

Jones, George Fenwick, The Ethos of the Song of Roland (Johns Hokins Press: Baltimore) 1963

p. 141 (cont'd) In a meticulous attempt to identify the various heroes of the SR, Boissonnade found more similarities with Norman personages than with those of any other area. This may only prove that he sifted his Norman sources more carefully in order to prove his point, but it may indicate that the author was of Norman descent, despite the French (Ile de France) bias of his poem.¹³¹

Footnote 131 The Ile de France bias is particularly strong in the first part of the song, since Roland and his peers are all Francs de France (177). Representatives from other areas of Charlemagne's empire play a larger role later on.

The name Roland was particularly popular in Normandy, as were several other names found in / ^{p.142} the SR. ¹³² Becker believes the poem to have been written in the eastern portion of the Ile de France, perhaps at Reims; ¹³³ yet, even if this is so, Norman influence would still be significant, since Normandy was not far away. Moreover, Normans were prominent in most military ventures of the age and took the initiative in the eleventh-century crusades in Spain. ¹³⁴

p. 159 Scholars have sometimes viewed the relative importance of religion in the various parts of the SR as evidence of the song's literary unity or disunity. Those who considered the SR a compilation of independent cantilènes generally questioned whether the "Baligant episode" was really an integral part of the work, and some decided that it had been added subsequently by another poet. By the "Baligant episode" is meant the section of the song in which Baligant, the Emir of Babylon, comes to Spain with all the forces of heathendom to assist his hard-pressed vassal Marsilie and is in turn defeated by Charlemagne and all the forces of Christendom.

This entire action, comprising more than a fourth of the epic (2476-2844, 2974-3632), can be deleted without serious damage to the plot. Certain editors even think the epic better without it. / ^{p.160} Some scholars consider it a later and inorganic interpolation because it is omitted from the Carmen and the Karlamagnus saga.