

Jones, G. F., The Ethos of the Song of Roland (Johns Hopkins Press: Balt.) 1963

p. 171 The preceding paragraphs indicate that, despite its greater fervor and crusading spirit, the Baligant episode is hardly more Christian in ethos than the Roncevaux episode and could therefore have been written by the same author, even if at a later date. This conclusion is negative, for it merely shows that an ethical analysis of the two parts of the song does not disqualify Turolde as author of both. Nevertheless, this negative evidence is of some value, since it offers a fairly persuasive argument that one author did write both. In the case of most continuations of medieval works, the continuator is more successful in imitating the language and style of the original than in comprehending or reproducing its ethos. One need only imagine what ethical values the Baligant episode would express if Priest Conrad had added it.

An unbiased evaluation of the SR's ethos may also discredit certain literary interpretations based on the commonly accepted idea that the song is essentially Christian.

p. 173 As our preceding chapters have shown Christian values should not be assumed for the Chanson de Roland except where the text clearly warrants. Humility, remorse, and penitence on Roland's part in this episode would clash with his character elsewhere p. 174 in the song; and this is to be avoided because, as Jessie Crosland insists, "Roland's character . . . is all of one piece" (p.90) and "the poet's psychological instinct never fails him. There is nothing incongruous or inconsistent in any of his characters" (p. 91).

p. 194 By refusing to attribute our highest ideals and aspirations to the warriors of the SR, this study may offend certain critics who consider the song typically and essentially French. But to attribute modern French ideals to the rowdy Frankish barons of the twelfth century is to disparage the contributions of later men like Montaigne, Pascal and Voltaire, who made French civilization what it later became. It is to be noted that quite unintentionally, this study always referred to the warriors of the SR as Franks and never as Frenchmen.