

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

p. 161 Hall has recently entered the lists again to champion multiple authorship. This time he bases his arguments on the marked differences between the laissez with earlier-type assonance and those with later-type assonance. In the former he sees a naïf story of a pure and saint-like hero who has far less dramatic value than the cocky, over-sure, insensitive young man of the later-type laissez, whose downfall is caused by his own pride.⁴

Similarities in style and vocabulary do not prove a single author, because a continuator could have purposely imitated or borrowed verses from the older sections. On the other hand, even if the Baligant episode was a later interpolation, it could still have been written by the same author. Turolde may have first written his song for a secular patron and later rewritten it for an ecclesiastical patron to popularize a crusade. Possibly the authors of the Carmen and the saga followed copies of the song made before Turolde added the Baligant episode, whereas Conrad, although earlier, followed a later copy that included it. Or else Conrad may have retained it because of his religious intent, while two later poets dropped it as unnecessary to the plot and detrimental to the main action, which is the battle of Roncevaux.

The episodes relating Ganelon's mission to the Saracens and his eventual punishment complement the Roncevaux story; and these three together form a complete and self-sufficient whole. On the other hand, the Baligant episode is superfluous to the basic plot of the song, notwithstanding Curtius's insistence that it grew out of "inner necessity" (p.285). Charlemagne needs no satisfaction from the Saracens for slaying Roland, who has already defeated them, maimed their king, and killed his son. At most, he must pursue the defeated king and destroy him and his city of Saragossa and thus complete his seven years' war, for/ ^{p.162} vengeance on Ganelon alone would provide both poetic justice and literary balance. Yet, even if the Baligant episode were an infelicitious addition, this would not prove that a talented and inspired poet like Turolde could not have added it. Critics generally agree that the Walpurgisnachtstraum

⁴ Hall, "On Individual Authorship in the Roland", Symposium, 1960, pp. 297-302