nature of the final *Saracen* rout is well rendered by 10407 'n'i atendi li pere son enfant', parallel to certain lines used in civil war situations in epics of revolt.

This vision of a fairly easy campaign, in which there may be temporary setbacks, or even griffons to fight in mountain passes, but

in which the momentum for victory is not checked, in which the crusader can count on God's help in most circumstances, and in which death is both rare among Christian protagonists *and* not feared because it is the First Prize anyway, while even the non-winners go home laden with booty - all this is not unlike the tone in the *Chanson de Jérusalem*³⁷ or *Antioche*. The matter needs further comprehensive investigation over a full range of texts but, at the moment, I see *Aspremont* as differentiating itself in this optimistic, triumphant approach from the generality of the normal epics set in the same legendary Carolingian period.³⁸

Another possible characteristic trait is an interest in theology³⁹ and, connected with it, the idea of the noble Saracen adversary who may be converted by argument. I believe that this theme originates in the Latin pseudo-Chronicle ascribed to the Pseudo-Turpin, that immensely influential text which seems to have furnished our poet at least with the Saracen king *Agoland* and probably the title of Duke of Bavaria for Naimon (who is not connected with that area in *Roland*), possibly the name of Eaumont too, according to van Waard (this particular argument seems unconvincing to me).⁴⁰ Its eleventh chapter may well be the source of the ennobling of serfs mentioned earlier.⁴¹ The *Pseudo-Turpin*, certainly the product of a clerical mind, belongs in all probability to the movement towards organized religious polemic against Islam associated with the names of Peter the Venerable and Bernard of Clairvaux around the middle of the century.⁴²

The *Pseudo-Turpin* has a long combat between Roland and the giant Saracen champion Ferracutus in the run-up to Roncevaux; during a lengthy truce in this quasi-judicial combat between Cross and Crescent, Roland explains the main tenets of Christianity to his opponent, who goes along with everything until Roland reaches the Ascension, which Ferracutus will not accept; the combat begins again, specifically on the issue of the truth of Roland's explanation, and Ferracutus is quickly killed. Q.E.D. This combat was the source, I believe, of many worthy, admirable figures of Saracens in later epics, including for example *Fierabras* and *La Chevalerie Ogier*, and many combats between sympathetic champions of irreconcilable causes. In *Aspremont*, we see not only some general and not particularly remarkable chivalry towards Saracens who have some admirable traits - as when Charles surprises Eaumont unarmed and gives him time to put on his armour (5796 ff.) - but also some serious theological argument. The most striking and detailed is Naimon's indoctrination of the Saracen messenger Balan, who stays with him, and who asks him simply (488) 'que creié [sc. creiez]?' He gets a potted history of Salvation (493-536), not unlike the long liturgical prayers known as *Credos épiques*, but without the standard error of chronology which

occurs in all of these, whereby the Resurrection precedes the Descent into Hell. After this, Balan will fight unwillingly, because he desires Baptism, which indeed he receives when he is taken prisoner. Later the Pope gives the Christian army a homily of the same Scripture-summarising type (7611-7669) just before the final battle, ending in a further promise of Heaven for those who fall; these final words repeat his Urban II-like sermon of 4271-4311.

Though other poems do have theological discussions between protagonists, there is much to suggest that *Aspremont* stands close to *Pseudo-Turpin*, itself a form of vulgarisation of Cluniac religious polemic, as van Waard says,⁴³ for *Aspremont's* religious preoccupations are accompanied by other certain or probable borrowings from the pseudo-chronicle, as we have seen.

Finally, and omitting a number of minor points one might make, I would like to consider the use in this poem of miraculous appearances of the True Cross and of the three warrior Saints.⁴⁴ There is nothing very original about the latter: stories of similar interventions in the First Crusade are to be found in the *Anonymi Gesta Francorum*,⁴⁵ where SS George and Mercurius occur with Demetrius, not Domninus as in *Aspremont* (though is the form *Domistres* perhaps a hybrid?);⁴⁶ they occur in Ordericus Vitalis and others who exploit the *Gesta*; also, repeatedly and spectacularly, in the *Chanson d'Antioche*⁴⁷ and in the *Chanson de Jérusalem*, where George is accompanied, at various points (e.g. *laissez* 26, 174, 265), by SS Domninus, Maurice (d'Angers), Denis (de France), Barbe, and a legion of angels (813). Mercurius occurs in one manuscript at one point, Demetrius (in that form) not at all.

The True Cross is not unique to *Aspremont* either; certainly not, of course, as a relic or as part of accounts of the story of Salvation, but not even in its role as a talisman carried by the Christians in battle (as indeed they did in reality, for example during the first Battle of Ramleh in 1101, during the second in 1177 and again, disastereously, at Hattin). It is so used, with great success, in the *Chanson de Jérusalem*, for one (*laissez* 232-3, 251, 260). But in *Aspremont* (8379-9763), there is a very great emphasis on it and one special feature, which appears to connect *Aspremont* with events close to the Third Crusade. As far as emphasis is concerned, the Cross is first introduced and stressed by dramatic technique, as the Pope tries (8379 ff., 8403 ff.) to get someone to carry it in battle: two men refuse on the grounds that they prefer to fight, thus setting off by contrast the action of Archbishop Turpin in volunteering as the Saracens approach (8417-89 - the situation is made more dramatic by the hesitation of the Pope at allowing an archbishop to be a knight and carry the relic, until his hand is forced by the approach of the enemy).⁴⁸ Turpin shows the

Cross to the army, which dismounts and adores it in a moment of great dignity and simplicity (8490-501); and this leads immediately to the first appearance of the warrior Saints.

But the remarkable thing about the use of the Cross is the way in which it shines with a supernatural light (9295, 9402, 9759-60) and appears to the enemy to grow and touch the sky (9757), forcing them to flee with a characteristic repeated line (9413, 9761). This is much more powerful and marvellous than the same motif in the *Jérusalem*, where there is a single reference (8928) to the enemies being dazzled by the Cross, and nothing about its miraculous size in the eyes of the Saracens.

Van Waard⁴⁹ connects this feature with eschatological thinking about the sign of the Son of Man appearing in heaven (Matt. 24, 30) or coming on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26, 64). The *Elucidarium* by Honorius of Autun,⁵⁰ in a section headed *De iudice et assessoribus*, speaks of Christ appearing at his second coming: 'electis in ea forma quae in monte apparuit: reprobis vero in ea quae in cruce pependit'; and this cross will be brighter than the sun ('splendidior sole'; cf. l. 9760 of *Aspremont*). Van Waard refers here to the fact that the famous abbot Joachim de Flore made a great impact on the English barons at Messina when, at the invitation of Richard Lionheart, he expounded the Apocalypse to them.

The combination of the miracles of the warrior Saints and the True Cross in its gigantic mode also links the *Aspremont* to a number of accounts of the second Battle of Ramleh, or Montgisard, in 1177, as recounted by several chroniclers. The experience was no doubt one of those cases of mass hallucination in war time, such as the Angels of Mons more recently; van Waard quotes Roger of Howden, Robert de Torigny, Ernoul (the vernacular continuator of William of Tyr) and others (pp. 245-246) to the effect that both supernatural military aid and the Cross seeming to reach the sky caused the flight of the enemy at Ramleh.

Van Waard rightly suggests that the combination of miracles cannot have occurred independently in *Aspremont* and the historical texts, and he cogently argues that it is the poem which imitates one of them, not four or five chronicles all imitating the poem. But between Ramleh and the poem came the trauma of Hattin: if our poem exploits the accounts of the earlier battle, it is because the loss of the True Cross, according to both Arabic and Christian evidence, was if anything more painful and shocking than that of Jerusalem. Van Waard quotes Ismad ed-Dîn, referring to Hattin and describing the Christians' veneration of the True Cross (which he describes accurately with its sheathing of beaten gold and jewels), and then saying: 'The capture of this cross is more important in their eyes than that of their

king, it is the greatest disaster inflicted on them in this battle' (van Waard pp. 238-9). The idea of 'avenging the Lord God' - which we saw earlier echoed in our poem (1500) is specifically applied to the recovery of the Cross in one Crusade lyric at least, quoted by van Waard from Bédier and Aubry's *Les Chansons de Croisade*:

Ke pensent li roi? Grant mal font
 Cil de France et cil des Anglois,
 Ke Damedeu vengier ne vont
 Et delivreir la sainte croix.

It is true that Conon de Bethune in 'Ahi! Amours, con dure departie ...' speaks of *vengier la honte* in reference to the capture of Jerusalem, but he further on also stresses the idea that 'Dieus ... fu mors en la crois que Turc ont'. One would want to go through many more *chansons de croisade* written around the Third Crusade to see how often *vengier Dieu* is used in this context, but already these lines, together with a number of sources quoted by van Waard (pp. 250-251), make it more than likely that our poem's stress on the True Cross and its powers is part of the very considerable obsession with the loss of this relic after 1187. One final example of this obsession, quoted by the Dutch scholar, is quite persuasive: for the year 1188, both Benedict of Peterborough⁵¹ and Roger of Howden report that the heavens opened above the town of Dunstable, and an enormous Cross appeared, on which Christ was nailed and from which blood flowed down, though not onto the earth.

This atmosphere of hysteria and sorrow over the loss seems to be reflected in the wishful thinking by which our author shows the True Cross wreaking havoc in *Aspremont*, in the better years of long ago. Longer research on contemporary poetry and perhaps Latin texts may serve to support the evidence to which I have referred, but it seems to me to be very strong as it is, given the other reasons for dating *Aspremont* from the period of the Third Crusade. I have tried to show those of its characteristics which tend to differentiate it from normal *chansons de geste*; one of the most dramatic is its particular approach to the True Cross. That being so, it is supremely ironic that only some 35 years later, when a one-sided peace to end the Fifth Crusade gave the Christians at least the promise of the return of the True Cross for their pains, the story of this relic fizzles out, apparently without much indignation or serious anxiety:

'It was with a shame that was bitter and well-earned that the soldiers of the Cross sailed back to their own countries. They did

not even bring back with them the True Cross itself. When the time came for its surrender it could not be found'.⁵²

NOTES

* This article is an updated and annotated version of a paper first read at the 1987 Summer Symposium of the Centre for Graduate Studies of the University of Reading and later at the Second Interdisciplinary Conference held at Goldsmiths College, University of London, in September, 1988. This origin in spoken form may account for an occasional absence of *gravitas*.

¹ Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. 2, i (Cambridge 1952, Penguin reissue 1971), p.459.

² *Ibid.*, p.460.

³ R. van Waard, *Études sur l'origine et la formation de la Chanson d'Aspremont* (Groningue, Batavia 1937), pp.232-5.

⁴ *L'Estoire de la guerre sainte*, histoire en vers de la troisième Croisade (1190-1192) par Ambroise, publiée et traduite d'après le manuscrit unique du Vatican par G[aston] Paris, (Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de la France) (Paris 1897).

⁵ Cf. Paul Bancourt, 'De l'image épique à la représentation historique du musulman dans "L'Estoire de la guerre sainte d'Ambroise" (*L'Estoire et la Chanson d'Aspremont*)', in *Actes du Xe Congrès International de la Société Rencesvals (Strasbourg 1985)*, 2 vols, Publications du CUER MA, Senefiance n° 20, 1987, Vol. I, pp.223-38, esp. 234-5. M. Bancourt sees a heavy stylistic as well as thematic influence from *Aspremont* on Ambroise, whose *Estoire* dates from shortly after the Crusade; I would not however subscribe to Bancourt's acceptance of de Mandach's view of *Aspremont* as originally written in Anglo-Norman to the greater glory of the Plantagenets (see below).

⁶ Quotations are from the edition of Louis Brandin, *La Chanson d'Aspremont*, 2 vols, (Paris, CFMA, 1919, 1921; 2e éd. revue, 1923-4). Unfortunately the new edition of M. André de Mandach (*Naissance et développement de la chanson de geste en Europe: III and IV*, Droz., (Geneva, Publications romanes et françaises CXXXIV, 1975 and CLVI, 1980) is well-nigh unusable. Attempting to replace Brandin's very accurate single-manuscript edition, de Mandach is in the first place very inaccurate in copying - as I have verified with his base manuscript at the B.L. (see my review in *French Studies* 38 (1984), pp.320-21). The editor is unreliable and inconsistent over punctuating his text, 'correcting' it unnecessarily and supplying variant readings which are given - when they are given - eclectically and nothing like comprehensively. A proper critical edition would be a big task; in the meantime, de Mandach's is no improvement - quite the reverse - on Brandin's, though it does supply us with text from two manuscripts other than the Wollaton Hall one (*W*) used

by Brandin. (This is now in Nottingham University Library, where I have checked the rigorous precision of Brandin's transcription.) I therefore continue to use Brandin, even though de Mandach may be right in thinking that the French manuscripts, including *W*, have omitted an original scene at Agolant's court, which he supplies from a Franco-Italian manuscript and to which there appears to be a reference in those manuscripts which lack it (ed. Brandin, 1349-50). Where Brandin's text differs significantly from that published by de Mandach (which at present runs only as far as Brandin 6154) on a matter of significance to my argument, the fact will be noted.

⁷ *Op.cit.*, pp.231-56. Van Waard (p.255) succeeds, in my view, in removing convincingly the obstacle to his dating raised by Szogs, who drew attention to the presence of Agolant in the *Ensenhamen* of Guiraut de Cabreira. Independently of the date of Guirat's death (there are three candidates in the Cabreira family, but M. de Riquer, who provides an edition and commentary at the end of his *Chansons de geste françaises* 2e éd. tr. par 1. Cluzel Paris, 1957, pp.332-54, opts for the first, dead before 1170), the reference at 145 may be to the *Pseudo-Turpin* (van Waard), or, as de Riquer suggests, more probably to *Mainet*, given the coupling of the name with 'Braithman l'esclavon' (though who is 'Captan', 146?). In any case, it is most unlikely that the allusion is to *Aspremont*, where there are no names resembling these.

⁸ That it was is the firm opinion of van Waard, *Études*, pp.231-5, but one may find his arguments more intuitively appealing than intellectually compelling. It is a view equally firmly shared by Karl-Heinz Bender, *König und Vasall* (Heidelberg 1967), p.119.

⁹ See, for the earlier 'traditional' chansons de geste, Jean Flori, 'Pur eshalcier sainte crestiënté. Croisade, guerre sainte et guerre juste dans les anciennes chansons de geste françaises', *Le Moyen Age* XCVII, 5e série, tome 5, No 2 (1991), pp.171-87.

¹⁰ Cf. Martin Gosman, 'La propagande de la croisade et le rôle de la chanson de geste comme porte-parole d'une idéologie non officielle', *Actes du XIe Congrès International de la Société Rencesvals* Barcelone, 22-27 août 1988), *Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, XXI (1990), pp.291-306, esp. p.298.

¹¹ Cf. Matthew Bennett, 'First Crusaders' Images of Muslims: the Influence of Vernacular Poetry?', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* XXII (2) (April 1986), pp.101-22. For an exhaustive treatment, see Paul Bancourt, *Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste du Cycle du Roi*, 2 vols, Publications de l'Université de Provence (Aix-en-Provence 1982) esp. Chap. VI.

¹² Cf. J. Flori, 'Pur eshalcier', pp.180-2, 186-7; and William Calin, 'Problèmes littéraires soulevés par les chansons de geste: l'exemple d'Aspremont', in *Actes du Xe Congrès International de la Société Rencesvals* (Strasbourg 1985), 2 vols, Publications du CUER MA, Senefiance n° 20 (1987), Vol. I, pp.333-47, esp. p.344 ff. Calin suggests

ways in which *Aspremont*, 'une chanson de célébration', differs from this stereotype.

¹³ For the taxonomy of the genuine crusade epic (represented by the *Chanson d'Antioche*) contrasted with that of the traditional *chanson de geste*, see Karl-Heinz Bender, 'Die *Chanson d'Antioche*: eine Chronik zwischen Epos und Hagiographie', *Olifant*, 5(2) (1977), pp.89-104. Though *Aspremont* conforms on the surface to that distancing into Carolingian times which Bender sees as the first hallmark of the genre of the ordinary *chanson de geste*, and though indeed it largely conforms to the other 'rules' established in the article referred to, I will argue below that *Aspremont* has also something of the crusade epic about it; there are implications here for reception theory and horizons of expectation which cannot be pursued in the space of this article. I do not think that such attempts at taxonomic differentiation by Bender and myself clash with Robert F. Cook's arguments in his '*Chanson d'Antioche*', *Chanson de geste: Le cycle de la croisade est-il épique?*, Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages, Vol. 2 (Amsterdam, John Benjamins B.V. 1980). Cook persuasively defends the First Crusade Cycle against its detractors, and insists on the content and form as being essentially epic rather than historical, without, I believe, excluding the sort of difference in inspiration studied here. Cook's view (p.17) that the First Cycle 'a dû prendre forme à l'époque de la III^e ou de la IV^e Croisade, pour servir d'*excitatorium* ...' is precisely the one I use here for characterising the inspiration of *Aspremont*. For the older 'ordinary' *chansons de geste*, see now Jean Flori, 'Pur eshalcier'.

¹⁴ *The Old French Crusade Cycle*, Volume VI, *La Chanson de Jérusalem*, ed. Nigel R. Thorp, The University of Alabama Press (Tuscaloosa and London 1992).

¹⁵ As Bender, p.94, calls *Antioche* 'ein Propagandainstrument', so Bancourt p.235 describes *Aspremont* as 'avant tout une chanson de croisade, la seule qui contienne tous les éléments du "credo de croisade"'. Van Waard pp.234-35 combines these two descriptions (*avant la lettre* of course); 'Une chanson de croisade, composée pour les croisés [...] un des moyens de propagande en vue de la troisième croisade'. At another level, see the discussion of the prominence of the interests of the lesser nobility and the ennobling of vilains in *Aspremont* and its consequent 'Aktualität', in Bender's earlier book *König und Vasall*, pp.122-6. These features would tend to group *Aspremont* on the same side as crusade epics in the taxonomy established in the article of 1977, though of course Girart's objurgations against promoting vilains near the end of the poem (11214-26) pull in the opposite direction, that of the typical *chanson de geste*.

¹⁶ This is in keeping with the general claim to alleutier status by the epic Girart characters - de Vienne, de Roussillon, de Fraite, in all the epics dealing with this single character in three avatars, based on the historical Girart de Vienne of the ninth century. Cf. *Karlamagnús saga*, *Branches I, III, VII, et IX* [...] *Texte norrois édité par Agnete Loth, traduction française*

par Annette Patron-Godefroit, avec une étude par Poul Skårup (Copenhagen 1980), p.72, 4-6. Girart (de Viana), summoned to explain his hostile behaviour towards the King, his lord, and his men, replies (in the French translation): "'Mon père tenait Viana et il en hérita de Gundebliif, son frère, qui la conquit sur les païens, il [read elle] ne passa jamais dans la propriété du roi, et je ne le ferai pas; il y a plus de trente années que notre famille la possède.'" I am indebted to Professor Skårup for confirming in a letter (August 1991) what I have long thought: that the clause translated 'et je ne le ferai pas' (*ok eigi mun ek koma*) would be more accurately translated 'et je n'irai pas [chez Charlemagne]'. This reading, that of the two oldest manuscripts, *Aa*, seems to me emblematic for the Girart legend. It is confirmed by the Danish *Karl Magnus Krønike* (which also inverts the last two sentences in a more logical order), and is in Skårup's view the original one; that of manuscripts *Bb* ('et elle ne viendra pas [dans la propriété du roi]'), which has figured in a number of translations, is a *lectio facillior*.

¹⁷ Thus getting himself nicely ready for the *Chanson de Roland*; on *Aspremont* as 'une continuation à rebours [de la *Chanson de Roland*]', see Calin, 'Problèmes littéraires', p.345; this may, like the expression 'une méditation continue sur le *Roland*', p.344, be something of an overstatement, in that there is much else in *Aspremont*, not least the personnage of Girart d'Eufrate, but there is also much to agree with in Calin's analysis.

¹⁸ Thus Girart d'Eufrate has four sons with the same names as the eponymous hero of *Girart de Vienne* and his three brothers.

¹⁹ Historians will recognize a similar if briefer intervention by Saints George, Mercurius and *Demetrius* in the First Crusade as recounted by the *Anonymus* and his successors, but it may be argued that the detail does not come directly from there; we shall return to this, of course.

²⁰ There is a notable lack of the physical grotesqueness attributed to them in other poems of about the same period, e.g. *Aliscans*.

²¹ *Acars de Flors*, killed at 9536, is still alive at this point (a measure of the inversion of *laisses* earlier).

²² There is, as we saw earlier, a curious claim that his tomb can still be seen there, 'dejuste un piler', 10583-5; perhaps this relates to some strange tomb at Reggio, unknown today?

²³ One of Girart de Vienne's brothers in *Girart de Vienne* is of course Milon de Pouille.

²⁴ Siegfried Szogs, *Aspremont. Entwicklungsgeschichte und Stellung innerhalb der Karlsgerste*, Romanistische Arbeiten XVIII (Halle, Saale 1931).

²⁵ *König und Vasall*, p.133. Bender's conclusion, that the decision of Girart to subject himself and his army to Charles may be seen as a pious wish of the author for the future of the Crusade, is close to the point I make in the next paragraph.

²⁶ Against this view (once propounded by the late René Louis, *De l'histoire à la légende*, Vols II and III, *Girart, comte de Vienne, dans les chansons de geste* (Auxerre 1947), Vol. II, Chap. 2), see W. Calin, 'Problèmes littéraires', pp.336-8. Having always found Louis persuasive on this question, I would wish to reserve my position on Calin's arguments, which owe much to Ockham's razor. Even if he is right in seeing one of the sources for the figure of Girart de Fraite as being the primitive *Girart de Viane* summarised in the *Karlamagnús saga* and by Philippe Mousket, the essential point for me is that the Girart of the source remains, like the protagonist of the lost *Girart de Fraite* posited by René Louis, a thorough-going rebel, who does not have right on his side.

²⁷ It should be borne in mind, for what it is worth in the absence of the full body of variants, that these lines are not in the manuscript edited by de Mandach (Vol. IV, p.158). One is not obliged to follow the Swiss scholar in his question-begging claim (Vol. III, p.55) that the 'addition' in manuscript *W* is characteristic of the late thirteenth century unless one (a) believes that references to red crosses are *unthinkable* in the late twelfth and (b) agrees with his controversial ideas on the development of the manuscript tradition. The passage is clearly present elsewhere in the manuscript tradition, since de Mandaach's quotation of the lines referring to the red crosses, though ascribed to *W*, 3308-09 (*sic*) is clearly not from the Wollaton manuscript. It is regrettable that de Mandach's edition gives us no means of checking how widespread the lines in question are.

²⁸ My impression was confirmed by the appearance, the year after this paper was first read, of D.A. Trotter's *Medieval French Literature and the Crusades*, *Histoire des idées et critique littéraire*, Vol. 256 (Geneva 1988). There is no other passage in a *chanson de geste* in which crosses are applied to the dress of crusaders (pp.77-82), though Conrad in his *Ruolantes Liet* adds the motif to his version of *O, laisse LXIV*; see *Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad*, nach der Ausgabe von C. Wesle, (Halle, Saale 1955), 3330-4 and cf. 248, 3446-7. (Cf. H.E. Keller, *Autour de Roland. Recherches sur la chanson de geste* (Paris 1989), pp.213-4.) Trotter discusses the apparently deliberate avoidance in traditional epic of an emblem which marked the real crusader from the very beginning; see H.E. Mayer, *The Crusades*, Second Ed., tr. by John Gillingham, (Oxford 1988) pp.38-9, and Colin Morris, 'Propaganda for War: the Dissemination of the Crusading Ideal in the Twelfth Century', in *Studies in Church History*, edited by W.J. Sheils, Vol. 20 (1983), pp.79-101, esp. pp.83-4. The contrast between reality ('... almost everyone who described the [1st] crusade mentioned the impact of the cross symbol.', Morris, p.79) and the silence of the Old French epic on the subject is indeed striking. Trotter sees an anxiety among epic authors to avoid describing the crusades directly in their poems (for reasons which rejoin Bender's analysis in his 1977 article): 'Only in certain areas are the *chansons* topical: thus there is a projection onto the past of the problems inherent in feudal relationships (perhaps the central theme of the epic) but not of the crusades.' (Trotter,

p.81). The fact that *Aspremont* is an exception to this among the 'ordinary' epics is highly significant. Cf. also Flori, '*Pur eshalcier*'. On another point, the red colour of the crosses was thought to be the distinguishing mark of the French during the Third Crusade (cf. de Mandach, III, p.55) but Trotter, p.79, states that the idea that the colour of crosses indicated nationality has no historical basis (quoting Michel Pastoureau, '*La coquille et la croix: les emblèmes des croisés*', *L'Histoire*, XLVII (1982), pp.18-25 [not available to me]). See, however, for a contrary view, J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades. A Short History* (London 1987), p.110, referring specifically to the Third Crusade: 'Following a practice begun on the Second Crusade, when the Wendish crusaders had worn distinctive crosses, it was decided that the crusaders of each nation should wear crosses of different colours: the French red, the English white and the Flemish green [...]'.²⁹

²⁹ Other examples at 3968-73, 4290-301 (implicitly), 7659-61, 9380-1. Cf. Morris, 'Propaganda for War', p.91. Morris quotes *exempla* from English crusade preaching material, including one of 'a knight who had been wounded four times [and who] insisted, in spite of the doctors, on returning to fight the Saracens again: "My Lord Jesus Christ suffered five wounds for me, and I will suffer for him a fifth wound to add to the four I have suffered."'.

³⁰ Cf. Morris, 'Propaganda for War', p.91, where a homiletic call to potential crusaders 'to redress the wrongs of their Lord, who had been deprived of his inheritance' is recorded. See also M. Gosman, 'La propagande', pp.301-4, where the theme of vengeance is found mainly in Church propaganda in Latin and in the First Crusade Cycle poems. The latter, of course, although they refer to the First Crusade, are more or less contemporary with the Third and with *Aspremont*. *La Chanson d'Antioche*, ed. Suzanne Duparc-Quioche (Paris 1976), 171-82, manages to combine the two ideas of vengeance discussed here, since Christ on the Cross prophesies that a future people (named as the Franks, 209; the poem also relates the conquest by Titus and Vespasian, 218 ff., but they do not figure in Christ's prophecy) will avenge Him both for His Passion and the 'pagan' occupation of the Holy Land! Cf. Gosman, 'La propagande', pp.302-4.

³¹ Ed. de Mandach, 4257 variant: *E qui i murra*; apart from being hypermetric, the reading is clearly faulty in meaning, since the sense of W 3890, with which a contrast is being made, is basically the same in de Mandach's equivalent line.

³² Morris, 'Propaganda for War', esp. pp.97-8; Gosman, 'La propagande', pp.296-8. See also J. Flori, '*Pur eshalcier*', p.182, and Étienne Delaruelle, *L'Idée de croisade au moyen âge* (Turin 1980), passim; esp. pp.95-103 (for pre-Crusade preaching in the Carolingian period); 120-1 (Urban II); 155-69 (Saint Bernard and his successors; the theme is especially strong in this chapter). The connection between remission of sins for the crusader and true repentance, which is stressed by Delaruelle in his discussions of Urban and Bernard, is of course much less in evidence in the *chansons de geste*!

For a discussion of the process by which the remission of penance, which appears to have been what Urban promised in 1095, becomes in the mouth of crusade propagandists and of crusaders themselves the remission of the temporal penalties attached to sin, see H.E. Mayer, *The Crusades*, pp.24-37; J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, pp.97-8 (quoting Saint Bernard); James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Milwaukee and London 1969), pp.149-53. For samples of the consequent confidence, see e.g. *Chanson de Roland*, ed. F. Whitehead, (Oxford, second ed., 1946 and repr.), 1134-5, 1519-25; *Aspremont*, (further examples) 835-44 (where there seem to be echoes of the 'spiritual bargain' forcefully offered by Saint Bernard and others, cf. Mayer, pp.34-5), 1500-2, 4302-11, 4398-4404 (quoted above; not in de Mandach), 4520-4, 5102-6 (not in de Mandach), 5335-6 (not in de Mandach), 7661-5, 9300-6; *Anonymi Gesta Francorum*, ed. B.A. Lees (Oxford 1924), XXIX, pp.16, 37-8, 84; Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, tr. by F.R. Ryan, ed. with an Introduction by H.S. Fink, (University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville 1969), pp.157-8 and 179-80; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done beyond the Seas*, tr. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, 2 vols (New York 1943), Vol. I, p.163. I am grateful to my colleague Dr Malcolm Barber for advice on the matter of the Indulgence and its interpretation.

³³ See *König und Vasall*, pp.119-20 (quoting *Aspremont*, 3430-33, 6992-3, 7289, 7295; see also, e.g., 3372-19, 3434-58, 4524). In his *Olifant* article of 1977, pp.91-2, Bender points to the fact that, in contradistinction to traditional epics, *Antioche* gives major roles to members of the lower strata of the nobility and even to non-nobles, with Peter the Hermit and the robbers and beggars of his army; exactly the same points could be made for the *Jerusalem*. To be fair, as far as *Aspremont* is concerned, Bender's taxonomic identification mark is mainly implicit (in terms of the rewards mentioned above) rather than explicit. The role of Graelent, a *jongleur* who becomes a knight, may nevertheless be a step in this direction. See also Girart's remarks on honouring the *povre chevalier* which are part of the conventional *speculum principis* (11178-254, 11289-336, see esp. 11186-98) delivered by Girart to his brother-in-law Florent, the new king of Hungary, who marries Agolant's widow at the end of the poem.

³⁴ *Aspremont*, esp. 11214-26, 11306-9. It is true that the anti-*vilain* exclusiveness here refers to the new king's appointment of bishops rather than to the creation new knights, but Girart's aristocratic contempt for the *vilain* is certainly a reassertion of the conventional epic attitude.

³⁵ It is perhaps also significant that Charlemagne's offer to men of low birth at 7270ff. follows Girart's advice (7249-65) to make just such an offer to 'jovene baceler ... escuiers', without reference to the categories which the King, who indeed starts with 'bacelier legier' (7270) adds to Girart's proposal of his own volition, 7271 ff. From another point of view, it has to be said, of course, that whatever the exclusiveness

increasingly claimed by the knightly class, the dubbing of men of low birth continued as a reality: for one example, taken at random from the events preceding the Third Crusade, one may quote the promotion of a number of burgesses of Jerusalem to knightly rank by Balian of Ibelin in preparation for Saladin's siege (see Runciman, *A History*, p.464, and Geoffrey Regan, *Saladin and the Fall of Jerusalem*, (London, New York and Sydney 1987), p.142).

³⁶ Cf. Bender, 'Die *Chanson d'Antioche*', p.98: 'die epische Fatalität wird zu einem heilsgeschichtlichen Determinismus umfunktioniert [. . .] Der Effekt der zahlreichen religiös motivierten epischen Vorgriffe ist ein doppelter: sie vermitteln den Christen Siegesgewissheit für das Diesseits sowie Heilsgewissheit für das Jenseits.'

³⁷ For a rather trivial example of routine divine aid, one might instance *laissez* 126-7 of the *Jérusalem*, where Baldwin, spying on the Saracens among the reeds in a shallow lake, is attacked by leeches [*a*] *grant sifloi* (!) (*Chanson de Jérusalem*, 4195) and prays successfully for immediate deliverance from this menace. (It is true that their attack is said to be lethal, 4177, but leeches are hardly exotic monsters which might impress a contemporary audience used to the hazards of fording streams.)

³⁸ Contrast, for normal *chansons de geste*, Bender's *Transpositionsregeln* in his *Olifant* (1977) article, pp.89-90.

³⁹ Cf. Bender, *Olifant* (1977), pp.92-3.

⁴⁰ *Études*, pp.156-69, esp. pp.163-7.

⁴¹ Van Waard, *Études*, pp.161-2.

⁴² See van Waard, *Études*, p.159, with a reference to H. Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin 1883) p.74 (not available to me).

⁴³ *Études*, p.160.

⁴⁴ Cf. van Waard, *Études*, p.238 ff. See also Bender, 'Die *Chanson d'Antioche*', pp.97-8, on such supernatural factors as a taxonomic identification feature in the *Antioche*, which has even more numerous and spectacular interventions than the *Jérusalem*. The fact that *Aspremont* shares this feature is certainly significant for its taxonomic position.

⁴⁵ Ed. Lee, p.67. Cf. Runciman, 'A History', Vol. 1, p.248.

⁴⁶ Cf. André Moisan, *Répertoire des noms propres de personnes et de lieux cités dans les chansons de geste* ..., (Geneva 1986), Tome I, Vol. 1, p.359, n. 10 to the name DOMIN(S), DOMISTRE(S), saint, martyr at p.348: 'Il n'apparaît pas clairement de quel martyr il s'agit. Voir la table générale des Vies des Saints ..., XIII s. v. Demetrius, p.324-5, Domice, p.329, Domnin, p.331. Des noms sensiblement différents s'appliquent, semble-t-il, dans les textes épiques à un seul martyr.'

⁴⁷ See ed. Duparc-Quioche, 2179 ff., 2783 ff., 5115 ff., 9058 ff.

⁴⁸ This scene has much in common with one in the *Chanson d'Antioche* (7731-834), where the Bishop of le Puy tries to get several of the leaders

of the crusade to carry the Holy Lance, which has just previously been miraculously discovered at the *mostier saint Piere* through the visions of an eponymous pilgrim (clearly Peter Bartholomew, 7200-34). Though the pilgrim's vision includes the promise of Saint Andrew that, if the relic is borne in the coming battle, there will be victory, none of the barons is willing to carry it, because they prefer to fight. The Bishop is left, like Turpin with the Holy Cross (though without any analogue to the papal conscience-searching in *Aspremont*), to carry the Lance. In contrast to *Aspremont*, however, there is no further significant exploitation of the relic as a factor in the victory, though there is a major and decisive intervention of the heavenly army led by Saint George (9058 ff.).

⁴⁹ *Études*, pp.238-42.

⁵⁰ See Migne, *P.L.* 172, col. 1166.

⁵¹ W. Stubbs, *Master of the Rolls*, 49, II, p.47: Interim quoddam mirabile contigit in Anglia: in vigilia namque beati Laurentii martyris, feria tertia, circa horam diei nonam, apud villam de Dunstaple, aperti sunt coeli super eam, et multis tam clericis quam laicis videntibus apparuit crux quaedam longa nimis et mirae magnitudinis. Et apparuit in ea Dominus noster Jesus Christus clavis confixus; et manus ejus extantae erant in patibulo; et plagae manuum et pedum et lateris Ejus erant sanguinolentae, et sanguis defluebat, sed non in terram. Erat autem haec apparitio continua ab hora diei nona usque in crepusculum.

⁵² *A History*, Vol. 3, p.170.