Four Chansons de Geste: A Study in Old French Epic Versification

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FOUR CHANSONS DE GESTE: A STUDY IN OLD FRENCH EPIC VERSIFICATION¹.

C. 'ALISCANS.'

THE *Aliscans*² is a remaniement of the latter part of the *Chanson de Willelme* and the *Chanson de Rainoart*, but in its metrical form it stands nearer to the *Chanson de Roland* than to its prototype. The 'ballad note' has died away; the refrain has disappeared³ and so too have the two-lined, three-lined and four-lined strophes and all the more literal repetitions. Retained are those types only found in the *Chanson de Roland*—the linking of the strophes and the 'laissez similaires.'

The linking device is employed with great frequency; the repetition is less literal than in the *Willelme* but there is so much of it that its effect is thoroughly tiresome. Movement is checked far too completely.

III.

1. 57. Et Viviens se combat par air
Devers l'Archant, mais pres est de morir,
Par mi ses plaies voit ses boiaus issir.

IV.

Viviens est en milieu de l'Archant,
Et sa boele li vait del cors issant;...

93. Vers les vachiers s'en vet esporouant!
Diex pent de l'ame, sa fin va aprouchant!

V.

Viviens torne, ke mais ne veut fuïr,
Vers les vachiers, qui diex puist maleïr!

- 109^a. Li quens Bertrans fu molt de grant air:
Quant les vachiers voit a torbes venir
Mout les redoute, ne vos en quier mentir
Ne set ke faire, vers aus n'osa guenchir.

VI.

Li quens Bertrans voit venir maint vachier
De la maisnie au Sarasin Gaïfier....
Li quens Bertrans ne les ose aprimier....

¹ Continued from *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. VIII, p. 367.

² Ed. Wienbeck, Hartnacke and Rasch.

³ The 'short' line that ends the *laisse* in so many of the *William* epics seems to have no connection with the refrain of the *Willelme*.

The 'laisses similaires' of Guillaume's regret over Vivien are retained, greatly elaborated; five long laisses take the place of the former three. The advantage is not wholly on the side of the poet of the *Aliscans*—one misses something of the naiveté and simplicity of the older poem but the remanieur knows better how to secure movement and work up to a climax and he has heightened the pathos by bringing in Vivien's relations with Guiborc.

No 'laisses similaires' are found setting forth the successive phases of a single episode as in the *Roland* and more roughly in the *Willelme* and the *Rainoart*¹, but the scene in which the arrival at Orange of the different members of the 'geste' with their forces is depicted is not unlike in character. Literal repetition is for the most part avoided here but the laisses are similar in movement and work up to the same climax.

4129. Par devers Termes s'est li quens regardest,
De cevaliers voit iiii mile armes,
Les hantes roides, les gonfanons fermés,
As nueves targes, as destriers sejornés...
Ernaus i fu, li preus, li alores,
Ciex de Geronde, qui tant est redoutes.
Li quens Guillaumes le reconut asses,
As grans banieres les a bien ravisés.
'Dame Guibors' dist li quens, 'or vees !
Ves la Ernaut et ses riches barnes,
Ne la garra Tiebaus ne Desrames.
Demain sera Bertrans desprisonés.
'Sire,' dist ele, 'or verrons ke feres,
Com Vivien no neveu vengeres.'
Ains ke Guiborc ait ses dis parfinés,
Sont descendu desous Orenge es pres,
Tendent lor loges et pavillons et tres
Or croist la force dant Guillaume au cort nes.

LXXXVII.

Endementiers k'il ont leur tres bastis
Et establerent et cevaus et ronchis,
Guillaumes garde par mi .i. pin antis
Et voit venir Buevon de Commarchis,
En sa compaigne x mile fervestis
As hantes roides, as confanons trelis,
As nueves targes, as destriers Arabis.
D'autre part vint ses peres Aimeris.
A iii.m. as vers iaumes brunis
De herbonois ki les cuers ont hardis.
Li quens Guillaumes les a molt bien choisis,
Dame Guiborc les moustre li gentis :
'Vees comtesse, la vient en cel larris
Une compaigne molt grant as pignons bis.
Chou est mes peres, Aimeris li floris,
Et d'autre part Buevon de Commarchis
Ki en prison a anbes ii ses fis

¹ Cf. the family's different offers of assistance, 2551—2578.

En Alischans, ou païen les ont pris
 Aveuc Bertran, dont mes cuers est maris.
 Mais se diex plaist, ki en la crois fu mis
 Nous les ravrons, ains ke past le tiers dis
 Ne la garra Tiebaus li Arabis
 Ne Desrames s'il ne s'en est fuïs.
 'Diex' dist Guibors, 'je vos en rent merchis.'
 Guillaume enbrace au cort nes le marchis,
 Les iex li baise et la bouce et le vis,
 Et cil descendent sous Orenge el laris,
 Tendent leur loges et leur tres ont bastis;
 Or croist la force Guillaume le marchis....

LXXXVIII.

Endementiers ke cil vont herbergant
 K'il vont ronchis et cevaus establant,
 Guillaume garde sor destre en .i. pendant
 Si voit venir dant Bernart de Brubant
 En sa compaignie maint cevalier vaillant.
 iii mile furent, cascuns ot jaserant
 Et bon escu et bon elme luisant.
 'Dame Guiborc,' dist li quens en riant,
 'Ves la Bernart, ki la vient cevaucant.
 Bien le conoïs a cel destrier baucant....
 Mar i entrerent Sarrasin & Persant!
 Chier la quit vendre la mort de Viviant,
 Ke laissai mort deseur l'erbe en l'Ardant,
 A la fontaine, dont li dois sont bruïant.
 Ot le Guiborcs, de pitie va plorant.'
 'Sire,' fait ele, 'Jesus vos soit aidant.'
 Li quens Bernars est descendus a tant
 Desous Orenge en .i. pre verdoïant.
 Li cevalier furent tuit descendant
 Et escuier et garçon & serjant.
 De leur tres tendre se vont forment hastant.
 Or va Guillaume molt grant force croïant.

Structure of the Strophe.

The only introductory device apart from the linking is the use of a descriptive line or a descriptive summary in general terms.

- 693. Li quens Guillaume ot molt le cuer dolant,
Molt fu iries et plains de mautalent.
- 1840. Molt fu li deus en Orenge pesans.
- 217. Grans fu l'estors, par verté le vos di,
Preu sont li conte et parent et ami,
Ne se fauront tant com il soient vif.
- 5578. En Alischans ont molt grant caplison
Païen glatisent et urlent com gaignon.
- 5623. Biaux fu li jors et li solaus luist cler
Et la bataille fist molt a redouter.
En .cc. lieux i veissies capler,
Cors et buisines et olifans soner,
Molt hautement enseignes escrier
Païene gent et glatir et huller
Et sor Franceis guencir et trestorner....

The strophe end is more varied but much less so than in the *Roland*; fewer devices are used, and one or two recur with wearisome frequency.

A number of strophes, considerably fewer in proportion than in the *Roland*, end off with the speech of one of the personages¹, but the chorus-like speech, so frequent in the older poem, is never found. The line of foreboding that concludes a few of the *Roland* *laissez* is elaborated and often replaced by several lines of description of coming events.

- end viii, l. 215. Lors renovele li estours moult pesans.
Maint gentil home perdi iluec son tans,
Ki puis ne vit ne fame ne enfans.
- end ix, l. 254. Cele bataille ont li nos desconfi ;
Mais dusqu'a poi seront grain et mari
Se dex n'en pense por la soe merci.
- end l, l. 1786. Mes Rainouars les fera parjurez,
Se diex li sauve son grant tinel quarrez.
Mar i entrerent paien en cel regnez :
Anchois qu'on soist el mois d'aoust les blez,
N'i voudroit estre li meillor arivez
Por trestot l'or qui onques fust fondez.

Otherwise the only other device used is an innovation, characteristic of the method of recital but without aesthetic value—the direct appeal of the jongleur to his audience.

- end xxxi, l. 971. Fiere chançon, qui oïr la voudra,
Face moi pes, si se traie en enca ;
Ja en sa vie mes si bone n'orra.
- end xcix, l. 4902. Fiere bataille ki or velt escouter
Face moi pes si lest la noise ester :
Ja mais meillor n'orra nus hom chanter².
- end lxxxiii, l. 3952. Cancon bien faite ki oir le vaura,
Face moi pais et si se traie en ça.
Onques gogleres de melleur ne canta :
Si com Guillaumes Vivien vengera,
Et Rainouars ki le tinel porta,
Le palasin Bertran desprisona,
Et Guielin et Guichart delivra,
Com au deable Haucebir combatra,
Par mi ses armes son grant tinel brisa
Grant duel i ot, quant il fraint et quassa
Mes neporquant trestot l'escervela.
Ne fust l'espee ke Guibors li dona,
K'il avoit éainte, dont il se ramembra,
A .i. seul cop Golias en trenca :
Mors fust le jor, mais si les esmaia,
K'ainc Sarrasins puis ne li trestorna.

¹ So *laissez* x, xviii, xix, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxvi, xl, etc.

² Cf. cvi.

The change of assonance never falls so clumsily in the *Aliscans* as was permitted in the *Willelme*¹. Here and there a speech is divided between two *laissez*² but no incident is cut awkwardly in two. On the other hand the nice coincidence of strophe and incident observable in the *Roland* is also absent. Composite strophes are almost as frequent as simple ones, many containing three or four totally different themes. So in *laisse* IV, containing 35 lines, we have described: Vivien's condition, his onslaught on the pagans, the arrival of the *maisnie Gorhant* and their appearance, Vivien's flight, his remembrance of his vow and his repentance. *Laisse* VI, 39 lines long, contains the account of Bertran's discovery of the enemy with Vivien among them, Vivien's call to him, Bertran's answer and onset, Vivien's swoon and the arrival of Haucebier and his army.

Strophes like these might be continued indefinitely. There is no real reason why they should end where they do. They may be furnished with a beginning and an end, but they have lost all individuality. Already the delicate balance of the lyrical and epic elements in the *Roland* has been disturbed; narration has got the better of song; the *Aliscans* is more than half-way to the epic chronicle.

D. 'GARIN LE LORRAIN'³

With *Garin le Lorrain* the chronicle stage is all but reached. The strophe structure is virtually destroyed, the language often prosaic, the repetitions without trace of emotional appeal.

Repetitions.

The repetitions of a kind are by no means infrequent—few, if any, of the numberless encounters can be set before us without recourse to the formulae 'La veïssiez,' or 'Qui veïst (oïst).'

La veïssiez tant paveillons verser,
Tant chevaliers morir et craventer
Tant Sarrasins et huchier et crier⁴.

Qui done veïst Huon de Cambresis
De bon vassal li poïst remembrer⁵.

Every one of the many journeys and goings and comings reaches its conclusion with the phrase 'Jusqu'à (Tresqu'à)...ne prinrent (prent) fin⁶.' One recurrent phrase—'Merveilles puis oïr'—serves to denote surprise,

¹ Cf. above, p. 360.

³ Ed. P. Paris, Paris, 1833.

⁵ I, p. 174, cf. II, 59, 83, 138, etc.

² Cf. Aerofles' speech in XL and XLI.

⁴ I, p. 13 and so on p. 14, 25, 28, 58, etc.

⁶ So on I, pp. 15, 56, 88, 91, 92, etc.

and the still more frequent 'a poi n'enrage vis¹,' to express overpowering emotion of any kind. One stereotyped line still serves to depict an ordinary recurrent incident, and so the line 'L'esve demandent, au mangier sont assis' occurs three times², and the line 'Lieve la noise, si enforce li cris' twice³. The same proverbial expression may sum up the situation for two or more persons and so Bauduin de Flandres and Guillaume de Monclin define their attitude to the problem that confronts them by the saying: 'Qui son nes coupe, il deserte son vis⁴.'

But repetitions like these have obviously no poetic function. They are due to the limitations of the poet's vocabulary and lack of flexibility in his style. Once only, in the lines concluding *laisses* 1 and 2 of the second *chanson*, does one get something of the emotional effect of the *Willelme* type of repetition:

Li rois fu joienes, n'iot point de raison
Ne le douterent, vaillant un esperon⁵.

Li rois fu jones, si ne se pot aidier,
Ne il nel prisent vaillant un sol denier⁶.

Elsewhere and even in the use of some of the above-mentioned formulae the poet is evidently striving after variation of phrase. In none of the numerous sentences beginning 'La veïssiez,' etc., is the conclusion put in precisely identical terms, and in the rendering of the messenger's reports the change from the old literal plan shows clearly.

Once only do we get partial repetition, in Hardré's announcement of the decision just made by the King and Council:

'Rois, prens conseil au los que je te dis :
Ivers ira si revenra avris,
Erbe croistra par chans et par larris,
La paisteront li bon cheval de pris ;
Adonc irons, se il se puet tenir.'...

Premier parla Hardres au poil flori :
'Signor message, entendez envers mi,
Mon sire avez trouvé moult degarni
Ivers ira, ci revenra Avris,
Adonc irons, car pre seront flori,
Et paisteront cil destrier arabi⁷.'

Elsewhere the reports are always given in varied form. A good example is the messenger's summary of Begon's haughty challenge to each member of the opposing family:

¹ So on i, pp. 39, 41, 43, 54, etc.

² i, pp. 165, 167; ii, 204.

³ Vol. i, p. 129.

⁷ i, p. 77.

² So on i, pp. 112 and 147; ii, 178.

⁴ i, 160; ii, 133.

⁶ Vol. i, p. 131.

‘Messagiers, freres, encores le te dis :
 Dites Fromont de Lens, le poestis,
 Que j’ai donné le cheval Fromondin,
 Maugré Bernart, le signor de Naisil,
 Haim de Bordelle, et le conte Harduin ;
 Maugré en aient Trestuit li Poitevin,
 Si le donrai mon nevou Rigaudin¹.’
 Et dit li mes : ‘Encor a il plus dit.
 Begues vous mande que malgré vostre vis
 Et le parage, quanque de vous a ci,
 Si avra il le cheval Fromondin¹.’

Passages like this are evidently far removed from the simplicity of method of the *Willelme*.

In another and more important type of repetition the technique of the *Roland* and the *Willelme* poet is no longer followed: the ‘laisses similaires’ are practically eliminated, not only in the relation of incident or conversation but also in the laments over the dead. Ordinarily, and this is typical of the lowering of the emotional pitch of the poem, the regrets are given in a concise line or two or even merely summarised:

Tant mar i fustes frans chevaliers gentis
 Qui vous a mort il n’est pas mes amis².
 Desor Guillaume de Poitou le guerrier
 Veissiez toz plorer et larmoier.
 Droes regrete son fil ancor legier³.

Begon’s death indeed calls forth longer and more elaborate laments from Garin and Fromont, but even here the old model is no longer exactly followed. The two parts of Garin’s regret are separated by a swoon but we find both included in the same strophe:

‘Ha ! sire Begues, li Loherains a dit,
 ‘Frans chevaliers, corajous et hardis !
 Fel et angris contre vos anemis
 Et dols & simples a trestoz vos amis,
 Tant mar i fustes, biaux freres, biaux amis !
 Tant as perdu, Girbert, biaux sire fils !
 Terre ! car ouvres, si recois moi, chaitis,
 Ce est domage, se je longement vis.’
 Garins se pasme, que ne se pot tenir.
 Au relever or oez que il dist :
 ‘Por coi, biaux freres, vos a Fromons ocis ?
 Ja disoit il qu’il ere nostre amis ;
 La pais fu faite devant le roi Pepin.
 Or vos ont mort ! Ja n’en puissent joir !
 Mais par celui qui le mont establi,
 Ne plaise Dieu qui onques ne menti
 Qu’il en soit fait accordance ne fin
 Tant qu’il en soit detrenchies et ocis⁴.’

¹ II, pp. 154 and 155.

³ II, p. 177.

² I, p. 266.

⁴ II, pp. 262, 263.

Fromont's outburst of mingled anger, sorrow and self-pity comes nearer the technique of the *Roland*, for it is on two assonances and shows some repetition, but each *laisse* contains much more than the regret and its latter part turns into a sketch of the scheme of action best for him to follow :

end ix.

'Fis a putain,' dit Fromons au vis fier,
'Vous moi disiez ocis aviez brenier,
Un veneor, un gloruton pautonnier;
Non l'avez, voir, mais un bon chevalier,
Le plus cortois et le mieus enseigne
Qui portast armes, ne montast en destrier.
Fis a putain, com m'avez engignie !'

x.

'Fis a putain,' li quens Fromons a dit ;
Vous moi disiez brenier avez ocis ;
Non l'avez, voir, Diex vos maudie vis !
Ains avez mort un chevalier gentil.
Begon a non dou chastel de Belin,
La niece avoit l'empereor Pepin,
Si est ses nies li Bourguignons Aubris,
Gautiers d'Hanau, Hues de Cambrisis.
En si grant guerre m'avez hui ce jor mis,
N'en isterai tant com je soie vis.
Las ! or verrai mes grans chastiaux croissir
Et ma contree esillier & laidir
Et moi meismes en convenra morir
Et si ne l'ai ne porchascie ne quis.
Or sai je bien comment porrai garir ;
Je vous penrai qui lui avez ocis,
Ens en ma chartre ferai vos cors gesir,
Thiebaut premier, mon nevou qui le fist, etc....'¹

Structure of the Strophe.

In the structure of the strophe the change of technique is equally far-reaching though masked to some extent by survivals from the past : just as in the *Chanson de Roland* the *laisse* is not infrequently introduced by a descriptive line, reserved, it would almost appear, for this purpose, for none occur in the interior of the strophes.

- laisse v. Grans fu la noise et enforcies li cris.
- laisse XIII. Grans fu la noise et fiers fu li hustis.
- laisse xv. Grans fu la noise et grans li chapeleis,
La dolors grans et enforcies li cris.
- laisse xvi. Grans fu la joie du Loherenc Hervi, etc.

A fair proportion of the strophes have no distinctive conclusion, though here also the old technique still obtains to a considerable

¹ II, pp. 244, 245.

extent. Very occasionally there appears a line of emotional content, an expression of sorrow or pity, wish or imprecation:

- i. Cil sont dolent qu'ont la parole oï.
- v. Dont grant dueil fu par tres tot le pais.
- ix. Diex le consant, qui forma Moysant.
- xxx. Li roi i sunt. Dame Dex les confonde.

The short chorus-like speech so noticeable in the *Roland* never appears, but the end of the *laisse* not infrequently coincides with the end of a speech of one of the characters¹.

Linking of the strophe is also practised by the poet though in its very slightest form. Verbal repetition is very rare, and appears to be almost confined to the second part: e.g.

- Vol. II, end x. Vient a Biaune, se logierent en qui.
- beginning xi. A Biaune vinrent ou li os se loja.
- end xvi. Tex s'en issit qui ains puis n'en revint.
- xvii. Del chastel issent trestuit communalment.

More ordinarily the phrase is varied and in all instances the linking concerns only the last line or two of the one *laisse* and the first line or two of the subsequent one. It is the method of Turold rather than of the *Aliscans* poet.

- Vol. I, end xi. Païen l'entendent, moult sont en grant frisson.
- xii. Celle nuit furent païen moult effrée
Tous li plus cointes n'ot talent de chanter.
- end xxv. El palais monte...
...Chascuns son ostel prent.
- xxvi. Herbergie sont Franceis & aresté.
- end xxvii. Malades fu, s'en pese a maint baron.
El lit le cochent, sans nule arestison.
- xxviii. Durement fu enfers li rois Pepius,
Chargies de mal et durement souspris.

In so far then as the beginnings and endings of strophes are concerned, the *Garin* poet still has much in common with the older tradition. It would seem from this that he must have had the feeling for the individuality of the strophe that underlay the traditional method and yet in his treatment of the body of the strophe he shows no sign of this. The strophes, many of them, instead of forming compact wholes, consist of strings of strophes arbitrarily linked by the same assonance. It is not only that so many are exceedingly long² and highly composite,

¹ So *laisse*s ii, vi, vii, xiii, xv, etc.

² A single *laisse* may contain over 600 lines.

the more significant fact is that their structural unity is entirely destroyed. The break is often greater between episodes linked by one assonance than it is between the separate *laissez*, and many a strophe falls apart into several others, complete not only in matter but also in form, introduced and concluded by the customary introductory and concluding formulae or lines¹.

Take, for example, *laisse* XXII of the first *chanson*. It contains eleven separate themes and might be split up into almost as many strophes, with appropriate finish and introduction, were it not for the unity of assonance. We have described in it:

(1) The council held to determine the action to be taken with regard to the invasion of Richard, Duke of Normandy, and ending with comment speech:

‘Diex,’ dist chascuns, ‘quel baron avra ci !
Se il vit gueres, mort sunt si anemi.’

(2) The campaign, with a normal type of introductory and concluding lines:

De Lengres partent un poi apres midi...
Enserré l’ont ensi com je vos di.

(3) The negotiations between Begon and Richard, introduced with the line ‘Begons apele le vassal Amauri,’ and ended with a speech, ‘Volontiers sire, li dux Richars a dit.’

(4) The summary of the terms, introduced with: ‘Je que diroie ne conteroie ci.’

(5) The decision of the king to get back for Garin his paternal fief, concluded with the line, ‘Esmaie furent moult la gent du païs.’

(6) Hardré’s successful negotiations with the town of Metz, introduced by the line, ‘Or entendez que li dux Hardres fist.’

(7) The news of the incursion of the Saracens and the arrival of Thibaut’s messengers, introduced with the line: ‘Huimes comencent merveilles a venir.’

(8) The council to discuss the question of rendering help to Thibaut, introduced with the line: ‘Li rois l’entent, si en bronche le vis,’ and ended again with one of the regular short concluding speeches: ‘Dit l’empereres: “Et je l’otroi ensi.”’

(9) The reply given to the messengers and their lament, ending with the wish: ‘Or nous secoure li rois de paradis.’

(10) The arrival with the Lorrains, beginning with the line:

¹ For example, 1, p. 16 *Lairons des mors & chanterons des vis.*
 p. 51 *Or vous lairons et endroit de Herir*
 Durons des Hongres, que Diex puist maleir.

'A l'ostel ert li Loherans Garins,' and ending with Fromont's acquiescing remark, "'Vollentiers, sire," Fromons li respondit.'

(11) The meeting of the Lorrains and the messengers.

An amorphous strophe of this type is clearly a mistake. The change of assonance, when it is reached, serves no purpose. Continuous narrative has triumphed over the older more emotional presentment of situations and actions, and has no business to keep on with the old outworn form. The same tendency we may add manifests itself in the style which has become so general and matter of fact in tone that the use of verse at all seems to be wholly out of place. For passages like the following prose is the only appropriate medium of expression:

De Lengres partent, un poi apres midi,
Cinq cent baron qui tuit furent ami.
Tant ont erré, ce sachiez vous de fi,
Qu'a Paris viennent droit a un samedi.
La nuit i jurent, et s'en vont au matin,
Et chevalchèrent a force et a estrif.
En Normandie s'enbatent un mardi.
Les chasteaus prenent, mainte vile ont croissi,
Et maintes proies par les chans accoilli.
Cil Normant fuient car moult sunt esbai.
Li ducs Richars n'estoit pas loing de ci,
Il repaira au chastel de Poissi;
Et li ducs Begues la parole entendî
Que pres de lui furent si anemi.
Li vassaus monte qu'il ot le cuer hardi
A bien set cens chevaliers fervertis;
Au chastel vindrent ains que fust esclarci.
As quatre portes ont lor gent establi,
Enserré l'ont ensi com je vous di.

I, xxii, pp. 68, 69.

Que vous diroie? la pais ont establi,
Il s'entrebaissent et furent bon amin.
D'ambedui pars delivrerent les pris.
Li os s'en va et chascuns s'en parti.
Li rois de France s'en va droit a Paris,
Li dus de Mez va veoir Biatris,
Begues remaint de ça en son país.
Entre Garin, Guillaume de Monclin,
Et de Verdun le riche Lancelin,
Tuit vont ensemble, et furent bon amin.
Li Loherens vint de nuit a Monclin,
Li quens Guillaumes moult bon ostel li fist,
La nuit delivre la dame d'un bel fil
Li Loherens a batesme le tint,
Et par chierte li mist a nom Garin.
En filolage li laissa et guerpi
Un des marchies de Mez, ce n'est avis,
Qui vaut cent livres de deniers parisis.
La pas dura sept ans et un demi
Entre aus n'en ot ne noise ne hustin.

Vol. II, pp. 211—2, end song II.

4—2

Garin le Lorrain has indeed very great qualities of its own: its story is excellently conceived, its personages, heroes and villains, stand out with a sturdy individuality rarely surpassed or equalled in the literature of the time, but it shows clearly that the old epic form is doomed, that it is indeed already a thing of the past when the poet is unhampered by tradition. The *Aliscans* remanieur and those who like him worked on older poetic material might retain and did retain till much later something of the earlier epic form—notably the ‘*laisses similaires*’ and the strophe linking—but the maker of *Garin le Lorrain* had no such help or hindrance. He, unlike twelfth century epic writers, if modern scholarship is right in its conclusions¹, worked freely, creating out of his own imagination the vigorous personalities and the long drawn-out feud that makes the subject of his poem. Up till now the historians have succeeded in finding no shred of evidence for the existence in fact of the quarrel between the *Lorrain* and the *Bordelais*. The originality of the poem appears to me to find ample corroboration in its metrical form. The characteristics that mark it—the destruction of the strophe, the absence of ‘*laisses similaires*’ and of the earliest types of repetition—belong, if we are not mistaken, alone to those narrative poems of the twelfth century that have little root in popular tradition, no previous existence in verse.

(*To be continued.*)

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¹ Cf. F. Lot, *L'élément historique dans Garin le Lorrain*. (*Études d'histoire, dédiées à G. Monod.*)