

FRENCH HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE '*GRANDES CHRONIQUES DE FRANCE*'

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

During the Thirteenth Century the monastery of Saint-Denis rose to a place of importance in the field of historiography through the presentation of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* to Philippe le Hardi. But even before this, Saint-Denis had taken an interest in historiography: accounts of the kings of France had been written there, and Saint-Denis had collected materials concerning the kings and their reigns.

To assess the *Grandes Chroniques* and to trace the development of the concept of official historiography as evidenced by the offices of *chroniqueur du royaume* and *historiographe du roi*, the logical point of departure is Abbot Suger — whose activities encouraged this development.

Consideration is given to the works and lives of those who were involved in the Saint-Denis tradition as well as those who can be connected with the development of the concept of official historiography to the end of the Fifteenth Century. Through this discussion one can assess the value of some of the works that were translated in the *Grandes Chroniques*, and also see the transition from *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* to *historiographe du roi* — an office that remained in existence until the French Revolution.

The *Grandes Chroniques* was begun at Saint-Denis. It, however, had a predecessor, the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. This work, compiled in the Thirteenth Century, was a collection of Latin accounts pertaining to the French monarchy from its 'Trojan origins' to the death of Philippe le Hardi. The original intent of this collection was simply to bring together material that would complete an earlier account written by Aimoin.

When the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* was undertaken by Primat at the request of Louis IX, the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* became its principal source, and later material was added to complete it to the death of Philippe le Hardi.

The first recension ended at the death of Philip Augustus, but once its value was realised it was continued at Saint-Denis to the death of Philip VI.

The second recension, which ended in 1381, was undertaken by Chancellor Pierre d'Orgemont at the request of Charles V. The third recension is represented by the first printed edition, published at Paris in 1476, and ends with the death of Charles VII. Further additions were made to later editions to bring them up to date.

The first recension and its continuation must be treated in a different way than for the second and third. Its stated purpose was to make known the history of the French monarchy. One can trace various themes throughout its text such as the continuity of the succession to the French throne. Such themes were of course presented in a manner that justified the monarchy and its actions. But there were occasional slips.

The second and third recensions must be treated as propaganda as well as history: their purpose was to present the official attitude of the monarchy toward its affairs; but they also provided much information about the eras that they cover.

As a whole the *Grandes Chroniques* is completely original for only forty years: 1340 to 1381. Thus, one must consider the sources of the *Grandes Chroniques* before assessing its own merits.

The *Grandes Chroniques* was received as an official account, but it was also popular. It was used in various ways by medieval writers. It must be noted that France was unique in having both an official and continuing vernacular account. Parallels of one or the other can be found in various places in Europe, but nowhere can one find the complete system with all of its trappings in a medieval setting.

Finally it must be noted that the Renaissance and the influence of Humanism were the cause of the decline of the popularity of the *Grandes Chroniques*. What did remain until 1789 was the concept of official historiography in the form of the office and duties of *historiographe du roi*. The office, if not its duties, was adopted by countries such as England and Scotland.

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INTRODUCTION

During the Thirteenth Century the monastery of Saint-Denis rose to a place of prominence in the field of historiography through the presentation of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* to Philippe le Hardi. But even before this, the monastery had an interest in historiography: accounts of the kings of France had been written there, and Saint-Denis had collected materials concerning the kings and their reigns.

Saint-Denis was well-situated to undertake these tasks. It had always been closely concerned with the monarchy: according to legend, it had been founded by Dagobert in 630; successive monarchs had added to its wealth and privileges; the abbey had become the burial site of the members of the French royal families; and it held the *oriflamme* — France's royal standard.

The work of gathering material and putting the archives in order seems to have been given impetus by Abbot Suger (1081-1150). Suger was a close friend and advisor to Louis le Gros and became one of the regents of the kingdom during Louis VII's absence on Crusade. It was also Suger who undertook the reconstruction of the abbey and the building of the choir, making Saint-Denis into something that would serve as a prototype for many of the designs that would go into the making of Notre-Dame. In this era Saint-Denis became the Santa Sofia of the West — at least in Suger's eyes and for those who cared to look through them.

Suger's efforts to collect works concerning the history of France were only the beginning of a long-lived endeavour — the rising and falling of which might serve as a barometer to the fortunes of the abbey itself over the years.

Two sets of titular distinctions must be borne in mind when viewing the development of historiography at Saint-Denis. The first concerns the titles given the chronicles:

- 1) *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*: a collection of Latin accounts pertaining to French history and the monarchy, it contains chronicles, annals, *gesta* and *vita* that trace the history of the French monarchy from its 'Trojan origins' to the end of the reign of Philip Augustus. The original intent of this collection is thought to have been the continuing and completing of Aimoin. When the importance of the work was recognised, further material was added to update it to the end of the reign of Philippe le Hardi. It must be stressed that the accounts contained in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* were nothing more than copies of the Latin works chosen to be included. /e
- 2) *Grandes Chroniques de France* (also known as the *Chroniques de Saint-Denis*): St. Louis ordered that a French account be written that would make known the history of the monarchy to those who could not read Latin. The execution of this command was undertaken by Primat, a monk of Saint-Denis. The result is known as the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*. When finally completed, it was presented to Philippe le Hardi — by then the reigning monarch. This first recension was little more than a literal translation of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*.

The second distinction pertains to the chroniclers and their titles:

- 1) *Chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*: An office held by a monk of Saint-Denis; perhaps started late in the Twelfth Century. It would seem to have been the duty of the incumbent to produce Latin chronicles.
- 2) *Chroniqueur du royaume*: A royal appointment to produce chronicles: at first in Latin; later in the vernacular. This position was probably instituted about 1380. Until 1464 the position was filled by monks of Saint-Denis. It would seem that once the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* was given the title *chroniqueur du royaume* he ceased to be referred to as *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*.

- 3) *Historiographe du roi*: A royal appointment which was first referred to in the Fifteenth Century. The appointee's principal concern was the production of propaganda for the king. It would seem that the title *chroniqueur du royaume* was discarded in favour of the more fashionable *historiographe du roi*.

The success of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* is evident in the mere fact that it was continued. At first those charged with the continuation followed Primat's lead by simply translating the Latin accounts found in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. Gradually they began to take more liberties until eventually becoming authors in their own right. From 1340 to 1350 the account is completely original.

One might say that from the time that the first recension appeared the kings of France began to realise its value. One can say that from 1340 to 1350 the *Grandes Chroniques* was a semi-official production. After that it became an official propagandistic account. The very fact that Pierre d'Orgemont, the chancellor of Charles V, undertook a new recension provides evidence for this opinion.

Later, its purpose was to aggrandise the monarchy in the face of the external threat of the English. To this end, further additions were made to the text throughout the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries until what may be called the third recension appeared in the first printed edition in 1476.

From 1340 until the coming of Humanism the *Grandes Chroniques* was composed of original French work and copies of French — not Latin — accounts. Even after 1476, further editions of the *Grandes Chroniques* appeared; the Humanists in fact undertook revision of its text, according to their principles, until interest in the work itself waned.

By the side of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques* there also developed the position of the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*. Initially the accounts written at Saint-Denis carried no official approval: a monk was charged by the abbot with providing a universal chronicle that included an account of the reigning monarch. In most cases the account of the reigning monarchy was included in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. This was the practice until the death of Guillaume de Nangis in about 1300. After this the account of the reign was either translated, abstracted, or copied into the *Grandes Chroniques*. The era of Guillaume de Nangis provides the first indication that the position of *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* was looked on as one of some importance: there is evidence that Guillaume received remuneration for this work.

The exact point of transition from the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* to *chroniqueur du royaume* is not clear: the appointee was a member of the community of Saint-Denis and was probably appointed by the abbot, but this may have been done only with the approval of the monarch. In any case, during the Fifteenth Century — when France was experiencing internal chaos as well as partial occupation by a foreign army — the *chroniqueur du royaume* came to be an arm of the Crown.

When the term *chroniqueur du royaume* came into use, it must be assumed that the choice of the appointee was the king's. As will be shown, the choice, on at least one occasion, ranged outside the monastery of Saint-Denis.

The first reference that we have that leads toward the title of *historiographe du roi* occurs when Jean Chartier refers to himself as

historiographus. From this point until the late Fifteenth Century the titles *historiographe du roi* and *chroniqueur du royaume* would seem to have been interchangeable. During that time the appointees were still monks. Most of the accounts written by them were in the vernacular, which was a more effective vehicle with which to disseminate apologetic material.

Later the connection with members of monastic communities was severed; but the office of *historiographe du roi* survived until the French Revolution. Although its survival long outlasted its usefulness, the concept of official historiography was, at least, to have an influence on other countries. The extent of the importance and popularity of the *Grandes Chroniques* is evident from the number of extant manuscripts; also, it was to become the model for diverse accounts on a wide range of subject matter written throughout France. Its text was copied, modified, or used as a source for specific information.

To assess the *Grandes Chroniques* and to trace the development of the concept of official historiography as evidenced by the offices of *chroniqueur du royaume* and *historiographe du roi*, the logical point of departure is Suger — whose activities encouraged them. He and the successive authors of accounts at Saint-Denis must be discussed before one can consider the *Grandes Chroniques* in detail.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

SUGER

There can be no doubt that the monastery of Saint-Denis was involved in the writing of chronicles and other accounts before Suger became abbot in 1122. But it is generally agreed that Suger's activity and interests in this field put further emphasis on it. Although we cannot credit Suger with the beginning of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* as found in the Bibliothèque nationale lat. MS 5925 — it was compiled in the 13th century — we can attribute to him the concept of collecting biographies of the kings of France for the purpose of depositing them in the archives of Saint-Denis. It is true that Saint-Denis was well-favoured by the French monarchs before the advent of Suger, but under his administration and through his close connection with the Crown the importance of the monastery rose in both the political and cultural spheres.

The reasons for the importance of Saint-Denis and Suger and his works can be found in the first instance in the details of his life. In comparison to the facts of the lives of many of the men connected with the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques*, those of Suger are known and well-documented. In the light of excellent studies by men such as Waquet¹ and Aubert², only a few details

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¹ Suger, *Vie de Louis VI le Gros*, ed. and trans. Henri Waquet (Paris: 1929).

² Marcel Aubert, *Suger* (Abbaye S. Wandrille: 1950).

need be mentioned. These will show how well-placed he was both to encourage the development of the archives and to undertake the composition of his own works.

Suger was born in 1081 probably at Argenteuil.³ At the age of ten he was given into the care of the monastery of Saint-Denis by his father. From about 1094 to 1104 the young Suger attended the school of the priory of Saint-Denis-de-l'Estrée. While there he met Louis, the son of Philip I, and the friendship between the future abbot and the future monarch was begun. This close relationship continued after Louis returned to court.

From 1104 to the beginning of 1106, Suger continued his education at a more advanced school. This further education was probably undertaken at Marmoutier for it was from there that Suger left to perform the first public act of his career: representing the abbot, Adam, at the council of Poitiers in 1106. From this time until his election as abbot, Suger's duties increased: for example, he pleaded the case concerning the privileges of Saint-Denis before Paschal II with success; and became *prévôt* first of Berneval in Normandy and later of Toury-en-Beauce. But not only did he carry out duties for the Church, he also performed services for the Crown: he helped to subdue troublesome barons and represented the king before the pope on more than one occasion.

In 1122 Suger was elected abbot of Saint-Denis; but the assumption of this duty seems to have had little effect on the frequency of his

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³ The name of Suger's father appears in the obituary lists of both Saint-Denis and Argenteuil. *Ibid.*, xiii.

service to the king. Not only was he concerned with efforts to revive the abbey, to bring it out of debt, and to reform it; but he was also able to act as a trusted advisor of the king. During the remainder of Louis's reign, Suger undertook only one official mission: that of accompanying the pope, Innocent II, through France in 1130. Unofficially, however, Suger wielded great authority as advisor and confidant of Louis VI and supervisor of the future Louis VII's education. The regard with which the King held Suger can be seen in Louis VI's generosity to Saint-Denis in the disposition that he made of his treasure in 1135 when preparing for his death.

After the accession of Louis VII, Suger — either voluntarily or because of the jealousy of others — temporarily relinquished close connections with the monarchy. This occurred between 1138 and 1143, and Saint-Denis benefited from it in two ways: during this period Suger undertook the rebuilding of the abbey, and probably wrote the *Vita Ludovici grossi regis*.

When he returned to the service of the monarch, he resumed the position of counsellor to the king. When Louis went on the Second Crusade, Suger was made a member of the Council of Regency. Although the council included other eminent men, such as St. Bernard and Pope Eugenius III, Suger carried the major responsibilities and undertook the onerous duties of governing. The problems were many — there were plots, constant demands for money, etc. — but Suger dealt with them in such a fashion that he was able to present to Louis a kingdom that was much stronger than it had been before his departure. Louis's return did not spell the end of Suger's involvement with the monarchy: he continued to be a trusted advisor until his death in 1152.

During his lifetime, Suger accomplished many things. He had restored the abbey of Saint-Denis, and through his own efforts had added to its prestige and wealth. Not only Louis VI and Louis VII, but also Henry I of England, David of Scotland, Roger of Sicily, and Emperor Henry V respected him. And, the most important fact — at least for our discussion — was that he had been able to write several works.

In addition to some letters and a will written in 1137, several other works have survived: *Libellus de consecratione ecclesiae sancti Dionysii*; *Sugerii sancti liber de rebus in administratione sua gestis*; *Vita Ludovici grossi regis*; and a part of an account of the reign of Louis VII.

The first two of the above-mentioned works are personal accounts of Suger's administration and rebuilding of the abbey of Saint-Denis. *De rebus in administratione*⁴ was begun by the abbot at the request of the monks of Saint-Denis during the twenty-third year of his abbacy (12 March 1144 to 11 March 1145) and most probably after the consecration of the choir on 11 June 1144. The composition of this work extended over several years: allusions are made to the Crusade, which would seem to indicate that it was not finished until 1148 or the beginning of 1149. The *Libellus de Consecratione* was also begun after the consecration of the choir, but because a reference is made to the *Libellus . . .* in the *De rebus in administratione*, we may assume that it was completed before it.⁵

It would appear that Suger had a great appetite for self-perpet-

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⁴ This work was erroneously attributed to Suger's biographer, Guillaume monk of Saint-Denis, by Duchesne.

⁵ Aubert, *op. cit.*, xiv.

uation. In his will, which was written fifteen years before his death, he declared that the anniversary of his death should be celebrated in the same fashion as were those of the abbey's great benefactors. No doubt the accounts of his administration of Saint-Denis and the consecration of the restored abbey were written with an eye to this end. Nevertheless, Suger also hoped to gain wider and more lasting recognition through his biographies of Louis VI and Louis VII.

The *Vita Ludovici grossi regis* was begun no earlier than 1137, the year of Louis's death. We may assume that it was begun no earlier because of a reference found early in the work. At the end of the discussion of the Investiture Contest (Chapter X), Suger alludes to the Italian campaign of Emperor Lothar II in 1137. Later in the work (Chapter XXXII), Suger refers to the death of the anti-pope Victor IV which took place in May 1138. It is of course possible that Suger inserted these facts into a completed account when they occurred.

M. Aubert has suggested that the composition might have been begun at an earlier date. In support of this he cites the fact that for the service to be said on the anniversary of the death of Louis VI, Suger used the beginning of the first chapter of the *Vita*, part of the next-to-the-last chapter, and the whole of the last chapter for lessons seven, eight, and nine.⁶

Although it is possible that Suger borrowed these chapters from the already completed *Vita*, this does not seem to be an adequate explanation of the use of the last chapters. It would seem more likely that these were written shortly after Louis's death for use in the

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⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

anniversary service and then were later incorporated in the *Vita*. One might accept M. Aubert's dating to the extent that the first chapter of the *Vita* may have been completed before the service and the last chapters written for the service and then used in the *Vita*. The years when Suger was not involved in the affairs of the realm (1138 to 1143) would have given him the opportunity to compose the *Vita*. The dates for the composition of the *Libellus*, the *De rebus*, and the *Gesta Ludovici VII* support this view. In his quest for self-perpetuation Suger would have begun and finished his major work, the *Vita*, as soon as possible. In any event it was definitely completed before the *Libellus* was written (c. 1144-45), for in that work he refers to the *Vita*:

Quod quidem egregie factum, quo labore, quibus
expensis, quam graviter expletum fuerit, en gestis
praefati regis enucleatius invenitur.⁷

Thus we may at least assume that by 1144 Suger had completed his biography of Louis VI.

Although Suger's personal aim was to immortalise his name and deeds, the prologue of the *Vita* indicates another reason for undertaking the work:

... exidamus ei monumentum ere perhennius, cum
et ejus circa cultum ecclesiarum Dei devotionem
et circa regni statum mirabilem stilo tradiderimus
strenuitatem, cujus nec aliqua temporum immutacione
deleri valeat memoria, nec a generacione in generacionem
suffragantis Ecclesie pro impensis beneficiis orationum
desistat instancia.⁸

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⁷ A. Lecoy de la Marche, *Oeuvres complètes de Suger* (Paris: 1867), p. 171. This would also seem to be confirmed by a reference in the *Vita* itself: in Chapter XXVII Suger speaks of the restoration or construction of the abbey. This may mean that the restoration of the choir was not yet completed at the time that the chapter was written. The choir was consecrated 11 June 1144.

⁸ Suger, *op. cit.*, 4.

It is true that in order to accomplish this aim the work could not be impartial and disinterested. It is true that Suger witnessed or took part in many of the events that he recorded, while in other cases he consulted eyewitnesses. But, because of the image of Louis VI that he sought to project, Suger suppressed some facts and some of the King's actions.

The image that Suger sought to project was that of an ideal theocratic king: one who was the giver of law, the dispenser of justice, protector of the afflicted, and defender of the Church. Thus Suger spends a great deal of space describing Louis's military expeditions to extend his authority and to punish those who opposed the king's power. He also devotes much time to describing the receptions that the popes were given in France during the Investiture Conflict, but he says nothing of the conflicts between Louis and the advocates of Church reform — their efforts would have sapped some of the monarchical power wielded by Louis. In line with his efforts to present the ideal theocratic monarch, Suger is silent on institutions that were being developed: he was only interested in those well-established ones that were demonstrative of the ideal. Some developing institutions may have eventually fitted within the theocratic framework, but others such as the communes would not. Thus, Suger neglects the problem of the communes, for example he makes no direct reference to the commune of Laon. In the end one must say that Suger viewed Louis not as a king in the most favourable light, but as an ideal king. One must note, however, that he did exercise some restraint when describing Louis's most admirable undertakings.

In line with his aim of presenting Louis as the ideal theocratic

king, Suger's attitude toward some of Louis's enemies was moderate: the criteria were their own actions and the manner in which they fit into Suger's scheme. For example, Suger speaks of Henry I of England in the following manner at the end of Chapter I:

... vir prudentissimus Henricus, cujus tam admiranda quam predicanda animi et corporis strenuitas et scientia gratam offerent materiam.⁹

In contrast, he shows little respect for Emperor Henry V, who had created so many problems for the Church and for Louis. Suger accuses Henry V of being devoid of all sentiment and of persecuting his father. Lothar, Henry's successor, is treated with greater respect. But, strong censure is reserved for some of the French nobles. The reasons for Suger's attitude were of course two-fold: they had stood in the way of the extension of royal power; and they had mistreated the people whom Louis was bound to protect. Thus, the *Vita* reveals very clearly Suger's attitudes toward Louis and his contemporaries: attitudes that find their bases in Suger's concept of kingship and his own position as a man of the Church and the government.

Although it is impossible to deny the historical value of the *Vita* as a whole, it is obvious that Suger was neither an impartial nor a complete recorder of events. In addition to this there are glaring imperfections. Although not defective, his chronology is confusing: Suger digressed to record things that came to mind as he wrote. For example, a description of a visit by Henry I to Normandy in 1109 is interrupted by references to the prophecies of Merlin and the administrative reforms made in England. These and other digressions affect the unity of the work. Further confusion arises

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⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

from the absence of dates some indication may be given of the month and day, but the year is rarely mentioned. He tells us that Louis died '... kalendis augusti' but that is all. Suger also says that Louis was *sexagenarius* by 1135 — at the time he was actually fifty-four (Philip I gets the same treatment at the same age). af

With such historical defects in mind, it is perhaps wise to consider the evaluation of Molinier: that the *Vita* is primarily a literary composition.¹⁰ Although this cannot be denied, it says very little about the nature of the work — which is more a piece about theoretical statecraft than a piece of *belles-lettres*.

Suger's biographer, Guillaume a monk of Saint-Denis, tells us that the abbot had a taste for classical verse and that he knew Horace well. The taste for classical literature is evident amidst the accounts contained in the *Vita*: for his literary adornment Suger drew on a wide range of classical authors. In spite of his knowledge of Horace, however, Lucan seems to have been his favourite. In fact both Molinier and Aubert assert that he has taken Lucan as his model and has even imitated his faults.¹¹ This does not mean that Suger has ignored other authors: Terence, Juvenal, and Horace — as well as one reference to Virgil — are also quoted in the text. Suger also draws references from the Bible and Patristic writings. In some cases the literary allusions fit into the text, but in others they are purely and simply ornaments — their inclusion seems quite forced.

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¹⁰ Auguste Molinier, *Vie de Louis le Gros par Suger suivie de l'histoire du roi Louis VII* (Paris: 1887), p. xv.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, x; Aubert *op. cit.*, 115.

In addition to his desire to present Louis as the ideal theocratic king and through it to immortalise the memory of the king and himself, Suger has taken great care to produce an agreeable and of course instructive work. Perhaps he hoped to provide a manual of instruction for Louis VII and thus to influence his actions by this means. In order to accomplish these purposes and to make his account as attractive as possible, Suger was forced to be both dramatic and entertaining. The means were those that were common among medieval authors: borrowing from classical models, Suger put rhetorical discourses into the mouths of his characters; and his imagination supplied the gaps in his information.

Furthermore, in order to retain the reader's attention by avoiding a monotonous account, Suger makes use of alliterations and puns. For this same reason, he seems to have omitted details that he feared might have been boring. For example, at the end of Chapter XXV, he says:

Hec et his similia in partibus illis crebo
clementissime pro quiete ecclesiarum et pauperum
patere consuevit, que, quia si stilo traderentur
tedium generarent, supersedere dignum duximus.¹²

Those things that Suger feared would bore his readers were not those which were detrimental to his purpose: and many of them would be of interest to historians today; while some of the things of a personal and entertaining nature are of little interest. Still, we cannot refuse to acknowledge that by stressing the dramatic and outstanding aspects of the theocratic king, by emphasising descriptions of events, and by strongly supporting the monarchy, Suger accomplished his

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¹² Suger, *op. cit.*, 182.

purpose: to glorify Louis VI and himself.

Turning to other aspects of the *Vita*, it should be noted that the work is well-developed to 1131, the date of the death of Prince Philip. The era before Louis VI's coronation occupies little more than one-fifth of the entire work; the section from the coronation to 1131, seven-tenths; and the final section deals almost exclusively with the rather distasteful details of the illness of Louis in 1135, his preparations for his death, brief recovery, and then death and burial. There is also a brief passage on the return of Innocent II to Rome, and some mention of the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to the future Louis VII.

Although Louis was no longer as active as he had been, the lack of material cannot be cited to explain the brevity of the final section. In earlier sections Suger shows no reluctance to amplify — and suppress — material for Louis's benefit. The division of the work in such a choppy fashion may have been the result of the lack of suitable material; but on the other hand there is the thought that during his last years Suger had begun to revise the *Vita*, abridging some passages and amplifying others.¹³ Thus, it would seem that this revision was not completed: and perhaps the section from 1131 to 1137 gives us some idea of the nature of Suger's original draft. This view has been refuted, rather inadequately, by Waquet. Basing his argument on the lack of an autograph manuscript and some later additions in one of the extant manuscripts (designated MS F), he has denied that Suger began a second recension.¹⁴

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¹³ Aubert, *op. cit.*, 121.

¹⁴ Introduction to Suger, *op. cit.* xxi-xxiv.

But in any case, the work as it appears in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* (B.N. lat. MS 5925) is neither a direct copy of Suger's autograph — designated by Waquet as MS A — upon which the others are based, nor is it a copy of a manuscript that contains some 14th century additions (MS F). Instead, as Waquet sees it, it is based upon an intermediate manuscript that is no longer extant.¹⁵

Whatever the exact form and distribution of material in Suger's *Vita*, there can be no doubt that his desire for self-perpetuation was satisfied. The *Vita* was admired by both his contemporaries and men of later years. They included not only Guillaume, Suger's biographer, but also Odo of Deuil, John of Salisbury, and Guillaume de Nangis. The *Vita* was selected for incorporation in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques*.

The admiration of Odo of Deuil leads us to a discussion of the composition of the *Gesta Ludovici VII* that was also included in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques*. In the preface to his *History of the Second Crusade*, Odo has indicated that in about 1148 or 1149, Suger was occupied with compiling notes on the life of Louis VII. Odo says that the writing of such a biography should be the task of Saint-Denis: 'Sit hos beati Dionysii, cuius amore haec fecit, et vestrum, quia monachum vestrum loco vestro suscepit.'¹⁶ Odo also gives other indications of Suger's activities: 'Vos patris eius gesta scripsistis, sed criminis erit fraudare posteros

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¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in orientem*, ed. and trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry (New York: 1948), p.2.

notitia filii cuius omnis aetas est formas virtutis¹⁷ And after saying that he is providing notes so that Suger may embellish them, Odo adds: 'Nec ideo vos pigeat exsequi quod debitis si hoc auditis a pluribus usarpari; immo gratum habetote si laudes habet multorum qui meruit omnium.'¹⁸ It is true that these are not positive indications that the work was already begun; but when added to the affirmation by Suger's biographer that Suger had begun such a work, it seems to give more positive evidence. Since Suger began this composition rather late in his career — about 1148 — we may assume that his death prevented its completion, and that this explains the lack of any definite credit to Suger for the *Gesta Ludovici VII*.

Only two chronicles remain for the forty-five years of Louis VII's reign: the *Gesta Ludovici VII*, which ends with events for 1152; and the *Historia regis Ludovici VII*, which covers the period from 1135 to 1165. Although the former ends in the year of Suger's death, it is impossible to attribute its composition to Suger. It is in fact nothing more than a 14th Century translation of those parts of the *Grandes Chroniques* pertaining to part of the reign of Louis VII.¹⁹ The *Gesta* is found in B.N. lat. MS 5925, the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, beginning at f.232^r and ending at f.247^v, but it is obviously of a later date than the works contained in the manuscript. It was probably, as Molinier suggests, inserted to fill the gap between Suger's *Vita Ludovici grossi* and Rigord's *Gesta Philippi Augusti*.²⁰

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¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Auguste Molinier, 'Suger auteur d'une partie de la chronique dite *Historia Ludovici VII*', *BEC*, xlviii (1887), 286.

²⁰ Molinier, *op. cit.*, xxxii.

If any of Suger's life of Louis VII is extant, it must be found in the *Historia regis Ludovici VII*, which was translated by the re-ensionist of the *Grandes Chroniques*. The text is composed of two parts. The first and the shortest speaks of events in England and France, as well as the Empire, in 1137. It also gives an account of the Diet of Mainz in 1125 where Lothar, the Duke of Saxony, was elected emperor. The author writes from the viewpoint of a Frenchman who resided in Mainz at the time. It is known that Suger was in that city during the Diet to settle a dispute between the abbey of Saint-Denis and the Count of Mosbach. This is confirmed by a charter granted by the Count to the abbey. Suger also alludes to this visit. The second part of the *Historia* is a collection of bits of unequal length, arranged in a rather shaky chronological order, concluding with an account of the birth of Philip Augustus.

Although the *Historia*, because of the length of the time that it covers, is a collection of the works of several persons, it is possible to attribute the account before 1152 to Suger. The first part, which seems to be a continuation of the *Vita Ludovici VI* and retains the same style, can definitely be attributed to Suger. Although the account ends in 1165, the *Historia* was probably compiled about 1172 to celebrate the birth of Philip Augustus. Despite the fact that it is impossible to identify positively the compiler, Molinier and Aubert feel that he was a monk of Saint-Germain-des-Près; that he was a Burgundian; that he had been a monk at Vézelay — which had close associations with Saint-Germain-des-Près — and that he was a close friend of the abbot of Saint-Germain, Thibaut.²¹ Otherwise, his identity remains unknown.

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²¹ *Ibid.*, xxxv; Aubert, *op. cit.*, xiv.

Later a continuation of Aimoin was added to the *Historia* to bring the account up to 1180. In this way it fulfilled the requirements of the *Grandes Chroniques* in its demand for an account to fill the gap between Suger's *Vita* and Rigord's *Gesta*. Although the *Historia* did not find a permanent place in the manuscript of the *Latin Chronicles of Saint-Denis*, it did find a place in the *Grandes Chroniques* and then in a round-about way was found in MS 5925.

Thus, the importance of Suger in our context is three-fold: the *Vita Ludovici grossi regis* became the basis for the account of that king in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, and was later used by the compiler of the *Grandes Chroniques*; the *Historia regis Ludovici VII*, which was Suger's work in part also found its way into both the *Grandes Chroniques* and the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*; and, above all, the compositions of Suger and his own particular place in the history of Saint-Denis and France extended and heightened the importance of the monastery in the field of historiography. Through his activity an awareness of the need of an official account undoubtedly grew. This was later manifested in the selection of a monk of Saint-Denis — who bore the title of *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* — to record the events of the kingdom and to perform other historiographical duties; then in the choice of the *chroniqueur du royaume*; and still later, in an *historiographe du roi*. The compilation of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* itself and the *Grandes Chroniques* were the duty of others or the subsidiary duty of some of these title holders.

CHAPTER II

RIGORD

As it has already been noted the account of Louis VII's reign as found in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* was a Latin translation of the account found in the *Grandes Chroniques* and inserted at some time after Bibliothèque nationale lat. MS 5925 was compiled. The compiler of the *Latin Chronicle*, however, had no problems in finding an account of the reign of Philip Augustus to use in his recension. The table of contents of B.N. lat. MS 5925 indicates that on f.248^r begins the

Gesta Philippi Augusti, Francorum Regis, authore
magistro Rigordo, Regis Chronographus [*sic*] et
Clerico Abbatiae S. Dionysii.

This work of Rigord's remains in only one other manuscript: Vatican Codex Reginensis 88, ff. 176-189. The Vatican manuscript is wanting the first sixty-nine paragraphs.

It is very likely that shortly after Rigord's death manuscripts of the *Gesta* were almost as rare as they are today. The prologue of the *Gesta* states that Rigord presented the work to the king '... ut sic demum per manus ipsius Regis in publica veniret monumenta'¹ It may be argued that this meant that his work was widely known; but it is more likely that this indicated that his work was placed in the archives of Saint-Denis. This was confirmed by Guillaume le Breton, his continuator, who made known that he found the *Gesta* there: 'Gesta

¹ Rigord, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Tome XVII (Paris: 1818), 3.

Francorum Regis Philippi ... in archivis ecclesiae beati Dionysii hieromartyris habentur²

The *Gesta's* rarity undoubtedly prompted Guillaume le Breton to make a résumé of it before continuing the account. Yet, if the *Gesta* of Rigord was not widely known, how did Guillaume le Breton become aware of it?

Guillaume was a canon of Senlis and Saint-Pol-de-Léon who came into the favour of Philip Augustus. While at the court he became aware of Rigord's work and began his search for it at Saint-Denis. There, Guillaume le Breton found the third recension of the *Gesta* which included an account that ended in 1209.³

During the late 19th Century, historians such as Delaborde, Daunou, and Waitz were involved in a controversy concerning the authorship of Chapters 149 to 154 of the *Gesta* — the section covering events from 1206 to 1209. The arguments found their bases in varying interpretations of the passage in which Guillaume le Breton indicates the point at which his continuation begins: 'Regnante Francorum Rege Philippo magnanimo, Ludovici Pii filio, anno ejusdem regni XXVIII, ab incarnatione Domini MCCIX'⁴ Waitz, who took this statement quite literally, said that this and another passage

Quoniam autem sequentia ejusdem Regis opera non minori laude, immo multò excellentiori praeconio digna sunt, ego Gillelmus ... eadem gesta ... literis commendavi ...⁵

² Guillaume le Breton, *Gesta Philippi Augusti, Francorum Regis* in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Tome XVII (Paris: 1818), 62.

³ *Infra*, pp. 18-25.

⁴ Guillaume le Breton, *op. cit.* 82.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

meant that Guillaume le Breton was continuing without a break the work of only one man whose account had gone to 1209. Guillaume le Breton did not name another author because there was no other. Thus, Waitz believed that Chapters 149 to 154 were Rigord's own.⁶

Daunou, writing in 1832, provided the explanation that Guillaume le Breton's arithmetic was in error: it seemed that there was a failure to include the two years in which Philip reigned with his father. Thus, Daunou claimed that, when this allowance was made, the year became 1208 and the chapters in question should be attributed to Rigord.⁷

Delaborde disagreed with this conclusion, believing that Rigord's work ended with the account of the floods of 1206. As Delaborde saw it, Chapters 149 to 154 were the work of an author at Saint-Denis; and the grounds for this were to be found in B.N. lat. MS 5949. That manuscript contained a chronicle for which information was taken from the *Gesta* of Rigord up to 1207 — after which the chronicle and the *Gesta* ceased to be related to each other. Delaborde felt that this indicated that the recension used by the author of the chronicle ended in 1206.⁸

Although it is true that Chapters 149 to 154 of the *Gesta* could have been written by Rigord as part of a fourth recension used by Guillaume le Breton, the facts of Rigord's life would seem to deny this.

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⁶ Waitz as cited in H.-François Delaborde, 'Notice sur les ouvrages et sur la vie de Rigord moine de Saint-Denis,' *BEC*, xlv (1884), 592.

⁷ Daunou, 'Rigord, historien, mort vers 1209,' *Histoire littéraire de la France*, Tome XVII (Paris: 1837), 5.

⁸ Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 592-93.

Rigord was — by his own admission — an old man by 1205, and he died about 1209: thus, if Rigord was the writer of Chapters 149 to 154, he would have had to have been writing actively almost until his death and recording events as they occurred. This, of course, is possible; but another point emerges to make such late activity unlikely: in general the form and stylistic approach of Chapters 149-154 are different from the portions that are certainly by Rigord. It is, however, not possible to deny that Rigord had some connection with the authorship of these paragraphs. The best solution might be found in compromise, in assuming that the account, as we have it, is the result of someone's transcription of Rigord's unamplified notes.

In considering this we find that from 1204 onward the account becomes increasingly terse. His age makes this understandable: Rigord himself noted that he was an old man by 1205.⁹ Although it is possible to read some faint indications of Rigord's style in the accounts for 1207 and 1208, the uncharacteristic brevity seems to indicate that another, perhaps a monk of Saint-Denis, had a part in setting down the material found in Chapters 149 to 154.¹⁰

Guillaume le Breton's failure to acknowledge the unknown monk might be explained in one of three ways: he might have considered that the continuation was not important because it was so short; he could have believed that it was Rigord's own work; or he perhaps realised that the material was based upon Rigord's own work and that no further explanation was necessary. The latter seems to be the best explanation.

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⁹ *Supra*, pp. 18-19; and *Infra*, p. 30.

¹⁰ *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. Jules Viard, Tome VI (Paris: 1930), 283.

If Guillaume le Breton searched for Rigord's work in the archives of Saint-Denis in the early part of the 13th century, he was probably aware that the work covering the years 1180 to 1208 was essentially Rigord's and no further acknowledgement was necessary.

Whatever Guillaume le Breton knew or did not know about the authorship prior to 1209, it is at least certain that he based his continuation upon this material found in the third recension of the *Gesta*.

The first and second recensions of Rigord's *Gesta* present fewer problems. The first was completed before 1196; and the second continued the account to about 1200. The *Gesta*, as it survives, is preceded by a letter of dedication to Louis VIII and a prologue. These two introductory pieces identify the first two recensions and their scope. Although the letter precedes the prologue in the extant manuscript, the prologue is the older of the two pieces. Whereas the letter gives the title of Augustus to Philip II without explanation, Rigord found it necessary to explain this appellation — he was the *first* to apply it to Philip II — in the prologue. Thus, Rigord says

... iste meritò dictus est Augustus ab aucta republica. Adjecit enim regno suo totam Viromandiam, quam praedecessores sui multo tempore amiserant, et multas alias terras; reditus etiam regnum plurimum augmentavit.¹¹

This statement also indicates the approximate date of the completion of the first recension: it was written after the annexation of Vermandois in 1185 but before the acquisition of Normandy in 1204. Because Normandy was an important step in the enlargement of the royal domain,

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¹¹ Rigord, *op. cit.*, 3.

it seems unlikely that Rigord would have failed to mention it and given preference instead to Vermandois. Two further indications are given about the date of the completion of the first recension. Rigord has said that the work required ten years to compose; he has also indicated that the work was begun before he entered the monastery by enumerating the hardships which he had undergone during the early years of composition. In an apologia for his style he says:

... multa concurrerunt impedimenta, egestas seu rerum inopia, acquisitio victualium, instantia negotiorum, styli simplicitas et mens in hujusmodi minus exercitata¹²

We know that Rigord was at the priory of Argenteuil in February 1189 because he has included an account of an eclipse that he witnessed there.¹³ On the basis of this we must conclude that the *Gesta* was begun before 1189. Another factor serves to give a more accurate indication of the date of completion of the first extension and, therefore, the date at which it was begun: the prologue was written at a time when Rigord was a staunch supporter of Philip Augustus.

Scripturus enim gesta christianissimi Philippi Regis, si cuncta de virtutibus ejus congrua dixerō, adulari putabor: si quaedam subtractione incredibilia videantur, damnum laudibus ejus mea faciet verecundia.¹⁴

This attitude toward Philip Augustus is found in the text of the *Gesta* until 1196, when the king's liaison with Agnes Meran began. Before that Rigord emphasizes Philip's continence in contrast to other kings;¹⁵

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¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ 'Item quarto idus februarii, me existente apud Argentolium'
Ibid., 28.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵ '... continentiam conjugalem prae omnibus aliis Regibus in domum suam transtulit.' *Ibid.*, 5. This is omitted in the translation found in the *Grandes Chroniques*.

praises his defence of the Church and the rights of the clergy; and blames bad counsel for some actions. But Rigord's attitude turns to one of criticism in 1196: Philip Augustus is condemned for his treatment of the Jews; for his treatment of the clergy who remained loyal to Rome during the interdict; and above all for the imprisonment of Ingeborg and the heavy levies imposed on the nobles and the bourgeoisie.

Because of the tone of the prologue and the treatment of the account to 1196, it is possible to say that there was a recension that was not critical of Philip, and that this — the first recension — was completed about 1196. This is further confirmed by Rigord's statement that he would have destroyed the *Gesta* or kept it secret had not Hugh, the abbot of Saint-Denis, encouraged him to present his work to the king. The point is complicated a bit by the fact that one Hugh was succeeded by another Hugh as the abbot of Saint-Denis: Hugh Foucault (1186-1197) and Hugh de Milan (1197-1204). Because of the similarity between the tone of the prologue and the account to 1196, and because it seems unlikely that a work as critical of the king as the *Gesta* becomes after 1196 would have been presented to the monarch and received his approval, the abbot in question must have been the one who reigned in 1197. We cannot expect Rigord's work and the completion of the text to be absolutely contemporary with the events which he describes: as will be shown later, Rigord was two years late in writing the account for 1204, and so might have been behind to some, but a lesser, extent with the first recension. If such were the case, the abbot mentioned by Rigord would have been Hugh of Milan.¹⁶

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¹⁶ This date would also mean that the work was begun about 1186.

As noted above, the letter to Prince Louis was written after the prologue. Because it contains no references to historical events, it is difficult to assign an exact date to it. The words used in reference to Louis indicate that the prince was a child at the time that it was written. For example:

Salvatoris exoramus clementiam, ut ... ipse vos
eâdem gratiâ quâ feliciter educavit in puerum,
felicîus vos promoveat in juvenem¹⁷

Puer is used several times in reference to Louis. His youth is further indicated by ' ... quia literas discitis et diligitis'¹⁸, which shows that his education was not yet completed.

M. Delaborde feels that another passage gives the best indication about the date of the composition.

Vox siquidem exultationis et salutis in tabernaculis
Francorum passim insonuit, quia vident Regem suum,
Regis Augusti filium, à cunis sapientiae laribus
educatum, ad regalem sapientiae thronum maturè
conscendere¹⁹

It would seem that a great event was about to take place. Philip did not have his son crowned during his lifetime. Louis was not knighted until 1209, and at that time he was aged twenty-two: he could not be referred to as a boy at that age. There was, however, an event that might explain the passage: Louis's marriage to Blanche of Castile in May 1200. Louis was not yet thirteen at that time, but he would be assuming the attributes of manhood through his marriage. Although it is true that marriage at an early age was not uncommon among princes and nobles, the Capetians indulged in early marriages to a lesser extent than did other royal families — such as the Valois. The marriage of the heir to the throne would be an important event and could explain

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¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Rigord's statement. The indications that Louis was still a child at the time that the letter was written serve to place its date in the early months of 1200: sometime before May when the marriage took place. Thus, the second recension would have been finished at the beginning of 1200 at the very latest; and the letter of dedication to Louis was then attached to it.²⁰

In order to accept the hypothesis of the three recensions of the *Gesta*, a plausible explanation must be given for an anomaly in Chapter 92. In this chapter, which deals with the marriage of Philip and Ingeborg in 1193, some allusions are made to the repudiation of the Queen in 1196. This might be used to negate what has been said concerning the first recension: that disapproval comes only after 1195; however, it should in fact be viewed as an addition to the first recension. As noted above, the prologue speaks of Philip in terms of highest praise. Even this instance of disapproval would have been met with distaste and it is not consistent with the rest of the account to 1196. It may therefore be assumed that this chapter was altered after 1196 to add weight to Rigord's disapproval of Philip's actions. If we accept that the second recension included an account to about 1200, this addition was probably a part of that recension.

Although some indications of the scope of Rigord's work are given in the above discussion, it is necessary to give more attention to this. After a brief account concerning the birth of Philip Augustus, the *Gesta* turns to his coronation in 1179. Chapter 11 discusses the death of Louis VII. The first five years of Philip Augustus's reign

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²⁰ Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 591.

are dealt with rapidly to Chapter 37, and it would seem that at least these five probably passed before Rigord began to write the *Gesta* and were therefore not fresh in his mind. After Chapter 37 Rigord digresses to trace the genealogy of the French kings beginning with Priam. After this Rigord's account continues to 1204. As noted above, the *Gesta* becomes terse after that year, and this continues so that by 1206 it is reduced to giving as an account of that year an eclipse of the moon, the illness of Prince Louis, a truce with John of England, and the floods of December. From this point onward the account is based upon Rigord's notes as compiled by an unknown monk.²¹

The sources from which Rigord derived his information are given in the prologue.

Scripsi enim quaedam quae propriis oculis vidi,
 quaedam quae ab aliis diligentius inquisita forsitan
 minus plenè edidici, quaedam mihi incognita penitus
 praetermisi.²²

By his own admission Rigord tells us that his account contains not only the events that he himself witnessed, but also material gained from other sources — which he does not identify. The text is not, however, simply a repetition of other contemporary accounts. It is true that Rigord made use of the works of other writers (such as Aimoin, Geoffroy of Monmouth, and Hugh de Saint-Victor), but the information derived from them was of past events such as those concerning the Jews, the genealogy of the French kings, and the opening of the tomb of Saint Denys in 1053.²³

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²¹ *Supra*, p.19.

²² Rigord, *op. cit.*, 3.

²³ Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 593-94.

But of more historical interest than the works of other authors is the use that Rigord made of the documents found in the archives of Saint-Denis. The first of these is included in the account of 1188 concerning the preparations for Philip's Crusade. At that point Rigord transcribes the *Statuta de debitis cruce signatorum* and the *Institutio decimarum*. These documents of course pertain to the time before Rigord arrived at Saint-Denis,²⁴ but they may have been added to his account after his arrival there or — as seems more likely if we accept that he came to Saint-Denis about 1190 — that he was simply able to incorporate them into his account for 1188 which he was writing at that time. Another example of the use of documents in the *Gesta* can be found in Chapter 70 where Rigord has recorded the political testament made by Philip in 1190 for the organisation of government during his absence on Crusade.

He does not, however, show that same care in including the texts of the several peace treaties made with Richard and John of England. In the case of le Goulet, for example, the author refers the reader to the document:

Qualiter aut quomodo inter eos sit illa pax confirmata, vel terra inter eosdem fuerit divisa, in authenticis instrumentis ab ipsis confectis et sigillatis plenius continentur.²⁵

Rigord has treated letters that furnish information in a similar fashion. Discussing the capture of Constantinople and the union of the Eastern and Western Churches he adds: 'Hæc in literis eorum scripta vidimus et legimus'²⁶ He indicates his source of

24 *Supra*, p. 21.

25 Rigord, *op. cit.*, 51.

26 *Ibid.*, 56.

information, but does no more. But in other cases, such as the capture of Richard of England by Emperor Henry VI, in spite of the fact that his account can be traced to a letter from the Emperor to Philip Augustus, Rigord gives no indication of it.²⁷ The criteria for the inclusion or omission of these sources seems inexplicable. On the other hand respect for the supernatural explains the fact that for the year 1186 we find much of Rigord's attention given over to the prophecies of astrologers.

In spite of the drawbacks of the *Gesta*, it reveals itself as the work of a precise and reasonably well-educated man. He does not fall prey to the stylistic affectations of Suger and he does not entangle himself in the complexities of classical imitation. Although his chronology and dating can be questioned at times, they can be explained by assuming that Rigord was working on the basis of a regnal year beginning on 25 March so that 20 March 1190 (n.s.) would be rendered as 20 March 1189.²⁸ Interest in the supernatural phenomena and interpreting them through prophecy is also very apparent in Rigord's work, but it must be remembered that this was the nature of medieval man and preoccupation with it was characteristic of the age. Thus, he cannot be condemned for such interests.

Before joining a monastic community, Rigord's profession was medicine. The place where Rigord undertook preparations for this career and the nature of his education are not known, but we must assume that he received some training, perhaps at Montpellier. In his dedicatory letter to Louis he quotes Virgil and Horace as well

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²⁷ Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 595.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 598.

as mentioning Plato. These would at least give an indication of the nature of the education to which he aspired. But in his writing, he depends upon allusions to the lives of saints and the Bible more than classical ones. Chapter 11 compares the richness of Louis VII's funeral to the magnificence of the time of Solomon; while Chapter 13 retells the story found in Kings 4:25 and ends with the quotation from Isaiah 21:5; etc. But the inclination toward such references never becomes an overwhelming factor in his approach to writing the chronicle, and does not reduce the force of the work. In general, the allusions tend to serve only in emphasizing certain parts of the account; and thus the *Gesta* cannot be said to be a string of platitudes with bits of more or less pertinent information here and there. Rigord, in fact, is one of the few chroniclers of Saint-Denis who is either honest or tries to present an impartial picture of his subject: Rigord is quite honest in expressing his personal assessments.

As noted above, the *Gesta* cannot be called impartial: no attempt is made to gloss over Philip Augustus's faults in the manner of Suger's eulogy to the ideal theocratic king. In fact he is quite honest: he disapproves of the repudiation of Ingeborg — and, although he supports and justifies Philip Augustus's expulsion of the Jews, he is also critical of their recall:

... contra omnium hominum opinionem ipsiusque Regis edictum, Judeos Parisiis reduxit et ecclesias Dei graviter est persecutus; qua de causa ... pœna secuta est.²⁹

Rigord does become most severe when he records Philip Augustus's relations with the Church. He is critical of anything that is contrary to his own moral precepts; he is a staunch defender of the clergy even

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²⁹ Rigord, *op. cit.*, 48-49.

when this necessarily involves standing against the king. He goes so far as to censure the bishops, who in 1196 would not venture to pass judgment on the dissolution of the King's marriage — calling them dumb animals who feared for their skins. It should be remembered, it is true, that Philip's power over the Church was so great that when the legate of Innocent III pronounced the resultant interdict the greater part of the clergy refused to publish the sentence. Those, such as the Bishops of Paris and Senlis, who obeyed the Pope's order were treated harshly by the king's men and their goods confiscated. For this action Rigord censures the king. It must be noted, however, that these criticisms are found in the second recension: they were not part of the recension that was presented to Philip Augustus himself, but were found in the recension that was dedicated to the future Louis VIII. Although Rigord's loyalty to the Church is to be expected, it may also have been reinforced by the security that he gained upon entering the monastery. Before this time he had struggled for existence: as the prologue states '... egestas seu rerum inopia, acquisitio victualium, instantia negotiorum'³⁰ Although, as M. Daunou suggested, the simplicity of the age might explain Philip's indulgence and acceptance of criticism,³¹ the answer is more clearly indicated by the fact that Rigord's criticisms were contained in the second recension — which may never have reached the eye of Philip Augustus. We must, after all, remember the following facts: Guillaume le Breton was forced to look for Rigord's work at Saint-Denis; the second recension was dedicated to Louis; the third was in progress at the time of Rigord's death; and we are told that the first recension was brought to Philip

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³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

³¹ Daunou, *op. cit.*, 5-20.

Augustus's attention. We have no reason to suspect that Philip was aware of the criticisms of him that existed in later recensions of his biography.

Any account of the life of Rigord — or Riguotus, as Guillaume le Breton transcribes his name³² — must of necessity be the result of deduction. The basis for it is the following passage from the letter of dedication to Louis:

... magister Rigordus, natione Gothus, professione
physicus, Regis Francorum chronographus, beati Dionysii
Areopagitae clericorum minimus³³

The year of his birth cannot be firmly established. In Chapter 145 of the *Gesta*, Rigord said that he was old in 1205:

Per omnia benedictus Deus, qui mihi servo suo,
licèt indigno et fragili peccatori, ferè in senio
jam existenti, divina pietas ... videre concessit.³⁴

But defining what old was to Rigord is not the only means of determining his birth date. Rigord indicates that his profession was medicine and that a number of years of hardship elapsed before he entered the monastery, years in which he began the *Gesta Philippi*. Rigord may have received his medical training at Montpellier, which, as noted

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³² The spelling of Rigord's name has several variations: in the prologue of the *Gesta* it is written Rigordus; Guillaume le Breton calls him Riguotus; and the obituary list of Saint-Denis calls him Rigoldus. The reasons for these disparities are discussed by Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 609-610. It is interesting to note that the spelling found in the prologue and a misreading of that given by Guillaume le Breton was the basis for the rejection of the validity of the *Gesta* by the canons of Notre-Dame in 1410. H.-François Delaborde, 'Le Procès du chef de Saint Denis en 1410', *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, xii (1885), 297-409. Also *Infra*, pp. 37-38.

³³ Rigord, *op. cit.*, 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

below, was near his home and where the existence of a medical school is first noted in 1137.³⁵ We cannot ascertain what the length of training was in the 12th Century, but in the early 14th Century the degree of *magister* required five years of training. If Rigord began his training at the age of sixteen or seventeen, as was the custom, he would have been twenty-one or twenty-two when it was completed. He has indicated that he was still in the area of his home in 1186 and that he was at the priory of Argenteuil in 1189. He died about 1209; thus twenty-three years elapsed between his death and the time that he is known to be in the South. In this way we can now account for about forty-five years of his life.

The *Gesta* was begun in 1186. It does seem unlikely that he would have undertaken the composition of it during his student days. If we make no allowance for time between his student days and the beginning of the *Gesta*, Rigord may have been about forty-five at the time of his death. Some margin, however, must be given to cover the possibility that some time elapsed between Rigord's student days and the time when he began the *Gesta*. Five to ten years during which time he practised medicine might have convinced him that monastic life and its security would be preferable. In this case his age at death would have been about fifty to fifty-five; and his birth date would have been between 1155 and 1160

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³⁵ Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. F.M. Powicke, vol. II (Oxford: 1936), 119.

³⁶ Benjamin L. Gordon, *Medieval and Renaissance Medicine*, (London: 1960), 344.

(or 1165 if no margin is allowed).³⁷

The place of his birth also calls for a question mark. At the beginning of the dedicatory letter to Prince Louis, Rigord describes himself as 'natione Gothus', meaning from Bas-Languedoc.³⁸ Because of the frequency of the name Rigord in an area bounded by Montpellier, the abbey of Franquevaux, Nîmes, and Alès, M. Delaborde has indicated that this may be the actual area of Rigord's home. Furthermore in an obituary list of Saint-Denis, where we find listed the names of the monks, their relatives, and well-known persons, there is an entry for a layman called Bernardus Rigor. In 1212 a consul of Montpellier carried this name.³⁹

Other evidence can be found to support a claim for this area. In the entire *Gesta* the author rarely relates things that do not concern Philip Augustus, the territory that he controlled, political events, or Saint-Denis. Among the exceptions only two accounts are concerned

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³⁷ Thus Rigord may have considered himself old at some time between the ages of perhaps forty-five to fifty. It is not possible to determine a length of life expectancy for medieval people in general. We can note that the kings of the era died in their late fifties on an average; that the abbots of Cluny were noted for their longevity; and that Suger died in his seventies; the Religieux in his seventies (if we accept his statement of his own age); Chartier perhaps died in his seventies and Castel in his late fifties. Thus if the *chroniqueurs* can be taken as an indication of monastic life expectancy, it would exceed that of France's kings.

Creighton Gilbert has studied the problem of when a Renaissance man grew old. Studying the life span and statements of well-known Italian people of the Renaissance, he found that most people stopped work and died between the ages of forty and sixty. Thus, a man could become old at age forty. Creighton Gilbert, 'When did a man in the Renaissance grow old?', *Studies in the Renaissance*, xiv (1967), 7-32. Rigord fits into that Renaissance definition, but his fellow chroniclers do not seem to do so.

³⁸ Daunou, *op. cit.*, 6.

³⁹ Delaborde, 'Notice sur les ouvrages', 610-11.

with events that occurred at a great distance from Saint-Denis: these are the details on the Chaperons blancs in 1183 and a mention of an earthquake that was felt at Uzès in 1186 ('... media existente Quadregesima, factus est terrae motus in Gothia in civitate quae Ucericum dicitur.').⁴⁰ Uzès is about ten miles southeast of Alès and would thus be near to the prescribed geographical area.

We do know that Rigord entered the monastic community late in life and several years after he had begun the *Gesta*. In light of the above discussion, we may assume that Rigord was still in his native territory in 1186. No other explanation can be offered for the inclusion of this information; other things such as eclipses and floods that are mentioned have either been witnessed by Rigord or have occurred in areas that directly concern him; the earthquake at Uzès must be accepted in the same way.

The year of Rigord's death is open to some discussion as has been noted above in the discussion of the authorship of Chapters 149-154 of the *Gesta*. The obituary list of Saint-Denis indicates that he died on 17 December, but it does not specify the year.⁴¹ As was pointed out earlier, Guillaume le Breton indicates that Rigord's account encompassed twenty-eight years of Philip Augustus's reign. Because Chapters 149-154 can be attributed in some way to Rigord, this places his death at about the beginning of 1209. A date of 1208 would indicate that Rigord's accounts were exactly contemporary to the events which they discussed, but such punctuality seems

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⁴⁰ Rigord, *op. cit.*, 19.

⁴¹ Daunou, *op. cit.*, 11-12.

unlikely: aside from the dates of the first and second recensions and their scope, we find an eclipse of 1207 mentioned in the account for 1206. On the basis of this, 1209 seems the most likely date for the death of Rigord.

As already noted, Rigord entered monastic life after leading an onerous secular life. Although the exact date is uncertain, we do know that he was at the priory of Argenteuil on 10 February 1189.

In the dedication to Louis of the second recension of the *Gesta* Rigord states that he was a doctor by profession,⁴² and from his comments on the penury that he suffered before entering the monastery it would seem that medicine was his only means of support. Several historians, such as Fabricius and Oudin, put forward the idea that Rigord was a physician of the king.⁴³ This was based on the phrase 'professione physicus Regis Francorum chronographus'. It should be noted, however, that the word *professione* does not allow *Regis Francorum* to be attached to it: *Regis Francorum* can only apply to *chronographus*.

Before turning to a discussion of the meaning of the title *chronographus*, several other questions arising from Rigord's description of himself must be given some attention. The first point arises from the title *Magister* that he claims. This was only assumed by monks in two cases: if they were priests, or if they gave lessons. Rigord was not a priest: in the obituary list his name is followed by the initials

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⁴² Further weight is given to this by a comment found in Chapter 55. In that chapter Rigord blames Saladin's arrival in Europe for the fact that children had 22 teeth instead of the usual 32.

⁴³ As noted in Daunou, *op. cit.*, 6.

M.B.D. (monachus beati Dionysii) and not by M.S.B.D. (monachus sacerdos beati Dionysii) as are others. It is true that he may have taught at Saint-Denis, but a better explanation of the title may be that it was the result of his activities before becoming a monk.⁴⁴ In the South the attitude toward medicine was more liberal, so perhaps his title arose from activities there. Rigord gives us no indication that he continued to practise his profession at Saint-Denis. We do know that the statutes of several orders and the decrees of Councils such as that of Rheims in 1131 and that of the Lateran in 1132 forbade such activities: for example 'statuimus ut nullus ominino post votum religionis, post factum professionem, ad physicam ... permittatur exire secus; excommunicatus ab inimicis vitetur.'⁴⁵ This suggests that although he could not go out to practise, Rigord may have been permitted to be a domestic doctor to the community itself. It is possible that until the first recension of the *Gesta* came to the attention of the abbot, Rigord continued his previous occupation; but once he became involved in the work of a chronicler, other pursuits were abandoned.

Not only was Rigord the author of the *Gesta*, he also wrote a short chronicle of the Kings of France — giving their names, genealogy, and the location of their tombs at Saint-Denis. This work, which was completed in the early part of 1196,⁴⁶ was a forerunner of Guillaume

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⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁶ This date is based upon the following:

- 1) The work is dedicated to the prior who occupied that position from 1190 to May 1196;
- 2) Only a part of the extant portion is written in the critical tone found in the second recension of the *Gesta*;
- 3) The prologue describes Rigord in the same words as the dedicatory letter to Prince Louis.

Delaborde, 'Notice sur les ouvrages ...,' 605.

de Nangis's chronicle of the French kings in that both were intended to be short guides for the use of visitors to the abbey. The only extant portion of this work, Bibliothèque municipale de Soissons, MS 120, ff. 130-37, is interrupted in the middle of the reign of Louis IV. The greatest interest in this work is found in the prologue:

... .R. natione Gothus, professione phisicus,
regis francorum chronographus, beati Dyonisii
ariopagitte clericorum minimus⁴⁷

Thus, in 1196, as in 1200, Rigord has used the phrase *Regis Francorum chronographus*. It must be stressed at the outset that there is no evidence — no financial account — that indicates that Rigord received remuneration of any sort for his efforts. Because of this lack of evidence, several alternative explanations can be put forward: the title was assumed without any other sanction; it was granted by or connected with Saint-Denis; or it was bestowed by the king as a favour without any other recognition and without remuneration. Rigord does admit that the *Gesta* was begun before his arrival at Saint-Denis and that it was presented to Philip Augustus. This was of course the first recension — completed in late 1195 or early 1196. Had he assumed the title of *chronographus* by his own hand, it would have surely appeared in the prologue, but it does not. Instead it appears in the prologue to the short chronicle that was completed a few months later in 1196 and in the letter of dedication of the *Gesta* from 1200. It is true that if Rigord adopted the title, he could have used it at any time, but then there would be no explanation for this adoption a few months later: after the first recension of the *Gesta* was completed. If we consider the reluctance of Rigord to make the *Gesta* known, we may

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⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 600.

conclude that it seems unlikely that such a man would have arbitrarily taken the title *chronographus* without any other authority.

But by whose authority was it taken? Was it given by the king, thereby standing as a forerunner of the *historiographe du roi* of later centuries? This seems unlikely. As was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the *Gesta* was placed in the archives of Saint-Denis and it was there that Guillaume le Breton had to find it. Had Philip Augustus granted the honour of *chronographus*, it would seem that the *Gesta's* circulation would have been wider; that Guillaume le Breton would not have been forced to go to Saint-Denis to find a copy; that Guillaume le Breton would have acknowledged the title when he named the author; and that Rigord might have been closely associated with the court. No evidence supports these points. Although he may have been imbued with the greatest integrity, Rigord would have surely restrained his criticism of Philip if the king had been his benefactor.

The third explanation, a connection with Saint-Denis, seems the most feasible. During the early 15th Century when a dispute arose between the canons of Notre-Dame and the monks of Saint-Denis over who possessed the valid relic of the head of St. Denys, the canons connected Saint-Denis with the histories of the French kings. The monks of Saint-Denis had presented the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, which included Rigord's work, as part of their evidence and the canons in their turn denied its validity on the grounds that it was a replacement of the original made by the monks to support their own cause. The original, they said, was written by a monk named Rignotus. This, of course, was simply a misreading of the spelling used by Guillaume le Breton. In addition to their objection to Rigord and his work, the

canons of Notre-Dame refused to accept the phrase 'Regis Francorum chronographus'. Although they acknowledged the historiographical activities at Saint-Denis, they denied the correctness of the title:

Item et de ce s'ensuit clérement que ledit Rigordus estoit le croniqueur de Saint-Denys au vivant de Philippe le Conquérant; et ne s'ensuit point que, se il estoit croniqueur de Saint-Denys, pour ce qu'il se doye appeller regum Francorum cronographus, néant plus que ont fait les autres croniqueurs de Saint-Denis si comme Aymon, Eginardus, Suggestus, Guillaume de Nangis et celui qui à present est⁴⁸

Furthermore the canons defined, very precisely, the *chroniqueur du royaume* as '... serviteur et familier, suivant et demourant a la court.'⁴⁹ The title of *chronographus* as held by Rigord was that which came to be known as *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*. It was the title that led to the *chroniqueur du royaume* and then to the *historiographe du roi*, but it was still in its infancy and the functions involved were not yet closely defined.

Thus the title that Rigord held can be explained in reference to Saint-Denis: in spite of the fact that it was *Regis Francorum chronographus*, the title was accorded by the monastery of Saint-Denis and its form may have simply been a forerunner of the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*. Since it appeared in the prologue to the short chronicle, it came into usage very shortly after the presentation of the *Gesta* to Philip Augustus in 1196. The title was not intended as a mark of high distinction, but rather as recognition of the work of the *Gesta*. Without evidence to the contrary, this seems to be the most acceptable explanation for the curious phrase.

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⁴⁸ Delaborde, 'Le Procès du chef ...,' 387.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 346.

As indicated earlier, the manuscript was deposited in the archives of Saint-Denis. Later in the 13th Century — perhaps because of its author's title or simply because of its availability — the *Gesta* and its continuation were included in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*; and still later in the century were translated by the compiler of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

CHAPTER III

PRIMAT

Phelippes, rois de France, qui tant i es renomez,
 Ge te rent le romanz qui des rois est romez.
 Tant a ces travallie qui Primaz est nomez
 Que il est, Dieu merci, parfaiz et consummez.

These verses — found at the end of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* — and their mention of Primat (Primaz) were the centre of a dispute that lasted for many years. The interpretations varied greatly: Bouquet considered Primat a copyist;¹ Paulin Paris thought him a translator;² Lacabane felt that both translating and compiling could be attributed to him;³ and Lebeuf, rejecting 'Primaz' as a proper name, claimed that the reference had to do with Matthew de Vendome — the abbot of Saint-Denis under whose direction the recension was made.⁴

These views were based on the fact that Primat was known for his French recension (*Les Grandes Chroniques*) of the *Latin Chronicles of Saint-Denis*: and not for a Latin work of his own. But Primat had

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¹ Martin Bouquet, *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Tome V (Paris: 1744), 218.

² Paulin Paris, 'Chroniques de St-Denis, 1274', *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, Tome XXI (Paris: 1847), 740.

³ Léon Lacabane, 'Recherches sur les auteurs des Grandes Chroniques de France dites de Saint Denys', *BEC*, ii (1840-41), 61.

⁴ 'En effet, les abbés de saint Denys tenrent toujours le premier rang parmi les abbés du royaume' Lebeuf, 'Notice d'un manuscrit des Chroniques de Saint Denys, le plus ancien que l'on connoisse', *Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, Tome XVI (Paris: 1751), 181.

written a Latin account, which is no longer extant and is today known only in a French translation made by Jean de Vignay, who in the early 14th century translated it to continue the *Miroir historial* of Vincent de Beauvais. It was M. Paul Meyer who added a Latin account to Primat's credit, when in 1866 he announced that he had discovered a translation made by Jean de Vignay of Primat's Latin work. Meyer found this material in a manuscript that also contained a translation of the work of Vincent de Beauvais, B.M. MS Roy 19 D.I.⁵

Jean de Vignay gives the name of the chronicler in two passages.⁶ The first is found in reference to the miracles of St. Louis that the translator has added to Primat's account:

Pour ce que il est avis frère Jehan de Vignay (qui ay transporté et mis les IIII volumes de ceste presente oeuvre de latin en françois, selon ce que frère Vincent de l'ordre des Preescheurs l'ordena et fist, avec une adition que je y ai adjoustée selonc les croniques que Prymat fist, laquelle adition prent là où frère Vincent laissa), c'est assavoir que l'edit frère Vincent et Primat parlent trop poy en leur traité des meurs esperituèles de celi très honnorable saint⁷

The second passage is found in the epilogue:

Et aussi me convient il faire fin, pour ce que Primat, de qui je ay translaté les croniques que il fist depuis le temps frère Vincent, laissa l'ystoire ci endroit ou environ; si que je fais la fin de ma translation selon l'ystoire de celi Primat.⁸

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⁵ Paul Meyer, 'Rapport sur une mission littéraire en Angleterre', *Archives des Missions scientifiques et littéraires*, ser. 2, iii (1866), 262-76, 319-25.

⁶ The possibility that the author of the Latin chronicle and the compiler of the *Grandes Chroniques* were not the same man has never been considered. The scope of the extant portion of Primat's Latin chronicle as found in translation, the details of Primat's life, and the use of the Latin chronicle by Guillaume de Nangis seem to indicate that they were the same man.

⁷ *Chronique de Primat traduite par Jean du Vignay in Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XXIII, 63.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

Why did Jean de Vignay translate the work of Primat? The reason for this has been indicated by him in the passage above ('... laquelle addition prent là où frère Vincent laissa ...'): he has translated Primat's work to form a continuation of the *Miroir historial* by Vincent de Beauvais. The fact that none of the other extant manuscripts of the translation of the *Miroir* contain the continuation⁹ indicates that there was a further reason for it. This is given at the end of the work:

... et merci tant comme je puis la très honorable et haute, puissant et noble Jehenne de Bourgogne, roïne de France, par qui je ay fait ceste presente oeuvre, de ce qu'elle le me daigna faire bailler à faire et à accomplir.¹⁰

In this manner Jean de Vignay indicates that the wife of Philip VI requested both the translation of the *Miroir historial* and a continuation. Unfortunately no reason is given for the choice of Primat's Latin work, nor does Jean de Vignay state by whom the choice was made. The use of the work does, however, reveal that the Latin chronicle of Primat was more widely known than the number of surviving copies indicate,¹¹ and that the Latin recension — whether held only at Saint-Denis or elsewhere — was extant in the early 14th Century.

As Jean de Vignay indicates, he has begun the translation of Primat's Latin chronicle at the point where the *Miroir historial* ends. Hence the extant portion begins at 1250. This date cannot however be accepted as the starting point of Primat's work. In Jean de Vignay's translation the first lines affirm this:

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⁹ Meyer, *loc. cit.*, 264.

¹⁰ *Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XXIII, 106.

¹¹ A fragment of another copy of Jean de Vignay's translation was found in Angers. Auguste Molinier, *Sources de l'histoire de France ...*, III, n^o. 2531.

Vraiment la royne mère d'iceulz, qui avoit nom madame Blanche ... gouverna en ce temps le royaume de France, et non pas par vertu feminine mès vertueusement, comme s'ele fust homme, si que pour alegier la douleur que ele avoit conceue de l'encheitivement de ses filz, les II devant diz contes ses filz furent envoiés à icele ...¹²

The phrase 'devant diz contes' obviously refers to an earlier passage that is not included in the translation. The extant portion of the chronicle gives no indication at what point it begins; instead this must be deduced.

Jean de Vignay's translation of Primat's work encompasses the years 1250 to 1285: the last twenty years of the reign of St. Louis and all of that of Philippe le Hardi. If the pattern of Primat's predecessors, Suger and Rigord, was followed we might suppose that Primat's Latin chronicle began in 1226 — the accession of Louis IX — or even 1214, the year of Louis's birth. The possibility also arises that the work may have included the short reign of Louis VIII; or it may have been a universal chronicle. Although no evidence can be found for the latter, some weight can be given to the former.

When a comparison is made between the *Gesta Ludovici regis* of Guillaume de Nangis and the translation of the chronicle of Primat, the only extant version, from 1250 to 1270, one finds a definite relationship between them. Guillaume de Nangis has reproduced chapters 10, 15, and 23 of Primat's Latin work in their entirety; and he has abridged others with the result that there are few chapters of Primat's work that Guillaume has not used in compiling his *Gesta Ludovici regis*. Because Guillaume de Nangis also made use of the work of Geoffroy de

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¹² *Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XXIII, 8.

Beaulieu, some confusion results: he repeats from Geoffroy things which he has already derived from Primat. It is obvious that this concordance from 1250 to 1270 could not support the hypothesis that Primat's Latin work covered the entire reign of Louis IX. But with this as the basis, Meyer has attempted to establish that parts of Guillaume de Nangis's account from 1226 to 1250 were derived from the portion of Primat's account that is no longer extant.¹³

Despite a very literal concordance between Guillaume de Nangis's *Gesta Ludovici* and the *Miroir historial* — which precludes the possibility of a similar connection with Primat's work — Meyer attempted to show that Guillaume did make use of Primat's Latin chronicle before 1250. In fact he evolved the theory that Primat had depended upon Beauvais's account and that Guillaume de Nangis in turn had simply derived his material from Primat.

Eodem anno quo coronatus fuit Ludovicus rex, Hugo comes Marchiae et Theobaldus comes Campaniae, nec non et Petrus comes Britanniae, contra ipsum regem et dominum suum conspirantes, foedus ad invicem inierunt. Unde comes Britanniae ex consensu comitis Campaniae, qui absque licentia, imo contra voluntatem et praeceptam regis jam defuncti Ludovici de terra Albigensium redierat, castellumque quod S. Jacobum de Beveron nominant, quod una cum alio quod Belesmum dicitur, sibi rex defunctus Ludovicus diu ante in custodia tradiderat, prout melius poterat firmabat, et victualibus muniebat.¹⁴

Meyer had identified the underlined phrases as similar to what we know of the style of Primat. On the basis of this he believed that the complete recension of Primat's Latin chronicle began with an account

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¹³ Meyer, *loc. cit.*, 269-72.

¹⁴ Guillaume de Nangis, *Gesta Sanctae Ludovici Regis Franciae*, in *Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XX, 312.

of 1226.¹⁵ The evidence for this is very shaky: the phrases attributed to Primat before 1250 are usually amplifications; and the similarity between the *Gesta* and the *Miroir* is too strong to be derived through an intermediate source. There is of course the possibility that Guillaume de Nangis might have consulted other works: he has acknowledged a missing work by Gillon de Reims as another source.

As Brosien points out, it must be admitted that there is no proof of a Latin chronicle by Primat that includes events prior to 1250;¹⁶ yet the precedence of Suger and Rigord and the phrase 'les deux devant dits comtes' favours an opposite — if inconclusive — view. Nor does Guillaume de Nangis's failure to acknowledge Primat's chronicle change this view: although he used several other sources,¹⁷ he cites only two: Geoffroy de Beaulieu and Gillon de Reims.

As noted above, the translation of Primat's Latin chronicle made by Jean de Vignay includes an account of the reign of Philippe le Hardi (1270-1285). Although Guillaume de Nangis has made use of Primat's Latin chronicle for the first seven years of Philip's reign (1270-77), he extracts only short passages and not entire chapters as in the case of his *Gesta Ludovici*. The *Gesta Philippi* of Guillaume de Nangis contains information not found in Primat's account. Brosien has concluded that this can be explained by the possibility that there were two recensions of Primat's Latin chronicle. According to this theory,

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¹⁵ Meyer, *loc. cit.*, 270-271.

¹⁶ Brosien's conclusions are cited by H.-François Delaborde in *BEC*, xli (1880), 61-74. This one is presented in *Ibid.*, 62-63.

¹⁷ Martin de Troppau, Vincent de Beauvais, *Chronique de Saint Denis ad cyclos paschales*, etc.

the first recension produced an uneven work varying from simple statements of events to very extended accounts. This was the recension used by Nangis, and is no longer extant. The second — a more polished work — was translated by Jean de Vignay.¹⁸

The similarity between the works of Primat and the *Gesta Philippi* of Guillaume de Nangis ends with the account of events in 1277. It would seem that Primat's own work ended at that point, and that the remainder of the account to 1285 is a continuation by an unknown author. Because we do not have the two Latin recensions of Primat's chronicle, it is impossible to determine whether or not Primat's work did include the years 1277 to 1285. It is possible that that portion of the text was lost after its completion, or that it was found only in the second recension which was translated by Jean de Vignay. Estimates of the date of Primat's death — varying from 1284 to 1297 — do not help to solve this problem: an early date might indicate that the work ended in 1277; a later one would not.

The account for 1278 to 1285, found in Jean de Vignay's translation, can, however, be found in another of Guillaume de Nangis's works, the *Chronicon*, which was completed at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries. The latest possible date for Primat's death, 1297, precludes the possibility that Primat himself would have derived it from the *Chronicon*. There is of course another possibility: Primat's account for 1278 to 1285 might have been part of the second recension — used by Jean de Vignay — and not the first, which was used by Guillaume de Nangis. Yet there would be no adequate explanation for Guillaume

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¹⁸ Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 64-65.

ignoring the account for 1278 to 1285 — found in the second recension — when writing the *Gesta Philippi*; it must have been available to him if he incorporated it in the *Chronicon*. Consequently, it must be assumed that the section in question was Guillaume de Nangis's own, and its inclusion in Jean de Vignay's translation must be the result of an effort to carry Primat's account to the death of Philippe le Hardi.

The unknown continuator — when completing the work to 1285, or when replacing a lost portion — turned to the work of Guillaume de Nangis and used it as the continuation to the second recension. Jean de Vignay, who used this recension, translated the entire work as it stood in the second quarter of the 14th Century: between the years that Jeanne of Burgundy became Queen of France (1328) and died (1348).

An assessment of Primat's work is complicated by the necessity of considering both Jean de Vignay's translation (the only surviving example) and the pertinent portions of Guillaume de Nangis's *Gesta Ludovici*. Comparisons between chapters 10, 15, and 23 of Primat's chronicle and the appropriate sections of the *Gesta Ludovici* show that Jean de Vignay's translation — although it might lack elegance and sophistication — is for the most part exact and, therefore, reliable.¹⁹ Through the translation one finds Primat's tendency toward verbosity and over-explanation. An example of this can be found in Chapter 63, which concerns the council held at Lyon by

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¹⁹ This is borne out when translations of other works such as the *Miroir historial* are compared with their Latin texts.

Gregory X in 1274:

En l'an de Nostre Seigneur, qui fut l'an mil CC.LXXIIII, general concile fu fait et celebré à Lyons sus le Rosne par Gringoire pappe le disième; ne l'en ne se recorde point que onques autrefois nul si grant concille ne si general fust celebré en nulle partie. Et a ce concile envoia l'Eglise d'Orient, c'est assavoir ceulz de Grèce, plusieurs des prelas de la terre, comme messages sollempnez, si comme ils disoient, et prometoient que du tout en tout d'ores en avant, il obéiroient à l'Eglise sainte de Romme, et comme à vraie mère catholique, c'est assavoir sur tous les articles de la foy. Et avant celi concille il n'avoient point le *Credo* des apostres, ne ne créoient point que le Saint Esperit procedast egaument du Père et du Filz, ne n'avoient point *Quiconque vult*. Et en celi concille il reçurent ces choses, et promistrent fermement que toute l'Eglise d'Orient ensuivroit et tendroit d'ores en avant toutes ces choses et ce saint enseingement.²⁰

Another is found in the account of the activities of Simon de Montfort in England:

En celi temps ou environ estoit en Engleterre (mès il n'en estoit pas né, mès estoit du lignage de France), c'est assavoir homme noble en lignage et en armes, Symon de Mont-fort, fils de noble home Symon conte de Mont-fort le viel, homme très crestien, et semblablement noble el fait des armes, lequel père, en combatant soi contre la mauvestié des herèges d'Albigois, fu mort el siège de Thoulouse du coup d'un mangonnel; et, si comme l'en croit, il trespasa à Dieu aussi comme martyr. Et celi Symon, son filz, pourseoit la conté de Lencestre par droit de heritage, et avoit espousé la suer de Henri, roy d'Engleterre, et en avoit v nobles filz et une fille, c'estoit Henri, Symon, Richard, Guy et Almauri.²¹

There is also some evidence of imprudent but honest assessments.

For example, in Chapter 27, where the problems encountered by the Crusaders in their attempts to secure food are recounted, Primat

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²⁰ *Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XXIII, 91.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

states what the probable action of Charles of Anjou would have been in a similar situation:

O! se Kalles Martel, c'est à dire Kalles roy de Secile, fust venu à un tel chastel, et il eust trouvé tel chose et si rebelle pueple, si comme je cuide, il eust destruit en un seul monent et gent et chastel tout ensamble.²²

This comment was suppressed by Guillaume de Nangis.

Unlike the works of Suger and Rigord, Primat's chronicle does not include quotations or allusions to classical authors. Instead one finds references to Greek and Roman mythology: Atropos, one of the Three Fates, is mentioned at the death of Louis; and Neptune is connected with the storm encountered near Sicily by the returning Crusaders.

Because so little is known of Primat's life, no reasons can be given to justify the nature of his style. It must be noted that the question of the form of Primat's writing is a circular one because we do not have his Latin text: if one does not accept the theory of Guillaume de Nangis's dependence on Primat's Latin chronicle and the validity of Jean de Vignay's translation of it, then the responsibility for a turgid, extended, and sometimes imprudent account — studded with mythological and Biblical references — must be placed upon the translator, Jean de Vignay.

But the evidence discussed earlier does not lead us to blame Jean de Vignay for these faults of style. Nevertheless it must be

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²² *Ibid.*, 43-44.

noted that the recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* made by Primat reveals few of the faults encountered in his chronicle: he was able to restrain himself when translating the works of others from Latin into French. Although this aspect of Primat's endeavours will be discussed in a later chapter, a few words must be said about it at this point.

Primat has omitted parts of the sources that he has translated for the *Grandes Chroniques*; the reasons for some omissions are apparent, others are not. The latter include historical fact and comment as well as Biblical and mythological allusions; and what Primat seems to have added is free of the stylistic grossness found in the chronicle, although there are some mis-translations.

What is the importance of Primat's Latin chronicle in relation to the *Grandes Chroniques*? As is noted above, Primat was considered a mere translator or copyist until Meyer's discovery. As such, Primat would not have a place in our discussion at this point.

It would seem that Primat's work came to be part of the *Grandes Chroniques* in a round-about manner. Unlike the *Gesta* by Suger and Rigord, which became a part of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and then were translated and incorporated into the *Grandes Chroniques*, large parts of the Latin chronicle by Primat were included not in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, but in the *Gesta Ludovici* and *Gesta Philippi* of Guillaume de Nangis, which became part of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*

and were in turn translated and incorporated into the *Grandes Chroniques*.²³

It is distinctly possible that Primat and his Latin chronicle might have been of greater importance during his own era than they were after the beginning of the 14th Century. If the title of *chroniqueur* that Rigord carried was already a feature of Saint-Denis, it would seem that Primat would have held it during at least the latter part of St. Louis's reign, since no other figure at Saint-Denis emerges to fill that role. Had he held the title, Primat's accounts of St. Louis and Philip would have been composed for deposit in the

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²³ After M. Meyer discovered the Jean de Vignay translation of Primat's Latin chronicle, he put forward the idea that Primat himself had at one time made a translation of his own chronicle and had appended it to the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* (found in Bibliothèque Sainte-Genève MS 782). According to this theory, Primat's account of the reign of Louis IX would have followed the French and Latin verses that conclude the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Today, an account of the life of St. Louis, written at the beginning of the 14th Century, follows the verses. Meyer believed that, at some time after the presentation of the manuscript to the king, Primat's work was removed and then replaced by the work now found in the manuscript. The basis for this, he felt, was found in the first five lines of the Latin verse.

Ut bene regna regas per que bene regne reguntur,
Hec documenta legas que libri fine sequuntur:
Ut mandata Dei serves prius hic tibi presto,
Catholice fidei cultor devotus adesto.

The word *documenta* should apply, Meyer said, to a text that followed rather than preceded the text. Meyer, *loc. cit.*, 266-68.

Molinier opposed this view and pointed out that the term *documenta* was used by various authors of the 13th Century to designate the *Enseignements de Saint Louis*; and that at one time these completed the manuscript of Sainte-Genève. Molinier, *op. cit.*, III, no. 2530.

Brosien has repudiated both of these theories and has demonstrated that the exhortation of the second line refers to nothing more than the counsels found in the succeeding lines. Brosien as cited in *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. Jules Viard, VI (Paris: 1930); 374.



archives of Saint-Denis, incorporation in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* (B. N. lat. MS 5925), and eventual translation in the *Grandes Chroniques*. As in the parallel case of Rigord and Guillaume le Breton, Primat's work was known well enough for Jean de Vignay, or his patroness, to choose it to continue Vincent de Beauvais's account. There is, however, nothing to indicate that any formal appointment of a *chroniqueur* was made after Rigord's death or during the reigns of Louis VIII or Louis IX. Evidence, which will be cited in the following chapter, indicates that Guillaume de Nangis held a paid position at Saint-Denis — possibly in connection with his historical work — as early as 1285. Guillaume de Nangis's *Gesta Ludovici* and *Gesta Philippi III* did become part of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques*; Primat's chronicle — under his own name — did not. The works of the two men were concerned with the same subjects: there would seem to be little reason for two appointees to write on the same subjects. If we accept a death date for Primat that occurs after 1285, then payments were made to Guillaume de Nangis while Primat might still have been alive. Thus, there is little evidence to suggest that Primat's Latin chronicle was anything more than one of a number written by various monks at Saint-Denis: these works cannot be described as insignificant, yet no far-reaching importance or motivation can easily be attached to them. If we assume that Primat died before 1285 (which will be discussed below), then it is possible that Guillaume de Nangis was the successor of Primat in the position of *chroniqueur*. In any event Primat's importance is based upon his work in the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* and the fact that Guillaume de Nangis made use of his Latin chronicle.

Some reference to the scant details we have concerning Primat's life might be in order at this point. The first mention of the surname Primat in connection with Saint-Denis is found in the cartulary of l'Office des Charités of Saint-Denis. From this source one learns that an act of March 1269 (o.s.) concerning the gift of a house to Saint-Denis was passed in the presence of several witnesses. Among them was a clerk of the abbey, Pierre de Sartin, and someone called Robert Primat.²⁴

Because the name Primat is unusual and since it appears in connection with Saint-Denis, one must assume that Robert Primat was not only a member of that monastic community, but also the author of the Latin chronicle and compiler of the *Grandes Chroniques*. But this is not the only time the name is found in connection with Saint-Denis. The accounts of receipts and expenditures of the abbey provide others. These reveal that the wife of Primat (*uxor Primati*) received an annuity in 1284. From 1285 to 1289 the designation 'uxor Primati' is replaced with the name Agnes de Derrest; yet the amount remains the same — perhaps indicating that the same person was involved.²⁵

We find 'uxor Primati' again entered for the period 1290 to 1296, and the amount is the same. The name appears for the last time in 1297 when she received one-half the usual amount, which might perhaps indicate that Primat died before the middle of the financial year.²⁶

That Primat had married Agnes de Derrest and entered the monastery

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²⁴ Leopold Delisle in *Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XXIII, 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

with her consent, and that she received support from the monastery are not beyond the bounds of possibility. The change of name is difficult to explain, although it could simply have been the result of a clerical formality.

It can be assumed that Primat was at Saint-Denis in 1274 — the year in which he completed the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*. The name found in the cartulary would push the date back to at least 1269. It is of course possible to arrive at an earlier death date than 1297, especially on the strength of the life annuity that is entered in the account for 1284. It is possible that the annuity commenced upon Primat's death, which took place some time before the beginning of the financial year of 1284. We know that as it exists today in translation, the text of Primat's chronicle is his to only 1277 — at which point it becomes a translation of the *Chronicon* of Guillaume de Nangis. This could indicate that death prevented the completion of Primat's life of Philippe le Hardi: he had reached the account for 1278 in 1283 or before the beginning of the financial year (22 July) of 1284. The half payment for 1297 could indicate his wife's death, and not his own.

Thus, although the evidence is very circumstantial, a few details of Primat's life emerge: Primat was married, presumably before he entered the monastery, sometime before 1269; the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* was completed about 1274;²⁷ and his Latin chronicle, completed to the year 1277, was written before 1297, but because

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²⁷ This is based on the dates given in the text of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

something prevented Primat from doing the section for 1278 to 1285 — or because it had been lost — another monk is responsible for what we have of this period. Primat's death occurred either in 1284 or in 1297.

Primat still remains a mystery in many ways. To us he is important for two reasons: as the translator of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*; and as a source for the work of Guillaume de Nangis. No concrete evidence can be found in this period to indicate any progress toward the establishment of the writing of an official history at Saint-Denis. And yet some weight must be placed on the beginning of the *Grandes Chroniques* by him. The choice of Primat for the task indicates that factors other than the quality of his Latin composition influenced his selection. Knowledge of these factors seems unattainable through the materials available to us at this date.

CHAPTER IV

GUILLAUME DE NANGIS

In the course of our discussion of Primat and his works, numerous references have been made to Guillaume de Nangis: we know a great deal about his works, yet little is known about his life.

The name 'Nangis'¹ was probably taken from the place of his birth — possibly it was the town of Nangis in the Ile-de-France between Melun-sur-Seine and Nogent. . On the other hand, it is impossible to establish the date of his birth. We do know that he lived and worked during the reign of Philippe le Hardi; and that he presented his *Gesta Sanctae Ludovici regis Franciae* to him.

There is evidence to suggest that Guillaume died about 1300.² He does not, however, make any claims that he was of advanced age in any of his works at any time. But the accounts of Saint-Denis show him holding a responsible position within the community as early as 1285-1286. It has also been shown that his account of the reign of Philippe le Hardi was of his own composition from 1277 onwards: this would seem to indicate that he was aware of the events of Philippe's

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¹ A Guillaume de Nangis, priest and canon, is named in the obituary list of the Cathedral of Rouen; and another Guillaume de Nangis is cited in a charter of 1262 as the king's chaplain, but no evidence connects these men with the chronicler at Saint-Denis. Léopold Delisle, 'Mémoire sur les ouvrages de Guillaume de Nangis', *Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, xxvii, part 2, pp.288-89.

² *Infra*, pp. 60-61.

reign from that time. Such awareness may have come at age twenty or a bit earlier; a responsible position may have been held between the ages of twenty-five and thirty (or even as late as thirty-five). These figures represent only conjecture, but this is the only method open to us on the basis of limited information. In this way we might place the date of Guillaume de Nangis's birth between 1250 and 1260.

Although we cannot establish a definite connection between the activities of Guillaume de Nangis and the office of *chroniqueur du royaume*, we do seem to find some indications of a growing awareness of the importance of historical writing at Saint-Denis, and of the need to reward the person chosen to undertake the task. Guillaume de Nangis was cited by the canons of Notre-Dame as a *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* in their dispute with the monks of Saint-Denis over the relic of the head of St. Denys.³ The fact that his *Gesta Ludovici* and his account of Philippe le Hardi became part of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* confirms their statement. The reward which Guillaume received seems to indicate the first, although tentative, steps toward the emergence of the *chroniqueur du royaume*. In order to assess the role assumed by Guillaume at Saint-Denis, it is necessary to present the following entries from the accounts of the monastery in which he

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³ Item et de ce s'ensuit clérement que ledit Rigordus estoit le croniqueur de Saint-Denys au vivant de Philippe le Conquéran; et ne s'ensuit point que, se il estoit croniqueur de Saint-Denys, pour ce qu'il se doye appeller regum Francorum cronographus, néant plus que ont fait les autres croniqueurs de Saint-Denis si comme Aymon, Eginardus, Suggestus, Guillaume de Nangis et cellui que à present est

H.-François Delaborde, 'Le Procès du chef de Saint Denis en 1410', *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, xii (1885), 387.

figures.

(1285-1286).	Domno [<i>sic</i>] Guillelmo de Nangiis	xl s pro cartis
(1288-1289).	Domino Guillermo	x lb.
(1288-1289).	Magistro cartarum	c s.
(1289-1290).	Domino Guillelmo de Nangis pro cartis custo- diendis	c s.
(1289-1290).	Pro privilegiis per dominum G. de Nangis scribendis.	xxxij s.
(1290-1291).	Custodi cartarum	c s.
(1291-1292).	Pro transcripto privilegiorum et cartarum per dominum G. de Nangis	vj lb. xvij s. iiij d.
(1291-1292).	Domino Guillelmo custodi cartarum	c s.
(1292-1293).	Pro pluribus quartis transcribendis per dominum G. de Nangis et Stephanum Buffet	vj lb. viij s.
(1292-1293).	Domino G. custodi cartarum	c s.
(1293-1294).	Pro transcriptis plurium litterarum, cartarum privilegiorum tam per G. de Nangis et pro litteris regis per procuratorem	xviiij lb.
(1293-1294).	Magistro G. custodi cartarum	c s.
(1294-1295).	De transcriptis cartarum per G. de Nangis et alios	xxxviiij s.
(1294-1295).	Domino G. custodi cartarum	c s.
(1295-1296).	Pro transcriptis cartarum per dominum G. et alios	xl s.
(1295-1296).	Domino G. custodi cartarum	c s.
(1296-1297).	Pro transcriptis cartarum per dominum G. et alios	lv s.
(1296-1297).	Pro quinto priore et Guillelmo de Nangis pro privi- legiis portandis ad regem	iiij lb.
(1296-1297).	Domino G. custodi cartarum	c s.
(1297-1298).	Pro transcriptis cartarum et litterarum per dominum G. et per alios	xlviij s. viij d.
(1297-1298).	Domino G. custodi cartarum	c s.
(1298-1299).	Pro transcriptis cartarum et litterarum per dominum G. et alios	lxxij s.
(1298-1299).	Domino G. pro cartis	c s.
(1299-1300).	Pro cartis et litteris transcribendis per dominum G. et per alios	lxv s. ⁴

It should be noted that Guillaume de Nangis's name appears twice for every year from at least 1291-1292 until 1298-1299. The first of the two entries falls into the category of *expensa communis* and is

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⁴ As quoted by H.-François Delaborde, 'Notes sur Guillaume de Nangis', *BEC*, xlv (1883), 193-94.

concerned with the copying of charters; the second entry, being in the category of *expensa de graciis ac elemosinis*, is concerned with the duties of archivist.⁵ We are of course unable to establish positively the identity of *Magister cartarum* and *custos cartarum* (the third and sixth items above) but we may possibly trace them to Guillaume de Nangis, who definitely held such a position at a subsequent date.

Although no definite pattern emerges with the *expensa communis*, there is a continuity in the *expensa de graciis ac elemosinis*. Guillaume's name appears regularly in the latter, and the payment remains the same from 1288-1289 onwards: unlike the other entries from 1288-1289 onwards, which seem to indicate work in which other priors were also involved, Guillaume's name appears alone. These facts — plus the regularity of payment — would seem to indicate a project in which Guillaume de Nangis alone was occupied over a long period. We do know that during this time Guillaume was involved in the composition of several works; and consequently we might connect such compositions with the payments. If Guillaume de Nangis was the *chroniqueur*, as the canons of Notre-Dame indicate, then we might also say that the title of *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* assumed a new importance in that the *chroniqueur* was now receiving remuneration for his efforts. This is one indication that the concept of the *chroniqueur du royaume* — who received a regular income — was beginning to emerge. Nevertheless it still lacked the official sanction of the king in the form of an appointment by him. We must not, however, discount the possibility that he took some part in the selection of Guillaume de Nangis — and

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⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.

perhaps his predecessors — when the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* was chosen.

We cannot positively connect the position of archivist with that of *chroniqueur*. Yet, we cannot assume that the payment that Guillaume received was simply for performing the duties of archivist: as M. Delaborde points out, neither Guillaume de Nangis's predecessors nor his successors received such a sum for performing the duties of archivist.⁶ It was instead a payment for performing the functions of archivist as well as other duties, perhaps those of *chroniqueur*. Those who kept the accounts may have found it easier to combine the payments rather than make two separate entries.

The final entry in which Guillaume de Nangis figures is that of the *expensa communis* for 1299-1300. His absence from the other account leads us to assume that he died at some time during the financial year that ran from 22 July 1299 to 21 July 1300. That he was active in the abbey up to this time can be seen in the account from the *expensa communis*: he did not receive the annual gratuity as archivist, but he was mentioned in the regular entry along with his fellow clerks.

This death date also seems to be substantiated by a passage in a manuscript of his Latin chronicle, the *Chronicon* which, at the end of the account for 1300, states: '... huc usque protenditur chronica fratris Guillelmi de Nangiaco et non ultra.'⁷ Furthermore a continuator of the *Chronicon* says that the work of Guillaume de Nangis goes

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⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronicon* in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Tome XX (Paris: 1840), 582, n. 8.

to 1300 : ' ... ad annum Domini millesium trescentesium inclusive'⁸ Both of these references would support the theory that Guillaume died after 22 July 1299, but before the end of that financial year; and that he was active until the time of his death. These then are the few details that we know about the man who was perhaps the first paid *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*. We must now turn to his works themselves.

Guillaume de Nangis's works were four in number (not including the recensions and translations that were made of each account): the *Gesta Sanctae Ludovici regis Franciae*; the *Gesta Philippi tertii Audacis dicti, Dei gratia regis Franciae*; the *Chronicon*; and the *Chronique abrégée* or *Chronique des rois de France*. These works had achieved fame as early as the fourteenth century. The *Gesta Ludovici* and the *Gesta Philippi* were used to complete the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and were translated for incorporation in the *Grandes Chroniques*; his *Chronicon* was continued by a succession of men and these continuations were consulted by the compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques*; the *Chronique abrégée* or *Chronique des rois de France* was also continued and became popular — if one can equate popularity with the number of extant manuscripts. Despite the recognised stylistic faults, Guillaume's work continued to be respected until M. Meyer's discovery of a translation of Primat's Latin chronicle and the results of this study became known.⁹

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⁸ *Ibid.*, 583.

⁹ Paul Meyer, 'Rapport sur une Mission littéraire en Angleterre', *Archives des Missions scientifiques et littéraires*, ser. 2, iii (1866), 262-76, 319-25.

Following those events, the positions of Guillaume and Primat were reversed: no longer was Primat thought of as simply the compiler of the *Grandes Chroniques* and Guillaume as an author, now Primat was respected as an author and in many ways Guillaume de Nangis was viewed as the compiler.

A few words must be said about the *Chronique abrégée* or *Chronique des rois de France* before turning to the three works that were used by the compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Like Rigord, Guillaume de Nangis wrote a guide to the tombs at Saint-Denis. Although the original recension was written in Latin, he translated it into French so that it could be used and understood more widely. The Latin recension is no longer extant: it was probably forgotten because of the success of the French version. The surviving manuscripts vary: in some the text is simply a résumé, a methodical listing of the succession and deeds of the kings of France; in others, the text is more developed in that, from the reign of Louis VI onward, it is interspersed with additional information.

On the basis of the above, the two versions have been identified: the abridged and the amplified. Some manuscripts of the *Chronique abrégée* were continued to the reign of Charles le Bel.¹⁰ The manuscripts of the amplified version include continuations to 1303, 1316, 1321, and 1381. Although the great number of surviving manuscripts of the *Chronique des rois de France* indicate that it enjoyed some popularity, it is of little more than passing interest

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¹⁰ Delisle, *loc. cit.*, 352.

for our discussion. The continuations are for the most part based upon the text of the *Grandes Chroniques* — and parts of the relevant portions of the *Grandes Chroniques* are in turn based on another of Guillaume's works, the *Chronicon*.

As noted earlier, Guillaume de Nangis can be viewed as a compiler of sorts. In the preface to the *Gesta Ludovici*, he has cited two sources: the works of Geoffroy de Beaulieu and Gilon de Reims.¹¹ These, however, were not the only sources which he used: as it will be pointed out in the following discussion Guillaume availed himself of many other works.

Perhaps Guillaume realized the effect of attempting to combine so many sources: for reasons either of sheer honesty or self deprecation, he has apologised in the preface for the roughness of his style.

Ideo ego frater Guillelmus de Nangis ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii in Francia indignus monachus praedictorum historiographorum¹² vestigia sequi desiderans, quia tamen scholasticus non eram imò pauper et modicus in

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 11 Dominus enim Gilo de Remis commonachus noster principia gestorum ejus inchoans, quia morte praeventus est, terminare non potuit. Frater verò Gaufridus de Bello loco, ordinis praedicatorum, ea quae ad mores pertinebant, vitam ipsius regis sanctissimam, absque gestis praeliorum et negotiorum secularium, prudenter ac religiosè scribere procuravit. *Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XX, 510.

Gilon de Reims, a monk of Saint Denis, wrote a life of St. Louis which is no longer extant. The only information about it is found in the above passage.

More is known about Geoffroy de Beaulieu, a Dominican, who served as confessor of Louis IX. At the request of Gregory X he wrote the *Vita et sancta conversatio piae memoriae Ludovici, quondam regis Francorum*. The work is a panegyric: it says very little about Louis as king and concentrates on the man and his religious outlook. Molinier, *Sources de l'histoire ...*, III, nos. 2541 and 2542.

12 No further explanation of the word *historiographus* is given; in this case it carries the sense of *chronographus*.

scientia literarum, ad instar illius recolendae mulieris Ruth ad agros cucurri scripturarum, spicas inde recolligens metentium doctorum, quas nobis post tergum suum de industria reliquerunt.¹³

Geoffroy de Beaulieu and Gilon de Reims are specifically mentioned as sources in the above passage, but it also indicates that other authors have been consulted: *metentium doctorum* would surely indicate others. As noted in the preceding chapter, Vincent de Beauvais and Primat were among those to whom due credit was not given. Although the preface precedes only the *Gesta Ludovici*, it must be interpreted as applicable to both that work and the *Gesta Philippi*. In the preface the author speaks of making known the actions of the two kings and says that after completing an account of the life of Louis IX he will write one of Philip III. It should be pointed out that the life of Louis by Geoffroi de Beaulieu provided Guillaume with material not only for the *Gesta Ludovici*, but also for the earlier parts of the *Gesta Philippi*. Thus, what was indicated about the sources in the preface must encompass both works.

Because of the concordance between the works of Primat and Guillaume — and between the works of Vincent de Beauvais and Guillaume — it is proven that Guillaume did not restrict himself to the sources mentioned. Nor can one accept that the similarity between the accounts of Guillaume and Primat were only the result of the use of common source material and notes;¹⁴ this would in fact lead to the rather

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¹³ *Recueil des historiens ... de la France*, XX, 310.

¹⁴ Delisle put forward the theory that Primat and Guillaume de Nangis simply used the same sources and that this was the reason for the similarity of their works. Delisle, *loc. cit.*, 292-94. A discussion of the concordance of their works can be found in the previous chapter, pp. 44-46.

startling conclusion that any two people in the same environment and with identical purposes could, by the use of common material, produce the same account — in the same order and in similar terms. The denial that Primat was a source of the *Gesta Ludovici* (a denial based solely on the omission of his name in the preface) can only be the result of short-sightedness and misinterpretation. The reason for Guillaume's failure to acknowledge Primat cannot be explained adequately. If Primat held an official position, such as *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*, and if Guillaume was Primat's successor, the omission may have resulted from a reluctance of one *chroniqueur* to admit his debt to his predecessor.

In order that a more positive explanation about the omission of Primat's name can be made, it is necessary to ascertain when the two *Gesta* were written and whether Primat was alive at the time. The preface to the *Gesta Ludovici* indicates that an account of the life of Philippe le Hardi would follow; and yet two dedications are found. The dedication in verse of the *Gesta Ludovici* is addressed to Philippe le Hardi; and that of the *Gesta Philippi* in prose is addressed to Philippe le Bel. The *Gesta Ludovici* would therefore have been completed before 1285, the year of Philippe le Hardi's death. It may well be that the references to the *Gesta Philippi* were inserted in the second and only surviving recension of the two works. If this is the case, it would seem strange that a second preface would not have been written instead when Guillaume de Nangis presented both works to Philippe le Bel. If we accept that the references to Philippe le Hardi were an original part of the preface of the *Gesta Ludovici*, this would indicate that the *Gesta Ludovici* was written during the latter part

of Philippe le Hardi's reign: at a time when a work on his reign might reasonably have been undertaken.

The *Gesta Philippi* was dedicated to Philippe le Bel — indicating that it was completed after 1285. The date of its completion is uncertain. If we accept the statement in the preface that a life of Philippe le Hardi would follow that of Louis, it would seem possible that Guillaume de Nangis began to write the *Gesta Philippi* during the lifetime of that king, completing it after his death and presenting it to the new monarch, Philippe le Bel. In any event, it would have been completed before 1297, for in the parts that we assume are Guillaume's own (the account from 1278-1285) no reference is made to Louis IX as a saint, although he was canonised in 1297. Thus the *Gesta Philippi* would have been completed between 1286 and 1296, after Philippe le Bel ascended the throne, but before the canonisation of Louis IX.

The style of Guillaume de Nangis in these two works is basically that of the authors of the sources that he used. And yet the faults of Guillaume's style cannot be blamed entirely on earlier writers. For example, although that part of the *Gesta Ludovici* taken from the *Miroir historial* of Vincent de Beauvais (from the birth of Louis to 1250) contains a close rendering of the work, the account itself is amplified by Guillaume.¹⁵ The additions might of course be attributed to Primat or Gilon de Reims whose Latin works no longer exist: but, as noted in the preceding chapter, this seems unlikely due to the character of the additions. Instead, the responsibility for the unnecessary explanations and confusion must rest upon Guillaume.

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¹⁵ *Supra*, Chapter III, pp. 44-45.

This becomes evident in that portion which traces events from 1250 to 1270. In that section, Primat and Geoffroy de Beaulieu are Guillaume's sources, but he is unable to balance them and repetition is the result. One finds an account of an event taken from the work of Geoffroy de Beaulieu that has already been taken from the Latin chronicle of Primat. It must be emphasised that Primat's style was characterised by verbosity, but Guillaume's compounds it: he has attempted to combine many sources but has only succeeded in creating confusion to replace mere verbosity. In the hands of a more competent writer the additions derived from the *Chronicon ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii ad cyclos paschales* and the work of Martin de Troppau would have been handled with more care.¹⁶

The first seven years of the reign of Philippe le Hardi (1270-1285) present a slightly different picture. In this section the information, it is supposed, was derived from the first recension of Primat's Latin chronicle. That recension — if we accept the opinion of Brosien concerning the recensions of Primat's chronicle — was more restrained and terse, thus explaining the limited

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¹⁶ The *Chronicon ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii* ... is composed of entries covering the years 1 to 1285 (or 1292). The work seems to be based for a great part on obituary lists; there are similarities with the *Annales S. Germani Parisiensis*.

The *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum* by Martin de Troppau is an account of the popes and emperors imitative of the work of Hugh of Saint-Victor. The work of Martin de Troppau is a compilation that draws on a variety of sources, including the *Liber pontificalis*, Paul the Deacon, Vincent de Beauvais, canon law, etc. A popular work, it was continued; enlarged; consulted by many writers of the 13th and 14th centuries; and translated into several languages. Molinier, *Sources de l'histoire*...., II, no. 1040 and III, no. 2795.

nature of Guillaume's work.¹⁷ The result was a slightly more coherent and less wordy account.

The last portion of the *Gesta Philippi* — from 1278 to 1285 — was entirely the work of Guillaume. The events that he recorded for the reign of Philippe le Hardi were those that took place when he was possibly composing the *Gesta Ludovici*: he may have made his own notes of the era for a projected work. Guillaume does not, however, seem to be very interested in his subject: he omits material that would have been beneficial to the monarch's image. The reign of Philippe le Hardi was shorter and less complex than that of his father; and yet Guillaume shows only slightly more clarity in his personal composition than he did when using the works of others. Thus, throughout both of these works, the style remains the same. Guillaume was not able to rise above his sources, and his personal accounts do not show any improvement over the former. The *Gesta* show little imagination and a flair for over-explaining without clarifying. And yet these two works were considered suitable for inclusion in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques*.

We might wonder why his works with all their imperfections were favoured by inclusion in such works; but any adequate explanation is hard to form. Is it possible that Primat, despite the nature of his writing, was not so honoured for the simple reason that he never held the title of *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*? We have no way of being sure about this. The only reason that we can give is that Guillaume was responsible. It is possible that he undertook the continuation of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* during his appointment as

archivist¹⁸ and that he might have supervised the inclusion of his own work on Louis IX to the exclusion of Primat's. If this were true, it would appear that Guillaume took advantage of a situation and used it for his own advancement.

The third work of Guillaume de Nangis used by the compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques* was the *Chronicon*, an account from the Creation to 1300. In effect the account to 1113 is little more than a copy of Sigebert de Gembloux's widely read *Chronicon*. The first lines of Guillaume's work tell us that he is continuing the work of Sigebert:

Sigebertus, Gemblensis monachus, temporum
et regnorum descriptor praecipuus, moriens finem
chronicae suae fecit. Abhinc subsequutus est eum
frater Guillelmus de Nangis monachus sancti Dionysii
in Francia.¹⁹

Although Guillaume de Nangis was a very faithful follower of his source, there are a few breaks with Sigebert's text. For example, Guillaume suppresses the account in which Pope Joan appears (s.a.858) — we can find this only in Sigebert's work. Guillaume also expresses a view on the Investiture Contest that is diametrically opposed to that of Sigebert. But in spite of the few differences, Guillaume does follow Sigebert closely and carefully.

After reaching the end of Sigebert's *Chronicon*, Guillaume used the immediate continuations of that work, and also the account by Robert de Auxerre, as well as the *Chronicon Turonense* (for 1227). In fact the *Chronicon* does not become Guillaume's own work until 1278:

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¹⁸ Delaborde, 'Notes sur Guillaume de Nangis', 197-98.

¹⁹ Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis de 1113 a 1300 avec les continuations de cette chronique*, ed. H. Céraud, Tome I (Paris: 1843), 3.

before this use is made of the work of Vincent de Beauvais, Primat's Latin chronicle, and Martin de Troppau. As in the case of the *Gesta Ludovici* — where Guillaume failed to balance his sources, thus causing repetitions — confusion arises. The *Chronicon* seems to have a double standard: it seems to censure and at the same time sympathise with Eloise and Abelard; two comments on Saladin, one in 1272, and the other in 1187, contradict each other; etc.

That portion of the *Chronicon* covering the first sixteen years of the reign of Philippe le Bel, is in fact among the few texts on that period. Because of this the *Chronicon* was often consulted. And yet Guillaume's account is not all that could be hoped for: many details are given, but few explanations are offered. The lapses and omissions might be accounted for by the growing support of the monarchy for official chronicles: the language is reserved, and no opinions are offered that are contrary to the policies of the Crown. The attitude may have been that it was better to say nothing reproachable than to suffer.

As may be surmised from the above, the style of Guillaume in the *Chronicon* is the same as that found in the *Gesta Ludovici* and the *Gesta Philippi* until 1278: it is the style of the sources, stripped of their individual organisations, and with it we have Guillaume's additions to further obscure the material. It is only after 1278 that we notice a change: from this point we see evidence of restraint in Guillaume's tone, a fear of giving offence.

If we accept the evidence that shows that Guillaume's writing became timid, the question of dating the *Chronicon* arises. It is

possible that two recensions were made of it, but evidence for this is slim. Only one manuscript (Bibliothèque nationale lat. MS 5703) indicates that a portion of it was written before the canonisation of St. Louis in 1297. In the chapters devoted to the reign of Louis IX in that manuscript, the king is never called a saint; whereas in corresponding chapters of other manuscripts, 'saint' is constantly used. Because it is only a copy of the first recension, it is impossible to determine the exact scope of it.²⁰

In the case of the second recension, M. Delisle found what he believed to be the original manuscript of the text in Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS 4918. The manuscript contains interlinear corrections that seem to have been made by either the author or a collaborator. The corrections are incorporated in one fashion or another in the other manuscripts of the work.²¹

In many ways the two versions are identical; however, a comparison reveals some differences in secondary details. For example: in the discussion of the reign of Louis IX an incident in the first recension may be recounted in the same way as that in the *Gesta Ludovici*; while the same incident in the second recension may be set down in the manner of Primat's chronicle (or, as Delisle would have us believe, from notes used by both authors).²² Because Primat's Latin chronicle was a major source for Guillaume's *Gesta Ludovici*, the differences are indeed slight.

.....
²⁰ Delisle, *loc. cit.*, 298.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 302.

²² *Ibid.*, 327-37.

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, it is believed that Guillaume's work ceased in 1300. Despite the fact that the original manuscript of the second recension is not complete — it ends in the middle of a sentence describing events in 1298 — two other second recension manuscripts seem to indicate that Guillaume stopped writing in 1300: a fourteenth century copy states after the entry for 1300, 'Huc usque frater Guillelmus de Nangiaco cronicam suam studio diligenti produxit.'²³ and the other, a fifteenth century copy, ends at the same point with 'Huc usque protenditur cronica fratris Guillelmi de Nangiaco, et non ultra.'²⁴ The date of 1300 was also confirmed by the first continuator of the *Chronicon* who began his work by stating that he was continuing the chronicle of Guillaume which included events from the creation to 1300.

Compendiosae satis ad multa perutilis chronographie seriem a venerabili fratre, cenobi nostre commonacho, Guillelmo de Nangiaco, ab initio mundi usque huc, videlicet ad annum Domini M.CCC inclusive, studio diligenti stiloque eleganti digestam, ulterius quantum ex alto mihi concessum fuerit aut permissum pertrahere cupiens²⁵

In addition to the testimonies of the continuator and copyists, we note that in the major part of the text there are no allusions to events which took place after 1300 (In many chronicles reference to future events has served to indicate the date of their composition or completion.).

Earlier it was noted that both the *Gesta Ludovici* and the *Gesta Philippi* were incorporated into the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* (B.N. lat. MS 5925) and later included in the *Grandes Chroniques*.

²³ *Ibid.*, 340.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

It is in fact thought that Guillaume translated these works. It is also believed that he undertook the second recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*, bringing them up to date from the reign of Philip Augustus. Although he may not have completed the inclusion of his own works into the *Grandes Chroniques*, he had begun the task. The section of his *Chronicon* that covered part of the reign of Philippe le Bel was used by later compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques*. In this way his works achieved lasting recognition.

This recognition was furthered through the continuations of the *Chronicon* that were used in the *Grandes Chroniques*. Guillaume's life was the turning point in the development of historiography at Saint-Denis. After Guillaume's death the monks may have been charged with the mission of continuing the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques*. The historiographical work of the monastery might no longer have been a haphazard affair. The monastery itself was becoming even more involved in the affairs of the realm: for example, the abbot came to be connected with the Conseil secret. These factors in addition to the growing need of the monarchy for an official organ of propaganda forced the monks to undertake the work that had previously been done by fits and starts.

Until 1340, Guillaume's *Latin Chronicon* was continued at Saint-Denis by a series of anonymous writers. In 1340 a Latin continuation was begun by Jean de Venette who was not connected with Saint-Denis. His continuation runs until 1348. After 1340 the monks of Saint-Denis, however, no longer continued the *Chronicon* in Latin; instead they concentrated their efforts on a continuation in French of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

The continuators of the *Chronicon* in Latin are anonymous until Jean de Venette. In fact the exact number of men involved in the Latin continuation cannot be definitely established: it is thought that Jean de Venette had three predecessors.²⁶

The first continuator perhaps took the account from 1300 to just before 1310. It would seem that when he began his work he considered himself to be an old man: he has anticipated his death in requesting that his work should be continued after him. His request was granted for he was replaced by another. The description of Louis X's expedition against the rebels of Lyon was written in the terms of one who was living during the reign of Louis (1314-1316): and the same writer also wrote the account for 1310. The style had changed; thus, we may assume that the elderly continuator ceased work before 1310 or that he had not reached that year at the time of his death.

The next continuator, the third, began his work by writing the account for 1317. In reference to the events of that year he states

Et quoniam illi qui antea scripserunt à decimo quarto anno et circiter de Bavaro, qui se regem Romanorum dicit, nihil scripserunt; idcirco ab ejus electione sumens exordium, licet aliquantulum tactum fuerit superius his annotare curavi cum factis praecedentibus.²⁷

The previous continuator had spoken of the Duke of Bavaria's election as King of the Romans, but had failed to describe his actions after

26 M. Géraud and M. de la Curne called Jean de Venette the second continuator. Both of them, however, seem to recognize that there were actually other men involved. H. Géraud, 'De Guillaume de Nangis et de ses continuateurs', *BEC* iii (1841-1842), 29-30. De la Curne, 'Sur la vie et les ouvrages de Guillaume de Nangis et de ses continuateurs', *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, viii (1733), 568.

27 Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique latine* ..., II, 6.

the election. His successor felt under an obligation to recount these past events.

The same writer seems to have carried the continuation of the *Chronicon* up to 1328. It seems in fact that he wrote the account up to 1340. The evidence for this is somewhat circumstantial, being based on a continuation of characteristics that we find in the part before 1328: he frequently uses *inde* as a connective in his accounts; the details that he gives are good; and the work ceased in 1340, it was picked up by Jean de Venette and the continuation of Guillaume de Nangis's Latin *Chronicon* was no longer connected with Saint-Denis. At about this time, the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* also ceased to be important and those who were connected with the *Grandes Chroniques* began to look for other sources of material.

The era of the casual *chroniqueur* had come to an end at Saint-Denis. Guillaume de Nangis represented a transitional period: he was paid for his efforts, but appointment by the king had not yet been established. When this occurred the step from *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* to *chroniqueur du royaume* had been taken. Our limited knowledge of the period between the death of Guillaume de Nangis and the reign of Charles VI seems to indicate that no successor was appointed to fill Guillaume's position during those years. But when the position was filled during the reign of Charles VI, a man of Saint-Denis was chosen.

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIEUX

One of the great mysteries in connection with the development of historiography at Saint-Denis is the identity of the author of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*, a man whom historians have been content to call the Religieux. Whoever the Religieux was, he and his work represent a major step in the emergence of the position of royal historiographer.

While there is evidence to suggest that Guillaume de Nangis held an office that might have been somehow connected to that which was to become known as historiographer, there is evidence to assert a closer connection during the life of the Religieux.

The Religieux himself indicated in the course of his account for 1392 that he held such an office. Speaking of le Mans and the illness of Charles VI, he says:

Sed, ut in procursu rerum adversa et inconsueta emergunt, hoc nequi vit infirmitate mirabili et alias inaudita prepeditus.

In castris residens, dum acerbitatem hujus mente revolvebam, manus libens calamum retraxisset, ne ad noticiam transisset posterorum, nisi hujus regis commendabilia gesta et note subiacencia scriptis redigenda ex officio suscepisset.¹

But it is not on his testimony alone that we base our assumption; the office is mentioned in the account of the Procès du chef de Saint Denys

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¹ *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, ed. and trans. M.L. Bellaguet, 6 tomes (Paris: 1839-1852), II, 18.

of 1410. In their defence the canons of Notre Dame sought to distinguish between the titles of *Francorum regum cronographus* and *ecclesie Sancti Dionysii cronographus*. By their definition the first was someone who '... estoit serviteur et familier suivant et demourant a la court [of the King]....'² This would seem to indicate that the title was in existence and that someone was filling it. However, when denying that Rigord could have held such an office and was thus simply the *chroniqueur* of Saint-Denis, the canons say that Rigord was 'néant plus que ont fait autres croniqueurs de Saint-Denis si comme Aymo, Eginardus, Suggestus, Guillaume de Nangis et celui qui à présent est'³ Although he is not mentioned by name, we do know that the Religieux was alive at the time that the above was presented. We must therefore assume that he can be identified with the 'celui qui à présent est'. This would seem to exclude the Religieux from holding the office of *Francorum regum cronographus*: the canons have specifically included what we assume to be the Religieux in the category of *chroniqueurs* of Saint-Denis. As M. Delaborde points out no other writer of the time seems to have filled the position during the reign of Charles VI,⁴ but the Religieux seems to have played the

.....
² H.-François Delaborde, 'La Procès du chef de Saint-Denis en 1410', *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de l'Ile de France*, xi (1884), 388. Adrien de But applied the vague title of *notarius regis* to the Religieux in the *Chronique des religieux des Dunes*. Although this does not describe the duties of the Religieux, it does seem to confirm that the Religieux held a position of some importance. On the other hand, however, a too literal translation of the Latin as secretary of the king has led some historians astray when they have sought to identify men such as Pierre Salmon, a secretary of Charles VI, with the Religieux. cf. pp. 88-90.

³ *Ibid.*, 387. Rigord and his work became involved in the dispute when the monks of Saint-Denis cited his chronicle as part of their defence and the canons questioned its validity.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 345-46.

role of *Francorum regum chronographus*, as will be noted below. Jean Chartier in the reign of Charles VII says that he was *Francorum regum cronographus* and thus possibly combined the two titles under the more impressive one. Thus, it is possible that the time of the Religieux represents a transitional period, but this does not really explain the strict definition given by the canons of Notre-Dame. The Religieux tells us that he had a duty to write an account of the reign of the King, and the canons confirm that he held one title. But it is impossible to say positively more than this about the Religieux's title.

Nowhere in the *Chronicle of Charles VI* does the Religieux reveal his identity. No contemporaries connect the chronicler and a name. The financial accounts that would have given some information about his remuneration are lost. It has been proposed that the Religieux's anonymity was a result of his attempt to escape political vengeance in the time of internal struggle in France as well as English intervention. Although political affiliations are noticeable in the work of the Religieux, the simple act of not identifying oneself in the work would not be sufficient concealment. Surely the name of such a chronicler would be known to all factions, especially to those who were present at times when the Religieux accompanied the King. It should also be pointed out that anonymity was not fashionable among the Benedictines at this time. Neither fear or vengeance nor fashion prevented other contemporary writers at Saint-Denis from identifying themselves.⁵

⁵ Charles Samaran, 'Études Sandionysiennes', *BEC*, civ (1943), 42.

Yet another explanation suggests itself as an answer to this problem: the Religieux was displaying some sort of humility and attempting to present as neutral an account as possible in spite of political bias. While his name was undoubtedly known to many at the time, he hoped to have the reader consider the work itself and not the author. This would be particularly true if the author was, as will be shown below, a member of a well-known family and a person of well-known loyalty to the King himself.

One final possibility may be suggested. As will be shown below, the *Chronicle of Charles VI* was but a part of a universal chronicle written by the Religieux. This may perhaps be the most logical explanation: having already revealed his identity in a no longer extant portion of the universal chronicle, there would have been no reason to repeat it. Indeed this may be the actual explanation. The *Chronicle of Charles VI* reveals many things about the author: the Religieux did not try to remain anonymous — he tells us of his movements and the part he played in events that he records. It would seem that he assumed that his reader would already know who he was.

And yet, the question still remains: who was the Religieux? This is a question that many historians have attempted to answer. Some clues are provided by virtue of the Religieux's own testimony, others by inference from the text: thus, the few known facts about the Religieux's life emerge from his work.

Our only indication about the date of his birth is found in the section which relates the deprivations suffered by the French in 1419. After relating the pitiful situation confronting the Parisians as well

as others, the Religieux adds his own testimony to affirm the miserable state of affairs:

Et breviliquo utens, septuagenarius eram cum scriptis hoc commendabam, nec hucusque recordabar universas res venales cariora vidisse.⁶

Consequently we may assume that he was born between roughly 1339 and 1349.

Whatever the exact date of his birth, we do have a record of the Religieux's presence at Saint-Denis by October 1368. In Book XXVII (1406) the Religieux notes the dispute between the monks of Saint-Denis and the canons of Notre-Dame over the possession of the true head of Saint Denys and attempts to refute the claims of the canons. As evidence, he cites an event which took place in 1368 during the reign of Charles V: in order to dispel all doubts about the authenticity of the relic housed at Saint-Denis the King displayed it to members of the chapter of Paris with the admonition that they should cease to show their spurious relic. In the course of the account the Religieux says that he was present at this event.⁷ This of course tells us nothing about the date at which he entered the monastery, but merely that he was there by 1368.

In any case, by at least 1381 the Religieux had risen to a place

.....
⁶ *Chronique du Religieux* ..., VI, 366, 368.

⁷ ... in die sollempnitatis ejusdem martiris gloriosi Karolus rex, agnominatus disertus, genitor serenissimi regis nunc regnantis, anno quinto regni sui, collegii Parisiensis eminentiores sciencia et auctoritate evocavit, et inter alios cum nobili genere Petro de Roniaco ... et Jacobum Divitus ... memini me vidisse ante altare martirum congregatos.

Ibid., III, 442.

of sufficient importance in the monastery to travel to the English court to carry out business pertaining to Saint-Denis. Thus, in speaking of the wave of unrest which swept not only France, but other parts of Europe in the 1380's, the Religieux alludes to the Wat Tyler rebellion:

Michi causam ecclesie nostre in hoc regno promoventi,
cum indignanter audirem ipsa die per ville bivia
illius archiepiscopi capud sacratum plebem pedibus
huc illucque projecisse⁸

As noted earlier, the Religieux did not mention his official position until 1392. We assume, however, that he began to follow the court sometime after 1381: he indicates that he accompanied Charles VI to l'Ecluse in 1386⁹ and then to le Mans in 1392!¹⁰ Although the statement of his official function is not mentioned until 1392, the fact that he followed the court in 1386 would seem to give some evidence that he had received his appointment at least six years before he indicates it in his chronicle. There may have been a note of the date in the parts of the universal chronicle which are no longer extant.

In recounting the events of 1393, the Religieux again gives some indication that his duties were of importance, that he was not simply one of the many who made up the King's entourage: he tells us that he attended the conference at Leulingham between the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy and the Dukes of Lancaster and Gloucester. And, he states that the Duke of Berry requested that he should carefully observe the

.....
⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 134.

⁹ Sed redeuntibus nunciis, michi et universis residentibus in castris et de rerum statu sciscitantibus asserebant ducem ipsum nil amplius affectare, nisi tempus in vanum terere.
Ibid., I, 452.

¹⁰ 'In castris residens', *Supra*, p. 76.

ceremonies of the conference so that he might record them.

... quociens ipsi duces in prefata ecclesia inibant colloquia, ut cerimonie regales servarentur, quas et dux Biturie michi jussit scriptis redigere¹¹

Not only is this another indication of the Religieux's status, but it also substantiates the argument that he was not consciously seeking to remain anonymous. Although, as he notes, he was not apprised of the provisions of the treaty made between the English and the French,¹² he was nevertheless at Leulingham with the Dukes and not at Abbéville where the king had remained.

It is doubtful that the Religieux accompanied Charles VI to his meeting with King Richard for the marriage of Isabel. The chronicler describes the meetings between the two kings in detail, describes the ceremonies which took place and the gifts that were exchanged; but at no point does he say that he was present. In the other instances, cited above and below, he makes a definite statement of his presence.¹³

.....
¹¹ *Chronique du Religieux* ..., II, 76.

¹² Formam et modum tractatus ignorabam, quamvis personaliter pro negociis Ecclesie ducum vestigiis adhererem. *Ibid.*, I, 82.

¹³ The Religieux's account of these events gives the distinct impression that he was reporting them on the basis of information supplied by others: 'Curiales cerimonias tactas et tangendas viri eciam scientifici scriptis dignas reputantes, rogabant ne solam iotam ex hiis eximerem.' *Ibid.*, II, 452.

At another point he notes that a secret meeting was held between Charles and Richard and attended by the Dukes of Berry, Burgundy, Bourbon, Lancaster and Gloucester and the Counts of Rutland and Maréchal; and to this he adds '... super quibus michi utique non certum'. *Ibid.*, II, 458.

And, in speaking of another meeting between the two kings he says: 'Michi autem sciscitanti quid ibi actum fuerit ab hiis qui secretis colloquiis ex officio assistunt responsum est' *Ibid.*, II, 460.

That the Religieux was present at the meeting between Charles and Wenceslas, the King of Bohemia, in 1398 at Rheims, is also in doubt. In his comments he says:

Quamvis inde dampnum multum aulici, me audiente, assererent ex absentia ipsius consequutum de hoc non curans, adventum ejus usque ad diem alterem expectavit¹⁴

This can, however, be interpreted as a report gained from another eye-witness or source. It would seem that the Religieux should have been present at the meetings of Charles with the Kings of England and Bohemia by virtue of his office, but no definite statement can be made.

Thus, between 1392 and 1408 we can find no positive evidence of the Religieux's presence at the court. The date of 1408 is based upon the assumption that he attended an assembly of prelates and nobles which condemned Benedict XIII ('... quod veraciter membris meis et multorum tum assistencium tremorem attulit et horrorem'¹⁵). The Religieux, however, gives no clues as to the reason for his presence: as a member of the court, the nobility, or the prelates. But it was undoubtedly as a member of the court that the chronicler accompanied Charles VI during his campaigns against the Duke of Berry in 1412: he indicates that he was present at the sieges of Fontenay¹⁶, Moulin-Porcher¹⁷, and Dun-le-Roi. In the case of Dun-le-Roi, the Religieux

.....

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 568.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, 14.

¹⁶ '... et quotquot ibidem aderamus oppinabamur' *Ibid.*, IV, 644.

¹⁷ Michi sollicite sciscitanti cur incentores preliorum tantum erraverant, maxime cum vexilla accedencium dicerent se fide oculata percepisse, fide dignorum relatu responsum est ducem Burgundie predictos clamores fingi precipisse, ut experimento disceret quam mentem gererent militantes et quam prompte armarentur, si se casus similis obtulisset. *Ibid.*, IV, 648.

emphatically states that he was present: 'Regi vero de situ et statu ville sciscitanti ipsam ... ad resistendum paratum, me audiente, dixerunt se percepisse'¹⁸

Again in 1414 we find the Religieux in the company of the King in the struggle against the Duke of Burgundy at Compiègne, and again he makes it quite clear that he was present:

Castris regiis tunc degebam humo nuda jacens cum generosis scutiferis, qui regis fercula mense sue cotidie apponebant, a quibus didici obsessos inquisivisse quomodo possent exire liberi et immunes cum thesauris et locupleta supellectile a longo tempore predis et latrociniiis parta.¹⁹

Only one more aspect of the dating of the Religieux's life is revealed in the *Chronicle of Charles VI* — the possible date of his death. As will be demonstrated below, the text of the chronicle changes in style and manner in Book XLI (1420). The final two books are undoubtedly the work of Jean Chartier, who assumed the title in 1437.

There is no reason to assume that Chartier received his appointment immediately after the death of the Religieux; indeed, if we carried the assumption to the absurd, we would arrive at an age of death for the Religieux of between 98 and 108 years. We do know that Chartier had served as the Religieux's assistant for some years; thus it is logical that he should have been entrusted with the task of completion whenever it was done.

It is impossible to ascertain the exact place where the Religieux's

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¹⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, 650.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, V, 302.

work ended.²⁰ But we may assume that Chartier's own account begins at some point in the events of 1420, whether at the beginning of the year (7 April)²¹ or after the marriage of Catherine of France to Henry of England (2 June).²² The problem of the exact dating of the beginning of Chartier's work stems from the fact that the first four chapters of Book XLI (1420) are for the most part concerned with several statements of the Treaty of Troyes — 21 May 1420. Before setting down the account of the treaty the author does say:

Sed prosequens que hystorice scribenda sunt, tunc filiam regis Francie minorem, dominam Katerinam, sibi dulciter oblatam, ut promiserat, desponsavit, prius tamen tractatu composito ab utroque rege et illustribus circumstantibus jurato, quem posterorum noticie notandum censeo sub hac forma²³

A second allusion to the marriage is made in Chapter V of the same book — 'Statim postquam, ut prefertur, nupcie dicti regis Henrici et Katherine, filie Francie, fuerunt celebrate'.²⁴ Both by tone and style it would seem that the two passages were written by different authors.

Given the above statements and assuming that the Religieux was more or less up to date in his writing chores — there is no indication in his text that his account was written after 1420 — we may say that he died in that year.

Before considering the candidates for the identity of the Religieux, it is necessary to note several other pertinent points which arise from the text of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*: things which may shed some

²⁰ *Infra*, pp.105-106.

²¹ *Chronique du Religieux* ... , VI, 408.

²² *Ibid.*, VI, 410.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, 444.

light on his identity. In spite of the obvious proximity of Saint-Denis and Paris the Religieux seems to feel a special affinity to the city and takes a definite interest in her affairs and her bourgeoisie, perhaps indicating that he was a native of the city and a member of that social group.²⁵

Another important factor is the loyalty which he expresses to the King. It is true that the monarch may have been responsible for his appointment or at least its source, but it must be noted that the Religieux's loyalty is directly to the King: he recognises the source of abuses as the government, but does not hold the King responsible. The loyalty is intense, but it specifically pertains to the King and not to the monarchy in its governmental sense. In respect to the factions that arose from the ducal parties, the Religieux is almost impartial²⁶ until the assassination of the Duke of Orleans. After this he favours the Burgundians. This may have been the result of his realisation of a change in power or it may have simply been his predisposition coming to the fore.

Another aspect which can be ascertained from the chronicle is that the Religieux was an educated and cultured man. There are references to classical authors; and there are references to the University of Paris. The Religieux seems to have some affinity to the University

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²⁵ The affairs of Paris and her people are noted many times during the course of the chronicle. The list of entries can be found in Bellaguet's index. *Ibid.*, VI, 732-34.

²⁶ When recounting the first manifestations of Charles VI's madness in 1392, the Religieux depicts the Duke of Burgundy as being the most upset by it. *Ibid.*, II, 20, 22. In contrast one can find in the accounts of Charles's other bouts of madness insinuations of the faults of the Duke of Orleans; the privileges that he assumed; and the liberties taken by him.

and its views: he refers to it in respectful terms even when it is in opposition to the policies of the monarchy. This of course may have been either the result of a close relationship with the University itself or due to the fact that it, in many cases, spoke for the people — the bourgeoisie to whom the Religieux seems to have extended some partiality. But through all this, loyalty to the monarch (either from the privilege of office or a relationship with it) is the outstanding feature: there is none of the stern disapproval evidenced in the writing of Rigord.

On the basis of these few facts, historians have tried to solve the puzzle of the Religieux's identity. Le Laboureur, in the first edition of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* in 1663, suggested two possibilities: Guillaume Barrault and Benoît Gencien, both monks of Saint-Denis.²⁷

Barrault, a doctor of theology and a member of a family with strong Burgundian sentiments, was *grand prieur* of Saint-Denis. If he was the Religieux, it was the first time that the holder of a high administrative office was given the position of *chroniqueur*; if he was *chroniqueur* he was extremely moderate in expressing pro-Burgundian sentiments. Two other things, however, weigh against this choice: Barrault is named in the third person throughout the chronicle²⁸ and according to an obituary list of Saint-Denis, which has been brought

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²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, v.

²⁸ The name of Guillaume Barrault appears six times in the text: once in connection with events of 1393; once in 1394; three times in the book devoted to the account of 1413 — one of these being an order of banishment — and finally in 1414. It should be noted that when he is mentioned in 1393 and 1394 he is described as *grand prieur* and a doctor of theology; whereas in 1413 and 1414 he is given the title of secretary of the King.

to light by M. Samaran, the date of Barrault's death can be placed before 1400.²⁹

Gencien was also a doctor of philosophy, as well as a man of the University and a Parisian. But, the Religieux also speaks of him in the third person and more importantly speaks with regret of his death at the hands of the Parisians;³⁰ and the date of his death, 1418, does not fit the requirement.³¹ Neither Barrault nor Gencien fit the Religieux.

Yet another suggestion was made by M. Henri Moranvillé, who sought to identify the Religieux as Pierre le Fruitier (or Pierre Salmon), a secretary of Charles VI.³² The majority of M. Moranvillé's proof seems unnecessary, but it should be pointed out that one of the major factors is the identification made by a chronicler of Dunes in which he describes the Religieux as *notarius regis*. Although this description seems to fit the Religieux in some ways, it would seem to be a mistranslation as noted above in footnote 2. One doubts that the Religieux was really a secretary of the King and M. Moranvillé is unable to prove that Salmon was a member of the community of Saint-Denis. In addition to this fact we must note that he is not mentioned in the obituary list where both monks of the abbey

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 29 Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 43 and 51.

30 *Chronique du Religieux ...*, VI, 246. The Religieux mentions Gencien thirteen times from 1412 onwards. It is noted that he served as a representative of the University of Paris at Constance; denounced the defence of the Duke of Burgundy for the murder of the Duke of Orleans; and was arrested for being an Armagnac.

31 Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 54.

32 Henri Moranvillé, 'La Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denis, les Mémoires de Salmon et la Chronique de la mort de Richard II', *BEC*, 7 (1889), 5-37.

and important persons are listed. Salmon (or le Fruitier) accompanied Isabel of France to England upon the occasion of her marriage to Richard II whereas we are uncertain as to whether the Religieux was at Calais for the meeting of the two kings before her departure. The Religieux gives no indication that he was a part of the entourage in England. It does not seem likely that he had been present; the Religieux would not have failed to indicate it.³³

Although the proof of their dissimilarity is not complete from the above, M. Moranvillé in his effort to identify the Religieux as Salmon put forward another statement that can be proven false. He noted that Salmon was concerned with the affairs of the Schism and made journeys to Avignon, Florence, Lucca, Siena, etc. in connection with it. Unfortunately, the Religieux indicates that he was not a member of the ambassadorial suite which visited these places.

Negotiations concerning the schism were the point of departure for M. Noël Valois's attempt to identify the Religieux with Jacques de Nouvion. In studying the account of the embassy of 1407 written by de Nouvion, who was the secretary of the Duke of Orleans and a member of the mission, M. Valois³⁴ demonstrated that the Religieux used this source. In fact he made an almost literal copy of it in his account (Book XXVIII, Chaps. XV, XVI, XVII, and XX). In addition to this, the Religieux speaks of the embassy in the third person and what is more, he credits Jacques de Nouvion with at least part of the

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³³ *Supra*, p. 82 and n.13.

³⁴ Noël Valois, 'Jacques de Nouvion et le Religieux de Saint-Denis', *BEC*, lxxiii (1902), 233-262.

account.³⁵ It would seem absurd that the Religieux would have done this had he been de Nouvion.

Thus, neither Salmon nor de Nouvion can positively be identified with the Religieux. They would also have to be identified as monks of Saint-Denis and have a death date of about 1420 — neither of these things can be shown, in fact the opposite seems to be the case.

M. Samaran, who has tried to refute the suggestions of other historians, has provided us with still other possibilities. He has noted that after 1350 all the known chroniclers of Saint-Denis are mentioned in the *Nécrologe de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*³⁶ which covers the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. Since the names of other chroniclers such as Jean Chartier and Mathieu Levrien appear in this, then why should not the Religieux's? It is impossible to determine the ages of those who are listed in the *Nécrologe* and thus it is necessary to look for the name of the Religieux under the date of his death.

M. Samaran, basing his date on the assumption that the Religieux's writing was almost co-terminal with his life, has analyzed the names appearing for 1420. There are five names entered for the year 1420 (n.s.) and six if 1420 (o.s.) is used. Of those listed, little or nothing is known of four and they may perhaps be eliminated.

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³⁵ In the course of his account the Religieux notes that when the embassy arrived in Genoa a letter was sent to Pope Gregory in a new attempt to end the schism. At this point the Religieux notes '... omnium consensu unanimi epistolam monitoriam ad pacem Ecclesie, elegantiori stilo editam a viro venerabili et scientia claro magistro Jacobo de Noviano, qui et processum pretactum lacius quam scripserim dedit' *Chronique du Religieux*..., III, 700.

³⁶ Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 45.

(1) Simon Vasseur, who was *prévôt* of Le Pré-Saint-Gervais, a possession of Saint-Denis in the Parisian region. M. Samaran has eliminated him on the grounds that the position required the almost continuous presence of its holder.³⁷ The *Religieux* does not mention Simon Vasseur, and he does not mention Saint-Gervais. Surely even a passing reference would have been given if the *Religieux* had been connected with it.

(2) Jacques Fromageau, who was *trésorier* of the abbey from about 1403 to 1418. The *Religieux* does not speak of him and nothing in the text of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* indicates that the *Religieux* had a special connection with the office of *trésorier*. This in itself would not be enough to eliminate Fromageau, but there is added the fact that we know nothing else about him and are therefore unable to fit him into the pattern of the *Religieux*.

(3) Blanchet de Saint-Benoît, was the cook. There is no further information about him, and his duties being incompatible with those of the *Religieux*, he must be eliminated as a possibility.

(4) Jean Dumesnil, who had been *commandeur* of the abbey for about ten years before his death. Although his duties were important and had nothing in common with those of the *chroniqueur*, we cannot exclude him except on the grounds that nothing else is known about him.³⁸

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Ibid., 47.

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The *Religieux* mentions two men with the name of Jean Dumesnil: the first was an equerry of the Duke of Guienne whose death in 1413 is noted in the text; the second was an officer of the dauphin. *Chronique du Religieux* ..., V, 59 and VI, 343.

The two remaining names are those of Jean Culdoe and Michael Pintoin.

(5) Pintoin, like Jean Chartier the historiographer of Charles VII, performed the duties of *chantre* of the abbey. There seems to be no connection between the two offices and nothing more is known about him. Yet he cannot be positively rejected. The obituary list is a chronological one and Pintoin's name is the final one for the year 1420 (n.s.). Because of this he fulfills at least one requirement of the Religieux's identity: given the date of his death, he would have been easily able to write the last part of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*, attributed to the Religieux. But, we cannot say that he was or was not the Religieux because of the lack of further information.

(6) The remaining name is Jean Culdoe whose name is the first in the obituary list under 1420. Although the year began on 7th April, the list does not give us the exact date of his death, but merely says 'Johannes Culdoe, obiit anno Domini M^olxxx^{mo} .³⁹ The next entry is that of Jean Dumesnil who died in September 1420. It should be noted that the portion of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* for 1420, which can be attributed to the Religieux (Book XLI, Chapters I-IV), contains the meeting of Henry V and Charles VI at Troyes; the text of the Treaty of Troyes dated 21st May 1420; the version of the treaty which was made public in Paris on 30th May; an appeal made by the King to officials to ensure the observance of the treaty issued 21st May; the capture of Sens; and an allusion to the marriage of Henry and Catherine on 2nd June 1420. Thus, if Culdoe was the Religieux, his

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³⁹ Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 55.

death must have taken place after the above events, which the Religieux records, but before September 1420.

But in what ways does Jean Culdoe fit what we know of the Religieux? Culdoe was a member of a high bourgeois Parisian family: he was either the son or the nephew of Jean Culdoe, the *prévôt des marchands et général des monnaies*. The Religieux refers to Jean Culdoe the elder three times in 1380: once by name⁴⁰ and twice by his title⁴¹ — in the second case the references must also be to Jean Culdoe since there was no change of office holder at that time. It is also certain that Jean Culdoe held the position in 1382 when he is once again mentioned by title only.⁴²

The question of course arises about the Religieux's failure to name Jean Culdoe in three of the four instances. Some sort of an answer may be found in the following: If the Religieux was the son or nephew of Jean Culdoe, the *prévôt*, then he was also the brother or cousin of Jean Culdoe's son, Charles, who was godson of Charles VI,

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⁴⁰ During the first year of the reign of Charles VI, unrest developed against the burden of heavy taxation. In the course of his account noting this the Religieux states '... unde Parisius ducenti et eo amplius viri ex abjectiori plebe Palacium regale ilico adierunt, secum prepositum mercatorum, Johannes dictum Cudoe, virum utique modestum et emerite fidei, nolentem reluctantemque, ad ducem regentem propter hoc adduxerunt.' *Chronique du Religieux* ..., I, 20.

⁴¹ The Religieux mentions the *prepositum mercatorum* twice in the course of describing further opposition to the heavy burden of taxation. As before, the Religieux notes that the *prévôt* was forced by the people to express their discontent. *Ibid.*, I, 44, 46;

⁴² In this instance Culdoe is also favourably depicted: he and several other Parisian dignitaries journeyed to Saint-Denis to ask the king to return to Paris, offering to lead the cortège and to submit to corporal punishment if any resistance was met. *Ibid.*, I, 234.

secretary of the King, *maître des comptes*, and later *prévôt des marchands*. Although several other references are made to the *prévôt* during Charles Culdoe's tenure,⁴³ direct references are only made in 1409, when he was sent to thank the dukes for the reform of abuses and the re-establishment of the ancient privileges of Paris:⁴⁴ and in 1411 when he and more than three hundred Parisians left Paris to escape the enmity of the Comte de Saint-Pol and his henchmen.⁴⁵ It should be remembered that the Comte upon being named the *capitaine de la ville* and attempting to strengthen the Burgundian party had chosen men of the lower classes for his counsellors. They immediately went about their tasks, having gained some experience from their former profession — they were primarily butchers.⁴⁶ Charles Culdoe is again mentioned a short time later when he was deprived of his office on the grounds of inciting its citizens and was replaced by Pierre Gentien.⁴⁷ And finally, there is a direct reference to him by name when in 1418 he he escaped the massacre of political prisoners at the Bastille of Saint-Antoine — perhaps because he was the King's godson.⁴⁸

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⁴³ *Ibid.*, IV, 136, 138; 180; 188, 190; and 446.

⁴⁴ 'Super hiis mercatorum prepositus, Karolus dictus Cudoe, de consilio assistencium burgensium, gracias ingentes egit pro civibus' *Ibid.*, IV, 278.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, 446.

⁴⁶ The Religieux notes that Armagnac and Burgundian factions arose among the citizens. Although his sympathies usually tend toward the Burgundian side, in this case his tone is guarded, expressing despair that Paris should be so divided and suffer from the machinations of the Comte de Saint-Pol and his followers.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 448.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, VI, 266.

Jean Culdoe is M. Samaran's choice for the identity of the Religieux,⁴⁹ but some inconsistencies can be noted in this choice. One of the most obvious is that the Religieux mentioned Charles Culdoe by name when he was forced to leave Paris by the pro-Burgundian party led by the Comte de Saint-Pol: on the other hand the Religieux shows Burgundian sympathies after the death of Louis of Orleans. M. Samaran has not noted this, but it might be explained by the fact that the account was either written after the Comte fell into disfavour or the fact that Charles was, as in 1418, still looked upon with some favour because he was closely connected with the King as his godson. The second inconsistency is that the Religieux shows no particular concern for the members of the Culdoe family in the passages noted above; and he does not allude to any relationship with them. This may indicate that the Religieux was the nephew of Jean Culdoe and thus there was not as great a feeling for Charles as there was for his uncle Jean. It may also have been the result of an attempt to remain neutral in writing such a work — perhaps the roles played by his relatives in Paris (or at least that of Charles Culdoe) were embarrassing to the Religieux. But despite these inconsistencies, this background of being of a high bourgeoisie family and one known to the King would have provided a reason for the choice of Culdoe as historiographer. The possibility that Culdoe was the Religieux would provide some explanation for the regard that the chronicler shows towards the King and the people of Paris: the family had some connection with the monarchy whose favour had been extended to them at one time; and the Culdoes were deeply involved in the affairs of Paris. As pointed

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⁴⁹ Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 47-48.

out before, anonymity was not involved: there was no reason for the author of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* to identify himself when it had already been done in a previous part of his universal chronicle.

M. Samaran's choice of Jean Culdoe thus depends for the most part on the coincidence of the death date of Culdoe and the end of the Religieux's part of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*. The other knowledge that we have of the Religieux might possibly apply to any of the others who are mentioned in the obituary list for 1421: and it is unfortunate that we can neither ascertain — with one exception — who died in 1421 nor anything about those who follow the 1420 entries.⁵⁰ A more thorough investigation of the Religieux's extant work, the emergence of some clues in the other manuscripts containing his work, the discovery of still more of his work, and/or further knowledge concerning the life of Jean Culdoe, may provide more definite information, perhaps even a positive identification. Until then we are forced to recognize M. Samaran's choice as the most plausible.

In the preceding discussion it has been mentioned that the Religieux wrote a universal chronicle. It should be pointed out that the function of the *Chroniqueurs de Saint-Denis* was to contribute to the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*: it was not their special function to translate material to form a continuation to the *Grandes Chroniques de France*. We know that Rigord and Guillaume de Nangis wrote universal chronicles in addition to their biographies of specific kings of France. Evidence indicates that the Religieux also followed this pattern.

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⁵⁰ After the entry dated 1421 no dates are given until the entry dated 1431. *Ibid.*, 56.

It is impossible to ascertain if the Religieux ever completed such a work, but two portions are believed to be extant. They are found in MS 553 and MS 554 of the Bibliothèque Mazarine — MS 553 tracing events from 768 to 1065 and MS 554 from 1057 to 1270. Although the accounts contained in these two manuscripts do not name the author, M. Delaborde has shown that they are probably the work of the Religieux by a comparison of phrases, word order, etc.⁵¹ It does not seem necessary to go into the methods of proof given by M. Delaborde at this point: he has shown that the work was probably that of the Religieux; and, given the distinctive style of the Religieux (which will be discussed below), there should be no doubt about the criteria which he applied.

Several facts substantiate M. Delaborde's conclusions on the manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Mazarine. A passage in the *Chroniques*

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⁵¹ In addition to the references that imply a previous account and are given in the text of the Religieux's *Chronicle of Charles VI* (*Infra*, pp. 98-99). These of course indicate account(s) that include the events during the preceding two reigns. M. Delaborde has also found that the MSS of the Bibliothèque Mazarine and the *Chronicle of Charles VI* contain the words *transquillus*, *vallidus*, and *excerorabilis* in the same orthographical style. He also cites the phrase *dignum ducere* (used in the sense of *juger bon de*) in both the Religieux's chronicle and a Life of Louis le Gros, but not in Suger's composition from which the Mazarine recension is taken. There is also a similarity between accounts of the visits of Philip II and Charles VI to Saint-Denis: the phrases are the same, whereas Rigord's work from which the account of Philip II is taken is very brief and contains none of the parallel phrases. The manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Mazarine contain adaptations of the well-known chroniclers of Saint-Denis such as Suger, Rigord, and Guillaume de Nangis. H.-François Delaborde, 'La Vraie Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denis', *BEC* li (1890), 93-110. The Religieux would have had access to the works of those noted above as well as the *Grandes Chroniques*, the *Latin Chronicles of Saint-Denis*, and other accounts found in the archives of Saint-Denis. M. Delaborde's argument is very convincing.

des Religieux des Dunes refers to an author of Saint-Denis who may be identified as the Religieux and records that he was as well acquainted with events which took place before his time as he was with contemporary ones.⁵² In addition to this we have indications within the *Chronicle of Charles VI*. In Book II, Chapter VI, the Religieux alludes to an account which he previously gave of the earlier years of the reign of Joanna of Sicily, whose reign began in 1343:

Hujus libri continuando titulos capitales, dignum est ut, sicut domine Johanne, Jerusalem et Sicilie regine ... regnandi scripsi principium, sic et terminum attingam. Cum enim triginta et tribus annis regnasset magnifice, videns quod prole careret apta regno, attenteque considerans ex Francorum generosa prosapia traxisse originem, dominum ducem Andegavensem in filium et successorem adoptavit⁵³

Not only does this passage refer to an earlier account, but it also mentions *titulos capitales*. The latter was a device employed by authors of universal chronicles in imitation of Eusebius; it was used by the Religieux who gave the years of the Incarnation, and of the reigns of the Popes, emperors, and kings of France, England, Jerusalem and Sicily in his chronicle.

Further proof that the *Chronicle of Charles VI* was part of a more extensive work — including at least the reign of Charles V — is found in the opening paragraph of Book I:

Serenissimi, Dei gracia, regis Francorum Karoli licet imperito stilo gesta defuncti scripserim genitoris, opere precium tamen reor ejus moribus addidisse quam vigilantia studio Acquitaniam et comitatum Pontivi amissos recuperaverit, velut rerum gerendarum regulam imitandam⁵⁴

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⁵² *Supra*, n. 2.

⁵³ *Chronique du Religieux* ..., I, 118, 120.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 2.

And, if we accept that the early years of the reign of Joanna of Sicily were recorded by the Religieux, then we must also accept another statement as further proof that the earlier account included the reign of Jean sans Peur, the father of Charles V. Speaking of the punishment of rebels in 1382, the Religieux says:

Diversis inde diebus duarum ebdomadaram sequencium multi complices scelerum, preposito Parisiensi in eos supplicium decernente, decollantur; inter quos quidam magne oppinionis civis apud omnes, Nicholaus Flammingi nominatus, qui dudum tempore regis Johannis, ut dictum est suo loco, interfuerat as marescallum domini Karoli filii sui primogeniti necandum. ⁵⁵

M. Lacabane has interpreted this reference to Nicholas de Flamenc as one which would have been relevant to the reign of Charles V, and thus in the history of his reign because '... la muerte du maréchal de Normandie eut lieu pendant la régence de ce prince n'étant encore que dauphin'.⁵⁶ Yet one must agree with Ste. Palaye,⁵⁷ on the basis of the possibility of a universal chronicle that it fell under the account of Jean sans Peur.

From the evidence cited above, a very strong case is put forward for the authorship of a universal chronicle by the Religieux, the last portion being the account of the reign of Charles VI.

It is of course impossible to discover when the universal chronicle was begun, but it is possible to determine approximately when

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⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 240.

⁵⁶ Léon Lacabane, 'Recherches sur les auteurs des Grandes Chroniques de France dites de Saint-Denys', *BEC* ii (1840-41), 64.

⁵⁷ Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye, 'Mémoire concernant les principaux monumens de l'histoire de France, avec la notice et l'histoire des Chroniques de Saint-Denys', *Mémoires de littérature tirés des registres de l'académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, xv (1758), 608, n.A.

the *Chronicle of Charles VI* was begun. In Book I, Chapter I, the Religieux states:

Hinc michi tamen non inficior timendum, ne parvitatem ingeni scribendorum sic opprimat magnitudo, ut redarguendus dicar; quod quidem tunc ignota mihi Tulliani non excusabit rhetorica, sed solum sincera caritas, ad hoc opus excitata reverendi in Christo patris domini N.N., vel. G. et P. abbatum, abbatis imperio.⁵⁸

As M. Bellaguet notes, the initials G. et P. were probably added by a copyist: they appear only in the margin of one of the three manuscripts of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* — B.N. lat. 5960.⁵⁹ This would indicate that the copyist (or perhaps someone who had access to the Manuscript shortly after its completion) felt that it was necessary to clarify the Religieux's statement.

The initials G. et P. correspond to two of the abbots of Saint-Denis during the reign of Charles VI — Guy de Monceaux 1363-1398 and Philippe de Vilette 1398-1418.⁶⁰ Given the fact that the Religieux held his appointment from at least 1392, it is more likely that Guy de Monceaux was his mentor. As it was noted above, the Religieux may have received his appointment in the years before he actually indicates it in his work. In addition to this it is quite possible that the *Chronicle* (and the universal chronicle) was begun before his position was recognized. This too would indicate that Guy de Monceaux was responsible for urging him to begin his work. Upon this basis, we might postulate that the *Chronicle of Charles VI* was begun between 1363 and 1392. When exactly the work was begun

⁵⁸ *Chronique du Religieux* ..., I, 2, 4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 5, n. 1.

⁶⁰ Michel Felibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Denis en France*, (Paris: 1706), 281, 313-14, 338.

is a moot point, yet the Religieux seems to indicate in the opening paragraph of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* that his subject was a young man at the time that he set to work:

... nam pudebit, degenerem sequendo lasciviam, turpi languere desidia, et necessitatem habebit pre oculis amplectendi virtutes a quibus prius instructus animus juvenilis probitatis robur evaporabit virile, ut parta non modo tueri valeat, sed magnifice augere.⁶¹

In order to complete a work of the extent of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* (and a universal chronicle) and to have been up to date at the time of his death, the Religieux must have begun his work during the time that Guy de Monceaux was abbot. And, like Chartier, his successor who served as his apprentice and began his own chronicle before he received his appointment, the Religieux may have also begun to work before he was officially charged with the duties of chronicler.

Previous references have been made to the extent, scope, and content of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*, but in conclusion a bit more should be said about it.

In addition to the problems associated with the person of the Religieux, the situation is complicated by the existence of only four manuscripts — none of which contain the whole of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*. They are B.N. lat. 5958, 5959, 5960 and 17659. Although none of them are autograph manuscripts, the oldest is 5959 which contains the accounts for 1403 to 1411 and 1415 to 1422 (Books

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⁶¹ *Chronique du Religieux* ..., I, 2.

XXIV to XXXII and Book XXXVI, Chapter XXXVI, to Book XLIII).⁶² MS 5958 includes the years 1380 to 1415 (Book I to Book XXXVI, Chapter XXXV); MS 5960, 1380 to 1385 and part of the account for 1418 and all of 1419 and 1420 (Books I to VI, part of Book XXXIX, and Books XL and XLI); MS 17659 part of 1418 and the whole of 1419 to 1422 (Book XXXIX and Books XL to XLIII).

The chronicle is composed of forty-three books — one for each year of the reign of Charles VI. Each book with the exception of the first two is preceded by the *tituli capitales* which as noted earlier give the year and then the years of the pope and reigning monarchs; further divisions within the books are chapters each with its own heading.

As noted before, that portion of the chronicle which covers the years 1420 to 1422 (Book XLI, Chapter V to Book XLIII) has been attributed to Jean Chartier, the Religieux's successor. Although a discussion of this aspect of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* belongs to the following chapter, a few words should be said about it at this time. In order to prove that the Religieux did not write an account encompassing the final three years of the reign of Charles VI, a

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⁶² MS 5959 would seem to be the oldest on the basis that corrections found in it are incorporated in the texts of 5958 and 5960. In addition to this one also finds in Book XL several false starts to the same chapter 'Rex Anglie regens regnum ad regis obedienciam Monsteriolum reduxit'. In one case the title is cancelled; in another it is followed by a few lines which are also cancelled and in yet another the chapter is left incomplete. This would seem to represent the first copy of the author's work. One can also note that errors have been made by the copyists of the other manuscripts; however, none are consistently found in the others.

We must not, however, assume that MS 5959 is an autograph for at least four different hands can be found in it.

consideration of the style of the chronicle as a whole is necessary. The Religieux seems to have been aware of the literary fashions that were developing in Italy at that time. This is not to say that the Religieux was a Humanist or that he had pretensions to be one (as Robert Gaguin later), but rather that he was aware of a change in literary style. In spite of the restrictions imposed by the Book-year system which he employed, the chronicle is not simply a stiff chronological account of the king's reign. The Religieux has been able to see some parallels with past events and has made reference to them,⁶³ and yet he is unable to bring together related events — for example, the sessions of the Council of Constance are interspersed with accounts of other events which took place at the same time. This may have been simply the result of recording events as they came to his attention or an attempt to follow the system which he had imposed upon the chronicle. The Religieux speaks of history in its modern sense and struggles to write it, but in the end he seems unable to break with the past. Because of this his work remains for all purposes a chronicle.

Stylistically the Religieux's writing is a Latinist's nightmare: clause after clause after clause is piled on to make a sentence, and verbosity is rampant; but the varied vocabulary and a myriad of transitional forms save the work from becoming boring. As others before him, the Religieux puts extended discourses into the mouths of his speakers; he makes greater use of this device to reinforce as well as express his points. Throughout these discourses the Religieux showed

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⁶³ The reference to Nicholas de Flamenc is one example.
Supra, p. 99.

that he was aware of the problems that faced the country and put the complaints into the mouths of the appropriate speakers.⁶⁴ As noted before, this awareness and expression of them in no way detracts from his devotion to the Crown. This is extended to the relative impartiality with which he is able to speak on many political issues. Nor does he give moral judgments on the events which he records; for example, he treats the assassination of the Duke of Orleans as a terrible thing, but he does try to explain its causes; he expresses regret at the divisions which rent the kingdom, but attempts to explain them; etc. These characteristics raise his work above the level of the fawning praise that we find in the work of Guillaume de Nangis and Suger.

Just as other chroniclers of Saint-Denis, the Religieux was able to incorporate various documents within his text. We find the text of the Treaty of Troyes and the letters which followed it;⁶⁵ edicts and letters of the King; and the decisions of the Council of Constance, but there are items, such as the secret agreements made at Leulingham, of which he was not apprised.⁶⁶ One cannot help wondering whether the *Chronicle of Charles VI* would not have been richer in documentary

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⁶⁴ Jean Culdoe provides one example of this device. It is true that Culdoe was forced by the people of Paris to oppose the king on the question of taxation; however, the speech with which he is credited conveys a knowledge of the whole of the country's problems in this sphere — far more than one could really expect Culdoe to express to the king in such a tenuous situation.

⁶⁵ As noted in this chapter and the following one, it is impossible to ascertain how much of the inclusion of these items can be credited to the Religieux and how much to Chartier. We must, however, note that the Religieux must be given some credit for them.

⁶⁶ *Supra*, n. 12.

aspects had the political situation in France been stable and had Saint-Denis avoided the enmity from which she suffered during the last years of the Religieux.

Again, as his predecessors, the Religieux seems to have been well acquainted with classical authors. Cicero and Livy seem to have been his favourites; in fact the *Chronicle of Charles VI* may be an adaptation of the plan of Livy. In any event, references are made to these two authors⁶⁷ as well as Ovid. Again the Religieux practises moderation and avoids the ostentatious parade of classical learning we find in some of the other authors of Saint-Denis.

The problems of isolating the Religieux's work from that of Jean Chartier are dependent on many of the qualities noted above. The final sixteen chapters (Book XLI, Chapter V, to Book XLIII) contain none of the above characteristics. M. Samaran has demonstrated that certain words and phrases appear in the text after Book XLI, Chapter IV, which are not found before. And to clinch his argument M. Samaran has found that many of the words and phrases peculiar to that last part of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* can also be found in the *Latin Chronicle* of Chartier.⁶⁸ One does not find the prolonged

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⁶⁷ Reference is made to Titus Livy in Book I Chapter I: 'Hinc michi tamen non inficior timendum etc.' *Supra*, p. 100.

⁶⁸ Words and phrases such as *strenuus prelio*, *caput amputatus* etc. are found in Chartier's *Latin Chronicle* and the *Chronicle of Charles VI* from Book XLI, Chapter VI onwards. In addition to this some chapters of Book XLIII of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* are found with minor variations in the *Latin Chronicle*, the *Essai* and the *French Chronicle* of Chartier. Jean Chartier, *La Chronique latine inédite de Jean Chartier (1422-1450)*, ed. Charles Samaran (Paris: 1928), pp. 18-19.

M. Samaran has also found that phrases such as *absque erubescencie* appear only in the first forty books of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*. *Ibid.*, 18.

discourses⁶⁹ nor the verbosity evidenced in earlier books; the chapters, with the exception of that which deals with the death and funeral of Charles VI (Book XLIII, Chapter V), are much shorter; and parallel material — in addition to parallel expressions — are found in both the last part of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* and the *Latin Chronicle of Chartier*.

The final proof that the Religieux did not complete his biography of Charles VI is found in Book XLIII, Chapter V. In this chapter a reference is made to events that took place in 1437. In the course of recounting the death and funeral of Charles VI, the author speaks of the enemy, the English, and the Dauphin:

Quapropter Carolus dalphinus, ejus unigenitus ac verus corone Francie heres et successor legitimus, multa passus est, qui quasi spacio triginta quatuor annorum ab una villa in aliam propulsabatur semper in guerra et afflictione dictorum inimicorum.⁷⁰

Because the Dauphin, later Charles VI, was born in 1403, these lines with their reference to thirty-four years could not have been written until 1437, the year that Chartier was appointed *chroniqueur*. As noted above, the manuscripts containing this part of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* are the products of a copyist; but in spite of this fact there seems to be no evidence that the passage cited above was a later addition: it is an integral part of the text itself.

Thus we may conclude that the Religieux can be credited with the account of the reign of Charles VI up to and including part of the

69 The last such discourse is found in Book XL, Chapter XXII. *Chronique du Religieux*: . . . , VI, 398, 400.

70 *Ibid.*, VI, 496.

account for 1420. During his tenure as *chroniqueur* the Religieux fulfilled the requirements of the office: he began a universal chronicle including the biography of the reigning monarch in Latin. As noted above, we do not have evidence that the Religieux translated any of his work into the vernacular. It is very likely that he did not: the *Grandes Chroniques* does not include a direct translation of his *Chronicle of Charles VI*. Instead the reign of that king is covered by the inclusion of two works: a part of the *Chronique* of Jean Juvenal (for the years 1380 to 1402), and the portion of the *Chronique du roi Charles VII* by the héraut Berry, Gilles le Bouvier, which covers the years 1403 to 1422. The *Chronique* of Jean Juvenal is an abridgement of the *Chronicle of the Religieux* in French with the addition of some credible and uncreditable items pertaining to the author's family. The inclusion of it in the *Grandes Chroniques* parallels the fate of the work of Primat whose account of St. Louis was used by Guillaume de Nangis and later incorporated in the *Grandes Chroniques*. With the exception of subject matter, however, the work of the héraut Berry has no connection with that of the Religieux. The direct contribution of the Religieux to the *Grandes Chroniques* is therefore not as complete as that of Guillaume de Nangis, for example; but the latter is an exception to the rule because his Latin work was directly translated and he took part in one of the recensions of the *Grandes Chroniques*, while others — such as Rigord or Primat — contributed to its composition in either one or the other ways.

The fact that the Religieux's work was recognised by his contemporaries is in itself important. The political situation may have obscured the Religieux's chronicle at the time that the printed edition

(the one in which the reign of Charles VI was first included) was made, for it was done during the reign of Louis XI. As it will be noted later, Louis XI shunned Saint-Denis as far as possible in historiographical matters. This may have been the reason for ignoring the work of the Religieux. On the other hand, the political confusion that occurred at the end of the life of the Religieux and during the beginning of the reign of Charles VII, may have obscured his work for several decades. And, in addition to these factors, there is the fact that no translation had been made save for that contained in the abridgement made by Jean Juvenal. One or all of these factors — it is impossible to designate one — weighed against the use of the Religieux's chronicle as it stood in the next recension — the first printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

Yet the importance and the mysteries of the Religieux still remain. The Religieux did receive an appointment as *chroniqueur*, and possibly that of *historiographe*; he wrote an account of the reign of Charles VI; and, to add to the importance of his position, he had an apprentice, Jean Chartier, who later succeeded him. This apprenticeship indicates that, at this time, the tradition of historiography was still strong at Saint-Denis and that thoughts were being held for the future. We have no record of similar apprenticeships at Saint-Denis. Perhaps they were instituted in an attempt to hold fast to the waning tradition, or perhaps they were begun oblivious to the changes which took place not too many decades later at the death of Jean Chartier.

CHAPTER VI

JEAN CHARTIER

The position that the Religieux held remained vacant from his death in 1420 until 1437. An apprentice, Jean Chartier, was prepared to assume the necessary functions, but the political situation made it impossible. The King, who was mad, was unable to appoint a successor and none of his so-called advisors chose to do so. The strife which followed the death of Charles VI made it impossible for the King of Bourges to assume immediately the duties of his office or to consider such an appointment until his rule was established. Charles entered Paris on 8th November 1437 and on the 18th November in the same year he appointed a chronicler. His appointee, Jean Chartier, notes this event in Chapter 134 of his *Latin Chronicle* titled 'Francorum historiografus a rege benigne susceptus est'.¹ Because this passage contains other significant material it is expedient to present it in its entirety.

Post cujusmodi adventum, Karolus, piissimus Francorum rex, benignius quam potuit singulis adequatus, super civitatis incolarumque regiminibus non plus majoribus quam infimis aures prebendo, decrevit providere. Inter cetera quidem rerum gestarum gerendarumque regni graffatorem seriosum, ne protracta hominum memoria deleret oblivio, sollerter ordinavit, ob quod ipse mitissimus rex, sciens

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¹ Jean Chartier, *La Chronique latine inédite de Jean Chartier (1422-1450)*, ed. Charles Samaran (Paris: 1928), p.87. The same terms are also used in the preface to Chartier's short Latin work, usually called the *Essai*, and in the Préambule to his *French Chronicle*. These are both published in Jean Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, ed. Vallet de Viriville, 3 tomes (Paris: 1858). For convenience Chartier's works will be cited in the text as follows: *Latin Chronicle*, *Essai*, and *French Chronicle*.

me fratrem Johannem Cherterii, religiosum ecclesie sancti Dyonisii, Francie patroni, jam onus illud per tria lustra progenitoris sui incliti vita comite absque stipendiis sustinuisse, per vendarium quendam erga suam majestatem accedere Parisius me compulit, ubi noviter, preveniente juramento, presentibus episcopo Castrensi, regis confessore, magistro Gauffrido Vassali, generali financiarum, necnon magistro Petro Alant, ejus secretario, hujuscomodi onus michi exsequendum expressissime injunxit, ac ego, quanquam cronografforum minimus, tanti principis mandatis non immerito parens nec ausus renuere, injunctum humilime acceptavi, dieque decima octava mensis novembris, anno ab incarnatione Domini millesimo quadringentesimo tricesimo septimo ac sui regni decimo sexto, ipse rex Christianissimus litteras patentes hujus officii per dictum secretarium michi indilate confici jussit, et quoniam nemo stipendiis propriis militare obligatur, verum dignus est operarius mercede, idem justissimus rex summam ducen- tarum quinquaginta librarum turonensium cum aliis juribus et pertinenciis singulis anno quolibet a me percipiendam ex integro suisque financiarum officariis persolvendam pro mercede ordinavit; hec enim sunt ipsius graffatoris jura jamdudum quasi ab omni evo ab illustrissimis Francorum principibus seu regibus instituta atque persoluta, quod scilicet, dum ipse regie majestati astabit, ad instar magistrorum domus regie debet pro victu suo, duobus famulis atque tribus equis horis singulis et diebus ab eadem curia fomenta suscipere.²

Was there a special reason for the choice of Chartier as the Religieux's apprentice and later as chronicler? In the previous chapter it was noted that the connection between the monarch and the Culdoe family might explain the choice of Jean Culdoe as the Religieux. Was there any parallel in the case of Chartier? Unfortunately we know very little about Chartier's early life. The earliest reference to his life, aside from internal evidence gained from his chronicles, is contained in the capitulary registers of Saint-Denis. They tell us that in 1430 he was *prévôt* of la Garenne, an important office in the framework of the abbey. Other than a few facts that can be gleaned from the passages of his chronicles, we have no further information

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² Chartier, *La Chronique latine* ..., pp. 87-88.

about his earlier life — the capitulary registers unfortunately begin with the year 1429.³

M. Vallet de Viriville in 1857 restated Doublet's⁴ theory that Jean Chartier was a brother of Guillaume Chartier, the bishop of Paris, and Alain Chartier, the poet and secretary of Charles VII; and on the basis of this also asserted that the chronicler was born at Bayeux the birthplace of his supposed brothers.⁵ There is no evidence to support this connection, and therefore information on the very early part of Chartier's life must be added to the list of unknown facts which surround so many of the authors from Saint-Denis.

Internal evidence contained in Chartier's chronicles does give us some indications about his life. In Chapter 134 of the *Latin Chronicle* as cited above, Chartier reveals that he had performed the duties of chronicler (or at least as an assistant) without title or remuneration for at least fifteen years before the accession of Charles VII in 1422 — '... per tria lustra progenitoris sui incliti vita comite ...' (*Supra*, p. 110).⁶ Thus Chartier undertook this work about 1407. The lack of extant records for this period makes it impossible for us to determine the veracity of this statement.

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³ Charles Samaran, 'La Chronique latine inédite de Jean Chartier (1422-1450) et les derniers livres du Religieux de Saint-Denis', *BEC*, lxxxvii (1926), 145, n. 2.

⁴ Doublet as cited by Vallet de Viriville, 'Essais critiques sur les historiens originaux du règne de Charles VII. Jean Chartier', *BEC*, xviii (1857), 484.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 481-82.

⁶ Although some confusion might arise because of the fifteen years that separate the accession of Charles VII (1422) and the date of Chartier's appointment (1437), evidence reveals that Chartier was involved with the Religieux in his *Chronicle of Charles VI* and thus the fifteen years must refer to the time of this involvement.

It seems unlikely that two men would have shared the office even during the time of internal conflict; there are no other examples of dual appointments until the reign of Louis XI; and the probability of a second appointment so soon after that of the Religieux would be unlikely. The best explanation would seem to be that Chartier was chosen to succeed the Religieux and served as his assistant for the last thirteen years of the Religieux's life. The internal political situation, the age of the Religieux, and the need of the monarchy (or those who controlled the government) to maintain an image would explain the appointment of an assistant who could take over the task of the Religieux at any time. The apprenticeship also goes some way toward explaining why Chartier completed the *Chronicle of Charles VI*. We do not know exactly when this was done but at least one chapter was written in 1437, as noted in the previous chapter. And, as the Religieux's assistant, we may suppose that Chartier was involved in some way in the assembling of the last parts of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* that the Religieux wrote himself.

On the assumption that he began his apprenticeship in 1407, and was possibly about twenty years old at the time, M. Samaran has put forward the idea that Chartier was born between 1385 and 1390.⁷ Further justification for this assumption is found in both Chartier's *French and Latin Chronicles of Charles VII*. In the former work he suggested that he was aware of the state of France during at least part of the reign of Charles VI:

Parquoy ceux qui ont veu cedit royaume de France en

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⁷ Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 147.

temps du roy Charles sixième de ce nom, sont pitieux de le veoir à présent, veu le changement effroyable qui y est.⁸

This would suggest that Chartier was already a man and a responsible observer during the latter part of that King's reign and further justifies the assumption that he was not a mere youth when he began to work with the Religieux. These meagre facts, however, are all that one can say about the early years of Chartier from the evidence which is known to us at this time.

After the initial appearance of his name in the capitulary registers of Saint-Denis in 1430, Chartier's life is better documented. 1432 finds him still in the position of *prévôt* of la Garenne, but 1433 brings a change: Chartier becomes *prévôt* of Cergy and Auvers, and then of Mareuil and Poincy-en-Brie. He held these offices for two years, but by 1435 had received a promotion in the form of being made *précepteur* or *commandeur* of Saint-Denis and later in the same year *hôtelier* of the monastery. These appointments to positions of importance were made before 27th May 1435, when reference to them is found.⁹ Thus, Chartier held these offices before 1st June 1435, the date of the recovery of Saint-Denis from the English.

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⁸ Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, II, 13. M. Samaran, in his introductory remarks to Chartier's *Latin Chronicle*, notes that the *Latin Chronicle* expresses this in the same terms: 'Idcirco, qui tempore Karoli sexti ... regnum florere conceperunt, hodiernis in temporibus tam adversa regni hujus christianissimi concipientes, nimirum singultibus externis affliguntur ...' Chartier, *La Chronique latine* ..., 11, n. 2.

⁹ M. Vallet de Viriville has noted that in the *Inventaire général de titres de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis* a reference is found to Chartier on 27 May 1435: 'Lettres accordées par frère Jehan Chartier, commandeur et hostillier de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis' Vallet de Viriville, *loc. cit.*, 482.

This raises the question of Chartier's appointments both to the offices held within the abbey and that of *chroniqueur*. M. Vallet de Viriville has posed the question of whether Chartier owed his position within the abbey to the influence of Charles VII or friends which he may have had at the court:¹⁰ were these factors already at work within the internal administration of the monastery even while it was still in English controlled territory? Were they granted under patronage in recognition of services already rendered to the king? It is of course impossible to answer these questions positively, but it may have been so.

Chartier may have proven his loyalty to the monarchy by avoiding connection with the factional interests that plagued the last years of the reign of Charles VI, before and after the death of the Religieux. In this way he may have attracted the attention of the dauphin or some one of his followers. Some unknown service may have been performed for the dauphin or Charles VII. Certainly if at least part of the last section of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* was written before 1437, the absence of malice toward the dauphin would have been a recommendation in itself. It is also possible that the position of *chroniqueur* was in some way connected with a position of importance within the abbey itself: no consistent pattern emerges indicating that any specific office was linked with that of *chroniqueur*; yet later *chroniqueurs* did seem to hold another position of importance as well. If this is true, the appointments are a covert form of recognition by Charles VII — who was unable to do more until his own authority was established.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 483.

In any case there seems to have been no doubt in the mind of Charles VII that when he entered Paris he would appoint a *chroniqueur*. The swiftness with which the appointment was made indicates that Charles had made his choice sometime before: he entered Paris and within a few days named as his *chroniqueur* the man who had been trained for the position, Chartier.¹¹

As a result of either his connections with the king, or the positions which he already held, Chartier continued to rise in importance in the abbey. He was one of the four men chosen by Parlement and approved by the king as temporal governors of the abbey in 1441 when a vacancy occurred after a disputed election of a new abbot.

Then, in 1445, Chartier appears for the first time as *grand chantre*. It is possible that he held this office as early as 1441: that he succeeded the incumbent upon his death in that year.¹² Was this office in any way connected with that of the *chroniqueur*? Nothing would seem to indicate this, but we must note that Chartier proved that they were not incompatible. M. Samaran rejected one of his candidates for the identity of the Religieux on these grounds, but Chartier invalidates the argument. Chartier continued to perform the duties of *grand chantre*: we know that he still held the office in August 1458

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¹¹ There is of course the possibility that Chartier had been appointed *chroniqueur* shortly after Charles's accession in 1422, but only officially received the title in 1437 when political conditions were more stable. In this case he may have begun writing shortly after 1422, but would have only been able to mention receiving the title in 1437. No evidence, however, can be found to support this hypothesis.

¹² M. Samaran has suggested that he immediately succeeded Hue Pain who died on 1 November 1441. Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 145.

and probably continued to do so until one Jean Jaloux succeeded to it in 1464, the year of Chartier's death. Throughout this time he remained *chroniqueur*.

But for two pieces of evidence, one would agree with M. Vallet de Viriville that Chartier was still alive in 1470. This view was supported by a reference to Chartier in connection with the inspection of the accounts of Saint-Denis:

Auditus et clausus per nos, commissarios inferius nominatos et ad hoc per curiam Parlamenti deputos et ordinatos, in presencia domini Johannis Charretier, presiteri, domini abbatis et conventus Sancti Dionisii procuratoris, [ex una parte] et fratris Guillermi le Maire ex alia xxij mensis octobris anni Domini millesimi CCCC sexagesimi decimi. — N. Vin; A. Boucher.¹³

The only entry in the *nécrologe* of Saint-Denis which can be identified with the Guillermi le Maire mentioned above is one which states that Guillermus Lemere, died in 1482.¹⁴ This would seem to fit the person mentioned in the extract for 1470. But the possibility that Chartier was alive in 1470 is negated by the same *nécrologe*. Only one Johannes Charretier can be found in it:

Obiit frater Johannes Charretier, cantor istius ecclesie, anno Domini millesimo CCCCmo LXXXIII^o, xix^a mensis februarii. (1464 n.s.)¹⁵

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 13 Vallet de Viriville, *loc. cit.*, 486.

14 'Obiit frater Guillermus Lemere, prior Sancti Clari, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo octuagesimo secundo, vicesima quinta die mensis junii.' Charles Samaran, 'Études Sandionysiennes', *BEC*, civ (1943), 62. There is one Guillermus Guillermere listed who died in 1479. *Ibid.*, 61. Although one might allow for orthographical changes this seems a bit too far from the name included in M. Vallet de Viriville's extract. No other le Maire or Lemere bears the same Christian name, and the others with the same Christian name fail to fit the time factor demanded by the extract.

15 *Ibid.*, 60.

If we accept the unquestionable fact that Jean Chartier was *chantre* and *chroniqueur*, then the Charretier cited in the *nécrologe* is the same man.

Added to the evidence of the obituary list is the fact that Jean Castel, the *chroniqueur* appointed by Louis XI, took office in 1464. Again the question of dual appointments arises; but again there is no reason to believe that Louis XI would have granted the office to Castel during Chartier's lifetime.

The problem of the passage cited by Vallet de Viriville still remains in opposition to the evidence found in the *nécrologe*. The registers of Saint-Denis do not contain any references to another *Johannis Charretier*. This is of course not conclusive, but a further explanation may serve to resolve the problem. It is possible that Chartier's name may have certified one part of the accounts and Guillermi le Maire another, but both were cited in the same passage under 1470.

Just as M. Vallet de Viriville believed that Chartier was alive in at least 1470, so M. Doublet set a death date after 1477. M. Doublet postulated that the abbot of Saint-Denis, Philippe de Gramanches, had charged Chartier with editing a recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* with an eye to printing it. The first printed edition was published in 1476, and Doublet and several other historians assumed that Chartier was connected with it.¹⁶

¹⁶ Doublet as cited by Vallet de Viriville, *loc. cit.*, 484. This was the view held by those who considered Chartier and his works up to 1926 when M. Samaran published the obituary notice as found in the *nécrologe* of Saint-Denis.

The 1478 edition of the *Grandes Chroniques* gives no indication of this: Philippe de Gramanches died in 1463 (n.s.), and thus could have had no further control over the printing; and the most substantial proof is the date of Chartier's death found in the *nécrologe*, a document which was not known to earlier writers.

According to the canons of Notre-Dame during the *Procès du chef de Saint-Denis*, the holding of the position of *chroniqueur* of France necessarily involved a continuing presence at the King's court. This does not seem to have applied to Chartier at all times after his appointment. It must be remembered that the canons were writing from their own personal experience. As pointed out in preceding chapters, there had been earlier authors at Saint-Denis who may have deserved the title; but like Chartier, they did not necessarily witness many events, although they had access to information concerning them.

We know that he was present at the siege of Harfleur in 1449-1450:

Ce siège fut ainsi conduit par les seigneurs que dit est. Ce que je, frère Jean Chartier, chantre de Saint-Denis en France, chroniqueur de France, certifie avoir veu et esté présent, endurant de grandes froidures, et souffrant beaucoup de vexation, combien que j'estois et soye sallarié et deffrayé pour les despens tant de moy que de mes chevaux, par ordonnance et volonté du roy, comme de tout temps estoit et est encore accoustumé.¹⁷

¹⁷ Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, II, 180.

Ac ego frater Johannes Cherterii, religiosus monasterii Sancti Dyonisii, regis Francorum historiografus, de omnibus premissis fidem perhibeo ventati, quoniam ipsis, [dum] sic ut premissum est agerentur interfui, ibidem multa frigora paciens.

Chartier, *La Chronique latine ...*, 105-106.

This statement which is found in both the Latin and French chronicles of Chartier seems to be the exception rather than the rule: if we accept the internal evidence of the chronicles, most of the *chroniqueur's* time was spent not at the king's side, but within the monastery.

This point is further substantiated when one compares his accounts of events at Saint-Denis with his records of outside events. With the exception of Harfleur, only in the passages relating to events at Saint-Denis does Chartier give evidence of being an eyewitness. This does not mean that his chronicles are chronicles about Saint-Denis, but simply that he was more familiar with events within the monastery. He asserts, however, that he has made use of information available to him by virtue of his office. For example in Chapter 199 of the *Latin Chronicle* and 178 of the *French Chronicle* he states:

Au reste les susdites batailles furent relatées à Saint-Denis en France par trois hommes d'église, presbystres dudit pais d'Ecosse, dont l'ung estoit chanoine et bien notable et authentique personne, comme il sembloit, qui les affermèrent par leurs sermens faitz solemnellement devant les précieux corps saint Denis et ses compagnons estre veritable; pareillement les certifièrent ses compagnons et en paroles de prestre, estre et avoir esté vrayes, suivant la forme et manière dessus rapportée; iceulx prestres examinez et interrogez par le croniqueur de France en la présence de plusieurs des religieux d'icelle église et autres gens de bien.¹⁸

From this evidence there seems to have been no requirement that the *chroniqueur du royaume* follow the court at all times. Chartier's duties

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¹⁸ Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, II, 91. The Latin account is less detailed. Chartier, *La Chronique latine ...*, p. 102. Another example can be found in an account of the events of 1456 when Chartier tells us that he received information from three Hungarians who visited Saint-Denis. Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, III, 69.

within the monastery kept him there in a place where there was relative security and yet where he had access to the information which he needed.

Through Chartier's own admissions we gain a bit more information about the position which he held: not only the reception of pertinent material, but also the accoutrements of the office. Chapter 134 of the *Latin Chronicle*¹⁹ tells us that he received a stipend, which was the equivalent to that of the *maîtres d'hôtel* of the king for himself, two servants and three horses.²⁰ In the same chapter he also gives the amount of the allowance: he received 250 *livres tournois* per annum.²¹

After having served as the apprentice of the Religieux for fifteen years without remuneration, and having possibly served the king before his actual appointment, there can be no doubt that Chartier deserved some sort of stipend. But in the light of his preference to remain in the monastery instead of going to more than at least one centre of action, did he earn his stipend? If the criteria of sheer volume is used, he did; but if it is a question of content some doubts can be raised.

Concerning the first of these two points it is necessary to begin with a discussion of that part of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* that

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 19 *Supra*, p. 110 and also the preface to the *Essai* and the preamble to the *French Chronicle*.

20 ' ... hec enim sunt etc. ' *Supra*, p.110.

21 *Supra*, p.110.

is attributed to Chartier. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, style and content make it possible to affirm that the Religieux's work ceased as of Book XLI, Chapter V (1420) — at the latest — and Chartier's began.

Some evidence of the change of authorship can be found in the earliest manuscript of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* — B.N. lat. MS 5959. This is not an autograph manuscript, but it does provide the corrections made in the other manuscripts; and it does support the idea of a change of authorship in 1420. The last three lines of f. 171^r — after Chapter IV of Book XLI — contain the beginning of a new chapter — 'Rex Anglie regens regum ad regis obedienciam Monster-iolum reduxit' — and two lines of the text. These three lines are cancelled and another start of the same chapter is found on 171^v and crossed out. Immediately following this a new chapter title — 'Rex Anglie regnum Francie regens villam de Melun ad regis obedienciam reduxit' — and a text are given. These too have been rejected but they are followed by some lines which are left intact and have been published by Bellaguet as the untitled Chapter V of Book XLI. The chapter concerning Melun can then be found on f. 172^r in its entirety as Chapter VI. The chapter concerning the capture of Montereau, which had caused so much trouble earlier, appears incomplete as Chapter X.

As noted before, MS 5959 was not an autograph on the part of the Religieux; and because we have nothing that can be identified as the autograph of Chartier, we must say the same of his part of MS 5959. The question then arises: why did the copyist — assuming that it was not Chartier — include all of Chartier's attempts? It is of course possible that the Religieux began the chapter concerning Montereau,

but wrote little more than the first few lines. Chartier, as his assistant, may have attempted to begin and complete the same chapter on 171^v, but only to abandon it for a topic with which he was more familiar --- the capture of Melun. Dissatisfied with all but the last part of this chapter, he cancelled them; and then continued the chronicle to the death of Charles VI, completing it in 1437, as shown by the reference to the dauphin cited in the previous chapter.

The above explanation assumes that the copyist was working on an almost day-to-day basis with Chartier: he copied everything as Chartier wrote it. A second depends upon the scribes responsible for MS 5959. We note that the hand becomes quite shaky in 1420 and that a new one can be seen on 171^v. This cannot be an argument for an autograph, because the manuscript contains four different hands. Thus it may have been the result of a change of scribes. The cancellation of the chapter on Melun can be the result of some error on the part of Chartier or the scribe.

As noted in the preceding chapter, certain word patterns and phrases reveal that up to 1420 the *Chronicle of Charles VI* was the work of only one author.²² The same is true of that part attributed to Chartier, especially when we find definite comparisons with his

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²² As it was noted in the preceding chapter, M. Samaran has found phrases repeated throughout the text until at least the end of the account for 1419. Because the opening chapters of the account for 1420 (Book XLI, Ch. I-IV) are primarily copies of documents, it is not possible to identify them with any particular style. Samaran, 'La Chronique latine ...', pp.17-18.

Latin Chronicle and the *Essai*.²³

In addition to these word correlations, however, there are definite parallels between the material contained in the *Essai*, the *Latin Chronicle* and *French Chronicle*, and the last chapters of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*. For example, Chapter I of the *Essai* is titled 'De obitu Henrici regis Anglorum'. The same material is treated in a similar fashion in the *Prohemium* of the *Latin Chronicle*, in Chapter I of the *French Chronicle* ('De la mort des rois Charles VI et Henri V'), and in Chapter III of Book XLIII of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* ('Decessus Henrici regis Anglie').²⁴ Several other similar repetitions can also be found among the chapters of Book XLIII of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* and the other works of Chartier.

That the chapters in Chartier's work were borrowed from the Religieux's own work would be a possibility if other factors of style, word usage, etc., were consistent with that of the Religieux. But they are not. Therefore we must accept that the last Books of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* were part of Chartier's prodigious if repetitive output.

As we have already noted in the preceding chapter, it seemed to

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²³ For example, *capite amputatus* in Book XLI, Ch. XII of the work on Charles VI and *ex caput amputari* in Ch. 152 of the *Latin Chronicle* are comparable. This is also true of phrases such as *extitit circuita*, *capti extiterunt*, *vulneratus extitit* (Book XLI, Ch. VI; Book XLIII, Ch. II; and Book XLI, Ch. VII) and *extitit lacertatus* and *extitit interempti* (Ch. 47 and 118 of the *Latin Chronicle*).

²⁴ The last section of this account, the part that notes the birth of Henry VI, forms Ch. IV of Book XLIII of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*.

be the obligation of the *chroniqueur* to produce a work in Latin — possibly a universal chronicle. The evidence for this statement was found by M. Delaborde in a comparison between the prologues of Chartier's *French Chronicle* and *Latin Essai*. In the *French Chronicle* Chartier states:

... cy commence la cronicque du temps de très chrestien roy Charles septiesme de ce nom, roy de France, faicte et compillée par moy, frère Jehan Charretier, religieux et chantre de l'église Monseigneur saint Denis, cronicqueur dudit royaume, à ce commis, ordonné et deputté de par le roy mon souverain seigneur²⁵

And yet in the *Essai*, as in the *Latin Chronicle* (*Supra* p.109-110), he elaborates on his appointment, giving the date of his appointment, the remuneration which he received, etc.

It is unfortunate that M. Delaborde came to this conclusion only on the basis of the *Essai* — the only Latin work by Chartier which was known to him at the time. The *Latin Chronicle*, its arrangement and style, would have made his argument much stronger. Until the study by M. Samaran of B.N. MS n.a.l. 1796 was published in 1926²⁶ it was believed that Chartier had begun a Latin work, but had completed only a small part of it. This assumption was based upon B.N. lat. 5959 which in addition to a portion of the *Chronicle of Charles VI* concluded with twenty-one chapters of a *Latin Chronicle of Charles VII*

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25 Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, I, 25. M. Delaborde has shown that the more formal and detailed account contained in Chartier's *Essai* seems to indicate that the Latin work (this would include the *Latin Chronicle* discovered after M. Delaborde's study) had an official character in the eyes of the author. H.-François Delaborde, 'La Vraie Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denis', *BEC*, li (1890), 94-95.

26 M. Samaran's article on Chartier's work preceded his edition of the *Latin Chronicle*. *Supra*, nn. 1 and 3.

by Jean Chartier, covering from the death of Charles VI to the end of 1424. These chapters, which came to be known as the *Essai*, were published by M. Vallet de Viriville as the sole example of Chartier's Latin work.²⁷

And yet a better example was available: Chartier's *Latin Chronicle* was to be found in B.N. n.a.l. 1796 which was acquired by the Bibliothèque nationale in 1899.²⁸ The recension of the *Latin Chronicle* traces events from the death of Charles VI to the middle of 1450: the last chapter (254) deals with the recapture of Cherbourg in August 1450. The fact that the Epilogue is well developed and complete seems to indicate, as M. Samaran notes, '... que Chartier a eu l'intention de clore, au moins provisoirement, son ouvrage sur ces glorieux succès de Charles VII.'²⁹

It must be noted that the *Essai* was probably intended as a continuation of the work of the Religieux's universal chronicle: in addition to the common language, allusions to the *Chronicle of Charles VI* and chapters preceded by titles, we find that Chartier continues to

27 The *Essai* is found in translation in Volume I of Vallet de Viriville's edition of the *French Chronicle*. Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, I, 1-24.

28 Before it was acquired by the Bibliothèque nationale, this manuscript had been in the collection of Sir Thomas Phillips of Cheltenham. Historians such as Kervyn de Lettenhove, Vallet de Viriville and Henri Omont had seen it and noted its existence in various articles which they wrote. Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 143-44. M. Delaborde also knew the manuscript, but dismissed the possibility that it bore any relationship to Chartier's *Essai*. Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 93, n. 1. M. Molinier ignored it in his bibliographical work published in 1904, although it had been in the possession of the Bibliothèque nationale for about five years. A. Molinier, *Les Sources de l'histoire de France des origines aux guerres d'Italie (1494)*, IV (Paris: 1904), no. 4133.

29 Chartier, *La Chronique latine ...*, 23.

employ the *tituli capitales*. Although the form of the *tituli capitales* in the *Essai* remains the same as the Religieux's — Anno domini, the years of the pope and the reigns of the emperor, kings of France, England and Sicily, examination of the manuscript reveals that only the year and the year of the King of France are completed.

The *Latin Chronicle* contains all of the characteristics of the *Essai* but one — it contains no *tituli capitales*. Although the *Essai* (as far as it goes) and the *Latin Chronicle* are similar in content, Chartier has abandoned the concept of a universal chronicle in the latter. The motives for this are not completely obvious, but some speculation may reveal the answer.

At the time Chartier abandoned the *Essai* and its trappings he may have become involved in the preparation of his *Latin Chronicle*, or his French one, for a specific purpose for which a universal chronicle was not suitable. With an eye toward the translation of his work into French and possible inclusion in the next recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*, Chartier deserted the form of a universal chronicle and turned to a more manageable unit, a Latin chronicle of the reign of Charles VII. This fulfilled part of the requirements of the *chroniqueur* of Saint-Denis, and its French translation could become part of the *Grandes Chroniques* — whether in manuscript or in print. It is true that at the time that Chartier contemplated the *Latin Chronicle* there was no idea of a printed edition, but simply a recension which would bring up to date the propaganda in favour of the monarchy. Later, in an attempt to prepare for a new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* itself, or to make the propaganda more accessible to more people

Chartier dropped the *Latin Chronicle* and turned to the French one, which is complete for the reign of Charles VII: it stretches from the death of Charles VI to that of Charles VII.

When were the works of Chartier begun? The Prologues to both the *Essai* and the *Latin Chronicle* contain no references to Chartier's position as *chantre*, but the *French Chronicle* does when Chartier describes himself as 'religieux et chantre de l'église Monseigneur saint Denis'.³⁰ All three of his works, as noted before, contain references to his appointment as historiographer. Thus, we may assume that the Latin ones were begun sometime between 1437 and 1445: after being appointed historiographer, but before becoming *chantre*.

As suggested above, the *Essai* seems to have been written before the *Latin Chronicle*. The *Essai* was dedicated to the dauphin and the Queen, Marie d'Anjou:

Piissime Omnipotentisque cultrici Marie, reginarum solertissime, Ludovico Viennensi delphino, amabili munito benignitate, consanguineis ex prosapia [regali] egressis, necnon cunctis fidelibus toto in orbe Christicolis, subsequencia quibus hec per lecturam innotescent aut quovismodo noticie devenient, frater Johannes Cherterii ... salutem.³¹

This, as M. Samaran points out, would be a logical move on the part of a *chroniqueur* who had just received his title at the hands of the king.³² What better way to show his loyalty and devotion than such a dedication; in addition to this it was a practice followed by some of his predecessors at Saint-Denis.

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³⁰ Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, I, 25.

³¹ Prologue to the *Essai*. As quoted by Delaborde, *loc. cit.*, 94.

³² Chartier, *La Chronique latine ...*, 27-28.

The *Latin Chronicle*, however, has no dedication. We may thus, perhaps, date the beginning of its composition after the revolt of the dauphin in 1440 and the rise to favour of Agnes Sorel in about 1444, but before Chartier became *chantre* in 1445.³³ The original dedication was no longer expedient; Chartier was wary of making a similar mistake; and, from references found in the prologue of the *Latin Chronicle*, he was despondent over the situation in France arising from her previous struggles.

The title of *chroniqueur du royaume* had been vacant for the first fifteen years of the reign of Charles VII. Thus, the immediate task before Chartier was to record the history of that period, which must have been an arduous undertaking. In spite of the loyalty of Saint-Denis to the monarchy, the misfortunes that befell it due to the English occupation and Charles's weakness could hardly have generated a great love for those years. The archives that would have provided sources for the chronicles seem to have been in a rather sorry state. The task of presenting the account in a manner that would not be detrimental to the image of the king required much thought. There was also the problem of building the spirit and morale of the kingdom for the remainder of the war. This required a considerable length of time.

A comparison between the *Latin* and *French Chronicles* gives some clues about Chartier's progress. Several references found in the former are dropped from the latter. The *Latin Chronicle* notes the birth of Jacques de France in 1432;³⁴ the *French* does not. This indicates that the *French Chronicle* was not composed simultaneously

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³³ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁴ Ch. 98.

with the Latin one, but that this section was written after Jacques's death on 2 March 1438. The *Latin Chronicle* also records the birth of Charles of France (28 December 1446)³⁵ who was also designated heir to the throne. Again the *French Chronicle* fails to record this event, indicating perhaps that it was written when the dauphin's fortunes were improving or after he became king. A final example is the omission of the Pragmatic Sanction from the *French Chronicle* in contrast to the fact that an entire chapter was devoted to it in the Latin one.³⁶ This may indicate that the *French Chronicle* was completed after its repeal by Louis XI in 1461.

While the above omissions would have been detrimental to the new king, several additions to the *French Chronicle* not found in the Latin one would have cast a harsh light on Chartier's original patron, Charles VII. The *French Chronicle* includes accounts of such things as the marriage of the dauphin (1436)³⁷ and the Praguerie;³⁸ the *Latin Chronicle* does not. This would also seem to indicate that work on the *French Chronicle* was done shortly before the death of Charles VII or after Louis's accession. Wishing to retain his position as *chroniqueur* after the death of Charles, Chartier sought to secure it by presenting an account which was more favourable to Louis.

With the above points in mind we can thus perhaps trace Chartier's

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 35 Ch. 179.

36 Ch. 146.

37 Ch. 122.

38 Ch. 137; There are other facts that are mentioned in the *Chronique de Charles VII*, but not in the *Latin Chronicle*, such as the death of Philip of France (Ch. 121) and the marriage of Catherine of France to Charles le Temeraire (Ch. 145); but as M. Samaran notes, these are perhaps events that had to be mentioned. Chartier, *La Chronique latine ...*, 29.

progress as follows. After tentative work on the *Essai*, the *chroniqueur* forsook it and began the *Latin Chronicle* in about 1444. In addition to the absence of a dedication, this dating also rests on internal evidence: the accounts for example of the arrest of Jean d'Arc in 1430 and Charles VII's entry into Paris in 1437 contain allusions to events that took place around 1440.³⁹

It would seem that by 1447 Chartier had reached his own times and was writing on a more or less day to day basis: he wrote of events as they came to his attention from accounts furnished to him by notable people or through the auspices of Saint-Denis. This can be seen in Chapter 175 of the *Latin Chronicle* which pertains to some events of 1447. In that chapter Chartier mentions Hélié de Pompadour and gives him the title of Bishop of Carcassonne. In contrast, in the parallel chapter of the *French Chronicle* it is noted that Pompadour was later Bishop of Alet, an appointment which he received in 1448. The *Latin Chronicle*, however, does not mention that appointment until Chapter 183, which deals with events of July, 1448. Had Chartier not been up to date with the *Latin Chronicle* he would surely have taken the line of the French one: he had made allusions to later events in earlier chapters of the *Latin Chronicle*.

We do not know the exact date when Chartier began the *French Chronicle*. Favourable references to the dauphin not found in the

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³⁹ Throughout the course of events for 1429-1430, Chartier gives André de Laval the title of marshal of France, a title which Laval did not receive until about 1440: during the account of the capture of Compiègne, Chartier alludes to the death of Jean of Luxembourg which did not take place until 1440; and in the account of Charles's entry into Paris in 1437, he gives the bastard of Orléans the title of Count of Dunois, a title he was granted in 1439. *Ibid.*, 30.

Latin Chronicle would seem to indicate that at least some of the French work was done after it was obvious that Louis would become or had become King. The French work is for the most part a translation of the *Latin Chronicle*. Given the speed with which the latter was brought up to date, it would seem that the translation of the accounts tracing events up to 1450 and the composition of the chapters that followed would have caused relatively little strain. We do know for example that in Chapter 226 (1449) of the *Latin Chronicle*, Chartier simply speaks of M. de Gaucourt, but in the French chronicle he notes that he '... est de quatre-vingts ans et plus'....⁴⁰ M. Samaran has revealed that Gaucourt was born in 1371;⁴¹ thus the French account could not have been written until after 1451.

Two alternatives can be offered for the dating and method of translating the *Latin Chronicle* to French: Firstly that Chartier after bringing the Latin account up to date in 1447 began a translation and then in 1450 gave up the translation in favour of a purely vernacular account. This theory implies that the omissions and additions were made later when Louis's fortunes were in ascendancy. Secondly, that Chartier in 1450 turned to a *French Chronicle* and some time after that began to translate his Latin work for the period to 1450.

Neither of these theories can be proven: the first seems to be the most likely if some of the internal evidence cited above is considered; the second if other aspects which have previously been noted

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⁴⁰ Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, II, 136.

⁴¹ Chartier, *La Chronique latine* ..., 29.

are centre of focus. Having no known autograph of Chartier, the manuscripts are of little help: the limited number of manuscripts also renders the solution impossible.

A comparison between the *Latin* and *French Chronicles* reveals that the latter is a translation of the former. For the years 1420 to 1450 the *Latin Chronicle* contains 254 chapters plus an epilogue, and the French 232 chapters. This difference arises from the fact that some chapters are found in the Latin recension and vice versa,⁴² while others were condensed. Although the basic structure is the same, the order is occasionally inverted; and while some accounts are more developed in the Latin, many more are extended with additional material in the French.

What were the sources of Chartier's information? Chartier has given credit to some in scattered references to visitors to Saint-Denis and the one occasion on which he was an eyewitness. There are, however, others. A resemblance can be noted between Chartier's account and another contemporary work known as the *Chronique de la Pucelle*. This, in the past, gave rise to the possibility that the two works were derived from either the same source or one from the other. The similarity between them can be seen in their contents and, in the case of Chartier's *French Chronicle*, the use of common phrases and sentence structure. Although some aspects are more developed in the first twenty-nine chapters (to May 1428) of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, they are similar to the work of Chartier: some material found in Chapters 30 to 35 is analogous to that in Chartier's account

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⁴² *Supra*, pp. 128-129.

(1428-1429); and the last chapters (55-63) of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, which carry the account to September 1429, again closely follow those of Chartier.⁴³

M. Samaran put forward a theory that the *Chronique de la Pucelle* was derived from the account of Chartier:

... l'explication la plus plausible ne serait-elle pas de voir dans l'auteur de la *Chronique de la Pucelle* un homme qui, ayant à dire sur Jeanne d'Arc des choses nouvelles et même en quelque sorte personnelles, aurait pris pour base de son ouvrage la chronique officielle, en empruntant le texte pour les événements sur lesquels il ne savait rien de plus, mais farcissant certains chapitres de renseignements complémentaires et en récrivant d'autres sur nouveaux frais pour tout ce qui avait trait à la Pucelle?⁴⁴

Despite this argument, M. Planchenault arrived at a more convincing, albeit less substantiated, conclusion: that both Chartier and the author of the *Chronique de la Pucelle* derived their material from yet another source. The means of proof are long and tortuous,⁴⁵ but in short they rely on a concordance between the two works and between the *Chronique de la Pucelle* and others covering the same era. The argument centres upon passages omitted by one or the other: both accounts contain important material not found in the other which undoubtedly would have been included if one had used the other as a source.⁴⁶

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⁴³ The concordance is discussed in detail in R. Planchenault, 'La *Chronique de la Pucelle*', *BEC*, xciii (1932), 55-104.

⁴⁴ Chartier, *La Chronique latine ...*, 36-37.

⁴⁵ cf. Planchenault, *loc. cit.*, 57-68.

⁴⁶ Had the author of the *Chronique de la Pucelle* used Chartier's account as his primary source there seems to be no reason why he ignored only nine passages found in Chartier including a report of the Council of War in Ch. 37 and the material concerning Jeanne d'Arc. If on the other hand, Chartier depended on the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, no reason can be given for his neglect of the detailed material on Jeanne d'Arc as well as the wealth of other material for that era found in that source. *Ibid.*, 57-58.

In no case would the king have suffered in Chartier's account by the inclusion of the material and the *Chronique de la Pucelle* would have profited if the opposite were the case.

In addition to the factor of omissions, M. Planchenault's solution depends on another factor: The two accounts contain variations in the names of people and places.⁴⁷ One cannot say that the author of the *Chronique de la Pucelle* used only the Latin works of Chartier, thus explaining some variations, for when there is concordance between the *Chronique de la Pucelle* and the work of Chartier, but divergence between Chartier's Latin and French work, the *Chronique de la Pucelle* is in agreement with Chartier's *French Chronicle*.⁴⁸ There would thus seem to be a dependence of the two French works on yet another.

In his quest for the common source of Chartier's chronicles and the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, M. Planchenault has also found that the last books of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*, which can be attributed to Chartier, are comparable in content and order to Jean Juvenal's *Histoire de Charles VI*. Again both authors have added things of varying importance⁴⁹ in such a way that it would seem that they used a common account.

M. Planchenault believes that he found the common source in the work of Ambroise de Loré.⁵⁰ Although the reasoning behind a common

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⁴⁷ For example, Chartier gives Guillaume Kirkeby and Beaumont, whereas the *Chronique de la Pucelle* calls these two Guillaume Kyriel and Beaumanoir. *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

⁴⁹ M. Planchenault has undertaken a chapter by chapter comparison of the two works. *Ibid.*, 88-92.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

source for Chartier and Jean Juvenal (des Ursins) seems well proven, the choice of Ambroise de Loré appears more than a bit strained. Loré (1394-96? to 1446) held positions of secondary importance until November 1437 when he was appointed the *prévôt* of Paris.

The weakness in M. Planchenault's argument in favour of what he calls the *Mémoires d'Ambroise de Loré* is that it is no longer extant. However, in the study of the writers of Saint-Denis the fact that a work is no longer extant has not deterred historians from recognising its importance or its existence. Although not quite acceptable, M. Planchenault's hypothesis is more plausible than that of M. Samaran. The earlier existence of this work depends solely on the fact that only the works of this period that are analogous report the exploits of Loré — a minor figure at that time — while other contemporary sources either ignore him completely or mention him only once or twice.⁵¹

Chartier mentions him more between 1422-1437 than the king himself — or other important figures of the era. After 1437 Chartier speaks of him only three times. The reasons for this are simple according to M. Planchenault: in that year Loré was named *prévôt* and Chartier, *chroniqueur*. And

Le moine de Saint-Denis, il le fait lui-même clairement comprendre, ne connaissait rien de précis sur ce qui avait pu se passer depuis 1418 dans le camp français et nous ne nous lancerons pas dans une hypothèse trop imprudente, en avançant qu'il choisit, pour faire appel à ses souvenirs, le principal, sinon le seul, des vieux serviteurs de Charles VII qui fut demeuré dans Paris.⁵²

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51 A list of the authors who mention Loré only once or twice is given by M. Planchenault. *Ibid.*, 99.

52 *Ibid.*, 100.

It is true that Chartier is suitably vague about events during the last years of the reign of Charles VI, despite the fact that he was the Religieux's apprentice and finished the account in 1437.

Juvenal also depends upon Loré for much of his information including that characterized by the *Journal du siège*. Juvenal however knew Loré personally and was perhaps able to make more individualistic additions to the account. It is true that Chartier added some information, however his additions are of lesser import and pertain to things with which he himself would have been familiar. The discrepancies in names etc. may have been the result of the copyist, the whim of the author, or the use of two different recensions by Loré.⁵³

As M. Planchenault sees it, some details in the *Chronicle* of the Religieux and the *Histoire de Charles VI* by Jean Juvenal des Ursins (such as the details of the deaths of Henry V and Charles VI and common to both authors) would not have been known by Loré. Instead they may have been taken from yet another source which M. Planchenault has designated as that of a 'serviteur de Philippe le Hardi'.⁵⁴ About this Burgundian source he says no more. Although the evidence is weak, the fact that the chapter order and many details are the same seems to put a great deal of weight to M. Planchenault's argument.

It is true that M. Planchenault's premises are more logical than those of M. Samaran: that a common source or sources seems to be the case rather than interdependence; however the evidence is circumstantial. No other extant chronicles are analogous to the work of Chartier

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⁵³ *Ibid.*, 100-101.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

and Jean Juvenal; no other supposed author and his work fit the requirements quite as easily, yet one wonders if M. Planchenault did indeed fit Loré to the requirements demanded by his quest in an effort to find a more definitive answer to a vexatious problem.

Yet another case of similar works can be made in the case of Chartier and le héraut de Berry. From 1422 to 1449 Chartier's works and that of le héraut de Berry — this includes the 1422 to 1449 period when the account of Loré was used — are distinct. From the chapter on Fougères (Lat. Chap. 184; Fr. Chap. 167) the accounts of Chartier and le héraut de Berry are similar: similar in material order, names, details and expressions. The similarity continues until 1455 — after the *Latin Chronicle* ends in 1450. Again it might be put forward that the other author has copied Chartier's account; however, M. Samaran has shown that a detailed comparison reveals amplifications in both the *French Chronicle* of Chartier and the work of le héraut de Berry that are not found in Chartier's *Latin Chronicle*.⁵⁵ That Chartier made use of Berry's account can also be refuted on the grounds that Chartier, carrying out an official task, would have had access to the reports of the officials of the Crown; and that he often uses the first person whereas Berry's account is impersonal. This of course does not mean that Chartier witnessed events and that Berry did not; in fact Chartier clearly indicated the events that he witnessed and would have done so in all cases. It is more likely that, as his predecessors, he remained at the abbey and received reports from which he derived his information.

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⁵⁵ Chartier, *La Chronique latine* ..., 38-43.

Le héraut de Berry, Gilles le Bouvier, was better placed to take part in the military events that he records, but only once does he indicate that he was present. Moreover, he was at some times very far from the centre of events by virtue of the duties which he carried out.⁵⁶ Thus, it would seem unlikely that he was the author of the account which was used.

Again, the best solution to the problem is that a common text was used by both authors for their parallel accounts of the Normandy campaign. M. Samaran has put forward the convincing idea that the text was a whole or part of a detailed report made by a military official of Charles VII or someone in his entourage.⁵⁷ It would seem that Chartier and Berry continued to follow this sort of official report until at least 1455; it is possible that Chartier continued to do so until the end of his *French Chronicle* in 1461.

The theory pertaining to military reports gains further credence when one looks at Chartier's account from 1449. By that time he was writing, according to evidence cited above, as he received the information. There is also the fact that the epilogue of the *Latin Chronicle* contains French words for various artillery pieces — words such as *bombardes, gros canons, canons de vengleires, serpentines, crapaudines, ribaudequins et coulevrines*.⁵⁸

This of course provides an additional explanation for the termination of the *Latin Chronicle* in 1450: the bulletins or sources of

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⁵⁶ The account for the 1450 campaign is exact and merits praise, but we know that he spent the time travelling to the courts of the Dukes of Burgundy and Lorraine. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

of information were issued in French and there was little reason to translate them and great difficulty in doing so. In this context it should be remembered that the *Essai* was begun as a continuation of the *Chronicle* of the Religieux; the manifestations of a universal chronicle were excluded, but the tradition of a Latin chronicle on the part of the *chroniqueur* was continued in the *Latin Chronicle*. It would seem that vernacular composition by the *chroniqueur* received approval and, with the difficulties of Latin composition in the circumstances involved, it was embraced.

Because of the similarity between the *French Chronicle* and Jean Juvenal des Ursins' work, we must assume that the source for the early period — perhaps Loré — was also written in French and not Latin. This also shows that the idea of dropping the *Latin Chronicle* did not occur until there was almost simultaneous translation to French: tradition was dropped when it was most logical: about 1450. In this context, one must also note that there is the possibility that the *Latin Chronicle* was ended because preparations were under way for a new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*: all attention was directed to preparing an account of the reign of Charles VII for that purpose. All of this, however, assumes that as indicated by extant manuscripts no further recension of the *Latin Chronicle* was made.

Chartier's use of other texts may provide some explanation for his faults of style and sense of history, but this cannot surely be the complete reason. When discussing the *Essai* and the *French Chronicle* M. Vallet de Viriville notes a certain negative attitude on the part of the author: he notes that the manner in which the works were written reveals negligence. The chronology is poor; the facts are

presented in a haphazard fashion; accounts for some years are entirely missing; etc.⁵⁹ In general he has little respect for Chartier's efforts.

Despite his faults, Chartier does not entirely merit the disdain of M. Vallet de Viriville: the use of other sources cannot be condemned nor can he be accused of lacking some qualities of an historian. The dependence on the work of others would seem to be the most logical thing for a man who was confined to his monastery because of his duties there. Another factor which should be remembered is that because of the years of turmoil through which the monastery went, Saint-Denis would have had little to offer in the way of records. Although not devoid of a sense of history, it was not Chartier's duty to be an historian in the strictest sense. In fact it was the opposite: his duty was to present the actions of Charles VII in the most favourable light, to exclude derogatory information, to play down opposition, etc. Later the impending accession of the Dauphin Louis required Chartier to present a slightly different picture: to present him in a favourable light as well. In short, Chartier was a paid propagandist; this was what was meant by the appointment of *chroniqueur du royaume*. Later appointments reinforce this point.

In the previous chapter some attention was given to Chartier's style in an attempt to ascertain the authorship of the last years of the *Chronicle of Charles VI*. In brief, we find that Chartier's sentences are far less complex than those of his predecessor; that he has not adopted the practice of using fictitious orations to put across

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⁵⁹ Vallet de Viriville, *loc. cit.*, 496.

his own ideas; and that he has not (possibly owing to a paucity of information) been able to include any number of documents or official records. These few things cannot be taken to be great faults, but in other aspects the work of Chartier falls short. As M. Vallet de Viriville points out, Chartier's use of language is barbarous:⁶⁰ the fact that Chartier's Latin is more torturous than his French seems to be an indication of a change in attitude. The resurgence of Latin under the influence of Humanism of course changed this briefly. Before Humanism was felt, a double standard pulling in two directions seemed to be prevalent: Chartier seems to be an example of one who was supposed to be able to express himself with proficiency in both languages, but ended up by covering his inadequacies by using the most unusual words possible. Because of his limitations, his works have a banal quality heightened by pretentious attempts to be otherwise: the general effect is a sameness, a dullness coupled with ridiculous attempts to add variety and spice to it.

Despite this, the value of the work remains. It is certainly not an account which contains a great amount of information that is not found in other sources; and there are other works which cover the period with more competence and interest. And yet the work of Chartier remains important in that his *French Chronicle* became part of the first printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques* in 1477. It would not have had to be included in the recension despite the fact that Chartier was *chroniqueur du royaume*: another's work might have been chosen as in the case where Jean Juvenal's account for 1388-1402,

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⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 496-98.

and le héraut de Berry's work for 1403-1422 were substituted for a strict translation of the Religieux's *Chronicle of Charles VI*.

In addition to this Chartier's work holds yet another importance: it seems to spell the end of the tradition of continuing the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. The project had of course gone into decline with the last of Guillaume de Nangis's continuators, but it had been temporarily revived by the Religieux and then carried on by Chartier. Although later *chroniqueurs* wrote in Latin they were not concerned with the *Latin Chronicle* as such, but instead wrote accounts to fill the purpose at hand: a strict biography of the king with the appropriate propaganda.

Chartier's chronicles were perhaps symptomatic of the state of historiography at Saint-Denis. Saint-Denis had suffered great hardships at the beginning of the century; it had lost its position as a leader in the field of historiography through the effects of the war. Chartier marks the last of a continuous line of historiographers at Saint-Denis who under the patronage of the king and abbot were entrusted with the task of writing an account of the king's reign.

After Chartier a few members of the community of Saint-Denis did become *chroniqueurs du royaume*, but the chain had been broken: Saint-Denis was no longer the obvious place from which to make a choice. This was immediately evident when Louis XI turned to another monastery for Chartier's successor, Jean Castel.

CHAPTER VII

JEAN CASTEL

A chronicle of the reign of Louis XI states that

' ... tous baillifs, prevostz, cappitanes, tresoriers, gene-
raulx, vicontes, receveurs, grenetiers, qui avoient esté du
temps Charles VII, pere dudit roy Loys, feurent presque tous
despointés, et toutes aultres offices du royaume feurent
donnees a gens nouveaulx dont la plus part n'en estoient
dignes, pourquoy grant murmure estoit partout.'¹

These changes also had an effect on the office of *chroniqueur du royaume*.

Georges Chastellain in the *Chronique des ducs de Bourgogne* explains that
Louis XI

... prist indignacion contre ceulx de Saint-Denis et par
courouch thira hors des mains [d'iceulx] l'auctorité de
chroniqueur, et mist en la main d'ung religieux de Clugny,
lequel il manda venir devers ly, appelé maistre Jehan²

It is true that Saint-Denis suffered as a result of its ties with
Charles VII, but as pointed out at the end of the preceding chapter, the
quality of Chartier's work may be indicative of a decline in its histor-
iographical tradition. And before we condemn Louis XI too harshly, it
must be noted that he did not replace Chartier with an appointee of his
own choice immediately upon his accession. Instead Chartier seems to
have retained the title until his death in 1464. Although Louis impat-
iently swept away the vestiges of his father's rule as quickly as possible,
he probably realized that Chartier had found it politic to take a softer
attitude toward the future King of France in his *French Chronicle* than
in his earlier work.³ There can, however, be no question that, to Louis,

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¹ Giuseppe A. Brunelli, 'Jean Castel et le "Mirouer des dames"',
Moyen Age, lxii (1956), 93.

² J. Quicherat, 'Recherches sur le chroniqueur Jean Castel',
BEC, ii (1840-1841), 469.

³ *Supra*, p. 129.

Chartier was Charles's man and that Saint-Denis, in spite of its loyalty to the monarchy as an institution, rankled Louis. Thus, while in the throes of establishing 'new monarchy' in France, Louis XI turned to a new source for someone to chronicle his reign: he appointed a Cluniac as Chartier's successor.

In 1464 Jean Castel was appointed as *chroniqueur du royaume*. Castel remained in the position, receiving the remuneration of 200 livres per annum, until 1476.⁴ But after his death, whether because of a mellowing of Louis's attitude or expediency, the title returned to Saint-Denis for at least a short time. The reasons for this will be discussed below, but first we must ascertain why Louis chose Castel as a suitable replacement for the Saint-Denis tradition.

A look into the biographical details of Castel's life provides us with some clues. On the paternal side, his grandmother was Christine de Pisan, whose father had come to France to serve as Court Astrologer and physician to Charles V. At the age of about fifteen, she married Etienne Castel, a secretary for the King. After the death of Charles V, Thomas de Pisan fell from favour and died bankrupt in about 1385; and within a few years her husband fell victim to the plague (1398). At her husband's death Christine de Pisan, aged twenty-five, was left with three children, the chronicler's father, also named Jean, being one of them.

The young Jean Castel enjoyed three years in England under the patronage of the Count of Salisbury. This, however, did little to enhance his position because of the circumstances surrounding the death of Salisbury — disfavour and decapitation. It was undoubtedly the rising influence of his mother in the French literary scene, and perhaps the inherited

⁴ Quicherat, *loc. cit.*, 463.

ability to flatter and ingratiate, that secured the chronicler's father the appointment of notary and secretary to Charles VI. He is mentioned in the accounts of March 1411 (n.s.)⁵ and by 1416 was one of the ministers of the court of Charles VI. Sometime before 1418 he married Jeanne le Page (or Coton), the daughter of a bourgeois of Paris, and a member of a family that had also provided notaries and secretaries to the king.

The year 1418 witnessed another change in the family fortunes. The circumstances surrounding it remain to us in a letter of remission dated 27 December 1431 from Henry VI of England in favour of Jeanne. The letter states that about thirteen years before:

ledit maistre Jehan Castel se parti de nostredicte ville de Paris et s'en ala en la partie et obeissance de noz adverseres, et emmena avec lui ladicte suppliante sa femme, laquelle a l'occasion de son dit mary esté, demouré et fréquenté avec noz diz adverseres par aucun temps, et jusques a six ans a ou environ; après le trespas de son dit feu mary, elle desirant estre avec ses pere et mere, parens et amis en nostre dicte ville de Paris, en la confiance de nostre grace et misericorde, s'en retourna avec trois petiz enfans qu'elle a eu en nostre dicte ville; et assez tost après son retour lui fu enjoinct et commandé de par nous qu'elle partist de nostre dicte ville et alast demourer en aucun lieu de nostre obeissance; en obtemperant auquel commandement elle se parti, et depuis [n'a] demouré ailleurs que en nostre dicte obeissance, en vivant solitairement et an soy gouvernant la plus doucement qu'elle a peu.⁶

The reasons for the elder Jean Castel's departure can be ascertained from a letter of Louis XI to Jeanne Coton, when he states that she was

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⁵ Eugénie Droz, 'Jean Castel Chroniqueur de France', *Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'à 1715) du Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques*, (1919), p. 95.

⁶ Thomas, 'Jean Castel', *Romania*, xxi (1892), 273. M. Thomas also notes that the form of Jean Castel's surname has been questioned: Beaucourt has called him Jehan du Castel; some have called his grandfather Jehan du Castel; a secretary of Charles VII wrote of his father as Jehan de Castel; and a letter of Louis XI speaks simply of Jehan Castel. Although de Castel would seem to have been the most common, modern historians have simplified it to Castel. *Ibid.*, 274, n. 3.

' ... vefve de feu maistre Jehan Castel, son vivant notaire et secrétaire de feu nostre très-chier seigneur et père'⁷ Thus we see that Jean Castel, secretary to the dauphin who became Charles VI, had fled from Paris with him to escape Burgundian captors.

After the death of Charles VI, Jean Castel seems to have remained in the entourage of the King of Bourges for he is mentioned in an account of Charles VII (25 November 1422) as one of four ambassadors sent to the court of Castile⁸ before his death in 1425.

During his lifetime the elder Jean Castel gained a reputation as a writer: he was for example placed in the same rank as Guillaume de Machu, Alain Chartier, Pierre de Nesson, and Eustace Mercadé by Martin le France in 1440.⁹ *Le Pin*, his only extant work, is an allegory lamenting the state of France because of the English occupation.

This poem and the service which he rendered were a clear indication of his loyalty to Charles VII, but his associations with the King of Bourges and the Armagnacs were of course offensive enough to the Duke of Bedford to prevent his widow from returning to Paris with her three small children. Only six years later was she granted the letter of remission by Henry VI and was able to return to Paris.¹⁰

The fact that the *chroniqueur du royaume* was one of three children of Jean Castel is proven by the opening passage of the letter of Louis XI to Jeanne Coton noted above: 'Receue avons l'umble suplication de Jehanne Coton, vefve de feu maistre Jehan Castel ... et mère de feu frère Jehan Castel, lui vivant nostre croniqueur et abbé de Saint Mor des Fossez'¹¹

7 Quicherat, *loc. cit.*, 463.

8 Thomas, *loc. cit.*, 274.

9 Droz, *loc. cit.*, 96.

10 *Supra*, 145.

11 *Supra*, 145.

Unfortunately we have little information about the early years of the *chroniqueur*. The exact date of his birth is not known, but must have taken place between about 1418 and 1425 on the basis of the information known about his father. We do know, however, that from 1439 he was a monk at the monastery of Saint-Martin-des-Champs. Although it is not our purpose to examine the reasons for the entry of our chroniclers into monastic life, one may read into Jean Castel's action a conscious effort to re-establish the fortunes of the family through a new means — monastic life — which provided fewer immediate, but safer, opportunities for advancement. The action may have been the result of his own desires, but it was more likely at his mother's insistence for Louis XI's letter notes that she '... a despendu tout le sien pour l'avancement et promotion de son dit fils' The choice was wise, for it probably kept Castel from involvement in political factions during his youth and possibly served to disengage the family from the political misfortunes which had continually plagued it. The choice, as noted before, may have been Castel's own for much the same reasons.

The next indication of Castel's progress is that in January 1459 he received 20 écus for '... ung role de parchemin de plusieurs beaux ditez par lui faiz en rime a la louenge de Nostre Dame et unes lettres myssives, aussi en rime, adressant audit seigneur'¹² from Charles VII. This may be

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¹² Thomas, *loc. cit.*, 271. M. Quicherat sought to identify Jean Castel with one Jehan de Castel, a clerk who figures in some accounts from 1461 to 1463 and who was a secretary of the King in 1470. (Quicherat, *loc. cit.*, 469-70). M. Thomas, however, has shown that the secretary and the chronicler were probably two different people. His argument is based on two quittances — the first dated 26 June 1471 and the second 9 Feb. 1474 (n.s.) — both carrying the name of Jehan de Castel who is styled 'notaire et secretaire du roi'; and the fact that in the letter of Louis XI to the chronicler's mother, Jean Castel the elder is called 'notaire et secretaire de feu nostre ... père', but his son is simply styled 'nostre croniqueur et abbé de Saint Mor des Fossez'. The chronicler is thus not credited with also being a secretary of the King. Thomas, *loc. cit.*, 272-73.

interpreted as a personal commission not connected with any apprenticeship for the position of *chroniqueur*: Castel was not a member of the community of Saint-Denis where the incumbent, Jean Chartier, was still occupied with his tasks. But for the simple spatial problem, we might assume that this was a paid apprenticeship. Yet another factor serves to dismiss this possibility: would he have received the appointment from Louis XI if he had been closely connected with Charles VII? Had he been directly connected with Charles he would have surely been bypassed and dismissed as Louis had done with so many of his father's appointees.

At any event, despite this one connection with Charles VII, Castel did not suffer. As it was noted above, some of the verses presented to Charles VII were religious in nature, and Louis XI's misdirected sense of piety worked in Castel's favour: the author was appointed *chroniqueur* when Louis broke with the historiographical tradition of Saint-Denis.

It is not possible to determine the exact date of Castel's appointment. His name first appears in the accounts for 1463-1464. The financial year began on 1 October and Chartier's death occurred in February 1464 (n.s.); therefore we must assume that Castel's appointment was not long delayed after the death of his predecessor.

We have no evidence for the motives behind Louis's choice. In the case of Chartier and his predecessors it was a matter of selecting someone within the monastery of Saint-Denis; but in the case of Castel there seems to be no immediate reason why Louis turned to Saint-Martin-des-Champs.

There were, however, some factors which favoured Castel. In spite of the rather tortuous political fates suffered by his family, they had certainly proved one point: that they were able to remain loyal to the object of their allegiance at any cost. His grandmother had achieved fame

through her flattering verse and his father had become an important literary figure. Although Castel himself had produced only one work, the verses for which he received remuneration from Charles VII, up to the time of his appointment, there may have been others. As will be shown below, as early as 1465 he was a friend of Charles de Gaucourt (a councillor of the King, seigneur of Châteaubrun and later governor of Paris). All of these things — background, his own work, and his friendship with de Gaucourt — or a combination of some of them, may have influenced Louis XI in his choice: instead of an unknown figure from Saint-Denis, Louis's attention was drawn to him. Thus he received the appointment.

There can be little doubt that Castel (just as his mother was characterized by Louis XI) was ambitious and desired honours beyond those of *chroniqueur*. For these he sought the aid of de Gaucourt in 1465. Through an extant series of letters we see that Castel was on familiar terms with Louis's councillor and, above all, that Castel was not the 'petit moine' which he styled himself. Thus in 1465-1466 he directed verse letters to de Gaucourt requesting that he intercede on his behalf with Louis XI.

With a sense of irony Castel says in the first stanza:

A Monseigneur de Gaucourt soit donnee
 De par Castel son servant lige et homme,
 Qui voudroit bien so place estre ordonnee
 Pour être pape au saint siège de Romme,
 Car nul ne voit qui le prise une pomme
 Pour ce qu'il n'a cens, rente ne heritage,
 Et qui pis est, jamais on ne le nomme
 Que le 'petit moine' pour tout potage.¹³

In a later stanza, however, Castel becomes realistic and states his preference on the question of advancement, and indicates that being made the abbot of Cluny would be to his taste.

The appeal to the good offices of de Gaucourt seems to have

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¹³ Droz, *loc. cit.*, 104.

accomplished nothing, for in March 1466 he again addressed the King's councillor requesting his intercession for the bestowal of a mitre, or being elected the abbot of Saint-Germain, or the archbishop of Narbonne.

This letter in fact reveals a great deal about Castel's aspirations, employment and attitude toward monastic life.

Mais chose n'est qui me puisse esjoïr,
S'ainsi de vous aucun ne me rapporte
Et suis toujours, sans partir hors la porte
De mon estude, a croniquer et lyre,
En attendant (mais trop on s'en desporte)
Qu'un de ces jours pape on puisse m'eslire.¹⁴

After this he expresses a distaste for the rigours of his life during Lent and reveals that he was indeed well acquainted with de Gaucourt by indicating that he hopes to enjoy both his hospitality and table after Easter. The letter also indicates a familiarity with another well placed person, for at the end of the letter he sends greetings to Robert d'Estouteville, the *prévôt* of Paris. The letter closes with a repetition of the request to be made the abbot of Cluny.

In spite of Castel's efforts his specific requests for advancement were not realized. It was not until 1472 that he was named abbot, not of Cluny or Saint-Germain, but of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés. Four years later, in February 1476, he died.

Much of what we know about Castel is confirmed by the letter of Louis XI in favour of the *chroniqueur's* mother, which has already been quoted in part. After having indicated Castel's parentage and his position the letter indicates that Jeanne Coton has petitioned with reference to the fact that

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¹⁴ Brunelli, *loc. cit.*, 95.

' ... ou moys de fevrier derrain passé, ledit abbé son filz ala de vie à trespas, lequel avoit deservy sondict office de croniqueur depuis le premier jour d'octobre précédent jusques audit jour de son trespas, sans avoir eue aucune assignacion ou paiement de ses gages appartenant audit office qui estoit de deux cens livres tournois par an, combien que ladicte somme fust couchée en l'estat général de noz finances dedans les rivières de Seine et Yonne, de ceste présente année commencée le premier jour d'octobre. Après le trespas duquel croniqueur, ladite suppliante désirant faire prier pour le salut et remède de l'âme de sondit fils, s'est tirée par devers nostre amé et féal notaire et secretaire maistre Pierre de Lailly ... pour avoir assignacion de paiement des gaiges de sondit fils ... ce que nostredit receveur général a diféré faire disant que ladicte suppliante n'estoit pas habille luy baillier quittance, actendu qu'elle n'estoit pas héritière de sondit fils, lequel comme dit est estoit religieux et n'avoit aucuns héritiers excepté les religieux de l'esglise dont il estoit abbé; et que, sans nostre auctorité et ordonnance, il ne luy estoit loisible lui faire ou bailler aucun payement ou assignacion: comme tout ce icelle suppliante nous a fait dire et remonstrer, requerant humblement sur ce provision et nostre grace lui estre imparties. Pourquoy nous, considéré ce que dit est ... la viduité et ancien aage de la ditte suppliante, qui a despensé tout le sien pour l'avancement et promocion de sondit fils ... avons auctorisé et auctorisons par ces presentes la quittance de ladite suppliante, et voulons icelle estre valable et alouée en la despense de ses comptes jusques à la somme de cinquante livres tournois et au dessouss, se tant montent les gaiges dudit croniqueur jusquez audit jour de son trespas ...'¹⁵

Not only does this letter confirm Jean Castel's parentage, his position, his remuneration, and his death date; but it also gives us a picture of the power behind him, his mother. This is gained not so much from Louis's statements, but from the very purpose of the letter. It characterizes Jeanne Coton as a poor widow who is not afraid to demand what is due to her son for herself in spite of the fact that his sole heir was the Church. No record indicates that the Church opposed the appeal and demanded its right to the backpayment. It is

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¹⁵ Quicherat, *loc. cit.*, 463-64.

evident, however, that Louis held some regard for Castel in the granting of the request.

The question of the basis for Louis's esteem thus arises: what was the nature of Castel's work? Just as his grandmother and father, Castel gained literary fame; his contemporaries placed him on a par with such authors as Froissart and Chastellain.¹⁶ It is uncertain whether this assessment was made on the basis of poetry or prose: Froissart and Chastellain wrote in both media — their poetry having little appeal to modern taste.¹⁷ When one adds Castel's name to the others it would seem that the criterion was poetry, because as the following discussion will show, we have no prose works from which to judge his merits in that field. We do have a few extant examples of poetry which can be positively attributed to Castel: the *Spécule des pécheurs* composed in 1468 for Jean du Bellay, the bishop of Poitiers; the verse letters to de Gaucourt; and some verse written to Chastellain.¹⁸ Just as Froissart's poetry was little more than a reiteration of old ideas in the old style, so was Castel's *Spécule*. Of the many works of the Middle Ages that bear this same title the greater part are moral treatises — translations or adaptations of esthetic writings.

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¹⁶ Because of the confusion that results from the fact that both the chronicler and his father were authors, it is not possible to discern to which man some contemporary references are made. It is, however, possible to positively identify the chronicler Jean Castel in some. Droz, *loc. cit.*, 112-113.

¹⁷ It would be impossible to list the works of the two men; some of the titles can be found in Molinier, *op. cit.* vols. IV and V. In ranking these three men, contemporaries may have sought to provide examples of French, English and Burgundian interests.

¹⁸ One must add to this the six verses which Castel seems to have written and later erased from the end of his own copy of the *Roman de la Rose*. Droz, *loc. cit.*, 97.

Castel's work follows this trend: it is based on a meditation on Deuteronomy 32:29. In contrast to this intense work we find the verses to both de Gaucourt and Chastellain amusing and ironic, but aside from evidencing an aptitude for versification they have little to recommend them.

In addition to these known works of Castel two others, also in verse, have been attributed to him: the *Mirour des Dames* and *Poems sur la Vierge*, both found in B.N. MS fr. 147 (a collection of moral and pious poetry).¹⁹ It may be that the *beaux dites* for which Charles VII paid 20 écus are found in that collection. Experts in this field disagree: Paulin Paris dated them before 1456,²⁰ but Mlle Droz in 1919 contended that they were written after 1468.²¹ The disparity between these two widely divergent views has not yet been resolved, but should they finally be proven as Castel's work they add nothing to the views of his poetic talents which have already been expressed.

It may be of course that Castel achieved fame in prose as did Froissart and Chastellain. Indeed, given the position which he held, one might expect this. But as in the case of Primat — whose chronicle remains only in translation — only a small portion of his work remains. It cannot be disputed that some relevant work was expected of the *chroniqueur* and that the holder of the office had access to the *Latin Chronicles of Saint-Denis*. The transfer of the title from Saint-Denis to another monastery seems to have made no alteration to this scheme. Proof of this is found in the sequence of events that followed Castel's death in 1476. On 26 June 1482 Louis XI ordered that the box

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¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

containing what we must suppose were the *Latin Chronicles of Saint-Denis*, which had been held at Saint-Maur, should be inspected. The King then appointed Mathieu Lebrun (or Levrien) of Saint-Denis to carry out the work necessary to complete the chronicles.

We may interpret this as Louis's demand to know what had already been accomplished and, in light of the results, either to write the account from Castel's notes or to bring it up to date. In either case it would seem that Louis was seeking to find out the extent to which Castel had carried out his charge.

It must be noted that simple notes would not have gained notoriety for Castel even among his contemporaries. Jean Molinet, for example, called him the '*Grand Chroniqueur de France*'.²² We cannot put too much emphasis on this praise, for Molinet was a Burgundian partisan and had suffered territorial losses after the defeat of Charles the Bold. Whether cynicism or flattery was intended, Molinet's comments seem to indicate that Castel produced not merely notes, but some finished work which could receive commendation or condemnation from him.

In the past, historians sought to find an indication of Castel's work among the best known works of the era. The *Chronique Martiniane* was one possible lead: it says 'Le[second volume] de la Martiniane qui suyt selon les dactes du temps des Chroniques de France selon le croniqueur Castel'.²³ This however proved impossible since the

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²² André Bossuat, 'Jean Castel, chroniqueur de France', *Moyen Age*, lxiv (1958), 298.

²³ *Ibid.*, 298, n. 41.

portion covering the reign of Louis XI was taken from the *Chronique scandaleuse*: and it is impossible to credit Castel with any part of the account.²⁴

Thus an account of Castel's prose work has to be sought elsewhere. It is perhaps found in the Vatican manuscript Reg. Lat. 499, entitled the *Chroniques du Bec*. The manuscript was brought to the attention of historians in 1876 by M. Delisle.²⁵ For the most part the manuscript is devoted to documents concerning the abbey of Bec: however folios 1 to 6 contain the text titled '*Chroniques abrégées, par Castel croniqueur de France, composées*'.

M. André Bossuat has found three other recensions which also seem to bear a definite relationship to the Vatican manuscript: the *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel*, and MSS 1993 and 1994 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.²⁶ It is true that the manuscripts are definitely related, but before discussing this it is necessary to attempt to indicate the contents and format of at least one of them.

The portion of Castel's alleged work contained in the Vatican manuscript opens with a request for the reader's indulgence, then French rubrics followed by Latin verses record historical events —

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²⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

²⁵ Léopold Delisle, 'Notice sur vingt manuscrits du Vatican', *BEC*, xxxvii (1876), 519-27.

²⁶ Bossuat, *loc. cit.*, 287, 291. M. Bossuat has published the text of the *Chronique du Bec* with cross references to the *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel* and MSS Sainte-Geneviève 1993 and 1994. *Ibid.*, 499-535. Cf. *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. Siméon Luce, Tome I, (Paris: 1879), 1-84.

the Latin verses forming chronograms which give the date of the event,²⁷ beginning with the entry for 1066.

The first three entries are an exercise in enumerating nine famous warriors: three Jews — Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabee; three pagans — Hector, Alexander and Julius Caesar; and three Christians — Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godefroy de Bouillon. A verse on Thomas à Becket follows, and then the relation of French history begins with the Norman Conquest. The series of 148 entries ends with an account of the death of the Queen of Scotland in 1445 and that of her daughter Margaret, dauphine of France, in the same year:

La mort de la royne d'Escoce et de madame la daulphine.
 Francia Delphine, regine Scotia matris,
 Valde sub Augusto planexerunt fune.²⁸

Although the work ends before the accession of Louis XI, it was obviously written during his reign. This can be affirmed from the entry pertaining to events of 1443:

La destrousse des bastilles devant Dieppe par monseigneur
 le Daulphin de present roy de France nommé Loys.
 Deppe succurens augusto, strenuus armis,
 delphinus P[ar]dos conterit; unde dolent.²⁹

The basic form of the work can be seen in the entries quoted above. With few exceptions the French rubrics are very brief, barely covering a line; the length of the Latin verses that follow them

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James Hilton has noted that chronograms seem to have been used less in France than in other European countries. James Hilton, *Chronograms 5000 and more in number excerpted of various authors and collected at many places*, (London: 1882), p. 194. The solution to the chronograms in the *Chronique du Bec* is derived by adding the Roman numerals I, V, X, L, C, and M. The numeral D is ignored.

²⁸ Bossuat, *loc. cit.*, 535.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 534.

varies, being dependent on the author's ability to achieve the chronogram. The Latin verses in general repeat the information given in the French rubrics, but they are also used to give some detail, occasionally the month of the event, or (after 1415) the sign of the zodiac.

The chronicle can be divided into two parts: from its beginning to 1415 and from 1415 to 1445. This division is significant for several reasons.

The greater part of the work is devoted to events after 1415 — items 34 to 149. Although the French rubrics and Latin verses still vary in length, they are more developed and contain more detailed information. Whereas the section before 1415 is concerned with well known and outstanding events such as the births and deaths of important figures, natural phenomena, one entry for the Black Death, the acquisition of Normandy, outstanding conflicts, etc., the second section goes into greater detail, noting both events of general interest and details of the course of the Hundred Years' War.

The reasons for the greater development of the second section may have been the result of either personal knowledge or the availability of better sources from which to work. Given the approximate date of Castel's birth (1418-1425) we cannot assume that personal knowledge played a great part until almost the end of the period covered in that section. It is therefore a greater documentation which is responsible. We must of course take into account the fact that the text found in the Vatican and other manuscripts is an abridgement of Castel's work, but it is most likely that the proportions were similar in the original work.

The source until at least the reign of Charles VI was a universal chronicle: evidence of this is found in the need to return to early history. Because of the very general nature of the pre-1415 section it is impossible to determine what works Castel consulted. We must, however, remember that as *chroniqueur* Castel had access to the *Latin Chronicles of Saint-Denis* as well as previous recensions of the *Grandes Chroniques*. A combination of these works or another universal chronicle could well have served as Castel's source for the general information incorporated in the first section of the work.

The exceptions to the information of a general nature are references to natural phenomena and Breton affairs; these are aspects found in both sections of the chronicle. It is of course possible that the Breton information was inserted by the abridger, but it is also entirely possible that it was part of the original work. As M. Bossuat points out the chronicle is not wholly Breton: the author does show some interest in other areas as well.³⁰ But as the emphasis in the special references is Breton, some explanation is necessary. Saint-Maur had dependencies in that area and thus he would have had access to material from them. The fact that there is a similarity but not a concordance with a composition by a Breton, Pierre le Baud, seems to indicate that an outside source was used and that it may have reached Castel through the auspices of Saint-Maur. This seems even more true when we note that between Castel's work and the *Chronique* of Perceval de Cagny as well as the *Chronique* of Guillaume Gruel there are similarities in reference to other affairs. Thus, we may assume that Castel consulted a variety of works in the course of compiling his chronicle.

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³⁰ *Ibid.*, 537.

The formats of the manuscript of the Vatican and the *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel* are the same in the parts common to both: their entries are in the form of French rubrics with Latin chronograms. Between 1415 and 1433, the chronograms are identical, before and after this period they are similar (but not identical) indicating that the compilers probably worked from a common source. Both compilers added (or subtracted) certain local materials: the *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel* has neglected regional materials not concerned with Bas Normandy and the Vatican text has included entries which relate to the entire Western region with particular interest in the affairs of the Dukes of Brittany. The compiler of the Vatican manuscript also shows more interest in natural phenomena and miracles.

Given the similarity in chronograms and material it is obvious that both compilers worked from a common or similar source, attributable in some way to Jean Castel. M. Bossuat believes that he has found that text in MSS 1993 and 1994 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.³¹ Both are Fifteenth Century manuscripts written by the same hand. Although 1994 seems to be a copy of 1993, both contain some gaps which can be filled by referring to the other manuscript.

Both of these manuscripts contain a collection of texts: the lineage of the French Kings from the Trojans; an account of the Jacquerie and Charles of Navarre; a general chronicle from the Trojan origins to 1440, the early period being derived from the *Chronique abrégée* of Guillaume de Nangis; a chronicle whose accent is on Breton history; a few brief mentions of events from the Flood to 1367;

³¹ *Ibid.*, 291-296.

another genealogy of the Kings of France; a list of the Kings of England to Henry VI; a record of the conflicts between the Kings of France and England; a record of the Parlement held by the Duke of Brittany in 1451; a copy of the héraut Berry's *Recouvrement de Normandie et de Guyenne*; a more modern copy of an act of the Duke of Brittany in 1433; la detrousse de Talbot; the composition of the assembly held to try the Duke of Alençon in 1458; and *Le livre de la patience Griselides marquise de Saluces*.

As M. Bossuat points out, except for the last mentioned item in the manuscript (MS 1993 contains much the same material), it would seem that it was a collection of material made in preparation for a larger work.³² The most important item is the general chronicle from the Trojan origins to 1440. Despite some blanks, the information contained in the section from 1360 onwards corresponds for the most part with the relevant section of the Vatican manuscript.³³

It must be noted however that whereas the Vatican manuscript goes to 1445 that section of the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève ends in 1440. This disparity may be explained by looking at the manuscripts: both have suffered mutilation in several places. In the general chronicle the section to 1360 has suffered to some extent and we may perhaps assume that the last part — 1440 to 1445 — has been completely lost.

It might be asserted that the concordance suggested was the result of pure chance if it were not for the nature of the material: in both we find an interest in the affairs of the West of France, the mention

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³² *Ibid.*, 301-302.

³³ *Ibid.*, 295, 301-302.

of events pertaining to the Dukes of Brittany — there is also an entire section of MS 1994 which has special reference to Brittany — and a definite taste for natural phenomena. An important bit of evidence which connects the manuscripts of the Vatican and Sainte-Geneviève can be cited: only in these two do accounts appear of the death of St. Vicent Ferrier in 1419 and a miracle which occurred at Doué in 1423.

There are however some differences between the manuscripts of the Vatican and Sainte-Geneviève, and the *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel*. The manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève contain no chronograms, and therefore are more highly developed and not as abrupt as the others: the accounts contained in the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève left more scope for the compiler to enlarge them as he saw fit. This leads us to an assumption that there was an intermediate source between the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève and these accounts contained in the Vatican manuscript and the *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel*. The similarity of the chronograms in the latter two seems to demand this explanation: it would have been impossible for two compilers to produce such similar chronograms without some guide. The *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel* closely follows the French rubrics of the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève and on occasion fails to give the appropriate chronogram. The Vatican manuscript shortened the rubrics, but depends on the chronograms for dating and detail.

There can be no doubt that the three texts are related, but in what way? There was without doubt an intermediate source that provided the chronograms; and the compiler of the Vatican manuscript had

access only to this; whereas that of Mont-Saint-Michel had access to both. It is impossible to tell if Castel had any part in the formulation of the chronograms. All that we can say at this time is that, on the basis of the credit given to him in the Vatican manuscript, he was in some way connected with their composition. He does not seem to have had a personal connection with either Bec or Mont-Saint-Michel. In addition to this it must also be noted that both chronicles contain some regional material that is peculiar to them alone. Thus they were dependent on an intermediate source which in turn was derived from either the collection found in the Sainte-Geneviève manuscript(s) or a finished work by Castel.

In any event it would seem from the discussion above that the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève were the basis for the intermediate source. Their contents seem to be the preliminary notes for a universal chronicle: they provide the material for a history of the kings of France. Tracing the origins of the French monarchs from the Trojans had become the usual form used by authors to reinforce the monarch's legitimacy in the face of foreign opposition and pretensions. It is true that Louis XI was confronted by fewer dangers than his predecessors, but the customary form was still preserved. The object in the end was of course to present the most favourable picture of the monarch.

But the recensor of the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève was not only interested in the monarchy; Church affairs were also included in the collection. The recensor was obviously a cleric: he was interested in the papacy, liturgical innovation, the foundation of monasteries (such as Chelles, Corbie, Mont-Saint-Michel etc.), and, most

importantly, with the life of Saint Maur and the foundation of the abbey named after him in Anjou. The compiler also seems to be interested in the monastery of Saint-Martin-des-Champs and particularly in the introduction of Cluniac monks there.³⁴

These factors plus the obvious similarity of the Vatican manuscript and the dating of the copy of the watermark on the paper — which indicates that the copy was made about 1470³⁵ — makes it very probable that the collection of notes was the work of Castel. We do not know, however, if a chronicle was completed or even begun. The orders given by Louis XI after the chroniqueur's death may indicate that there was a more finished text, perhaps a chronicle which was complete until almost the time of his death.

Without the positive proof of an extant manuscript, however, it is impossible to know to what extent Castel fulfilled his duties as *chroniqueur*. On the basis of the closing dates for the text in the Vatican manuscript, he did not even approach the beginning of the reign of Louis XI (it closes in 1445, but this may have simply been the fault of the intermediate source). Because of the mutilation of the Sainte-Geneviève manuscripts no information can be gained from that source.

Some clues as to the final state of Castel's work may be gained through an attempt to date the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève. The Vatican text in the account which speaks of the birth of the dauphin Louis indicates that it was written after he was king. Although MS 1994 does not contain this reference to Louis as King, it is noted

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³⁴ *Ibid.*, 302-303 and n. 50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 291, n. 17.

in the margin. This would indicate that the collection after having been copied was being amended and corrected in preparation for the composition of a finished work. Since the manuscripts do not seem to be Castel's autograph we cannot of course be sure that it was he who ordered that the collection be made. The watermark as noted before does reveal that the copy was made about 1470: this may indicate that state of Castel's work at that time; or, on the other hand, simply be a later copy of his collection of notes.

The list of contents of the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève given earlier reveals that very little material for the period from 1440 to Louis's accession is included. Thus, we might conclude that for that era Castel was, or hoped to be, dependent upon other sources which he had at hand in addition to perhaps his personal knowledge. Of this we of course have no proof, but there are precedents in the form of the Religieux and, to some extent, Jean Chartier who both drew upon their own knowledge when the same age.

In addition to the sources listed in the contents of the manuscripts there are numerous glosses from other sources. M. Bossuat notes that in addition to glosses from anonymous accounts there are glosses from Martin de Troppau, Vincent de Beauvais, la Legende Dorée, Richard de Poitiers, Isadore de Seville, and (although not specifically named) Geoffrey of Monmouth.³⁶

For the more contemporary era we find rather definite proof that Castel had access to the material contained at Saint-Denis. For the reign of Charles VI the compiler seems to have been dependent on the

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³⁶ *Ibid.*, 302.

work of the Religieux and to an even greater extent on Jean Juvenal des Ursins³⁷ for the period to 1418. It is true that Jean Juvenal's chronicle was for the most part an abridgement and translation of the Religieux's, but it must be noted that the compiler has included elements which were peculiar to each. The *Chronicle* of the Religieux would have been included in the sources held at Saint-Denis, and a part of Juvenal's translation would have been available from the recension being prepared for the first printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*. After 1418 the compiler again found at least some of his sources in the new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*: Chartier's chronicle³⁸ and the *Chronicle* of the héraut Berry.³⁹ To this he added some information from the *Chronique* of Monstrelet or from a source common to both.⁴⁰

To these sources he also added Breton material. Some concordance has been found between this work and that done by Pierre le Baud, but it is not absolute: Castel has included some material ignored by le Baud..

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37 From the work of Jean Juvenal the compiler derived information concerning a journey that Charles VI made to Mont-Saint-Michel in 1393: a comet in 1399, an eclipse of the sun in 1406, and the siege of Dreux in 1412. Although other information may have been derived from the work of Jean Juvenal, those mentioned above are the most outstanding and could have been derived from possibly no other source.

38 We cannot exactly ascertain what entries are derived from Chartier's chronicle: information contained in the account which can also be found in that of Chartier is also traceable to the *Chronicle* of the héraut Berry. No unusual information can be traced to the chronicle of Chartier; the use of other works from Saint-Denis indicates that Chartier may have been consulted.

39 Many entries in the *Chronique du Bec* could have been derived from the chronicle of the héraut Berry. Several can be found only in the work of the héraut Berry, such as the capture of Verteuil in 1443.

40 *Ibid.*, 537 and the parallels noted in the text published by Bossuat.

It should be noted that le Baud's lifespan and the extent of his work exceeded those of Castel. These two factors in addition to differences in their material would indicate that they worked from similar sources.

Other information pertaining to the West of France may have been derived from the *Chronique d'Arthur de Richemont* by Guillaume Gruel, for there are common elements between the two and a sympathy for Richemont displayed by Castel.⁴¹ The *Chroniques* of Perceval de Cagny (which glorify de Cagny's master, the Duke of Alençon), or at least a source common to them, furnished further information.⁴² As noted before, the monastery of Saint-Maur with dependencies in the west would have placed a variety of information at Castel's disposal. This fact serves to defeat the argument of those such as Mlle Droz who felt that the work of the Vatican (and by implication that of Saint-Geneviève) was falsely attributed to the Parisian Castel who could have had little interest in or access to such regional information.⁴³

Thus Castel derived his information from a variety of sources. This derivation means nothing of course if we reject the probability that the three related texts were evidence of some of Castel's work. And if we take the line that there is no extant work directly attributable to Castel, then we cannot assume that he ever undertook the work required by his title.

It is true that the evidence is tenuous: we have only the title

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁴² *Ibid.*, de Cagny's work also gives one of the best accounts of Jeanne d'Arc.

⁴³ Droz, *loc. cit.*, 99.

given in the Vatican manuscript — '*Croniques abrégées, par Castel croniqueur de France composées*'. But it does seem possible that he did set down some of his notes in a chronicle form, adding the sources indicated above which were not included in the notes of the manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève. The additions were ones which would have been readily accessible through the information provided by the sources of Saint-Denis, which we know were at his disposal.

What was the scope of Castel's chronicle? The extent of the Vatican manuscript gives us no clues: it ends very abruptly in 1445 giving us some grounds for suspecting that the last folios were removed at some time. The manuscripts of Sainte-Geneviève give us no clues: the notes include some information to 1458, but as indicated before the later period could have been completed from other sources without the need for notes. Only the *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel* includes even a part of the reign of Louis XI — up to 1468. From 1448 onwards the entries are (as M. Luce notes) in a different style;⁴⁴ they are more developed and seem as though they have been written by an eyewitness or one who is familiar with the events that took place. It is possible that this section may have been based upon Castel's work, but one must note that the interest in regional affairs is more predominant than before. That part of the work itself gives us no evidence that it might have been the product of Castel, but it is of course possible that either his notes or an abridged chronicle provided the basic information to which other aspects were added. As in the earlier section, for which there are no related texts, the content is not

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⁴⁴ *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel*, I, xix.

solely regional; but there is more emphasis on it, such as the giving of more attention to the regional aspects of the War of the Public Weal. It is therefore possible that a no longer extant manuscript of Castel's work in some form did include at least part of the reign of Louis XI.

There is of course no proof of this. It is true that Castel was occupied with monastic duties during the time that he was *chroniqueur*, but twelve years elapsed between the time of his appointment and his election as abbot of Saint-Maur. Thus he would have had time to do more than compile simple notes for a projected chronicle; he would have had enough time to complete some sort of an account including the reign of Louis XI. In fact he describes his occupation to de Gaucourt as writing and reading.

Another point may be noted in conclusion: Louis XI was willing to grant Jeanne Coton her son's back wages and makes reference to '... les bons et agréables services à nous faiz par ledit croniqueur en son vivant....'⁴⁵ One suspects that Louis would not have been willing to do this had Castel not fulfilled his obligations. A universal chronicle ending in 1440, 1445, or 1458 — or notes for it — would scarcely have received approbation from Louis who undoubtedly saw the functions of the office as those pertaining to propaganda. That there was a work to be completed would explain the appointment of Castel's successor Mathieu Levrien in 1482. The date of the appointment would surely indicate that Castel's work was more or less up to date at his death and that there was little urgency for the work to be continued

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⁴⁵ Quicherat, *loc. cit.*, 464.

immediately. Indeed an appointment immediately after Castel's death and with it a return to Saint-Denis (which had always given satisfaction) would have indicated that Louis was dissatisfied with Castel's work. In any event the position was not filled until 1482 and the nature of Castel's work remains for the most part unknown until the discovery of more of his chronicle.

CHAPTER VIII

DANICOT AND LEVRIEN

As has already been noted, Jean Castel's successor, Mathieu Levrien, was not appointed until 1482. Before discussing Levrien's role in the tradition of French historiography, it is necessary to assess a further complication that arose during the reign of Louis XI: the appointment of Guillaume Danicot as his historiographer. The discovery of this appointment was made through research in the Vatican Archives by M. Lesellier, and announced in 1926.¹ From this it would seem that Louis was supplied with a triumvirate that would produce accounts favourable to the monarchy — Castel, Danicot, and Levrien. But, with the exception of Castel's work discussed above we have no extant examples of historical writing from any of them.

The position that was held by Danicot of course raises the questions of what the functions of the historiographer were, what they meant to Louis XI and why Danicot was chosen to perform them. An analysis of Danicot's life helps to answer these questions.

Born about 1415, a native of Savoy, or perhaps Burgundy, he first became a member of the community of Saint-Michel de la Chiusa. While there he was made *chambrier* of the abbey and a short time later was

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¹ J. Lesellier, 'Un historiographe de Louis XI demeuré inconnu: Guillaume Danicot', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, xliii (1926), 1-42. Most of the biographical details of Danicot are taken from this study, items of special interest will be cited.

sent to study law at the University of Turin. Before completing his doctorate, he left the University to take part in the Council of Basel. Danicot did nevertheless attain the degree that he had forsaken: through the introduction of his abbot and his presence at the court of the anti-pope, he was granted one of the many honorary doctorates distributed by Felix V. At about the same time he was made *trésorier* of his abbey and granted an income from two of its priories. His fortunes did not fall with those of the anti-pope: the grants made to Danicot were among those that were confirmed after Felix's abdication.

Although Danicot returned to La Chiusa at this time, he soon left for an affiliated house in the Dauphiné. This was the first of many moves that he was to make from one monastery to another during the course of his life. The motives for these almost constant dislocations seem to be several: an ambition for advancement, a strong desire to improve his monetary fortunes, and — as M. Lesellier would have us believe²— the need to travel in search of material after his appointment as historiographer. The first two of the above seem to be valid, but as it will be shown below, the third is in doubt.

The desire for revenue and advancement are well illustrated by the transfer to the Dauphiné: there was much to be gained from allying oneself with the fortunes of the future king of France. The opportunity for doing this was probably well arranged for it is believed that, at the time of the marriage of Charlotte of Savoy — the grand-daughter of Felix V — some arrangements had been made concerning Danicot's service to the court.

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² *Ibid.*, 23-24.

The only indication of the services that Danicot may have performed is found in a manuscript which is headed

Cy dedans sont contenus les statutz et ordonnances
generales faictes par monsieur le gouverneur du Daulphiné,
lieutenant de monseigneur le daulphin de Viennois, trans-
latées de latin en roman par frère Guillaume Danicot,
docteur en décret, par le commandement de noble et puis-
sant homme Reymond Aynard, seigneur de Monteynard,
lieutenant de monseigneur le gouverneur du Daulphiné.³

The work can be dated between mid-1455, when Aynard was given the position, and the beginning of 1456 — when Danicot left the Dauphiné. It must be noted that this must have surely been only one part of his work during this period, for a short time later he was named a member of the Grand Conseil of the province: this must have been done in recognition of greater service than that represented by the manuscript.

It is obvious that Danicot was seeking and gaining the favour of Louis: in 1458 Louis named him a counsellor of the Parlement of Grenoble in recognition of the loyalty that Danicot had shown during the Dauphin's struggle with his father. The light in which Louis viewed our subject is even clearer when it is realized that Danicot did not accompany the Dauphin to Burgundy, but instead sought refuge at Cluny. It is true that the title of counsellor was an honorary one, but in spite of this it was a sign of favour.

Although Louis purged many of his father's officials after he ascended the throne, Jean Chartier retained his position as *chroniqueur*. After Chartier's death, however, it was not Danicot, but Jean Castel who was appointed *chroniqueur*. The established literary tradition of

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³ *Ibid.*, 6-7. This manuscript is in the collection of the Bibliothèque de Grenoble. MS 1437, ff 52.

the Castel family may have determined Louis's decision. There is no indication that Danicot had hoped for the position of *chroniqueur*, but it is obvious that he was preparing himself for other things.

In April 1462 Danicot resigned the priory which he held in the Dauphiné in return for a pension and moved to the monastery of Saint-Julien de Tours. It would seem that this was a move calculated to bring him once more into the favour of Louis, for Saint-Julien was situated near the royal residences. Danicot's diligence was rewarded: between 1462 and 1466 he was named counsellor and then historiographer of Louis XI. But even these offices were not enough to make Danicot content to remain at Saint-Julien, for by 1466 he had moved to le Mans.

The move to le Mans was, so he believed, a further step in his career. In the entourage of Louis XI Danicot had met — or possibly renewed his acquaintance with — Guillaume de Malestroit, one of the king's counsellors and the titular bishop of Thessalonika. It was Malestroit, abbot-elect of le Mans, who established a 'chair' for Danicot there — in spite of the fact that Danicot did not possess the qualifications to teach. Although the position might have been to his taste, Danicot did not fare well. At le Mans he encountered the enmity of the monks who sought to have an abbot of their own choice recognized in opposition to Malestroit. It was Danicot who suffered at their hands. The monks had discovered that he had inserted his honorary doctorate in bulls issued by Pius II granting the pensions that he enjoyed. With the knowledge that the title had been granted by an anti-pope, the monks of le Mans demanded that the bulls be annulled and the pensions revoked. His financial position threatened,

Danicot was forced to confess to Paul II that his title was an invalid one and beg forgiveness. Fortune was on his side and the pensions were confirmed — much to the chagrin of the monks.

It was obvious that Danicot could not remain at le Mans. Thus, within that same year, 1466, Danicot accepted a place in the second abbey under Malestroit's control: Saint-Sever. Again Danicot suffered the brunt of the hostility of the monks. In his efforts to protect Malestroit's interests — including the extraction of as much revenue as possible — he was too zealous. Because of the thoroughness with which he carried out this task, the pope was forced to take action. But the papal measures were not stringent enough to pacify the monks, and Danicot felt that he must again seek another place.

The transfer to the priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs which he obtained in 1469 was granted at the request of Charles, the eldest son of Yolanda of Savoy and the nephew of Louis XI. There can be no doubt, however, that Danicot was the source of the request: it is true that Charles, prince of Piedmont, was living in France and might have known of the plight of Louis's historiographer, but it must also be remembered that he was only thirteen years of age at the time. Danicot's hand can surely be seen in the way that his titles were so exactly phrased as '... consiliarius et historiographus Serenissimi domini Ludovici francorum regis'⁴ and in the reason given for his desire for the transfer, the desire for an atmosphere of peace which was necessary to fulfill his obligations as historiographer. It would seem from his previous undertakings that his ambitions for self-

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⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

advancement, and not those of fulfilling his obligations to the king, had been foremost. On the basis of Danicot's extant work we are unable to ascertain whether or not he fulfilled his duties as historiographer. But, we do know that he found the peace that he desired at Saint-Martin-des-Champs and was able to communicate with the small group of humanists at Paris who were preparing for the establishment of the first printing press at the Sorbonne.

Despite the advantages of Saint-Martin-des Champs, in 1471 Danicot returned to Saint-Julien de Tours where he had been six years before. As one might expect, the return was not permanent. Being at Saint-Julien gave him easy access to the king and with it the possibility of pursuing his next ambition: receiving an appointment in Rome. We must assume that he instigated a request made by the king, abbot and monks on 24 May 1472 that a pension from Saint-Julien be given to Danicot for life. On the same day Louis XI requested an appointment in Rome for his historiographer noting his qualifications: '... preclaras virtutes et magnam litterarum periciam et precipue quia gesta regnum francorum concernentia scribit'⁵ Louis specifically requested that Sixtus IV appoint him a penitentiary at St. Peter's. Louis knew that this post would be in his interests as well as Danicot's: he realized that it was necessary to have as many agents as possible in Rome. Thus, Louis envisaged that his historiographer should also carry out political duties for him. Danicot was granted a supernumerary appointment with the promise that he should fill the first of the two posts reserved for the French that fell vacant; but he never received the position: we find another becoming penitentiary when the first vacancy

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⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

occurred in November 1473. It is, of course, possible that Danicot was passed over when the appointment was made, but surely for one so vocal and ambitious some evidence of complaint would remain for us. Instead it is more likely that Danicot died in France between late 1472 and November 1473 when the vacancy was filled. Thus, Danicot's final ambition was not realized.

The fact that Danicot's role in the régime of Louis XI did not come to light until 1926 seems strange, but it is true that the evidence presented by M. Lesellier was derived from the Vatican Archives, which remained closed for many centuries. Danicot was, however, a respected man during his time and thus one would expect some indications of his existence and work in other sources. Only two pieces of his work remain extant (both translations); but as we know this does not necessarily indicate the extent of his work. Yet, if he had been well-known to his contemporaries, then surely they would have mentioned him in some way. It would seem that he was indeed well-known to some; but of those who held him in regard we know only of the few who in some way represented his interests with the papacy. Charlotte of Savoy and Yolanda of Savoy obviously held him in esteem when describing him in a letter to the pope as '... vir magne litterature'⁶ It is true that in the case of Charles of Piedmont the words were probably dictated by Danicot, but this would hardly seem to be the case with Louis XI. It is true that Louis was praising his historiographer so that he might have yet more ears in Rome,⁷ but by the side of this it

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⁶ *Ibid.*, 36. In this letter Danicot is also called '... Consiliarii et Istorioграфи Illustrissimi principis domini Ludovici, francorum regis illustris' *Ibid.*

⁷ *Supra*, p. 175.

must be remembered that Louis had appointed Danicot as historiographer and had also given him other recognition.

The questions of course arise, what did Danicot do to merit the description 'vir magne litterature' and what were his duties as historiographer? Louis XI attributes a *gesta regnum francorum* to Danicot, but the search for such a work has been unsuccessful. Only two examples of his work are extant. The first is the translation of statutes and ordinances, noted above, which was done before his appointment of historiographer. The second work, done after Danicot became historiographer, is titled 'La translacion de latin en françois de la legende Mons^r saint Julien, chevalier et martir, le quel garde de trahison ses serviteurs et de toute desloyaulté'.⁸ According to the dedication found at the end of the text, the translation was presented to Charlotte of Savoy; and it can be identified with one of the books listed in the inventory of her library. M. Samaran, who has studied the work, has noted that it is probably a translation of a *Liber de vita sancti Juliani* listed in the catalogue of the library of Saint-Julien de Tours.⁹ During his sojourn at that monastery Danicot would have had access to that work.

In the dedication to Charlotte of Savoy, Danicot identifies himself as

... son tres humble orateur Guillaume Danicot, moyne du monastere de Saint Julien de Tours, docteur en decretz, indigne conseiller et ystorien du roy nostre sire¹⁰

.....

⁸ Charles Samaran, 'Un ouvrage de Guillaume Danicot historiographe de Louis XI', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, xlv (1928), 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

Later in the same passage, he further defines his position noting

... le roy nostre sire et monseigneur le conte du Maine, son lieutenant et oncle, m'ont commis de leur grace en l'office d'istorien pour cuellir et chercher les ystoires et legendes touchant les faiz de ce royaume et icelles mectre par livres especiaulx, en laquelle chose j'ay autrefois labouré et laboureray a ma vie au plaisir de Dieu notre createur.¹¹

References to the comte du Maine, Charles of Piedmont, Gaston du Lyon (as *sénéchal* of Saintonge), the completion of the expedition against the Catalonians in 1463, etc. enable M. Samaran to date the work about 1465.¹² Thus this work would have been undertaken very shortly after Danicot was appointed historiographer.

These are the only works of Danicot which are extant. Neither of them fit the description of the *gesta regnum francorum* that Louis XI credits to Danicot. We cannot ascertain if the *gesta* was actually written when Louis mentioned it: he may have done this to enhance Danicot's chances of obtaining a position in Rome; or he may have simply believed that such a work was being undertaken by his historiographer.

At the same time that Danicot held the title of historiographer, Jean Castel also held an official position — that of *chroniqueur*.

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¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹² In addition to the Comte du Maine (1404-1472), Danicot also mentioned Charles of Piedmont (1456-1471). But these are not the only references given: it is indicated that Charlotte of Savoy was Louis's wife and queen; the expedition to Catalonia which was completed in 1463 is described as finished a short time before; and Gaston du Lyon is called by the title which he held until 1468, *sénéchal* de Saintonge. But other references bring us still closer to the date: Danicot calls himself a monk of Saint-Julien de Tours, where he was from about 1462 to 1466; he also identifies himself as *docteur en décret*, but he gave up the title in 1466; and he notes unrest throughout the kingdom and the efforts to put it down — the Guerre du Bien Public was over. *Ibid.*, 15-18.

Because of the lack of extant material it is difficult to ascertain what the exact differences between the two titles were. Although the two positions were interchangeable in the case of Jean Chartier,¹³ it would seem that they became separate with the appointments of Castel and Danicot: Castel is always referred to as *chroniqueur* and Danicot as *historiographe*. One must agree with M. Lesellier that this implies a division of labour between the two men. This is confirmed by the royal accounts that reveal that Castel received a fixed payment, but Danicot did not. The accounts also indicate that Castel's was the well-established position of *chroniqueur* held before him by Jean Chartier; and that Danicot's position was a personal one. Up to this point one can agree with M. Lesellier's conclusions.

M. Lesellier, however, goes on to define the duties of the *chroniqueur* and *historiographe* in an attempt to determine the division of labour between the two positions. Jean Castel, he says

A l'instar de ses prédécesseurs, ... rédigea, selon l'ordre des temps, le récit des faits du règne en cours, ce qui ne l'empêcha point de compiler des sources narratives antérieures, comme le prouvent ses *Chroniques abrégées*. Le fragment qu'on en conserve trahit une méthode qui répond à la définition usuelle du chroniqueur.¹⁴

On the other hand, he feels that Danicot's position as historiographer demanded that he write '... une histoire embrassant toutes les périodes de la monarchie'.¹⁵ As proof of this Lesellier asserts that Gaguin with his plan of a vast history of the French was seeking the vacant position of historiographer in his letters appealing for the support

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¹³ The *Essai* uses the title *chronographus*; the *French Chronicle* employs the title *chroniqueur*; while the *Latin Chronicle* calls Chartier *historiographus*. *Supra*, Ch.VI.

¹⁴ Lesellier, *loc. cit.*, 27-28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

of the Chancellor, Pierre d'Oriole. M. Lesellier's evidence for this is very weak. As noted above, Danicot's death can be placed between late 1472 and November 1473. The letter in question is simply dated 4 November, the year, so he says, was either 1472 or 1473: thus he believes that it was written shortly after Danicot's death.¹⁶ The dating of the letter is still in question, but as will be noted below, the position that Gaguin sought was Castel's and not Danicot's.

Without the evidence of an extant general history of the monarchy by Danicot, or even some indication of its existence save the vague statement of Louis XI, it is not possible to conclude that such a work was required of the historiographer. In view of what is known about the position of *chroniqueur*, M. Lesellier's division of labour does not seem likely. On the contrary the composition of a chronicle of the whole of the monarchy seems to have been the duty of those who held the position of *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*, the position from which the *chroniqueur du royaume* emerged. It is true that Chartier merely completed the chronicle begun by the Religieux, but it should also be noted that Castel's notes indicate that he composed or intended to compose a history of the monarchy; not a specific history of Louis XI. Castel's predecessors in the position of *chroniqueur* also wrote accounts of the reigning king or his predecessor, but such works were very likely intended to be the tailpiece of the chronicles of the monarchy that they had composed and had to bring up to date. When during the course of the Hundred Years War the *chroniqueur's* duty was to support the cause of the king by placing the French monarchy in the

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¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29, n. 2. Lesellier also notes that a second request was made for the position. *Ibid.*, 29, n. 1.

most favourable light possible, a chronicle underlining the glories of the monarchy as well as the reigning monarch continued to be essential.

M. Lesellier has asserted that Danicot's constant movement was due to the necessity of gathering material from far-flung places.¹⁷ As was demonstrated above, Danicot's motives were the personal ones of advancement and new sources of revenue. M. Samaran in fact doubts that Danicot would have had access to sufficient material in the moves that he made.¹⁸ One is forced also to question whether he would have had the time both to collect material and write such a work while spending so much of his time searching for remunerative appointments. One also notes the vague terms in which he describes his duties in the dedication of the translation of the life of Saint Julien.¹⁹

It is true that the extant translations by Danicot cannot be equated with the *gesta regnum francorum* credited to him by Louis XI, but is it possible that Louis was indicating that Danicot was preparing, or had prepared, a new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*? Perhaps Danicot was responsible for all or part of the recension that was printed at Paris in 1476 — three or four years after his death. There is another possible meaning for Louis's words: if it was the duty of the *chroniqueur* to prepare a chronicle of the monarchy which was, as Castel's, in Latin, then it is quite possible that either a translation or a vernacular version of the current *chroniqueur*'s (or his predecessor's) would be entrusted to

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¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

¹⁸ Samaran, *loc. cit.*, 19.

¹⁹ *Supra*, p.179.

another person. The connection of the *chroniqueur* with a Latin chronicle indicates that Gaguin hoped to be appointed to that position and not to the one held by Danicot. Although there is no evidence, it is possible that Danicot's position as historiographer demanded occasional vernacular translations and the preparation of propagandistic material for which he was paid on a *pro rata* basis.

Without further evidence, it is impossible to determine exactly the duties of the historiographer during Danicot's tenure. Later French kings employed several historiographers. Louis XI perhaps foreshadowed this by appointing two men whose duties were similar, but whose titles were distinctly different.

It would seem that the services of neither Castel nor Danicot were particularly missed: although within a space of three or four years Louis lost both his *chroniqueur* and *historiographe*, even after Castel's death in 1476 he made no move to appoint a successor to one post or another until 1482. As noted above, Robert Gaguin, whose work did much to maintain interest in the *Grandes Chroniques*, sought the position of *chroniqueur*. Gaguin's request, however, was not the only one: in a letter of 22 June 1482 the abbot of Saint-Denis, Jean de Bihères-Lagraulas, expressed his views to Chancellor d'Oriole:

Monseigneur, je me recommande à vostre bonne grace. Le roy a escript à Saint-Denis que on luy envoiast toutes les croniques depuis le temps mons^r saint Denis.

Monseigneur, vous savez que, apres le trespas de l'abbé de Saint-Mor [Jean Castel], à ma requeste vous feistes mettre toutes les croniques qu'il avoit en ung coffre au tresor de Saint-Denis, dont vous avez l'ugne des clefz. Si vous plaise l'envoier et aussy tenir la main que le roy ordonne ung croniqueur de l'eglise, et en ce faisant, Monseigneur, l'eglise vous en sera tenue et nous obligerez à prier Dieu

pour vous. Vous envoieerez la clef par celuy que
le roy ordonnera²⁰

In this way the abbot indicated that he wished the position of *chroniqueur* to be returned to its traditional home — Saint-Denis.

It seems strange that Louis should have waited so long before naming Castel's successor. As previously pointed out, it is possible that he did not miss the services that they performed, after their deaths. It is true that he was immersed in other affairs of the realm, but it is also possible that he was not aware of what Castel (and Danicot) had accomplished and therefore felt no threat from the works of their contemporaries, Basin and Commynes. SIC

For a reason known only to Louis (perhaps a desire to have his reign commemorated in a favourable manner or on the reminder of the abbot) he chose a *chroniqueur* in 1482, one year before his death. Evidence of the appointment and its recipient are found in the royal accounts for 1482-1483: ' ... Frere Mathieu Le Brun, chroniqueur de S^t Denis, IIII^CXXX II'.²¹ This is the first time that Le Brun, or Levrien as M. Samaran chooses to call him,²² appears as *chroniqueur*; it is also the last time. Nowhere else is the title of *chroniqueur* connected with his name.

The little that we know of Levrien indicates that he had a varied

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20 Charles Samaran, 'Mathieu Levrien chroniqueur de Saint-Denis a la fin du règne de Louis XI', *BEC*, xcix (1938), 127-28. Biographical details have been taken from this study; items of special interest will be cited.

21 *Ibid.*, 125.

22 Miscopying as well as misreading has led to variations of the surname. Documents of Saint-Denis render the name Levrien. *Ibid.*, 126.

career. The first indication of his existence is in the royal accounts for 1482-1483. No secular record mentions him until 1488 when his name appears with two others who received their bachelor degrees in law under the *décanat* of Robert Gaguin.²³ Two years later, in April 1490, Levrien received his *licence*.

Within the abbey, Levrien did hold the position of *trésorier* according to documents which note him in that capacity in 1487, 1489 and 1492. During the absence of the abbot, Jean de Bilhères-Lagraulas, in Rome from 1492 until his death in 1499, Levrien served as one of the two governors of the abbey. Later he became the abbot of Forest-Montiers and remained there until his death. Only once is he mentioned as *chroniqueur*: only the record of the one year's payment which he received in 1482-1483 notes the official position that he held. Thus, it seems that he held that office only during those years. This is confirmed by the entry of his death in the *nécrologe* of Saint-Denis: 'Eodem anno [1522], die decima nona junii, frater Matheus Levrien [obdormivit in Christo]'.²⁴ Furthermore, later lists of the dignitaries of Saint-Denis (for example, one collected in the eighteenth century) give him no credit for being *chroniqueur*, but they do identify him as *trésorier* of Saint-Denis and abbot of Forest-Montiers.²⁵ Thus

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 23 'Eodem die, fuerunt admissi, premissis examine, ad gradum baccalariatus frater Johannes de Faudoas, prior de Argentolio, frater Matheus Le Wuen [this is undoubtedly a misreading of Le Wrien], thesaurarius Sancti Dyonsii in Francia, et Guillelmus Bouguyer, magister in artibus, Parisiensis diocesis.' *Ibid.*, 128. Faudoas was the nephew of the abbot of Saint-Denis and Bouguyer had been sent on embassies to Rome. *Ibid.*

24 Charles Samaran, 'Études sandionysiennes', *BEC*, civ (1943), 68.

25 Samaran, 'Mathieu Levrien ...', 130. A history of the abbey of Forest-Montiers contains the following lines: 'Il y a encore plusieurs abbez reguliers dont les noms sont couchez dans le mortuologe, mais sans datte, scavoir, Mathieu Levrien, le 13 calendes de juillet.' *Ibid.*, 129.

it must be realized that his earlier office was forgotten with the passing years.

No evidence of Levrien's work as *chroniqueur* has been discovered, if it indeed existed. It must be remembered that Levrien was appointed by Louis XI a year before his death and only during that year is Levrien mentioned in the royal accounts as *chroniqueur*. We must therefore assume that his tenure was brief. It is possible that this can be explained by the accession of Charles VIII. Having received the confidence of Louis XI in the form of an appointment, Levrien probably fell out of favour when Louis died. The curtailment of his duties after such a short period of service (if the evidence presented by the records is taken) eliminates the possibility that Levrien was able to complete or even make much of his duties as *chroniqueur*. Judging from extant material, Louis XI was extremely unfortunate in his choice of *chroniqueurs* and *historiographe*.

The appointment of Levrien had brought back to Saint-Denis the honour of having the *chroniqueur* chosen from among her monks. With the exception of Jean Castel, the tradition of quasi-official and then official historiography had been performed by the monks of Saint-Denis since the time of Suger; and she considered it her duty to perform this service: the appeal by the abbot, Jean de Bilhères-Lagraulas, bears witness to this fact. When the successors of Levrien were drawn from other sources, it was the final blow to the prestige of Saint-Denis in the field of historiography: the title had at times remained vacant before this, but when filled the choice was --- with the exception of Castel --- made from among the monks of Saint-Denis no matter what their qualifications; now only occasionally would one of its

number be appointed to the position.

A new attitude toward the writing of history began to emerge just as the attitudes of the men who wrote it also changed. This change of attitude was the result of a new discipline, Humanism, which had its origins in Italy and was now taking a firm hold over the Alps.

CHAPTER IX

ROBERT GAGUIN

From the death of Jean Castel in 1476 until the appointment of Mathieu Levrien in 1482, the office of *chroniqueur du royaume* remained vacant. Louis XI showed no inclination to bestow the title on anyone, but of course there was no want of interest among those who felt that they were eligible to receive it.

Within nine months of Castel's death there was a willing applicant — or, rather, supplicant — for the position: Robert Gaguin. Gaguin had been elected the head of his order — the Order of the Trinity for the Redemption of Captives, or the Mathurins — in May 1473 and the *ministre commendataire* of the Church of St. Mathurin at Paris in February 1474. In a letter of November 1476 Gaguin appealed to the Chancellor, Pierre d'Oriole, that a chronicler should be named who would undertake the composition of a history of France from its origins to his own time: someone who would undertake the duties that we assume were assigned to the *chroniqueur*. In the spirit of the coming renaissance (which will be discussed below) and possibly in relation to the duties of *chroniqueur*, he felt that the work should be written in Latin rather than in French. He wanted a universal chronicle to underline the glories of France.¹ It is true that the

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¹ Louis Thuasne, *Roberti Gaguini Epistole et Orationes*, Tome I (Paris: 1903), 38. Biographical details of Gaguin have been gleaned primarily from this work, pp. 4-168; therefore references will only be given for points of special interest.

concept of a Latin work was an old one, but it should be remembered that it had been forsaken by Chartier in favour of a French work and possibly by Castel. French chronicles were then the best means of communication for both education and edification; but Gaguin had already come into contact with Humanistic ideas and had attempted to adopt them as a panacea for scholarship. In spite of his aspirations, no appointment to the position of *chroniqueur* was made at that time.

Who was the man to put forward such a request? Robert Gaguin was born in 1433 at Calonne in Artois. The death of his father, while Robert was still young, left his mother in difficult circumstances. Because of this he was sent to the monastery of Préavin where the Order of the Trinity gave poor children a basic education. Lacking the financial resources to attend the University of Paris, he became a novice of the order. But later, with the aid of the Duchess of Burgundy, Gaguin was able to attend the University. Upon his arrival in Paris, in September 1457, he took up residence in the house of the Trinitarians. Three years later he was ordained a priest.

At the University, Gaguin undertook courses in the Faculties of Theology and the Arts. At this time his interest in Latin literature developed. At first this study was hampered by the lack of competent masters to direct his reading and by the difficulty of procuring the necessary manuscripts; but it was helped by the presence of the Italian humanist Gregorio da Citta di Castello who in January 1458 was given the chair of Greek and also undertook the teaching of Latin authors. Although Gregorio remained in France only until September 1459, Gaguin made rapid progress under his tutelage. He also began a study of Greek, but progressed little farther than the alphabet and

rudimentary grammar.²

Gregorio was one of the two masters to whom Gaguin gives credit for guiding him in the beginning of his study of literature. The other was Guillaume Fichet, who came to Paris in late 1459. Fichet, who was the same age as Gaguin, established Italian Humanism at the University of Paris. It was he who commented on classical authors to students, such as Gaguin, while pursuing his doctoral studies; it was he who established the first printing press at Paris; and a group of early Parisian Humanists, the Ficians, were named after him. The mutual respect of Gaguin and Fichet lasted; and after Fichet's departure from France in 1472, Gaguin took over the leadership of the Humanist circle at Paris.

While continuing his studies, Gaguin also seemed to be constantly travelling: in carrying out the affairs of his Order he journeyed to Italy, Germany, Southern France, and Spain (where he carried out the original aims of the Order by ransoming twenty-two Christian captives at Granada). He also travelled to other areas on personal matters. He found time to write poetry and to copy the works of classical authors such as Vergil, Suetonius, and Cicero. Due to his ability in carrying out duties for his Order, he quickly rose in its ranks. Although he served as the minister of various houses, he resided in Paris in order to continue his studies. In 1472, at the death of the minister of the Order, Gaguin was named interim minister of the Order; and in May 1473 he was elected to the same position.

Gaguin was ambitious. He had risen to the highest position in the

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² *Ibid.*, 12.

Order of the Trinity; he had been in close contact with the press at the Sorbonne which published several of his couplets in its third book;³ he had become a member of the Humanist circle at Paris; and he had undertaken literary composition such as the verses written in 1470 praising Louis XI for his concern for the interests of France. These verses were undoubtedly written with an eye to the future, in hopes of securing the good opinion of the King. At Castel's death Gaguin put forth his own ideas on the position to Pierre d'Oriole as noted above.

As we know, Gaguin's petition was unanswered. The reasons for this may lie in the quarrel between the nominalists and the realists. Although M. Renaudet claims that this quarrel held very little interest for Gaguin,⁴ there can be no doubt that, through his friendship with Fichet, a leading exponent of nominalism, and his connection with the Ficicans after 1472, Gaguin would have been seen as a sympathiser of the nominalists. This of course would have meant nothing had Louis XI not condemned nominalism at the Sorbonne in an edict of March 1474 (n.s.), stating that realism was the more useful. As a

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³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴ Augustin Renaudet, *Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517)*, 2nd edition (Paris: 1953), p. 115. In support of this opinion M. Renaudet cites a letter of February 1474/75 from Gaguin to Fichet.

Quorum celebriores lebrs ferro et clavis tanquam
 compedibus ne intro spectetur, vinctos esse jussit rex
 Lucovicus. Putares misellos codices arrepticia quodam
 frenesi et demonio furore ne visentes impetent esse
 legatos. Sic indomitos leones et beluas vinclis cohibemus
 et carcere. Realibus, id est Scotiis atque Aquinatibus,
 tamen suus est honos et libertas, quamquam obstrepent
 semper inter se et rixentur.

Thuasne, *op. cit.*, I, 249.

result of this, sanctions were imposed against the nominalists and their works confiscated.⁵ The denial of Gaguin's petition may have been the result of this dispute. Perhaps Louis's fear of choosing the wrong man partly explains his failure to appoint a successor to Castel until 1482.

Despite the fact that Louis did not choose Gaguin as *chroniqueur*, he did avail himself of Gaguin's services in other ways. It is possible that Gaguin was charged with carrying out business for the chancellery — finding out whether the Franco-Spanish alliance was weakening in favour of an English one — when he went to Spain in 1468 to transact business on behalf of the Mathurins.⁶ We know that he was sent by Louis XI to Germany on a secret mission to ascertain the attitude of the Electors to the proposed marriage of Mary of Burgundy to Maximilian, the son of the Emperor. Louis of course opposed the marriage of the Burgundian heiress to anyone other than a French prince; and he was therefore displeased when his ambassador failed to sway the Electors from favouring it. Gaguin was thus disgraced for the remainder of Louis's reign.

Yet this did not affect Gaguin's attitude toward the position of *chroniqueur*. In 1479 he approached Ambroise de Cambray, one of the King's favourites, through a letter that extolled Louis's virtues and noted that a history of the monarch should be written. As in the case of his approach to d'Oriole, no appointment was made. Why did Gaguin press for the appointment when he knew that his disgrace would make it

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⁵ Renaudet, *op. cit.*, 92.

⁶ Thuasne, *op. cit.*, 21-22.

impossible? His ambition which had motivated him in his rise through the Order was one factor, of course, but another was his patriotism and admiration for Louis XI in spite of the monarch's attitude toward him. One can, however, place too much emphasis on the fact that, even at the death of Louis XI, he reiterated his praise for the achievements of the king and lamented the loss sustained by France by his death.⁷ This may have been the result of both sincerity and wisdom in light of future possibilities.

As M. Thuasne points out, Gaguin would have been the first to regret his loss of independence had he received the appointment:⁸ for the duties of *chroniqueur* involved propaganda, and Gaguin would have probably rebelled against this in the end.

In spite of this failure to receive the appointment, Gaguin's activity continued on an even broader scale. He continued to pursue literary activities, composing a few verses and copying works for his own use. He also became closely associated with the affairs of the University, representing its interests in disputes that arose from time to time and later being elected as *doyen* of the Faculty of *Décret*. After the death of Louis XI, Gaguin resumed his service to the Crown. Under Charles VIII, he became a member of embassies sent to Rome, England, and Germany. The choice of Gaguin was a recognition of his reputation as an orator and literary figure, but in most cases this counted for very little in the achievements of these embassies which often failed to accomplish their missions. This was also true of the tasks that he undertook on behalf of the University and his Order.

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⁷ *Ibid.*, 54-56.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

Gaguin was distressed by this fact and wrote to the chancellor, Guillaume de Rochefort, deploring the bad luck which seemed to plague his efforts and expressing a waning confidence in the Court. To counteract this, he placed his hopes in the power of the chancellor to influence the recognition of his efforts.⁹ Despite this disenchantment and a desire to restrict his efforts to the affairs of the University and his Order, Gaguin did undertake one more charge on behalf of the Crown — making and signing a treaty with England.

By 1493 his health was failing and thus Gaguin dissociated himself from political and University affairs and turned to literary activity. He was visited, for example, by Erasmus (whose genius he recognized); he was charged with the composition of a history of his Order; and he began to collect materials for a history of France. His enforced leisure, therefore, enabled him to begin work on a history of France such as the one that he had described to d'Oriole.

The first edition of the *Compendium* was published by Pierre Ledru on 30 September 1495. Gaguin was, however, discontented with the printing of this edition which contained a multitude of errors. Thus he corrected and enlarged the work and then entrusted it to the German printer Johann Trechsel of Lyons. This revised edition was published in June 1497. Yet another edition appeared in 1498 from the press of Durand Gerlier at Paris. Although some historians have asserted that the Gerlier printing preceded that of Trechsel, Miss Katherine Davies has proven that the very opposite is true.¹⁰

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⁹ *Ibid.*, 67-69.

¹⁰ Katherine Davies, 'Late XVth century French historiography, as exemplified in the *Compendium* of Robert Gaguin and the *De Rebus Gestis* of Paulus Aemilius', (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh: 1954), 76-98.

In spite of the fact that the Trechsel edition was favoured by Gaguin, it was the Gerlier edition which became the best known and which served as the basis for the fourth edition. That edition, published by Gerlier and Jean Petit on 13 January 1501, was probably the last that Gaguin supervised before his death on 22 May 1501.

This fourth edition, which was re-issued later in the same year with only minor changes, was an altered and enlarged version of the third edition. An extra book had been added to cover the reign of Charles VIII and that of Louis XII to 1500. Among the alterations made was a change in the preface: whereas previous editions contained dedications to Gaguin's childhood friend, Pierre Burry, canon of Amiens, the preface to the fourth edition simply speaks of the previous editions. In it Gaguin recalls that the second edition was criticized on the grounds that the *Compendium's* form was too brief and dry. In addition to this Gaguin tells us that by favouring his countrymen, he was accused of giving unfair treatment to foreigners and enemies of France. Gaguin, of course, denies these charges, but he does not name his critic. The severe treatment which he has given to the Italians, however, may indicate that his critic may have been among them. It has been suggested that the critic to whom Gaguin alludes was Paule Emile, who in being appointed royal historiographer had succeeded where Gaguin had failed. Although it is possible that Gaguin experienced some displeasure when the appointment of Emile was made, it does not necessarily follow that Emile was the critic: the critic may have been a figment of Gaguin's imagination, developed for the purpose of revealing the plan of this new edition of the *Compendium*. The identity of the critic remains an open question, but as M. Thuasne points out, it is

possible that it was Emile. It may have been about this time that Emile was beginning to write a history of the King of France at the command of Louis XII; and that when he learned of the projected fourth edition of Gaguin's work he tried to advance his own cause by criticizing the preceding edition of the *Compendium*.¹¹ If this is true, Gaguin may have mentioned the critic in order to refute the criticism and to justify the format of his new edition. In any event, the fourth edition was well received and, as noted above, it was necessary to reprint it during the same year.

Although the abortive appeal of Gaguin for the position of historiographer is important for our study, the major importance of Gaguin is the *Compendium* itself. It was through the *Compendium* that the *Grandes Chroniques* came to be the basis for so many other works. It is true that the *Compendium* was a Latin work, but its main source was the *Grandes Chroniques*. The first printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques* (published by Pasquier Bonhomme in 1476) seems to have been the edition on which Gaguin put his greatest reliance. There is, however, evidence to show that Gaguin did consult a recension of the *Latin Chronicles of Saint-Denis* which had been made in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century (Bibliothèque Mazarine MSS 553 and 554) and the work of the Religieux and Chartier (B.N. lat. MS 5959).

As Miss Davies points out, Gaguin seems to have made a résumé of the *Grandes Chroniques* and then, especially in the case of the fourth edition of the *Compendium*, amplified his narrative by references to the sources of the *Grandes Chroniques*, to other relevant works, and to personal knowledge.¹² In his search for his materials we may assume

¹¹ Thuasne, *op. cit.*, 153.

¹² Davies, *loc. cit.*, 107-108.

that Gaguin drew on the libraries of the Order of the Mathurins and his friends, as well as the collection that he had personally made. One does question how he managed to gain access to the new recension of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*: it suggests that he may have been able to consult it at Saint-Denis or that several copies, no longer extant, had been made of the work and Gaguin consulted one of these. In his consideration of the sources of the *Grandes Chroniques* Gaguin consulted Aimoin; and, in some cases, he consulted Aimoin's source Gregory of Tours thus enabling him to include information not found in either Aimoin or the *Grandes Chroniques*. In other cases he interpolates information from Paul the Deacon.

Because Gaguin followed the *Grandes Chroniques* in material and form, the nature of the *Compendium's* style changes with it. As it will be noted later, the *Grandes Chroniques* came to depend on a single source rather than on a combination of several when the account of Aimoin came to a close. Thus, like its model, the *Compendium* became less complex. It would seem that at this juncture Gaguin began to draw more heavily on the vernacular account with fewer references to its Latin sources. It is true that he did consult Latin accounts from time to time, but those that he chose to consult were not the most valuable. For example, he consulted the universal chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis for accounts containing information of the reigns of Louis VI and Philip II when more accurate information could have been obtained from the works of others.

Gaguin's practice of heavily depending on the *Grandes Chroniques* led to particularly poor results when the *Compendium* reached the account of the fourteenth century: it was then that the authors of the

Grandes Chroniques (although contemporary with the events they recorded) became propagandists intent on presenting the French kings in the most favourable light. It should be noted that this strong use of the official account was made in the 1495 edition, but the text of the 1497 edition was supplemented by material from the Religieux's *Chronicle of Charles VI* and from Froissart. Although the additions from Froissart give the *Compendium* life, the limitations of Froissart's work and Gaguin's failure to appreciate its better qualities give the work an unevenness when interpolations from Froissart are used. For the reign of Charles VII, Gaguin copied the format of Chartier's account in subject and arrangement; but to this he added information gained from verbal tradition and possibly from the sources that Chartier himself used.

In spite of the fact that he was a contemporary of Louis XI, Gaguin produced no personal account of that king. Instead, he based the account of Louis's reign almost exclusively on the *Chronique scandaleuse*, adding only a few things that were derived from personal experience such as the mention of the embassy to Germany concerning the marriage of Mary of Burgundy. Miss Davies has noted that Gaguin treated the *Chronique* with the reverence due to a part of the *Grandes Chroniques*.¹³ This may, of course, indicate that Louis's own *chroniqueurs*, Jean Castel and Mathieu Levrien, produced no work concerning even the first years of their master's reign; it may on the other hand mean that Castel's (or Levrien's) account, such as it was, was unknown to Gaguin or not available to him even during the time that the *Compendium* was being composed. The use of the *Chronique* instead filled

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¹³ *Ibid.*, 124-25.

this gap. The fact that Gaguin used it rather than compose an account himself, was perhaps done in order to solve the dilemma caused by the difference between his personal attitudes toward Louis, whom he probably disliked as a person, and toward the Crown to which he was loyal.

It was only for the final book, which was added to the 1501 edition and covered the reign of Charles VIII and that of Louis XII to 1500, that Gaguin relied on his personal knowledge, a limited number of documents to which he had access, a few literary sources, and general knowledge. Thus, only this part of the *Compendium* is Gaguin's own work and his alone.

In the dedication of the first edition of the *Compendium* to Pierre Burry, Gaguin stated that he proposed to follow Humanist ideals in his work. This, of course, was the result of his association with the Humanist circle in Paris and his desire to please its members. It can, however, be seen from the above discussion that Gaguin travelled the path of a medieval compiler and chronicler; and, in fact, the *Compendium* when completed fell between the Humanist and medieval ideals. Although Gaguin had intended to carry out internal criticism of his sources, his heavy dependence on the *Grandes Chroniques* with only limited reference to other sources made this difficult: the other sources were too similar to the *Grandes Chroniques* making errors less easy to detect. It was Gaguin's own judgment rather than reference to a better source which resulted in any criticism. His judgment enabled him to question the Trojan origins of the Franks and reject the legends connected with Charlemagne. But it is in the medieval manner that he makes his criticisms: no attempt is made to provide a synthesis; instead, he states the accounts of the origins and the legends and then beside

them gives his own comments. While there are minor criticisms within the text, only on these two occasions is any major topic given such attention. It was not the absurd or the ridiculous which brought him to heel, but simply things which seemed unreasonable. The Humanist view, for example, rejected the supernatural; however, Gaguin's past training did not allow him to forget the importance which it held in the medieval mind. Gaguin's inability to reject the past and to bring criticism to bear on his material led to his failure to question the *Grandes Chroniques* to any extent. This failing makes the *Compendium* an uneven work and results in curious and contradictory situations. For example, the patriotism expressed in the *Compendium* takes on the various shades found within the sources of the *Grandes Chroniques* and even becomes Norman in sentiment while the source of the *Grandes Chroniques* was an account by the Norman historian Guillaume de Jumièges. Within the context of the *Grandes Chroniques* this is not such a great failing, but simply the result of the choice of source; when it is found within the *Compendium* with its Humanist pretensions the weakness is obvious.

Although the size of the *Grandes Chroniques* necessitated drastic abridgement, Gaguin was unable to achieve the balance and proportion that were the Humanist's literary ideals. It is true that the *Grandes Chroniques* lacked balance: for example, it treats the Norman Conquest in a single sentence, and the First Crusade in one paragraph. Gaguin, however, failed to remedy this situation. In fact in the first three editions of the *Compendium*, the Conquest is omitted and the Crusade rates a parenthesis. The 1501 edition contains some improvements in that the Conquest is mentioned in a sentence and a brief account of

the Crusade to the time that its participants reached Syria is given. But this in itself is not enough: in cases such as these Gaguin has failed to carry out his stated aims and retains his medieval outlook.

Although the *Compendium* is not in the form of an annal, the '... events are set down in succession, without transition or pause, and seldom with any indication of their wider causes and results or possible relation with one another'¹⁴ This cannot be blamed solely on the problems involved in coping with a source as large as the *Grandes Chroniques* for the same fault is evident in the last book of the *Compendium*, which was Gaguin's own work. The content of that book in fact suggests that Gaguin had difficulty in handling direct material as well: only half of the account is composed of material of historical importance and the most salient points are dismissed very quickly. In fact it would seem that Gaguin had more success in handling material from other sources than in making use of material about which he had personal knowledge. Gaguin was more successful as a compiler than as an author.

Thus Gaguin, while affecting a Humanist style, was still prisoner of an old-fashioned outlook which he wished to forsake. This did affect Gaguin's influence on those around him. His reputation and the quasi-Humanist qualities of his work enabled the *Compendium* to be well received: it appealed to the Humanists who viewed it as an attempt to emulate their ideals and it appealed to others who found that it was not too far from the accepted tradition of composition. But, because of the compromise, the *Compendium* declined in popularity among Humanists in the course of the sixteenth century. Erasmus, who had praised

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¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 338.

its qualities in a letter that had been printed in the first edition, lost interest in the work as he came to realize what the true spirit of Italian Humanism involved. It is true that Gaguin was not the only author to suffer from the changes in taste: others such as Flavio Biondo and Polydore Vergil were also victims of their own works.

That Gaguin's work remained popular for as long as it did is to his credit. His failure to succeed in following the new literary styles that were emerging enabled the work to exercise an influence on many people. Its strongly nationalistic flavour (with a few exceptions) made the *Compendium* popular in France, but not in other countries. Its popularity and importance at the time is particularly significant in a study of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Although Gaguin was not the royal chronicler his work became accepted '... in some quasi-official way as representative of the Chronicles of Saint-Denis'.¹⁵

Most of those who used the *Grandes Chroniques* as a basis for their own works — *Mer des Chroniques et Miroir historial*, *Sommaire historial*, *Chronique Martinicane* etc. — based their continuations on the *Compendium*'s account for 1461-1500. In fact Gaguin's account for the years 1461-1500 was included in the 1514 printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Not only did the *Compendium* become the basis for works of a broad nature, but it also formed the basis for works that expressed provincial rather than national loyalties. Although their authors may have disagreed with the nationalistic attitudes that Gaguin expressed, these authors used his work with the confidence with which their predecessors had used the *Grandes Chroniques*.

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¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

Because of the confidence which was accorded to the *Compendium* and the use that was made of it, brief continuations were added to both the 1515 and 1521 editions. One also finds that blank pages are provided so that further continuations may be added to it by the owner.

Thus, in spite of Louis XI's failure to appoint Gaguin as his *chroniqueur*, it was Gaguin's account of Louis XI's reign which came to be an almost official one. Gaguin had failed to secure the position which he coveted, but his work gained an importance that equalled the works of royal *chroniqueurs*; and through it the importance of the *Grandes Chroniques* was continued.

CHAPTER X

THE HISTORIOGRAPHES DU ROI AND THE
TRANSITION FROM MEDIEVAL TO HUMANIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

Humanist historiography was developed after Humanist styles had taken hold in the field of diplomacy: thus it was through diplomacy that European monarchs became acquainted with some of the aspects of the new scholarship. Humanism as a scholarly discipline did not attract Charles VIII. Thus the new historiography as such held no interest for him; but a desire to avoid being overshadowed by others did. It was therefore imperative that the new style of historiography should be established in France so that there would be no danger of the French people learning of their history from what were viewed as biased Italian accounts.

In spite of this France's first Humanist history — Gaguin's account can be discounted — was written by an Italian, Paul Émile. Émile, who was born in Verona in 1460, came to France in 1483 and then served as secretary to Cardinal Charles of Bourbon. After the cardinal's death in September 1488, Charles VIII took him under his patronage and continued the pension with which Émile had been endowed by the cardinal.¹

It is believed that at this time Émile added to a work which he had previously dedicated to Charles of Bourbon and with an offer of his
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¹ 'A M^e Paulus Emilius, orateur et chroniqueur lombard, pour sa pension, neuf vingt livres, 1489.' Louis Thuasne, *Roberti Gaguini Epistole et Orationes*, Tome I (Paris: 1903), 152.

services as historiographer to the king, dedicated it to Charles VIII. Charles availed himself of the offer, and in 1495 Émile began to collect material for a history of the French monarchy.

Émile's work did not cease at the death of Charles VIII: it continued through the reign of Louis XII and that of his successor François I. All three kings provided for the security of Émile through the means of pensions, grants, and a sinecure at Notre-Dame. In fact the first six books of the *De rebus gestis* appeared in 1518-1519 during the reign of François I. When Émile died in 1529 the work was not completed; it was, however, completed and continued to the death of François I by other writers.

But Émile was not the only historiographer or *chroniqueur* during the reign of Louis XII. Jean d'Auton, a Benedictine who was born about 1467, also received the patronage of the king. It is believed that the name of d'Auton was not unknown at the court for members of the family of the *seigneurie* d'Auton in Saintonge can be found in close contact with Louis XII before his accession. Nevertheless it was probably the marriage of Anne of Brittany that provided d'Auton's *entrée* to the court. Through her patronage his name appears in the list of the *officiers de l'ostel du roy*; and it was probably at her request that he accompanied the king's expedition to Italy and wrote the account called *La conquête de Milan*. For this work he was rewarded with the abbey of Angle.

It is not certain if d'Auton ever received the title of *chroniqueur* or *historiographe*. We know that from 1501 he began to use the official style of beginning the year at Easter. But if the title was granted it

was not done until about 1505: evidence reveals that he was writing several years after the event.² Be this as it may, the *Chronique du roy tres chrestien Loys XII^e* received official recognition, for it was presented to the king; read by the court; placed in the royal library; and the author was granted the title of chaplain of the *chapelle royale* with the recompense of 120 livres per annum.³

D'Auton's reputation, however, was derived from his poetry and not his historical writings. Indeed, his attitude toward the history that he wrote was very casual: in spite of a desire to be impartial, his account of Louis XII is elegaic; the work is medieval in outlook, neglecting any influence that Humanism may have had on those around him; he makes very little use of the documents to which he probably had access; much of his account is based upon the testimony of random witnesses, instead of those who would have been well informed; he seems to be an eyewitness on only a very few occasions; and he shows very little knowledge of the court.

D'Auton's contribution to the historiography of Louis XII's court was in fact very short-lived: his account ends abruptly in 1507 and was never completed. After Louis's death, d'Auton retired to his abbey where he remained until his death in 1528, undertaking no further duties for the monarchy.

The existence of possibly two historiographers during the reign of Louis XII cannot be considered unusual. Louis XI appointed a second

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² Henri Hauser, *Sources de l'histoire de France...*, I, 126.

³ R. de Maulde, 'L'œuvre historique de Jean d'Auton', *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes rendus*, xxii (1894), 214.

chroniqueur to replace Castel; he also appointed an historiographer. During the 16th and 17th centuries several instances of multiple office holders can be cited. Three historiographers were named and paid by Henri II: Jacques Boujou, whose payment is recorded in 1549; Pierre Paschal, whose payment is recorded in 1557; and Denis Sauvage.⁴ It must also be noted that the tenure of these men did not cease in 1559 at Henri's death. As the acceptance of the fact of an official historiographer grew, it became common for men to serve under several kings. So we find that Sauvage served not only François II, but also Charles IX and Henri III — his own death closely following Henri's. There is no record of Boujou's service to François II, and although we do not know his status from 1560 to his death in 1565, the title of one of his works, the *Journal de ce qui s'est passé en France durant l'année 1562 à Paris et à la Cour*, indicates that he was still a person of importance in at least 1562.⁵

Another example of multiple appointments can be found in the 16th century: Charles IX, who had the services of Sauvage and perhaps Paschal, appointed two more historiographers — François Belleforest in 1568 and Bernard de Girard seigneur du Haillan in 1571. Both du Haillan and Belleforest enjoyed favour during the reign of Henri III; a record of payment being made to du Haillan by the monarch in 1581 is extant. Even during the 17th century the existence of several historiographers at one time is frequent. In 1649, for example, there

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⁴ P.-M. Bondois, 'Henri II et ses historiographes', *Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'à 1715) du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1925), 138-49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

were four: Charles Sorel, Jean Sismond, Guillaume de Brisacier, and Jean Puget de La Serre.⁶

The multiplicity of appointments can be attributed not only to the acceptance of the position of *historiographe*, but also to an increasing awareness of the need for propaganda reinforced by the ability to disseminate it widely through the medium of print. Much of the awareness of the real potentiality of the historiographer came as a result of Charles VIII's expedition to Italy. The art of the historiographer had been developed there, and the ruling families as well as the republics of Italy had come to view their work as an integral part of government.⁷ The *chroniqueurs* of Saint-Denis had acted as propagandists through their accounts, but their effect was limited through the lack of printing; the historiographers' task, on the other hand, was much broader in effect for it not only affected the French people but also presented France to the rest of Europe. Thus the *historiographe* assumed a position of importance within the structure of the monarchy, and it came to be realized that several propagandists were more valuable than one.

In previous discussion the origins of the concept of royal historiography were dealt with. The position of the *historiographe* itself came to light during the reign of Louis XI when, so we are told, Guillaume Danicot was granted the title. Danicot's title was a personal one and probably a temporary one. We are not certain if Emile and d'Auton held

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⁶ *Ibid.*, 141, n. 4.

⁷ Denys Hay, 'The Historiographers Royal in England and Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, xxx (1951), 16.

the same position: d'Auton's appointment seems to be of a personal and temporary nature while Émile's seems to have been a more permanent one. It may be in fact that Émile held what had formerly been the position of *chroniqueur*: the title may have been different, but the nature of the duties was the same. In any case we may assume that the late 15th century saw the beginnings of the *historiographe du roi*. After 1550 the position assumed new importance due to the effects of the Reformation with its accompanying political turbulence and increased intellectual activity. As a result the position of the *historiographe du roi* became deeply entrenched at the Court and an unbroken line of historiographers stretches to 1789. Among those filling the position were many well-known men such as André Duchesne, Félibien, Mézeray, Racine, Daniel, and Voltaire. Their fame gives an indication of the importance of the title.

While the *chroniqueurs* with the exception of Castel were joined by the common bond of being members of the community of Saint-Denis, the historiographers of the 16th century had no such affinity. The manner of choosing the man for the title and the criteria that were used had changed. The choice of the *chroniqueur* seemed to be haphazard; aside from being literate in Latin and able to compose accounts in it, no special qualifications seem to have been demanded. It is possible that many of the men chosen had obtained their positions through faithful service in the *scriptorium*. As time passed, a decline in monasticism offset by the spread of literacy outside the monastic ranks led to a wider field of candidates. The manner in which the appointment was obtained also changed. Émile's appointment came as a result of his reputation as a Humanist, his availability — having

served as secretary to Charles of Bourbon — and of course the fact that he offered his services to the king. Others reached the position through having served either the king himself, in another capacity, or the nobility; while others were recommended by persons known to the king. Jean d'Auton had entered the court under the influence of Anne of Brittany. As others who followed him, he had served as an official of the royal household: Jacques Boujou had served as *maître des requêtes* for Marguerite, the sister of Henri II, and then for Catherine de Medici.⁸ Catherine de Medici had also employed François Hotman, another historiographer; Belleforest was under the protection of Margaret of Navarre, the sister of François I. Pierre Paschal received his position upon the recommendations of not one, but three clerics: the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Bishop of Riez, and the Bishop of Valence. It is du Haillan who exemplifies a combination of all these methods of seeking the king's favour. From an early age he had been the protégé of the brothers de Noailles: Antoine, who became the governor of Bordeaux; François, the Bishop of Dax; and Gilles, the abbot of l'Isle and later counsellor to the Parlement of Bordeaux. Du Haillan accompanied Gilles to England and François to Venice when they went as ambassadors to those places. Visits to Italy had become necessary for those with literary pretensions and for those who wished to attract patronage; thus du Haillan remained there for four years. During this period he produced a translation of a collection of works by Ludovico Domenichi. Although the work was a success, he also tried to attract further attention by writing poetry on the occasions of the two marriages: in 1559, of Philip II of Spain to Elizabeth of France,

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⁸ Bondois, *loc. cit.*, 138.

the daughter of Henri II; and of the Duke of Savoy to Marguerite of France, the daughter of François I and sister of Henri II. He also wrote a poem on the death of Henri II. In 1560 he published a translation of *L'histoire romaine d'Eutropius*, dedicating it to François II. Du Haillan's pains were rewarded for this effort: 'M. Bernard de Girard, pour l'estat de secrétaire ...' is the first name found in a list of 'Personnes que le Roy a pourvez en la maison de Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans, sa frère, depuis son dernier estat faict à sa maison séparée de celle de Monseigneur le duc d'Anjou.' dated 1561.⁹ Further recognition came to du Haillan when he was appointed historiographer by Charles IX in 1571. He retained the title after the death of Charles.

The position of *historiographe* was highly esteemed. Boujou, for example, thanked the monarch for his honoured place among the king's servants in a dedication to Henri II of his translation of Titus-Livy. M. Bondois has asserted that this is definitely an allusion to the position of historiographer and not to that of *maître des requêtes* which he had held in the retinues of Marguerite of France and Catherine de Medici.¹⁰ But, aside from the honour, what else could an *historiographe* hope to receive? Jean d'Auton who may have held the title was made chaplain of the *chapelle royale* after the date that he may have been named historiographer.¹¹ A document of July 1557 reveals the payment made to Pierre Paschal:

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⁹ Paul Bonnefon, 'L'historien Du Haillan: lettres et documents inédits', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, xv (Dec. 1908), 660.

¹⁰ Bondois, *loc. cit.*, 140.

¹¹ *Supra*, p. 205.

... avant esgard aux bons et agréables s[er]vices q[ue]
 ... M^e Pierre Paschal n[ost]re historiographe, nous a
 cy-devant faictz, faict et [con]tinue c[hac]un un jo[ur],
 et espérons qu'il fera cy-après; à icelluy po[ur] ces
 causes et aut[re]s à ce mouvans, avons donné et octroyé,
 donnons et octroyons par ces pr[ése]ntes tous et ch[ac]uns
 les fruictz, prouffictz, revenuz et émolumens ou[dit],
 prieuré de Valflory en quelque façon et manière que ce
 soit appartenans po[ur] en joyr par led[ict] Pascal¹²

Jacques Boujou, on the other hand, received direct payment. An order was made to the treasurer of the king's household on 21 December 1549 to pay him for the year just completed.

... paieez comptant à n[ost]re amé et féal historiographe,
 M^e Jacques Boujou, auquel nous avons donné, octroïé et
 ordonné ... par ces p[rése]ntes tant pour ses gaiges,
 à cause de sond[it] estat d'historiographe de ceste
 p[résen]te année que pour fournir aux fraiz, qu'il luy
 convient fè[re] à faire escripe et mettre au nect le
 premier livre qu'il a faict de n[ost]re histoyre, et,
 par rapportant ces d[ictes] p[rése]ntes ... nous voullons
 la d[icte] somme de iij^e escus d'or sol[eil] estre passée
 et allouée en la despence de noz comptes Car tel
 est n[ost]re plaisir, nonobstant la réservation par nous
 faicte de la somme de huict mil livres tournois, par
 chacun mois, sur la vente et composition des offices¹³

As time passed the position became even more lucrative. Documents reveal that within a period of nine days, Henri III ordered that two gifts of 1000 *écus d'or* be made to du Haillan.¹⁴ Thus, after obtaining the position, the rewards for the historiographer could be considerable if the king so wished them.

It is obvious that by the 16th century the conception of the position of *chroniqueur* had given way to that of historiographer: the manner of appointment, the remuneration, and the number of appointees

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¹² Bondois, *loc. cit.*, 147-48.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 140-41.

¹⁴ P.-M. Bondois, 'Henri III et l'historiographe Du Haillan', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, xxx (1923), 507-508.

had all changed. With the exception of Jean Castel, the *chroniqueurs* gave evidence of their talents only through the composition of their chronicles; the *historiographes* however possessed auxiliary skills as well. Like Castel, many historiographers were poets. As noted before, the reputation of d'Auton was acquired as a writer of verse and not as an historian. Pierre Matthieu also wrote poetry before he turned his attention to writing history; indeed through one poem he had unsuccessfully tried to attract the patronage of Philip II of Spain.¹⁵ Before becoming secretary to the Duke of Orléans, du Haillan also attempted to curry royal favour through creditable verse. Jacques Boujou — praised by several of his contemporaries for his poetry — held a distinguished place among the young writers who gathered around Ronsard.¹⁶ François Belleforest occupied himself solely with poetry at one point in his career. Belleforest in fact tried as many mediums as he could set his hand to. Although we must respect him for his persistence in that he finished everything that he attempted, he seems to have been obsessed with quantity rather than quality in the massive amounts of work that he churned out in a variety of literary styles. It would seem that he had a poem for every occasion. Love poetry, lives of saints in translation, a defence of the innocence of Mary Stewart, elegies, history, and a multitude of unconnected translations — Belleforest tried them all.¹⁷ But he was not the only historiographer to use translations as a stepping stone to recognition: Matthieu,

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¹⁵ Abbé Goujet, *Bibliothèque française ou Histoire de la littérature française*, Tome XII (Paris: 1748), 281-283.

¹⁶ Bondois, 'Henri II et ses historiographes', 138.

¹⁷ Belleforest's French translations of Greek works were made from Latin translations. Goujet, *op. cit.*, XIII, 160.

Boujou, du Haillan, and Sauvage also undertook them.

Humanism was the discipline that most historiographers from Emile onwards tried to follow; yet many of them failed in one way or another: in spite of the growing interest in Humanism and a desire to apply its principles to the writing of history it was in fact slow to spread and even slower to affect historiography to any great extent. Medieval traditions were deeply rooted in France and, although shaken, they persisted in the 16th and early 17th century.

On the other hand conditions in Italy had favoured the growth and spread of the new scholarship: the reality of Roman civilization and the conducive economic, political, and social atmosphere had conjoined and interacted to produce it and to encourage adherence to it. A renewed interest in the works of classical authors had led men to realize the value of imitating them for their own purposes: to present their government's cause or their patron's attitude in the most favourable light possible was their goal. As the techniques learned from the study of classical models were applied with success in the political sphere, they were extended to historiography.

The Humanists saw history as a way to help men to lead more successful and worthwhile lives — one can see in this that one of the reasons for studying history today was developed by the Humanists. But if history was to accomplish this purpose it had to be arranged and made more coherent. Thus, the medieval chronicles were replaced by history which was polished and had form and unity. The choice of a model was important to the Humanist historian, for the success of his work depended on it; and gradually Livy became the most popular. In his efforts to

pattern his work after classical models, however, the Humanist was at a disadvantage: the words and phrases developed by medieval men to suit their needs could not be used; the problem was solved only by giving sometimes torturous classical equivalents. The end result of this interest in antiquity was, however, history in its modern sense, for this interest coupled with the political and social changes of the time led the Humanist historian to develop a sense of time and change. Through this he was able to discern the differences between his own era and the past.

As the Renaissance progressed there was a new interest in the Middle Ages, and a new way of viewing it. The ecclesiastical form of history, the chronicle, had been abandoned for a secular one. Thus, the medieval period was viewed in a different light: the Church no longer assumed the place of prime importance. Following the ideas of men such as Nicholas of Cusa, ecclesiastical power was no longer considered a universal one, but was instead put in a position that was subordinate to the sovereignty of government. No longer did the historian accept the idea of a divine force that directed the course of events. The rejection of such a force also led to the rejection of many Christian miracles. Such exorcising fell short of the fables and legends found in sacred literature and those that resembled things described by ancient writers — these they tried to rationalize.¹⁸

The climate of Italy with its wealth and secularization of society enabled the historian to prosecute these actions. Humanism, as found in France, was however a somewhat different breed. Whereas the

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¹⁸ E. Fueter, *Histoire de l'historiographie moderne*, trans. Emile Jeanmarie, (Paris: 1914), pp. 13-17.

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Italians began to think of the Middle Ages as another antiquity — with some modifications — the French were unable to do so. For them the Middle Ages evoked two opposing emotions: it was a period of barbarism and feudality, but it was also the basis of pride and their heritage. The critical spirit which French writers did apply to this era was therefore a superficial one: legends of negligible importance could be rejected, but those which evoked strong national pride were not questioned for many years. The Church presented another problem for the French Humanist: while the Italians had secularized history by putting the Church in a subordinate position in political affairs, the French still looked on it as a powerful political as well as religious force. These conflicts with Italian Humanism did not deter French followers from the start. As we know, Humanism had its advocates in Paris before Charles VIII realized its potentiality and necessity and appointed Emile as historiographer. Most noteworthy was a group whose assorted members included lawyers, an archbishop, a court musician, two chancellors of the realm, and several professors of the University (among these Robert Gaguin). Many of these early French 'Humanists', strongly influenced by their theological training, were unable to make a complete break with tradition. Gaguin, for example, wrote a Latin poem on the Immaculate Conception in 1488: this in itself was not unusual for Italian Humanists were writing on similar topics, but Gaguin's was medieval in outlook and form and not governed by the rules of Humanism. It should also be remembered that his *Compendium* failed to exemplify the epitome of Humanist style. Nevertheless, in spite of these drawbacks, the members of the Humanist 'academy' were able to introduce some aspects of the new scholarship into the teaching methods of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Paris without

disturbing the revered position which theology held there.¹⁹

Despite the differences in outlook, Humanism in France did not develop independently of Italy for some time. Italian humanists in Paris provided a focal point and leadership for the French. The most elegant of the Latin translations of Greek works, which filled the void that the lack of knowledge of Greek and of teachers of Greek had created, came from Italy. What would seem to be pilgrimages to the birthplace of Humanism were made. These visits to Italy were in fact a necessity for men such as du Haillan who wanted to acquire the polish of Humanist literary ideas and wished to attract recognition. The new scholarship had become fashionable and was practised in some quarters, but in order to qualify as a true Humanist, some time had to be spent in Italy.

The intellectual activity that accompanied the struggles of the second half of the 16th century weakened these ties of France to Italy and allowed for a more independent development of Humanism in France. The men who held the first rank in historical writing during this period had the common bond of being members of the legal profession, and were interested in the political and philosophical climate. Prodigious activity resulted from these common interests: and in an attempt to justify their own political views a new interest in the Middle Ages was aroused. As noted before, the medieval era of French history had been a thorn in the side of her Humanists: some medieval works had been printed in the late 15th and

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¹⁹ Augustin Renaudet, *Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517)*, 2nd edition (Paris: 1953), pp. 118-20.

early 16th centuries,²⁰ but the main object of interest had been the safer classical works. But because of the interests of the men of the latter part of the 16th century, increasing attention was given to the Middle Ages, and the publication of medieval texts by Pithou for example — although they were printed in Bâle and Frankfurt — was the result.²¹

In light of these conflicting attitudes the work of the *historiographe* was difficult. The task which confronted Émile was not an easy one. Attacking medieval tradition as set forth in the *Grandes Chroniques* was, in effect, attacking the French monarchs who had instituted it. Perhaps it was fortunate for French historiography that her first Humanist historiographer was an Italian: given the liberty by the Crown to break down the legends of the past, Emile set an example which Frenchmen would be able to follow if they so chose. A Frenchman — if one equal to the task could have been found — in Emile's position might not have been given approval as readily by the monarch, nor would he have perhaps been willing to tread on this hallowed ground.

The merit of Émile's work is that he tried to apply the principles of criticism developed by Bruni and his followers to a new subject: French History. As an Italian, he was able to ignore completely such things as the death of Roland, eliminate many miracles — or at least

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²⁰ For example, *Les Grandes Chroniques* was published in 1477; Froissart in 1495; and Aimoin in 1514. Later Sauvage edited and made continuations of authors such as Froissart and Monstrelet.

²¹ G. Monod, 'Introduction du progrès des études historiques en France depuis le XVI^e siècle', *Revue historique*, i (1876), 12-14.

add a rational explanation to them — and dismiss the Trojan origins of the French as simple folklore.

Not only was Émile's Humanism evident in his critical application, it can also be seen in his writing. M. Thierry has asserted that because Émile was familiar with classical authors and manners, he easily adopted their style and attitudes. Thus, French characters under Émile's pen came to resemble their Roman counterparts. M. Thierry goes even further when he states:

Il ne faut s'attendre à y trouver aucune variété dans les caractères, aucune diversité dans les époques; c'est toujours le même temps et les mêmes hommes: Chlodowig, Karle le Grand, Philippe-Auguste, sont taillés sur le même patron.²²

Émile's history did not enjoy popular success due to its learned propensities and in spite of the fact that it was translated into French and continued. Apart from a small group of literati, society at this early date was not yet willing or able to accept the new form of scholarship; it was still interested in local colour and the poetic and narrative individuality of the medieval chronicles.²³ Gaguin had succeeded in capturing men's imaginations because he had failed in his stated purpose of writing a Humanist history and of applying Humanist principles of criticism to history. Although Émile's work was not a perfect example of Humanist historiography, it was close enough to alienate the people who were accustomed to the old styles and to whom this history, which was the first of its type written about the French, was indeed odd. In spite of this first cold reception,

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²² Augustin Thierry, *Oeuvres de Augustin Thierry*, Tome II: *Discours d'Études historiques* (Paris: 1834), p. 366.

²³ *Ibid.*, 369-70.

the style of Émile's *De rebus gestis* was emulated by later *historiographes*. The fact that du Haillan could translate parts of it literally without questioning their authenticity and have his work accepted shows that the impact of Humanism needed to be felt by a wider circle of people.

In contrast to Émile, d'Auton's *Chronique du roy ... Loys XII^e* shows none of the beneficial effects of Humanism. The division by years rather than books, the nature of his sources of information as indicated above, and the recording of the supernatural without explanation are throwbacks to the medieval chronicle. The classical quotations and allusions, as well as the reflections and judgments given, fit more readily into a medieval frame of reference than a Humanist one.²⁴

After a temporary lapse into the past with d'Auton, Henri II's appointees were more 'modern' men. Jacques Boujou followed the pursuits befitting a Humanist of translating classical works and writing Latin verse. Denis Sauvage — the translator of numerous Latin and Italian authors as well as the editor of Froissart and Monstrelet — developed what may be a more renaissance than Humanist interest in linguistics and grammar, adding to the problems of future generations of schoolchildren by the invention of the parentheses and the interjection. Pierre Paschal, possibly affected by his visit to Italy, carried his scholarly imitation of classical models to ridiculous extremes.²⁵

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²⁴ Katherine Davies, 'Late XVth century French historiography, as exemplified in the Compendium of Robert Gaguin and the *De Rebus Gestis* of Paulus Aemilius' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1954), pp. 389-91.

²⁵ Bondonis, 'Henri II et ses historiographes', 138-40, 142, 144-45.

The next appointee, François Belleforest, as already noted, attempted to bring all forms of Humanist literature under his pen. But, just as in his other phases of literary endeavour, the history that he wrote suffered from his attempts to produce as much as possible and to appeal to a wide audience. Belleforest's primary goal was to give support to the hereditary theory of monarchy; and, in carrying out this aim, he permitted his history to become an extended pamphlet: often the narrative is interrupted by the author's diatribes against the proponents of an elective monarchy. Although much of his material had been acquired through a revision and augmentation of the work of Nicholas de Gilles — and through him the *Grandes Chroniques* — the historiographer of Charles IX did apply a certain amount of criticism to his subject. Belleforest did dismiss the Trojan ancestry of the Franks, but his fear of displeasing his readers was too great to reject the battle of Roncesvalles and its characters. In spite of this, he was able to apply some criticism to other myths surrounding Charlemagne. One must point out that there are two positive contributions to historical science contained in Belleforest's work: the *Grand Annales et Histoire générale de France (de Pharamond à Henri III)* included geographic distinctions not used before the 16th century, such as a time delineation between *roi de la Gaule* and *roi de France*; and an attempt to restore more genuine orthography to German names. Although the end result was not as good as might be possible, there is an historical reality which gives a certain distinction to Belleforest's work.²⁶

²⁶ Thierry, *loc. cit.*, 382-411.

In contrast to the general ineptitude of Belleforest, his fellow historiographer, du Haillan, can be considered a more ready adherent to the Humanist concept of history: it was he who made the greatest contribution to Humanist historiography in the 16th century. Du Haillan, in fact, has been called the father of French history by M. Thierry on the basis that he and his followers gave France her first serious history.²⁷ Such works were now ready to be received in France: by the second half of the 16th century, Humanist culture had reached many members of the middle class. Thus a desire arose for a new national history, the offerings of previous historiographers were not enough.

Du Haillan was able to fill this void to a great extent. History, he felt, should concern itself with the affairs of State and, in so doing, it should consider not only the historical event, but also its causes and results. This indeed spelled the end of the medieval chronicle. To accomplish this end du Haillan followed the outline set down by Émile, translating Émile's *De rebus gestis*, but inserting other material as he saw fit. Du Haillan's method and choice of material was not perfect: for example he criticized the work of Gregory of Tours and the *Chronicle of Turpin* for containing material that had no validity, but he also inserted equally invalid legends from sources such as the *Grandes Chroniques* and Gaguin's *Compendium*. On the other hand, he neglects the legend of Pharamond and in its place uses the device of a dialogue on monarchy versus aristocracy. In the field of criticism, he did, for example, question the traditional concept of the French monarchy, Salic law. These changes made du Haillan's work

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²⁷ *Ibid.*, 379.

totally different from Émile's, but the end result was still something of a compromise.²⁸

Du Haillan had succumbed to pitfalls: he inserted material here and there which made the narrative uneven; and he had made concessions to tradition, concessions which gave his subjects an heroic aura and underlined the patriotism of the author. It is perhaps because of these concessions and the patriotism evoked that the *Histoire générale des rois de France* and its author greatly influenced future historians. Du Haillan was not an innovator: he followed Émile's plan, but with better results and reception. It was not because his work was far superior to Émile's, it was the outcome of several factors. For Émile, an Italian, French history produced no personal feeling, but Italian scepticism. Du Haillan on the other hand was a Frenchman with a personal interest in his subject; and through his heroes — who seem to belong to a *roman* — he makes his attitudes felt. This perhaps justifies the fact that in some ways he compromised the principles of Humanist historiography: in this way he gave a public, which was experiencing civil strife, a taste of Humanism as well as its familiar and cherished national legends. At the time the public was ready for both. His work marked a turning point in French historiography and prepared the way for his successors in the office of *historiographe du roi*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 373-82, Fueter, *op. cit.*, 172-74.

PART TWO

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CHAPTER XI

THE LATIN CHRONICLE OF SAINT-DENIS
AND THE OTHER SOURCES OF THE
GRANDES CHRONIQUES DE FRANCE

Before it is possible to consider the *Grandes Chroniques* and the various recensions through which it went, it is necessary to examine the sources used by its compilers. For this the obvious point of departure is the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* (B.N. lat. MS 5925¹) which has been mentioned many times in the course of preceding chapters. It has been quite justly called the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*: it contains a collection of sources tracing the history of the French monarchy from Pharamond to Philippe le Hardi, sources which were translated by the compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

The *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* has its roots in the work of two men of Saint-Denis: Abbots Suger and Mathieu de Vendôme. As noted before, Suger's most significant work in this context was his effort to develop the library and archives of Saint-Denis and to make it an important centre of historical study. And it should also be remembered that his *Vita Ludovici* was later incorporated in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*.

It is true that Suger's contributions to historiography at Saint-Denis made it possible for a work such as the *Latin Chronicle* to be undertaken; however, it was not until the Thirteenth Century that it

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¹ B.N. lat. MS 5925 is composed of 376 leaves, the final two being of a different size and containing material under the title *Provinciale Ecclesiae Romanae aliud Provinciale ejusdem Eudesid.*

was begun. Credit for this venture can be given to Mathieu de Vendôme, who conceived the idea of collecting Latin works within the framework of a single manuscript in order to trace the history of the French monarchy from its inception.

The compiling of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* preceded the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*, but it is impossible to discover whether or not the *Latin Chronicle* was compiled merely for the purpose of translation into the *Grandes Chroniques*. Perhaps Mathieu de Vendôme's original intent was simply to continue Aimoin's *Historia Francorum* and, through the addition of other chronicles, to bring the history of the monarchy up to date. No matter what the intent, when Louis IX requested that an account of the kings of France be written in French at Saint-Denis, the monk Primat, who undertook the task, turned to the most readily accessible collection of sources — the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. Evidence for this can be found in the fact that the arrangement of material in the *Grandes Chroniques* follows that of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. It is also indicated by Primat's statement in the prologue of the *Grandes Chroniques*:

Si sera ceste hystoire descrite selon la lettre et l'ordenance des croniques de l'abae de Saint-Denis en France, où les hystoires et li fait de touz les rois sont escrit, car là doit on prendre et puiser l'origenal de l'estoire.²

This does mean that the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* was the only source which Primat used: as the statement continues in the prologue, Primat announces that if other works of value are found in

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²*Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. Jules Viard, I (Paris:1920), 2.

other places, he will consult them if warranted.³ Thus, from time to time Primat (and his successors) added information not found in MS 5925 to the text. The most compelling reason for citing MS 5925 as the main source for the contents of the *Grandes Chroniques* to the death of Philippe le Hardi is that the arrangement of material in both the *Latin Chronicle* and the *Grandes Chroniques* is the same; that some material and even words and phrases found translated in the *Grandes Chroniques* can be traced to the Latin source as found only in MS 5925; and finally that marginal notes found in that manuscript are incorporated in the text of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

It must be noted that the role of B.N. lat. MS 12710 was considered by M. Jules Lair to be the basis and framework of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Basing his hypothesis on the fact that this manuscript and related ones provided extracts to cover a gamut of French history, he stated that MS 12710 also provided the inspiration for the *Grandes Chroniques*.⁴ M. Lair, however, neglected the fact that as indicated above there is a much closer concordance between MS 5925 and the *Grandes Chroniques*. Although MS 12710 is for the most part made up of bits and pieces from various works, it does contain some material common to the *Grandes Chroniques*. Thus, its role may have been to provide additional information to supplement the account found in MS 5925.

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³ Et se il puet trover es croniques d'autres eglises chose qui vaille à la besoigne, il i pourra bien ajouster selonc la pure verité de la lettre, sanz riens oster, se ce n'est chose qui face confusion, et sanz riens ajouster d'autre matiere, se ce ne sont aucunes incidences.

Ibid.

⁴ Jules Lair, 'Mémoire sur deux chroniques latines composées au XII^e siècle à l'abbaye de Saint-Denis', *BEC*, xxxv (1874), 543-580.

At first glance, however, MS 5925 would not seem to be the major source of the *Grandes Chroniques*: the table of contents, added at a much later date, belies the wealth of material that it contains when it states

Aimoini, Floriacensis Monachi *historia Francorum*,
libris quatuor, a Pharamundo ad annum 825 sive ipse
Aimoinus sive alius ad id temporis hanc historiam
produxerit.
Vita Caroli Magni, authore Eginhardo.
Gesta Caroli Magni in hispania, Turpino.
Gesta Ludovici Pii Imperatoris.
Item, appendix continens gesta Regum Francia a morte
Ludovici Pii ad mortem Philippi I. e/
Vita Ludovici VI, Cognomento grossi, authore Sugerio
Abbate S. Dionysii.
Gesta Ludovici VII.
Gesta Philippi Augusti, Francorum Regis, authore
magistro Rigordo, Regis Chronographus et Clerico Abbatiae
S. Dionysii.
G. Ludovici VIII, Francorum Regis.
G. S. Ludovici IX, authore Guillelmo de Nangis,
Monacho S. Dionysii in Francia.
G. Philippi III, eodem authore.⁵

Only through a closer examination of the manuscript does one come to realize that the above list does not present the complete contents. Following Chapter VI of Book IV of Aimoin's work one finds 'Incipit vita domini dagoberti regis francorum':⁶ indicating that the compiler has inserted the *Gesta Dagoberti*. After the copying of the *Gesta Dagoberti* was completed, the compiler then added portions of the *Liber historia Francorum*; the *Continuation of Frédégaire* (to 741); and the *Annales Francorum, ab anno DCCXLI ad annum DCCCXXIX*. e/

Among the other works listed that require explanation is the

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⁵ As noted above two small leaves have been added to the end of the manuscript. *Supra*, p. 223, n. 1.

⁶ The *Gesta Dagoberti* begins on f. 29^r.

Gesta Regum Francia that follows the *Gesta Ludovici Pii*. As the title implies it is a collection of material derived from the *Chronicon, sive Breviarium chronicorum de sex mundi aetatibus, ab Adamo usque ad annum 869*; the *Annales Saint-Bertiniani*; and the *Continuation of Aimoin* to the death of Philip I. e

As mentioned in the chapter on Suger and his works,⁷ the *Gesta Ludovici VII* as found in MS 5925 is the only extant recension. It was probably based in part on Suger's notes for a projected biography of Louis VII which were then completed by a monk of Saint-Germain-des-Près to form the *Historia regis Ludovici VII*. To this was added additional information probably for the purpose of using it in the *Grandes Chroniques*. It must be noted that as found in MS 5925, the *Gesta Ludovici VII* is nothing more than a Latin translation of the pertinent section of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

It would seem that when the material for the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* was collected and copied an account of the reign of Louis VII was not included. The manuscript itself reveals this in several ways: leaves 231 and 248 are from the same quire, but two new quires — one of twelve leaves and the other of four — are inserted to form leaves 232 to 247. The last sentences of the *Vita Ludovici grossi regis* are in fact found on both 232^r and 248^r while a portion of 247^v is blank. Thus it would seem that before beginning to transcribe the *Gesta Ludovici VII* the scribe completed Suger's *Vita Ludovici* for the sake of continuity. When he had reached the end of the *Gesta Ludovici VII* and found that there was nothing else to add he merely left a blank space on 247^v. But, he failed to cancel the last sentences of Suger's work

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⁷ *Supra*, pp. 13-15.

that appeared on the following leaf. The final bit of evidence that completes the argument that the *Gesta Ludovici VII* was inserted at a later date is the fact that there is an abrupt change of hands and orthography between 231^v and 232^r and then a return to the one found on 231^v on 248^r. Thus the *Gesta Ludovici VII*, although now part of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, was not included in it at the start.

It must also be noted that the section covering the reign of Philip Augustus and attributed to Rigord is actually composed of three works: Rigord's *Gesta Philippi*; Guillaume le Breton's *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (to 1215); and a continuation of Guillaume's work to Philip's death — possibly written by a monk of Saint-Denis.⁸

Primat's recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*, completed in 1274, ended with the death of Philip Augustus and it is believed that at that time MS 5925 contained no accounts of the reigns of Philip Augustus's successors. This, however, spelled neither the end of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* nor of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Instead both were continued under the auspices of Primat's supposed successor, Guillaume de Nangis;⁹ it is thought that he was responsible for the continuation or possibly a new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* and we do know that his accounts of the reigns of Louis IX and Philippe le Hardi were included in a continuation of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. The success of the *Grandes Chroniques* demanded that it be continued; and as a result the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* may have changed in character: it may have been continued for the purpose of providing material for those who compiled the *Grandes Chroniques*.

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⁸ *Supra*, Chapter II.

⁹ *Supra*, Chapters III and IV.

In order to do this the monks turned to their archives. The authorship of the *Gesta Ludovici VIII* has long been in dispute. M. Waitz postulated that it was the work of Guillaume de Nangis, who composed it with the aid of some parts of his *Chronicon* and some reliance upon the *Miroir historial* by Vincent de Beauvais. M. Delaborde on the other hand believed that it was the work of an anonymous monk of Saint-Denis who depended on notes available to him; and possibly an account written by a canon of Saint-Martin de Tours; and also the work of Vincent de Beauvais.¹⁰ The work itself is superficial and disappointing. It is true that Louis's reign was a short one, yet a great deal of the space of the *Gesta* is taken up with genealogical details that trace the monarchy from the Trojans to the recovery of the Carolingian line by Hugh Capet. The remainder is a very rapid review of Louis's reign.¹¹

MS 5925 is completed with products of Guillaume de Nangis's pen: the *Gesta Ludovici IX* and the *Gesta Philippi III*. After this we can no longer speak of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*: it was no longer considered a necessity. The attitude toward the *Grandes Chroniques* was changing: it was becoming an instrument of the monarchy for propaganda purposes. And, those who were trusted with its continuation were becoming authors in their own right.

With the end of our survey of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*

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¹⁰ Molinier, *Sources de l'histoire ...*, III, no. 2255. Waitz's conclusions are reviewed by H.-François Delaborde in *BEC*, xli (1880), 68-74.

¹¹ In the *Grandes Chroniques* the actual account of Louis VIII's reign is contained in little more than three chapters. *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VII, 8-24.

¹² A discussion of these works can be found *Supra*, Chapter IV.

it is necessary to return to its beginning and assess both the works that it contained and those that were used to augment it.

As noted earlier, Mathieu de Vendôme possibly intended to continue Aimoin's *Historia Francorum* and relate the lives and deeds of the French monarchs in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. Thus, our point of departure must be Aimoin (obit. c. 1008) and his work. Although the work was written long after the events recorded, Aimoin was able to combine many sources such as Pliny, the *Historia Francorum* of Gregory of Tours, *Fredegarii Scholastici chronicaum*, the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, the *Historia Langobardorum* by Paul the Deacon, the *Liber pontificalis*, the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, and the lives of many saints, with some sense of continuity and a reasonable style.¹³ Added to this is the fact that he wrote during an era when the legends and oral traditions of earlier years were not yet lost from view: because of this he was able to pass them on to future generations.

Aimoin was a monk at Fleury-sur-Loire (later called Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire) where, in spite of the low state of learning elsewhere, literary and scientific interests flourished. At Fleury he had access to the library and became acquainted with Gauzlin, an illegitimate son of Hugh Capet, who later became abbot.

It was at the behest of Gauzlin's predecessor, Abbon, that Aimoin began his work. It was to Abbon that the *Historia Francorum* was dedicated sometime before the abbot's death in 1004. On the basis of this we can assume that at least part of it was completed by 1004. As to

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¹³ The sources of Aimoin's *Historia Francorum* are discussed in *Les Grandes Chroniques*, II, iii-xxxviii; and in Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, nos. 196-198, 220, and 222.

the remainder, either Aimoin's death prevented the completion of his work or the last chapters are lost: the last book, Book IV, was to include an account of eight kings; however, it includes only three and the account ends in 654. Aimoin's work was of course a compilation rather than a personal one.

Aimoin's work provided Primat with material until 654, but as shown above in the course of our discussion of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, the *Gesta Dagoberti I regis Francorum* was interpolated to provide material concerning the reign of Dagobert I and part of that of Clovis II. The compiler of the *Gesta Dagoberti* in effect used many of the same sources as Aimoin. Yet, the work carries a note of one whose interests are centred on Saint-Denis.¹⁴

After the end of Aimoin's *Historia Francorum* and the *Gesta Dagoberti*, Primat found that through MS 5925 he had several sources at hand. Through the medium of Aimoin he had derived material from the *Liber historiae Francorum*¹⁵ to the year 654, now he turned directly to it for material from 657 until 727 and faithfully translated it. When the *Liber historiae Francorum* ended, Primat turned to the *Continuation of Frédégaire* picking up the account in 725,

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¹⁴ Among the many references to Saint-Denis are those which depict the generosity of Dagobert for the monastery. cf. *Les Grandes Chroniques*, I, 154-55, 159-61, 170-71, etc.

¹⁵ The *Liber historiae Francorum* (also known as the *Gesta regum Francorum*) was probably written in 726-727 by a monk of Saint-Denis. It can be divided into three parts: the first, ending in 584, is an abridged version of the relevant parts of Gregory of Tours; the second ends in 657; and the third, used by the compiler of the *Grandes Chroniques*, finishes with the year 727. This last part relies on documents, oral testimony and, after about 700, probably the author's own eyewitness accounts. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 66-67 and no. 198.

but using it only until the death of Charles Martel.¹⁶ From that Primat turned to one of the major sources of Carolingian history, the *Annales Francorum*, also known as the *Annales Laurissenses*, which were mistakenly attributed to Einhard at one time and in spite of this continue to be linked with his name.¹⁷ For the account from 741 to the accession of Charlemagne, the *Annales* is Primat's main source; later it furnished him with material on Charlemagne and Louis the Pious.

From 649 to the death of Pepin the Short, however, Primat found it necessary to augment his material from other works which he seems to have had at hand. The most frequently consulted by far was the *Chronicon* of Sigebert de Gembloux, a twelfth century effort to continue the work of Eusebius and St. Jerome.¹⁸ In addition to this

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 16 Although the *Fredegarii Scholastici chronicon* is itself the work of several authors to 642, the main body of the text is followed by what are styled continuations, which bring the work to 768. cf. *Ibid.*, no. 197.

17 The history of the *Annales Francorum* remains a puzzle to historians. The number of authors involved in its composition and their origins — the title *Annales Laurissenses* was derived from the thought that the first author was a monk of Lorsch — remain an open question. The work can possibly be divided into two sections: the first stretching from 741 to 788; and the second from 789 to 829. The first section is composed of a collection of material from documents and other annals; the second, however, seems to be a contemporary account whose author seems to have intimate knowledge of the court. Because of the latter and the semi-official tone of the work as well as some resemblances to the *Vita Karoli*, the second section, and in some cases more, was attributed to Einhard. Variations in the style of the second section have changed this opinion. Yet the 'Annales' are still best known as the *Annals of Einhard*; and authorship still remains a mystery.

A brief discussion of the *Annales Francorum* can be found in *Ibid.*, no. 745 and *Les Grandes Chroniques*, III, viii-xi.

18 The *Chronicon* of Sigebert de Gembloux (c.1030-1112) was written between 1100 and 1106; it was then revised and continued to 1111. From 381 to 1023 it is nothing more than a compilation of numerous sources which Sigebert copied literally, abridged, developed or corrected as he saw fit. After 1024 the work is more original. The *Chronicon* had numerous continuations. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, II, no. 2193.

Primat also referred to the *Miracula sancti Benedicti* by Adrevaldus, a monk of Fleury,¹⁹ and on one occasion to the *Chronicon S. Petri Senonensis* by Clarius, a monk of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif.²⁰ In addition to these, on one occasion — a mention of the death of the seneschal of Marseilles — he has consulted the *Chronicon Viridunense Hugonis abb. Flaviniacensis*.²¹ Of these three only the work of Adrevaldus furnished Primat with more than one incident. In light of this it is possible that Primat was working from a manuscript which simply contained excerpts from their work, and had not actually had access to their works.

Once the text of the *Grandes Chroniques* had reached the era of Charlemagne, MS 5925 furnished the best known account of his reign: Einhard's *Vita Karoli*. This work and the *Annales Francorum* are the main sources used to trace the history of Charlemagne's reign: their accounts are interwoven to present a comprehensive picture of the era. In light of the many studies of Einhard and the *Vita Karoli* little needs to be said. The most important points are that Einhard was

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 19 Adrevaldus (c. 814-878-79) a monk of Fleury, began the *Miracula sancti Benedicti* about 875. It includes an account of the beginnings of Fleury as well as descriptions of miracles from the time of Pepin to 878. Another monk added additional material for 878-79. cf. *Ibid.*, no. 832.

20 This work originally included an account from the birth of Christ up to 1120; and then was continued to 1124 by the author. It is believed that the author died shortly after 1124. In order to compile the work, Clarius looked to the *Liber pontificalis*, Hugues de Fleury, and local material including charters. The chronicle was continued to 1179 and then to 1267. cf. *Ibid.*, II, no. 1376.

21 Hugues de Flavigny was elected abbot of Flavigny in 1096. Some time before that, perhaps about 1090, he began to write a chronicle which would recount events from the birth of Christ to his own era. The work is divided into two books: the first ending about 1000; and the second completed to 1102. Many sources were consulted, but the use made of them was haphazard: there are many errors in fact and chronology. Nevertheless, the account has importance for the history of the east of France. cf. *Ibid.*, 2190.

present at the courts of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious and was therefore well placed to produce a biography of the Emperor. In spite of the fact that the *Vita Karoli* was patterned after Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* and his *Life of Augustus*, its value is not diminished. It is true that the great military figure of Charlemagne is the most outstanding aspect of the work, yet enough other facets are included to carry the work beyond the stage of being simply an account of a brave and heroic leader.

But the critical spirit that prompted Primat to use Einhard's work and the *Annales Francorum*, is somewhat dimmed by his inclusion of the legends of Charlemagne's supposed pilgrimage to Jerusalem and his exploits in Spain. It must be noted, however, that Primat should not be censured too heavily for this: these two accounts were accepted as early as the beginning of the Eleventh Century and were still popular during Primat's era.

The account of Charlemagne's pilgrimage to Jerusalem was written after the fiction was accepted: estimates on the date of its composition vary from the eleventh to the mid-twelfth centuries. The *Iter Hierosolymitanum* or *Descriptio*, found in MS 12710, may have been written in two parts: the first concerning Charlemagne's pilgrimage and the translation of the relics which he acquired to Aix; and the second recounting the translation of the relics to Saint-Denis. It is indeed thought that the idea behind the composition was to substantiate the veracity of the multitude of relics in the West and those possessed by Saint-Denis. Primat has followed the *Descriptio* for the most part, but the description of the transfer of the relics from

Aix to Saint-Denis is a bit different from that of the Latin text.²²

The best known of the two legends concerning Charlemagne, however, is the *Historia Karoli magni et Rotholandi* which tells of Charles's exploits in Spain and is found in MS 5925. As in the case of so many other works the nature of authorship of the *Historia Karoli* has long been in dispute — in spite of the fact that it was attributed to the so-called Turpin. What has emerged from the dispute is that it was probably written by a French author (now known as Pseudo Turpin) some time shortly before the middle of the Twelfth Century.²³ And as is well-known, it served as a basis for poetic and other romanticised works about the prowess of Charlemagne, throughout the Middle Ages.

The fact that Primat found the *Historia Karoli* in MS 5925 undoubtedly had much to do with its inclusion in the *Grandes Chroniques*; but we must admit that, given the popularity of it and that of the *Descriptio*, Primat could not omit them. Indeed he too probably fell under their spell; and he could not afford to neglect the popular accounts of the heroic deeds of Charlemagne.

As in the case of the portions of the *Grandes Chroniques* devoted to other monarchs, Primat had still other sources at hand that were not found in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, and drew on them for additional information. Thus, he derived the well known story of the

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²² The introduction to the third volume of Viard's edition of the *Grandes Chroniques* discusses the opinions on the origin of this work. *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, III, xi-xvi. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, no. 678.

²³ The varying opinions on the authorship of this work are surveyed in *Les Grandes Chroniques* III, xvi-xviii. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, no. 679.

two Scots who tried to sell knowledge in the market place from the *De gesta Caroli Magni libri duo* by a monk of Saint-Gallen. This *Gesta* is composed simply of a series of stories about the Emperor; and because of this it is of little real value. It was not a contemporary account: it was composed at the request of Charles le Gros sometime between 883 — the date of his visit to Saint-Gallen — and 887, the year of his deposition.²⁴

In addition to these sources, an incident concerning the monks of Saint-Martin-de-Tours was derived from a life of Saint Odon, the abbot of Cluny, written in the mid-Tenth Century by one of his followers. In actuality the event probably occurred after Charlemagne's reign and is only recorded as a demonstration of piety. Yet another source, the *Chronicon, sive Breviarium chronicorum de sex mundi aetatibus, ab Adamo usque ad annum 869*, provides Primat with information concerning relics given to Charlemagne.²⁵ Portions of this chronicle are found in MS 12710. It is also thought that Primat had at hand the *Annales Mettenses* which was compiled by a Carolingian partisan at about the end of the Ninth Century. The work, which includes the years 687 to 830, seems to have provided Primat with material parallel to that in his other sources, but in stretching the point a bit the editors of the *Grandes Chroniques* claim that only one short phrase was derived from it in the

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24 According to Molinier, the work was not completed: Book II is incomplete and Book III, although the author announces an intention of writing it, was never written. *Ibid.*, no. 650.

25 This work was a universal chronicle written by Adon the archbishop of Vienne, who died in 874. It was begun after Adon became archbishop in 860, material being derived from sources such as Bede, the *Annales Francorum*, the *Liber historiae*, and Einhard. cf. *Ibid.*, no. 806.

section devoted to Charlemagne.²⁶ Finally, among written sources, Primat continued to derive material from the *Chronicon* of Sigebert de Gembloux as well as a series of notes based upon the *Chronicon* and intended to serve as a basis of a new recension and a continuation of the work.²⁷

As already noted, Primat fell prey to the popular legends surrounding Charlemagne; and he used oral accounts as well. From them he derived allusions to the supposed exile of Charles in Spain when he was banished during his youth by his brothers,²⁸ as well as the place of the resettlement of Saxon families by Charlemagne.²⁹ Neither of these traditions can be substantiated; however, there is some merit in the latter.

After the death of Charlemagne and the accession of Louis the Pious, the Carolingian dynasty and the Empire began to weaken. The Empire under the rule of Louis the Pious still retained some of the vigour that had held it together during his father's reign, but after Louis's death it weakened rapidly.

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 26 'Post haec, Carolus ad Reganesburc venit, ibique marcas et fines Bajoariorum disposuit.' as contrasted with 'Avant que li rois retornast de cele voie, mist-il bones et devises, par le cors d'une iae, entre les Baiviers.' *Les Grandes Chroniques*, III, 15. The editors see the last phrase of the sentence as being related to the Latin sentence. *Ibid.*, 15, n. 5. On the *Annales Mettenses* see Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, no. 948.

27 *Supra*, p. 232 and n. 18.

28 'Car cil ne sont pas en memoire que il fist ou tens de s'esfance en Espagne entor Galaffre, le roi de Tholete.' *Les Grandes Chroniques*, III, 4.

29 'Touz les Saines qui habitent delà le flum d'Albe fist passer par de deça en France, et fames en enfanz. Lor país dona à une autre maniere de gent qui sont apelé Abrodite. De cele gent sont né et atrait, si com l'on dit, le Brebançon et li Flamenc, et ont encores aucuns cele meesme langue.' *Ibid.*, 100.

In order to present an account of the reign of Charlemagne's son, Primat turned to the *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* that he found in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. The *Vita Hludowici* was written after the death of the emperor by an anonymous chronicler. Few details are known about him: because of his interest in comets and similar phenomena he has been dubbed the Astronomer. For lack of a better name, the title is apt for his account of Louis the Pious is dotted with notations of comets, eclipses, storms etc. It is thought that the Astronomer was an ecclesiastic and at the end of the prologue of the *Vita Hludowici* he tells us that he was at Louis's court and witnessed some of the events that he recorded after Louis's death.³⁰ Although he obviously admired Louis, the Astronomer maintained some perspective when he recounted the problems that arose during the Emperor's reign. Only from 830 to 840, however, is his account original: from 778 to 814 he derived his material from an account of a nobleman — whether oral or written it provides a good record of Aquitaine during that period. The Astronomer then depended on the *Annales Francorum* from 814 to 829.

Primat has used the *Vita Hludowici* for almost all of the section covering the reign of Louis the Pious. In only three instances does he deviate from its text: he omits the prologue and the first two chapters; he inserts an episode — concerning the imprisonment of Louis at Saint-Médard de Soissons in 833 — by Odilon, a monk of that abbey;³¹ and at

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³⁰ 'Posteriora autem quia ego rebus interfui palatinis quae vidi et comperire potui stilo contradidi.' Further information on the Astronomer and his work is found in Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, no. 749.

³¹ This account was the last of three sections added to the account of the translation of the relics of St. Sebastian and St. Gregory to Saint-Médard, written in the 9th Century. cf. *Ibid.*, no. 767.

the end of Louis's life he adds a note that the relics of Saint Hippolyte and Saint Tiburce were brought to Saint-Denis during Louis's reign, deriving his material from a *Fragmentum historiae francicae a Ludovico pio ad usque ad Regem Robertum Hugonis Capeti filium*.

MS 5925 had provided Primat with material for the reign of Louis the Pious; however, for the period that followed the manuscript's contents left something to be desired. Nevertheless Primat used the collection which was given the title of *Gesta Regum Francia a morte Ludovici Pii ad mortem Philippi I*³² and augmented it with other accounts to which he had access. Either choosing to ignore it or not having it at hand, Primat made no use of Nithard's *Historiarum libri quatuor* which gave a well informed account of the civil war that raged from 840 to 843. Instead he neglects the turbulence of that period for the most part and covers the years 840 to 869 within the short space of one chapter.³³ The sources for the chapter are three in number: the *Historia regum Francorum monasterii Sancti Dyonisii* — a work which traces French history from the fall of Troy to 1108 with a continuation to 1137; the *Chronicon* of Adon, the archbishop of Vienne — which was employed before for a brief incident in the life of Charlemagne; and the *Annales Fuldenses* — which provides a brief comment on the number of fatalities at the battle of Fontenoy-en-Puisaye in 841.³⁴ It should

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³² *Supra*, p. 226.

³³ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IV, 164-171.

³⁴ The *Annales Fuldenses* (680-901) was the work of five authors, all but one members of the community of Fulda. They rely on the *Annales Laurissenses* to 771 and then become its continuation for the eastern part of the Empire. From 680 to 838 the account was compiled and written by Einhard (not the author of the *Vita Karoli*); from 838 to 863 they were composed by Rudulf of Fulda, the confessor of Louis the German, who is hostile toward Charles le Chauve; the third part from
(continued next page)

be noted that portions of the *Historia regum* and the *Chronicon* are found in MS 12710; while sections of the *Chronicon* as noted above are also contained in MS 5925.

The final eight years of Charles le Chauve's reign are covered by a lengthy section of thirteen chapters.³⁵ The majority of the material presented in these chapters is derived from the *Annales Bertiniani*,³⁶ which was also included in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*.

The exceptions to the use of the *Annales Bertiniani* for the last years of Charles's reign are found in Chapters XII, XIII, and XIV. The contents of Chapters XII to the end of the first paragraph of Chapter XIV are concerned with visions connected with Charles le Chauve. They are not found in MS 5925, but in MS 12710. The contents blandly tell of the visions that appeared to a monk of Saint-Denis and to a clerk at

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 (note 34 continued:)

863 to 882 was perhaps the work of Meginardus, disciple of Rudulf, or it may have been written at Mainz; no author can be traced for the account written at Fulda which stretches from 882 to 887 and is very anti-Charles le Gros; the final section, 887-901, was written not at Fulda, but in Bavaria. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, 803.

³⁵ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IV, 171-259.

³⁶ These *Annales* which seem to be the counterpart of the *Annales Fuldenses* for the west of the Empire were not the product of the abbey of Saint-Bertin: the title was simply derived from the place where the first manuscript was found. The first part (741-835) can be divided into two parts: up to 829 it is no more than a copy of the *Annales Laurissenses* and the continuation made to them, supposedly by Einhard, with some additions; after 829 it is an original but inaccurate composition by a supporter of Louis the Pious. The second section which includes the years 835 to 861 was the work of a Spaniard, Prudence the bishop of Troyes (obit. 861), who produced an exact and for the most part impartial account of that period. The third part (862-882) is thought to be a day by day account written by Hincmar, archbishop of Reims. It is believed that Hincmar also corrected some of the second section. Hincmar's contribution is considered the best source for the latter part of the 9th Century as well as a quasi-official chronicle of the government. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, I, no. 800.

Saint-Quentin in Vermandois, seven years after the death of Charles. In them he appeared to the men and demanded that his body be brought to Saint-Denis to be reburied. The request was granted. Chapter XIII recounts a vision supposedly seen by Charles during his lifetime; the account is interesting in that, while attributed to Charles le Chauve, it would seem to pertain to Charles le Gros instead: his father Louis, who was one of the speakers, is styled King and not Emperor and Lothaire is spoken of as Charles's uncle rather than his brother.³⁷ The final part taken from MS 12710 is found in the first paragraph of Chapter XIV. This account tells us of the great regard that Charles had for the Church and his generosity to Saint-Denis and other abbeys.

Charles was considered a great benefactor of Saint-Denis, thus it was natural that Primat should devote the remainder of Chapter XIV and therefore end his account of Charles's reign by enumerating his gifts to Saint-Denis in the form of property, relics, and jewels, completing the account with an inventory of the relics in the possession of the abbey. In order to acquire this information, Primat had only to consult the archives of the abbey.

Not only did Primat derive most of the material for the last years of the reign of Charles le Chauve from the *Annales Bertiniani*, but with few exceptions he continued to translate it to its end in 882.

The few exceptions were bits of material that he drew from the *Continuation of Aimoin*. After 882, however, he drew more heavily on the first continuation of Aimoin which covered the years 654 to 1015.

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³⁷ *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Tome VII, 147, n. d.

Nevertheless he also included material from other sources after 862. With the aid of the *Continuation of Aimoin*, and a bit of help from the *Annales Mettenses*, Primat managed to bring his account up to 898. After the death of Eudes and the accession of Charles the Simple, Primat flashes back to the election of Rollo as the leader of the Northmen.

The Ninth and Tenth Centuries witnessed the invasion of the Vikings in Northern Europe. From the *Annales Mettenses* Primat derived an account of their appearance in 884. But this was not the only source from which Primat drew material on the Northmen. Either from a genuine wish to present an account of the settlers of Normandy or because of the dearth of information on the later Carolingians — the latter seems more likely — Primat chose to intersperse his account of the later Carolingians with portions of the history of the Normans and their Dukes. For this information he relied on the *Historia Normannorum* by Guillaume de Jumièges. The author, who was a monk of the abbey of Jumièges, wrote the account after 1070 but before 1087, the date of the death of William the Conqueror to whom it was dedicated. Of the seven books, the first four are an abridged version of Dudon de Saint-Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normannorum*. Sometime before 1154 Robert de Torigny, a prior of Bec, added an eighth book and dedicated it to Henry I of England. Orderic Vital also made use of the work.³⁸ It was perhaps MS 12710 which gave Primat the idea of making use of the work of Guillaume de Jumièges, for the portions used by Orderic Vital are contained in that manuscript.

³⁸ cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, II, no. 1964 and also nos. 1962, 1973, and 2204.

Thus under the rubric of 'Ci commence l'estoire de Rolle qui plus fu apelez Roberz et des dus de Normandie, qui de lui descendirent' Primat begins to interpolate sections of the work of Guillaume de Jumièges (beginning with Chapter IX of Book II) with those of the *Continuation of Aimoin*. In this way he traces the adventures of the Northmen to 927 including the treaty of Saint-Claire-sur-Epte between Rollo and Charles the Simple. After this brief interlude Primat returns to the *Continuation of Aimoin* and discusses incidents concerning the monarchy, including the imprisonment of Charles the Simple and then the reign of Raoul. Interspersed, between these events and the return of Louis d'Outre-mer taken from the *Continuation of Aimoin*, are some things pertaining to the second Duke of Normandy, William Longsword. Yet another section from Guillaume de Jumièges reveals the aid that William Longsword gave to Louis and then continues to William's death; the imprisonment of his son Richard by Louis; and other Norman events to 946.

The early years of Lothaire's reign itself are treated in a cursory fashion and even then with a Norman slant because most of the attention is given to the affairs of Richard of Normandy. But some material is taken from the *Historia Francorum Senonensis* (688-1015), the name given to the end of the second recension of the *Historia ecclesiastica* by Hugues de Fleury (obit. c. 1120). The *Historia Francorum Senonensis*, which was used by Hugues de Fleury, was written between 1015 and 1034.³⁹ It is most valuable for its contents between 1000 and 1015 when the author seems to have been an eyewitness for many of the events that he records. Before 1000 the work, however, depends on

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³⁹ cf. *Ibid.*, 1373 and 2191.

ecclesiastical annals of Sens, the *Gesta Pontificum Remorum* and oral tradition. Yet Primat failed to realise its merits after 1000 and looked to it only briefly for some events between 954 and 959 and one in 978 (a battle between Lothaire and Otto II). The sections used by Primat are found in MS 12710. The account of the Carolingians ends with a short passage on the remainder of Lothaire's rule (from the *Continuation of Aimoin*) and then brief sections on Louis V and Charles, culminating in the coronation of Hugh Capet. In this way, by interweaving Norman and Carolingian sources, Primat managed to gather enough material for the reigns of the later Carolingians in spite of the fact that there were broad digressions.

Much the same thing can be said for the reigns of the early Capetians: Primat found a paucity of information for their reigns. Thus, he used the *Continuation of Aimoin* from MS 5925, and as before also interwove chapters from Guillaume de Jumièges's *Historia Normannorum* as well as the *Historia Francorum Senonensis*. These were supplemented for the reign of Robert II by a brief paragraph on the piety of the king, derived from an anonymous account concerning the relics of Saint-Denis⁴⁰ and charters made in favour of the abbey. It is undoubtedly true that Primat found these in the archives of Saint-Denis. And it is even more obvious that he failed to take into account or was not aware of the existence of the two main sources of Robert's reign: Raoul Glaber's *Historia libri quinque* and Helgaud's *Epitome vitae Roberti regis*.

When he came to the reign of Henri I, Primat continued to use a

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⁴⁰ Nothing more is known about this work. A fragment of it has been published in the midst of other works and lives of the saints which were of interest to Robert II. *Les Grandes Chroniques*, V, ix-x, n. 5.

combination of the *Historia Normannorum* and the *Continuation of Aimoin* until 1060. After that he ceased to rely on the Norman account and found additional material in a work by Hugues de Fleury, the *Liber qui modernorum regum Francorum continet actus* also known as the *Historia nova Francorum*,⁴¹ which traced French history from 842 to 1108 and was found in part in MS 12710. The work was composed after the marriage of Matilda, daughter of Henry I of England, to Emperor Henry V. In addition to this Primat consulted a work with the glorious title of *Detectio corporum macharii Areopagitae Dionysii sociorumque ejus quae facta est anno ab incarnatione Domini, plus minus circiter millesimo quinquagesimo, imperante apud Romanos Henrico Augusto, regnante apud Francos Henrico Roberti piissimi regis filio*. As implied this was written by Haymon, a monk of Saint-Denis, in defence of the authenticity of the relics of St. Denys and his companions against the claims of the monks of Saint-Emmèran (near Ratisbon). There in 1052 the monks had discovered the body of a man in the foundations of their church and subsequently claimed that it was of St. Denys. In reply Henri I and Hugh IV the abbot of Saint-Denis displayed the relics of St. Denys and his companions to the nobility and clergy on 9 June 1053. It is true that the account was written more than a century later, but it was based on the *procès verbal* of 1053 and the subject was a topical one: the tomb of St. Denys was opened in 1191 to refute opposition from the canons of Notre-Dame. The entire question of the fate of St. Denys continued to be of interest for it was cited again in 1410 when the dispute between the monks of Saint-Denis and the canons was renewed: the canons again claimed that they possessed the head of

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⁴¹ cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, no. 2191.

St. Denys.⁴²

Although the *Continuation of Aimoin* was used by Primat for the first portion of the reign of Philip I, the first forty years of his reign are treated very superficially. In fact some of the text is concerned with an account of the First Crusade and the repudiation of Philip's wife Berthe. Only when Primat had a more detailed source did he devote more attention to Philip's life. This came about when he could begin to use the material included in Suger's *Vita Ludovici grossi regis*. Thus, Primat relied on a popular and amplified source found in MS 5925 for the remainder of Philip's reign and all of that of Louis le Gros.

In Chapter I above, Suger and the *Vita Ludovici* have been discussed in detail and the authorship of the *Historia gloriosi regis Ludovici*, which traces the events of the reign of Louis VI, has also been mentioned.⁴³ The *Historia* indeed provides a very brief account of Louis's reign: of the twenty-eight chapters in the *Grandes Chroniques* devoted to his reign, only Chapters I and II plus part of III and XXII to XXVIII are derived from it.⁴⁴ Concerning the Crusade the *Historia* merely states that Louis took the Cross, left Paris, and returned. Thus, Primat was forced to look to another source for a discussion of Louis's adventures in the Holy Land.

For an account of the Crusade, Primat turned to the *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* by Guillaume de Tyr. The choice

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⁴² Reference to this has been made above in Chapters II, III, IV, and V. It is particularly important with reference to the position held by the Religieux.

⁴³ *Supra*, Chap. I.

⁴⁴ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VI, 1-14 and 64-86.

cannot be faulted: in spite of the existence of contemporary accounts of the Crusade by men such as Odo of Deuil, Guillaume de Tyr was well qualified to write such an account and acquainted with events in the Holy Land. Guillaume was born in the Kingdom of Jerusalem about 1130 and was later sent to study in Europe. After his return to the Holy Land, he became archdeacon of Tyr; undertook missions to Constantinople; served as chancellor of the kingdom; became archbishop of Tyr in 1175; and then attended the Lateran Council of 1179.

The *Historia rerum* was begun at the request of King Amaury between 1169 and 1173; but in spite of this date the work was an accurate one, for the offices that he held enabled him to have access to much relevant material. One does not know how Primat gained access to the work, but we do know that it was well known in the 13th Century by the very fact that it was translated into French at that time.

Again it must be noted that the *Historia gloriosi* and the *Historia rerum* were available through another (but unknown) source. Neither was found in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*: the account for the reign of Louis VII found in that manuscript was simply a translation into Latin of the portion covering Louis's reign in the *Grandes Chroniques* and inserted into MS 5925.⁴⁵ It must be noted that the account of the reign of Louis VII is disappointing — whether found in the *Grandes Chroniques* or MS 5925: the Crusade in the text takes up more than half of the space allotted to his reign in spite of the fact that it was only two years in length, while his efforts to extend his authority and the royal domain — a most important factor in the

⁴⁵ *Supra*, p. 227.

transition from feudal lord to king — are accorded little space in comparison to their importance and length of time.

The first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* ends with an account of the reign of Philip Augustus.⁴⁶ For the completion of this recension Primat needed to consult nothing more than Rigord's *Gesta Philippi*, and its continuations by Guillaume le Breton and an anonymous monk of Saint-Denis as found in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*.⁴⁷ The *Gesta Philippi* by Rigord has been discussed above and the work of Guillaume le Breton has been mentioned,⁴⁸ but more attention should be given to the latter. As noted before, Guillaume le Breton was a canon of Senlis and Saint-Pol-de-Léon who came into favour at Philip's court and was in fact entrusted with missions aimed at obtaining papal permission for the annulment of the King's marriage with Ingeborg. Philip's desires in this sphere were not fulfilled of course, but in spite of this Guillaume was entrusted with the education of Pierre Charlot, Philip's illegitimate son, and later became part of the king's entourage in the position of his chaplain. As such he witnessed many of the events that he recorded. Although both his *Gesta Philippi Augusti* and his poem the *Philippide* end after the battle of Bouvines, Guillaume indicates that he was aware of events of the first two years of the reign of Louis VIII. In light of this we must assume that the silence was self-imposed: the victory at the battle of Bouvines was Philip's crowning glory. In spite of this possible idea, the monks of Saint-Denis fortunately had the work of Guillaume le Breton at hand and added a continuation which stretched to 1223. As in the case of later

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⁴⁶ *Infra*, Chapter XII.

⁴⁷ *Supra*, p. 228.

⁴⁸ *Supra*, Chap. III.

chroniclers, who sought to please their patrons, Guillaume le Breton fell into the traps of partiality and flattery, yet the fact that he witnessed many of the events that he recorded makes his a valuable work and one worth continuing and including in the *Grandes Chroniques*.

As noted before, the first recension ended with an account of Philip Augustus. And, in spite of the fact that the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* for the moment contained no more material it was continued, probably under the direction of Guillaume de Nangis. By this time both the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* and the *Grandes Chroniques* were becoming quasi-official, and the fact that they should be continued was recognised.

The *Gesta Ludovici VIII*⁴⁹ was the first addition to MS 5925. As noted before, the work is a very superficial one, yet when Louis's reign is covered in the *Grandes Chroniques* it contains no addition of other pertinent material.

It must be assumed that the selection of material for inclusion in MS 5925 was left to the discretion of those who compiled it. But, as noted before, it is thought that Guillaume de Nangis was involved in its continuation. The simple fact that his *Gesta Ludovici IX* and *Gesta Philippi III* were included in MS 5925 would seem to indicate his involvement or at least the image that he had built up within the community. The fact that he was receiving remuneration for his work played no small part in the selection of his works for the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*. It should also be pointed out that few changes were made when the *Gesta Ludovici IX* was translated for inclusion in

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⁴⁹ *Supra*, p. 229.

the *Grandes Chroniques* for that king's reign.⁵⁰ But, later recensions made further changes in the section concerning Louis IX: in particular, editing or completely cancelling sections devoted to matters of Saint-Denis. This was indicative of a change in the recensors of the *Grandes Chroniques* that will be discussed in later chapters: a change from the monks of Saint-Denis to a recensor who was in the service of the king and for whom the affairs of Saint-Denis held little interest.

When an account of the reign of Philippe le Hardi was to be added to the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*, the monks, as noted above, copied Guillaume de Nangis's *Gesta Philippi III*. But, when the account was included in the *Grandes Chroniques* — unlike the sources for the reigns of other kings — it was not followed closely by its translators. Before this Primat and then his successor(s) had for the most part been content with literal translations of the Latin texts. But now the translators were in fact becoming authors in their own right: only twelve of the forty-five chapters devoted to Philippe le Hardi in the *Grandes Chroniques* are close, though free, translations of the *Gesta*; in the other chapters the framework of Guillaume de Nangis's work remains, but the text is either abridged or amplified at the translator's discretion.⁵¹

The *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* ends with the *Gesta Philippi*

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⁵⁰ For example, Guillaume de Nangis includes the first *ordonnance* made by Louis IX in 1254 to correct abuses perpetrated by his officials. The *Grandes Chroniques* uses the second *ordonnance* promulgated in 1256. *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VIII, 183-86. And while Guillaume devotes some space to Innocent IV's excommunication of Frederick II in 1245, the *Grandes Chroniques* gives only an abridged version. *Ibid.*, 110-11.

⁵¹ M. Viard has made a thorough study of this question: cf. *Ibid.*, viii and notes.

III.⁵² After this, the monks of Saint-Denis (and then their successors) who were charged with continuing the *Grandes Chroniques* became authors in their own right to an even greater extent than that found in the section devoted to Philippe le Hardi. As a basis for their work they followed the *Chronicon* of the indefatigable writer Guillaume de Nangis; and when his personal work — if one can call it that — ended they took the path of relying on the continuations of that work until 1340, and to a far lesser extent the continuation of the universal chronicle of Gérard de Frachet.

One might well ask why the monks of Saint-Denis chose this work. Gérard de Frachet (obit. 1271), in addition to the *Vitae fratrum*, and a history of the Dominican Order, composed a universal chronicle that to 1211 was little more than an abridgement of a chronicle of Robert of Auxerre. To this he added a very brief history of the Thirteenth Century to complete the account to 1266. In spite of the poor quality of the work it enjoyed great popularity. Saint-Denis possessed a copy of the work and it may be that Guillaume de Nangis consulted it during the course of his own writing.⁵³ Possibly because of the admiration on the part of one who was himself so admired by his brothers, the monks of Saint-Denis decided to continue it. The first continuation of Gérard de Frachet's work, which covers the years 1268 to 1285, was accomplished

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52 With the exception of the small leaves appended to MS 5925 and added at a later date, the correlation between the manuscript and the *Grandes Chroniques* ends: these leaves and their contents do not seem to bear a definite relationship to the manuscript as a whole. *Supra*, p. 223, n. 1.

53 It has been postulated that Guillaume consulted it for the composition of his *Chronicon*. *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VIII, xi-xii.

between 1285 and 1293⁵⁴ — during the life of Guillaume de Nangis. The second continuation (1285-1300) was composed at Saint-Denis and the third, 1300 to 1344, was then carried out by Richard Lescot, a monk of Saint-Denis, and completed about 1360.⁵⁵

Because the *Chronicon* and the *Continuation of Géraud de Frachet* are so similar it is almost impossible to distinguish from which the compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques* derived their material. With few exceptions, preference is given to Guillaume de Nangis's work and its continuations. Indeed the fact that the *Continuation of Géraud de Frachet* was consulted is affirmed by very simple things such as the inclusion of the name of the treasurer of the Templars in the *Grandes Chroniques*⁵⁶ — as found in the *Continuation of Géraud de Frachet* but omitted from the work of Guillaume de Nangis.

It is true that the recensors of the *Grandes Chroniques* were becoming more and more independent, but in addition to the above works and the documents available in their archives they relied on other sources of information both written and oral.

In addition to the two works mentioned above, the recensors of the *Grandes Chroniques* consulted Bernard Gui's *Flores chronicorum seu Cathalogus pontificum Romanorum* for the account of the recall of the

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⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁵⁵ Jean Lemoine, 'Richard Lescot, — un nouveau chroniqueur et une nouvelle chronique de Saint-Denis (1268-1364)', *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Comptes rendus*, xxiii (1895), 147-48. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, no. 2798.

⁵⁶ The name given is Jehan de Tur (Johannes de Turo). *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VIII, 278.

Jews by Louis X.⁵⁷ While, in the course of completing the section devoted to the reign of Philip V, the monks added additional information from Jean de Saint-Victor's *Memoriale historiarum*.⁵⁸ Thus, we see that the account of the coronation of Philip V follows that of the *Memoriale* more closely than the one found in the *Continuation of Guillaume de Nangis*;⁵⁹ this is also true of a paragraph devoted to Louis of Nevers;⁶⁰ the discussion of the peace treaty between Philip V and Louis of Nevers;⁶¹ and true of a section which puts forward the papacy's attitude toward a theological matter as well as noting the levy of a heavy tax by the Crown.⁶²

The *Grandes Chroniques* also contains accounts similar to those found in the *Chronographia regum Francorum*, the *Anciennes Chroniques de Flandre*, and the *Istore et chroniques de Flandres*. The first contains an account of the battle of Woeringen in 1287 similar to that found in the *Grandes Chroniques*.⁶³ It is accepted that the *Chronographia* was composed at Saint-Denis, but the date and the circumstances

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⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 320. Bernard Gui (c. 1261-1331) was a Dominican. The *Flores chronicorum*, which was but one of his many works, was begun about 1306. The first recension going to 1301 was completed in 1311. Further recensions take the work to 1301, 1315, 1319, 1320, 1321, 1327, and 1330 or 1331. In the *Flores chronicorum* Bernard showed a critical spirit unusual for his age throughout his works. In composing his work Bernard used not only other accounts of the period, but documents as well. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, III, 2844.

⁵⁸ This work included an account from the creation to 1322. Jean de Saint-Victor's (obit. 1351) work was begun in 1308. Until 1300 it is heavily dependent on the work of Guillaume de Nangis, but from that year to 1322 it is an original composition that reveals the talents of the author. A continuation in French to 1329 is added to some manuscripts of the *Grandes Chroniques*. cf. *Ibid.*, no. 2854.

⁵⁹ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VIII, 333-335.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 340-41.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 350-52.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 360-62.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 131-35.

are in dispute: it would in fact seem that the material common to the *Grandes Chroniques* and the *Chronographia* may have come from similar sources including texts which are no longer extant.⁶⁴ The *Anciennes Chroniques de Flandre* includes the account of the election of Adolph of Nassau in 1292 and the subsequent dispute over imperial lands claimed by Philippe le Bel.⁶⁵ Again the date and circumstances of its composition are disputed, and the similarities between it and the *Grandes Chroniques* may have also been the result of the use of a common or similar source.⁶⁶ Finally the expedition to Italy of Emperor Henry VII (he is styled '... roy de Lucembourg')⁶⁷ is similar to that found in the *Istorie et chroniques de Flandres*. This work does pre-date the account of the *Grandes Chroniques*: it was first compiled at some time after 1342 and was continued to 1383.⁶⁸ These three sources were related to one another, one being the source of the others or vice versa. The use of common material perhaps explains their similarity to the *Grandes Chroniques*: it has also been suggested that the *Grandes Chroniques* provided material for at least some of them.

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 64 The *Chronographia* is related to the abridged chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis until 1270, then it is a more developed work extending to 1405. There seem to be similarities between it and the *Chronique normande du XIV^e siècle*, the *Istorie de Flandres* and with the *Grandes Chroniques* themselves. It is possible that the work was composed at Saint-Denis between 1415 and 1429. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, IV, no. 3103.

65 *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, VIII, 158-591.

66 The *Anciennes chroniques de Flandre* are continued to 1384. The first part may have been derived from the *Istorie de Flandres* with some continuations from the *Chronique normande*. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, IV, no. 3459.

67 *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, VIII, 266-69.

68 The work was compiled first about 1342 and then continued to 1382. There are two recensions: the first, which is more detailed, includes the years 1250 to 1328; and the second was abridged, relying on the work of Badouin d'Avesnes from 1343 to 1383. The author-cum-compiler was from Flanders and probably from Saint-Omer. cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, III, no. 2891.

Among the other works which may have been consulted is what is now styled *Extrait d'une chronique d'anonyme finissant en MCCCLXXX*. In this work one finds a passage concerning a miracle that took place in Paris in 1290 which is similar to that found in the *Grandes Chroniques*:⁶⁹ but we have no way of knowing whether one account was derived from the other or if they have been taken from a common source. Yet another example concerns the shortage of salt in 1315:⁷⁰ this is not mentioned in the *Continuation of Guillaume de Nangis*, but it is similar to the accounts of the same subject found in the *Chronique anonyme finissant en 1328*⁷¹ and in the *Chronique anonyme de Saint-Martial de Limoges*.⁷² As in the previous case, however, the similarity does not mean a direct derivation. The monks of Saint-Denis were becoming authors and so they may have composed these two incidents from oral accounts. Such things as the charges against the Templars,⁷³ however, were derived from documents probably available in the archives of Saint-Denis.

All of the above works provided additional material for the reigns of Philippe le Bel, Louis X, and Philip V within the framework provided by Guillaume de Nangis's *Chronicon* and its continuation and the *Continuation of Géraud de Frachet*. Added to them is one final work that was used to complete the sections devoted to these kings. Between the mention of a great snowstorm in 1322⁷⁴ which was probably derived from

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⁶⁹ *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, VIII, 144-145.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 325.

⁷¹ There are continuations to 1340 and then to 1383. Molinier, *op. cit.*, III, no. 2855.

⁷² cf. *Ibid.*, II, 1469 and 1470.

⁷³ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VIII, 274-76.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 363.

memory and the announcement of Philip V's death (to which is appended the news of the victory of Edward II over his enemies — an account that is also found in the section devoted to Charles IV)⁷⁵ is an extended paragraph devoted to a miracle obtained through Saint-Denis by a servant of a Swedish scholar studying in Paris.⁷⁶ This account, which goes back to 1314, may be in that particular place because it had just come to the attention of the compilers: it was taken from a compilation including a history of the life of St. Denys; the miracles obtained through him; and a short history of France to the reign of Philip V made by Yves, a monk of the abbey, and presented to Philip V in 1317.⁷⁷

The monks of Saint-Denis had been using the *Continuations* of Guillaume de Nangis and Gérard de Frachet as their guide for some time and they continued to do this for the reign of Charles IV and then that of Philip VI, to some extent, until about 1340. Both of these sources were abridged, amplified, and translated as the compilers, now almost authors, saw fit. To them a few items are added for the reign of Charles IV from an anonymous continuation of the work of Jean de Saint-Victor.⁷⁸ Among the references to this continuation are an account of the succession dispute over the county of Flanders in 1322;⁷⁹ the problems of the King of France with the King of England and his men in Gascony;⁸⁰ the refusal of the pope to recognise the election of Louis of

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⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 366; and *Ibid.*, IX, 8-10.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, VIII, 363-65.

⁷⁷ cf. Molinier, *op. cit.*, III, 2847.

⁷⁸ *Supra*, p. 253; n. 58.

⁷⁹ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IX, 7-8.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 31-37.

Bavaria as Emperor;⁸¹ and the extension of a truce with the King of England in 1324.⁸²

As noted above, the *Continuation of Guillaume de Nangis* was consulted for the reign of Philip VI until the time that it was no longer continued there and passed into the hands of Jean de Venette.⁸³ More often, however, the monks turned to a source that was also readily available to them: a chronicle by a monk of Saint-Denis, Richard Lescot. Lescot is credited with a vast compilation in French reaching as far back as the reign of Philip Augustus.⁸⁴ But it was to his *Continuation of Géraud de Frachet* from at least 1300 to 1344 that the monks looked.

That this portion of the *Continuation of Géraud de Frachet* can be attributed to Lescot is based firstly upon the phrase in 1329 'In crastino Natalis Domini, ego frater Richardus Scoti in ecclesia Sancti Dyonisii monachus sum effectus';⁸⁵ and secondly upon the sense of unity within the section: no change of authorship can be noted. Although it is heavily dependent on the *Continuation of Guillaume de Nangis* for that period, M. Lemoine, Lescot's editor, believes that it was perhaps considered '... une sorte de rédaction définitive et officielle des *Chroniques latines de Saint-Denis*',⁸⁶ and in light of this he also believes that Lescot played some part in the recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* for that era.⁸⁷ It is true that Lescot was well-known within and without the monastery: he was accused of forgery by the canons of

.....
 81 *Ibid.*, 31-37.

82 *Ibid.*, 40-41.

83 *Supra*, p. 75.

84 Lemoine, *loc. cit.*, 145.

85 *Ibid.*, 143.

86 *Ibid.*, 148.

87 *Ibid.*

Notre-Dame in the course of the *Procès du chef de Saint Denis*⁸⁸ and he was called upon to write propaganda material in defence of the Valois claim to the throne. But yet we have no positive or even relevant material to show that Lescot was directly connected with the compiling of the *Grandes Chroniques*; and the nature and the extent of his work cannot serve to place him among those men whose work led from the simple position of *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* to *chroniqueur du royaume*. The continuation of a popular work such as that of Géraud de Frachet's — the first two continuations and the one from 1344-1364 were also accomplished at Saint-Denis — does nothing more to change our opinion. The consultation of his work by the recentors of the *Grandes Chroniques* can be given no special emphasis.

In addition to the *Continuations* of Guillaume de Nangis and Géraud de Frachet, some material for the reign of Philip VI was derived from the *Chronographia regum Francorum*, the *Anciennes chroniques de Flandre* and the *Istore et chroniques de Flandres* discussed above.⁸⁹ To them can be attributed such things as the account of Philip's campaign against

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Item et n'a grantement, car c'est du temps de plusieurs qui encore vivent et qui en saront bien parler quant mestier sera, qu'il y eust un desdits religieux, nommé frère Richard l'Escot, lequel ne savoit rien de science quelconques fors seulement qu'il estoit gramarien; et pour ce qu'il savoit ung pou rimer et versifier, il cuidoit bien estre un très grant clerc et, à [c]este occasion, il fist et multiplia mout de celles escriptures très nicement et bien clérement faictes et dictées, et par lesquelles il peut apparoir, que il n'estoit ne saiges ne bon clerc, et n'est pas chose ne bonne ne raisonnable que on doie avoir aucun regart à teles volontaires et foles escriptures.

H.-François Delaborde, 'Le Procès du chef de Saint Denis en 1410', *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, xi (1884), 398.

⁸⁹ *Supra*, p. 253, nn. 64, 66, and 68.

the Flemish in 1328;⁹⁰ the arrival of messengers from the King of England at the French court;⁹¹ a discussion of the relations between the Flemish and Edward III;⁹² etc.

After 1344 even more than since 1340 the monks of Saint-Denis became their own masters in composition. One can of course find similarities between the material they recorded and other works, but positive identification is no longer feasible: what material they did consult was treated in their own way, order, etc. But a word of caution must be inserted: in spite of this change, they continued to use the documents at their disposal and incorporate them into their text.

After the end of the account of Philip VI the *Grandes Chroniques* lay dormant for many years. When it was continued it was the work of the Chancellor Pierre d'Orgemont and not the monks of Saint-Denis. D'Orgemont's recension is found in B.N. *ancien fonds* (fr.) MS 2813; its continuation stretches from 1350 to 1377 with blank pages at the end, possibly for further additions. Some changes were made to the earlier recensions, but for the most part it remained as the monks of Saint-Denis had compiled it. For the years 1350-1377 d'Orgemont no longer relied on Latin sources; instead he composed his material as he saw fit with propaganda value in mind. Thus, the Jacquerie and the actions of Etienne Marcel are written from the viewpoint of the Crown; and this is also true of the breaking of the Treaty of Brétigny. And so it goes, ending with some brief notes of which the latest refer to November 1380.

⁹⁰ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IX, 8-10.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 142-45.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 162-66.

After d'Orgemont's work was finished the *Grandes Chroniques* remained as they had been until the first printed edition in 1477. Although there was an account available for the reign of Charles VI by the Religieux, it was ignored and the printed edition instead covered the king's reign by reference to two works which needed no translation: the *Histoire de Charles VI* by Jean Juvenal des Ursins and the *Chronique du roi Charles VII* by Gilles le Bouvier, le héraut Berry. Jean Juvenal's work, which was written about 1431, was an abridgement of the Religieux's chronicle with additions pertaining for the most part to his family. It was the first part of this work that was used for an account of the reign of Charles VI from 1380 to 1402. The choice of the *Chronique* of Gilles le Bouvier for the years 1402 to 1422 can be questioned. It is in fact a panegyric of Charles VII, whom he served as dauphin and king; but in opposition to this one must note that because of his position he was well-informed and was able to give details of many of the events of the war.

Finally the first printed edition turned to the work of the *chroniqueur du royaume*, Jean Chartier, and his *French Chronicle* for the details of the reign of Charles VII. A French work by an appointee of the king had finally found a place in the official history of the Kings of France.

This was not the end of the *Grandes Chroniques*, but after the first printed edition their character again changed. Later editions based their accounts of the reigns of Louis IX and Charles VIII on a translation of Robert Gaguin's work; while still others were the result of the editing of the Humanistic *historiographes du roi*. The stamp of Saint-Denis had faded; not to be revived until pretensions were forgotten and the value of the work as originally compiled was realized.

CHAPTER XII

THE ORIGIN OF THE *GRANDES CHRONIQUES DE FRANCE*
AND ITS RECENSIONS

The *Grandes Chroniques*, in spite of the importance it has in the literature and history of France, is surrounded by many mysteries. We can trace its sources to the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* as well as to auxiliary works with a reasonable degree of accuracy and determine the bias of its recensors; but as already noted we cannot establish the exact connection between the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* (and later *historiographe du roi*) and the *Grandes Chroniques*. Added to the latter is the question of the origin of the *Grandes Chroniques*: who conceived the idea of its compilation; by whose order was it begun; and when was it begun?

During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries the savants of France argued this question. Their conclusions ranged widely: some saw it as being related to the translation of the *Historia regum Francorum* made by the anonymous Ménéstrel d'Alfonse de Poitiers, which was continued to the accession of St. Louis: they assumed that the work of the Ménéstrel was an early recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* or was at least its basis. Others maintained that it was the work of Abbot Mathieu de Vendôme; and still others assumed that the *Grandes Chroniques* was first compiled by Guillaume de Nangis and presented to Philippe le Bel.¹

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¹ M. Wailly in presenting his own ideas on this subject has also reviewed the hypotheses of other historians. Natalis de Wailly, 'Examen de quelques questions relatives à l'origine des Chroniques de Saint-Denis', *Mémoires de l'Académie royale des inscriptions et belles lettres*, xvii, 379-407.

In their arguments on these and other points, many of the critics have neglected the simple and obvious evidence presented in the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* itself. It is probable that the first compiler of the *Grandes Chroniques* was aware of the work of the Ménestrel, for part of the prologue of the *Grandes Chroniques* is similar to that of the Ménestrel. It must be noted, however, that other parts of the prologue of the *Grandes Chroniques* were taken from Aimoin's prologue to his *Historia Francorum*, which was slavishly followed by the first recensor.

The first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* is represented today by MS 782 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.² On leaf 326^v of this manuscript is found a miniature representing the presentation of the manuscript to the king. The miniature depicts the king with crown and sceptre, seated on his throne, receiving the manuscript from a kneeling monk in black. The monk seems to be directed in the presentation by an abbot who is followed by three other Benedictines. At the right of the king are five witnesses. The miniature — aside from its decorative value — is important for the setting that it represents: the presentation is being made by a lowly Benedictine, and not the abbot. From this we may assume that the monk had some part in the recension of the manuscript. This, however, is not enough to refute the idea that the abbot was the recensor, and the monk the copyist.

The transference of the roles of monk and abbot is, however, refuted by the verses that follow the miniature, which have been cited before:

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² The manuscript is composed of 374 leaves, but the text of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* is found on ff. 1-326^v.

Phelippes, rois de France, qui tant i es renomez,
 Ge te rent le romanz qui des rois est romez.
 Tant a cis travallié qui Primaz est nomez
 Que il est, Dieu merci, parfaiz et consummez.³

As has already been noted,⁴ the name Primaz was the centre of discussion and speculation until 1866 when, through M. Meyer's discovery of Jean de Vignay's translation of Primat's chronicle, the controversy was ended. After that time Primat could no longer be thought of as a nom-de-plume for Mathieu de Vendôme, nor as a simple copyist. From then on, Primat was recognised both as an author and the compiler and translator of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

For those who did not recognise Primat as a name, but rather a title or label, M. Meyer's discovery altered the dating of the first recension as well as the reasons for beginning such a work and for identifying the person who suggested it.

In the prologue to the *Grandes Chroniques* the recensor stated:

Pour ce que pluseurs genz doutoient de la genealogie
 des rois de France, de quel original et de quel lignie
 ils ont descendu, enprist il ceste ouvre à fere par le
 commandement de tel homme que il ne pout ne ne dut
 refuser.⁵

Thus, the recensor gave a reason for beginning the work and later added:

Si puet chascuns savoir que ceste ouvre est profitable à
 fere pour fere cognoistre aus vaillanz genz la geste des
 rois et por mostrer à touz dont vient la hautece dou monde;
 car ce est exemples de bone vie mener, meismement aus rois
 et aus princes qui ont terres à gouverner; car I vaillans
 mestres dit que ceste estoire est mireors de vie.⁶

³ Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève MS 782, f. 326^V and *Les Grandes Chroniques*, ed. Jules Viard, VI, 376. Unless otherwise indicated reference will be made to this printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

⁴ *Supra*, Chapter III.

⁵ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, I, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

The phrase 'de tel homme que il ne pout ne ne dut refuser', however, tells us nothing more than that a man of some importance had commanded that the *Grandes Chroniques* be begun. Indeed it may have been the king or abbot: Primat would have been subject to the commands of both. There can be no doubt that Mathieu de Vendôme played some part in this; but the reasons given for undertaking the task point to one who had a special interest in the history of the kings of France: the king himself. But which king? The verses at the end of the text of MS 782 tell us that Philip was the king. Was it Philippe le Hardi or his successor Philippe le Bel?

The text of the *Grandes Chroniques* produces evidence that reveals the answer. In the course of the account of Philip Augustus, Primat retraces the genealogy of the monarchs from the era of Pharamond, ending with the comment:

Après le bon roi Phelippe, Looyz qui fu morz à Monpancier
 au retor d'Avignon. Cil Loys engendra le saint homme Looyz
 qui fu morz au siege de Thunes. Cist sains Looyz engendra
 le roi Phelippe qui or regne en l'an de Incarnation
 M CCL XXIIII.⁷

Thus he indicated at that stage — almost at the end of the first recension — that Philippe le Hardi was the monarch.

Evidence — however circumstantial — seems to indicate that 'tel homme' referred to in the prologue was indeed Louis IX and not Philippe le Hardi. The year 1274 was only four years after Philippe le Hardi's accession; and that short period would have scarcely been enough time for the material of the *Grandes Chroniques* to have been translated and compiled.

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⁷ *Ibid.*, VI, 141.

We must also take into account the fact that the *Grandes Chroniques* correspond to the outlook of Louis IX and give some indication of the state of learning during his reign. Louis was genuinely interested in the history of his ancestors; Guillaume de Nangis states that Louis had the tombs of the kings of France, found at Saint-Denis, put in order according to their dynasties. In addition to this, we might note that this was not the only direct contact with Saint-Denis: Mathieu de Vendôme, under whose direction the *Grandes Chroniques* may have been undertaken, was both confessor and confidant of Louis IX.

One final bit of evidence indicates that Louis IX was interested in making educative material available to non-Latin readers: in the *Vita sancti Ludovici*, Geoffroi de Beaulieu states that Louis had books familiar to him translated for the benefit of the members of his entourage who did not read Latin.⁸

Thus, the concept of the *Grandes Chroniques* seems indicative of Louis IX's ideas. However, two portions of the Latin verses that follow the French ones toward the end of MS 782 have puzzled critics and have led them to deny Louis's part in the formation and also the dating of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*. The first states:

Sancta patris vita per singula sit tibi forma
Menteque sollicita sub eadem vivito norma.⁹

The use of the phrase 'sancti patris' has made it difficult for

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⁸ Quando studebat in libris et aliqui de familiaribus suis erant praedentes qui litteras ignorabant, quod intelligebat legendo, proprie et optime noverat coram illis transferre in gallicum de latino.

Ibid., VIII, xi.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, 377.

historians to reconcile the ideas of Louis IX with the presentation of the *Grandes Chroniques* to his son, Philippe le Hardi: Louis was not canonised until 1297. Indeed the phrase has provided an exit for those who refuse to regard internal evidence such as '...qui or regne en l'an de Incarnation M CCL XXIIII',¹⁰ as indicative of the work being completed during the reign of Philippe le Hardi. In effect, those critics are stating that 'sancti patris' could be a laudatory term applied to any king's reign including that of Philippe le Hardi's.¹¹

These same Latin verses are also connected with a dispute over the final leaves of MS 782. As noted in the previous chapter, the first recension ended with the translation of Rigord's *Gesta Philippi*. However, after the French and Latin verses, MS 782 concludes with a translation of the *Gesta Sanctae Ludovici regis Franciae* by Guillaume de Nangis. This has led historians to give varying interpretations to a portion of the Latin verses that precede it:

Ut bene regna regas per que bene regna reguntur,
Hec documenta legas que libri fine sequuntur:
Ut mandata Dei serves prius hoc tibi presto,
Catholice fidei cultor devotus adesto.¹²

Although the *Gesta Sanctae Ludovici* that now ends that manuscript is of a later date, the question arises: what was found in its place beforehand? Several opinions are offered. M. Molinier saw the phrase as a reference to the *Enseignements* of St. Louis — directed toward his son — the word *documenta* having been applied to the *Enseignements* during that era. He felt that they were found at the end of MS 782,

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¹⁰ *Supra*, p. 264.

¹¹ Wailly, *loc. cit.*, 394-95.

¹² *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VI, 376-77.

but later lost.¹³ M. Meyer, however, maintained that the words referred to a following translation of Primat's Latin account of the reign of St. Louis that now exists only in the translation made by Jean de Vignay.¹⁴ A third interpretation was put forward by M. Brosien and M. Levillain who felt that the phrase simply referred to the verses that followed.¹⁵

All of these interpretations have their merit, but one must ask why Primat did not include a translation of his own account of Louis IX's reign within the body of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*. As noted in the previous chapter, Primat followed the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* very closely, which during Primat's era ended with Rigord's *Gesta Philippi*. It was perhaps simply for this reason that Primat went no further in the first recension. It might also be true that Primat had not yet completed his own account of the reign of Louis IX. Later, a translation of Guillaume de Nangis's *Gesta Sanctae Ludovici regis Franciae* was appended in an attempt to continue the recension — albeit without an account of Louis VIII. With these points in mind, the phrase 'Hec documenta etc.' can logically be seen as referring to the rest of the Latin verses:

Sancta patris vita per singulis sit tibi forma
Menteque sollicita sub eadem vivito norma.
Ductus in etatem sis morum nectare plenus

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¹³ Molinier, *Sources de l'histoire...*, III, no. 2530. For further information on the *Enseignements* see Paul Viollet, 'Les enseignements de saint Louis à son fils. Réponse à M. Nat. de Wailly et observations pour servir à l'histoire critique des Grandes Chroniques de France et du texte de Joinville', *BEC*, xxxv (1874), 1-56.

¹⁴ Paul Meyer, 'Rapport sur une mission littéraire en Angleterre', *Archives des Missions scientifiques et littéraires*, ser. 2, iii (1866), 266-70.

¹⁵ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VI, 376-77, n. 2.

Fac geminare genus animi per nobilitem.
 Si iudex fueris, tunc libram dirige juris,
 Nec sit spes eris, nec sit pars altera pluris.
 Et si bella paras in regni parte vel extra,
 Certe litus aras nisi dapsilis est tibi dextra.
 Cor quorum lambit sitis eris, unge metallo;
 Non opus est vallo quem dextera dapsilis ambit.
 Clamat inops servus, moveat tua viscera clamor,
 Nec minuatur amor dandi si desit acervus.
 Non te redde trucem cuiquam, nec munere rarum,
 Murus et arma ducem nusquam tutantur avarum
 Militibus meritis thesauri claustra resolve
 Allice pollicitis, promissaque tempore solve.¹⁶

Thus, we must accept the following facts about the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*: it was begun at the request of Louis IX; that several years of compiling material to add to that found in the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* preceded the beginning of the recension; that the recension itself was probably begun during Louis's reign and continued through the first years of the reign of Philippe le Hardi; that MS 782 was completed by the copyist and illuminator sometime after 1274, but before 1285; and that it was dedicated to Philippe le Hardi to whom Primat also addressed some lines for his edification.

As was noted in the preceding chapter, the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* provided Primat with a framework and the major sources for the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Initially Primat seems to have been unsure as to how to approach this mammoth task: at the outset the translation is a literal one, with occasional omissions of words or misinterpretations of them. On occasions it is obvious that Primat had also at hand a different copy of the work that he was translating: at times the version found in the *Grandes Chroniques* of even a single word differs from the rendition of MS 5925. This is true

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¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 377.

throughout the first recension.

Gradually Primat became more confident in carrying out his task: he became a bit more than a translator and imposed some of his own ideas on his material; he introduced additional material from other sources not found in MS 5925 — as indicated in the preceding chapter; he rearranged the material available; and exercised some critical judgment in excluding or limiting information (accounts of the popes and Eastern Emperors, for example) that was not directly related to the kings of France.¹⁷ Yet, Primat was not able to realise that in his text there were repetitions; and in the end very few portions of the Latin texts in proportion to the French text are omitted. Indeed in some cases one can question why Primat has abbreviated or omitted these accounts: most were certainly not detrimental to the public image of the monarchy or offensive to any other person.

On the other hand, one finds the excesses of the monarchy depicted: the bloodshed, murders, battles, and other tragedies found in Primat's sources were transferred to the text of the *Grandes Chroniques*. But it must be noted that Primat has forewarned his readers of this in the prologue: that the account would reveal both the good and the bad for the edification of his readers.¹⁸

As can be deduced from the discussion above, Primat's work gives us both good and bad examples of editing: on one hand he was not the most careful or meticulous of translators — in fact at times he was

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¹⁷ M. Viard and his colleagues have clearly indicated changes made by Primat in their edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

¹⁸ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, I, 2-4.

simply careless; but in opposition to this one can note that when Primat has found himself on a tangential matter, through the use of a transition, he indicates that he and his reader should return to the mainstream of the history of the kings of France. And if his sources are deficient, he admits that he knows nothing more about the subject.

On the question of chronology, Primat was also deficient: he tends to ignore the indications given in his sources and strikes out on his own. In an attempt to guide his reader, Primat does supply dates for certain events — many being relatively accurate. But in the case of others, Primat seems to be unwilling to number each year: he may have been trying to avoid turning the *Grandes Chroniques* into the form of an annal. Although many of his sources were annals, Primat, rather than preface each entry with the appropriate date, has instead resorted to phrases such as 'En cele année', 'un poi après' etc. The fact that he has in many cases combined events of several years, rather than break the flow of his narrative, frees Primat from complete censure.

Finally it should be noted that one can see when Primat's source changes. Primat's translations were for the most part literal. Thus the tenor of the *Grandes Chroniques* changes as well: the words used in the translation may be the same, but the text has a different feeling. And in addition it must be pointed out that when Primat reached the account of the later Carolingians, with its paucity of sources, he deserted his original outline as indicated in the list of chapters and, without cancelling them, assumed a new plan with the addition of material from sources other than those found in MS 5925.

After Primat ended the account of Philip Augustus, the first recension (now MS 782) was complete and presented to Philippe le Hardi.

This, however, was not the end of the *Grandes Chroniques*: it was continued. One must use the word continued, for until 1350 the monks of Saint-Denis simply added to Primat's recension, although not to the original manuscript.

The part that Guillaume de Nangis played in the continuation is difficult to ascertain. Whoever undertook the task of continuing the *Grandes Chroniques* exercised some editing of the Latin source. Guillaume de Nangis can perhaps be credited with the inclusion of his accounts of Louis IX and Philippe le Hardi in MS 5925, but one can question how closely he was connected with the continuation of the *Grandes Chroniques*: perhaps Guillaume when using French was able to overcome to a great extent the verbosity and shaky diction we see in his Latin recensions: the division into chapters is more sensible than in Guillaume's *Gesta Ludovici* and *Gesta Philippi*; items detrimental to the king's image are forgotten or explained away — even Charles of Anjou receives light treatment.

As noted in the preceding chapter, Guillaume de Nangis's accounts of Louis IX and Philippe le Hardi were treated in two different ways by those who continued the *Grandes Chroniques*: the contents of the *Gesta Ludovici* are followed closely and few changes are made in the course of translation; but when they came to the inclusion of Guillaume's *Gesta Philippi III* they began to amplify and abridge the account as they saw fit. These two different methods of treating those accounts may give us an indication of who might have been involved in the continuation. In fact, Guillaume de Nangis may himself have supervised the translation of his *Gesta Ludovici* — which might explain why few changes were made. But work on the account of Philippe le Hardi and

the manner in which it was handled would seem to indicate that it was under the direction of another. Although there is no positive evidence, this may have been done shortly before or after Guillaume's death in about 1300. Because of his stature in the community and the availability of his *Gesta Philippi* the monks continued to consult it. But, without the direction of Guillaume himself they were under no obligation to translate it verbatim.

Whoever these nameless monks of Saint-Denis were, they do at first seem to approach this change in their task with some fear and trepidation: they were unfamiliar with the idea of continuing the *Grandes Chroniques* on their own without literal translation. Initially the compilers seem to have had difficulty in accomplishing their task and also give evidence that without stern direction — as may have been provided by Guillaume — they were confused at times. Yet why did they not return to the old method of literal translation? Once they realised the advantages of being their own masters, it may be that they gained confidence — much of their material being within living memory. At the beginning, the account of Philippe le Hardi was dull and plodding; but as they became used to the techniques involved they became able to produce a creditable account. It must again be emphasised, however, that the *Gesta Philippi* continued to provide a frame of reference for their work.

Although they had broken the practice of literal translations of a Latin source, the monks found it difficult not to rely on some work as an outline of their material. They were familiar with the output of Guillaume de Nangis; thus for the reign of Philippe le Bel they turned to Guillaume's *Chronicon* and its continuations. Initially they

seem to have had some difficulty in handling the *Chronicon*: the text of the *Grandes Chroniques* becomes choppy, and episodes derived from it are not always in a logical order. Added to these deficiencies, the monks' sense of proportion and accuracy of recall seem to have gone astray: at times the account seems to be anything but an account of Philippe le Bel and his reign; and items such as the canonisation of Louis IX are repeated.

One of the greatest problems confronting those who were to continue the *Grandes Chroniques* after the death of Philippe le Hardi was the conflict between the king and the various arms of the Church. There had been conflicts between the kings of France and the Church before this, but never on the scale of those which occurred between Philippe le Bel and Boniface VIII — and later the Templars. The account of the initial confrontation between king and pope was obviously written before the entire conflict had run its course with Clement absolving Philippe from any responsibility for the fate of Boniface. It is difficult to set an approximate date for the composition of this section of the *Grandes Chroniques*, but it is not impossible to show that it was begun before Philippe was absolved.

One of the main problems is the supposition, discussed earlier,¹⁹ that the account of the reign of Philippe le Hardi as found in the *Grandes Chroniques* was undertaken shortly before or after the death of Guillaume de Nangis. It is indeed possible that the monks of Saint-Denis might have been able to finish the account of the short reign of Philippe le Hardi (1270-1285) before 1306 and begin that of Philippe le Bel. Thus the dispute with Boniface over clerical taxation (Edward

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¹⁹ *Supra*, pp. 271-272.

I was also a target for Boniface's diatribes), which occurred in 1297, could have been recorded before the 1306 absolution was announced.

Because they were unaware of the outcome, those charged with the composition of the *Grandes Chroniques* for that period abbreviated the account of the first confrontation and trod very gingerly, not knowing the result, but subtly indicated that Philippe le Bel was correct. Not until the meeting of the Estates does Boniface receive heavy censure. In fact this may have been written long after the event: when the compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques* were far enough away from the event to have seen Philippe le Bel's victory and therefore to justify his actions. Up until that time the monks of Saint-Denis held the contest at arm's length — their loyalties were divided between the Church and their patron, the king.

Once they had decided on the proper course (that of following the king) their accounts of Boniface and the episode at Agnani are strong and outspoken. In fact his death is treated in an off-handed manner and the posthumous trial is recounted accurately — at least from the French point of view.

It is here that the real propagandist role of the *Grandes Chroniques* emerges: the establishment of Clement in Avignon is treated as a matter of fact and the right of the pope to determine the suitability of the person chosen as emperor is considered proper.

Yet the complete concept of propaganda was not yet realised and used. For example the disbanding of the Templars at the instigation of Philippe le Bel is scattered throughout the text. The terms used are strong, but the compilers, in an attempt to present a chronological

narrative, have weakened their account.

As noted in the previous chapter, the monks of Saint-Denis followed the pattern of the *Continuation of Guillaume de Nangis* until 1340 when the continuation was taken over by Jean de Venette.²⁰ After the end of the *Continuation of Guillaume de Nangis* they became their own masters. When the compilers are contemporary with their accounts they seem to find it more difficult to present a coherent narrative. The Popes at Avignon are treated in an off-handed manner, with no questions being raised about their presence there.

Also, as might be expected, they took some interest in the Hundred Years' War. But there is little continuity in the monks' reporting of the war: the English are hated and censured, and the compilers support the Salic Law — although Edward's claims are never clearly stated. On the other hand, French defeats are justified: in fact the defeat at Crécy is blamed on poor advice given to the King by his advisors, and it is emphasised that Philip did not flee, but sedately left the field. But it must be noted in general that the account of the Hundred Years' War is restrained — possibly because its impact had not yet been felt.

Many of the manuscripts of the *Grandes Chroniques* end at the close of the reign of Philip V; others at 1340; and still others at about 1350.²¹ As noted above, the continuation made by the monks of Saint-Denis ended about 1350 — the death of Philip VI.

The character of the *Grandes Chroniques* had changed many times before owing to a change of source or change of compiler. But after

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²⁰ *Supra*, p. 75.

²¹ *Infra*, p.418.

1340 there is an abrupt change: in fact the character of the account changes — the compilers still give a chronological account, but the treatment of the material changes in that it seems more official. Several reasons can be given for this abrupt change. The task of the continuation of the *Grandes Chroniques* may have been taken over by another monk; but judging from the allusions to Saint-Denis, the compiler was still a member of the community of Saint-Denis. It must be noted that he seems to have had pretensions to originality. This may have been where Richard Lescot fitted into the scheme as Lemoine has suggested.²² One must also note that the continuation from 1340 to 1350 may have been given additional patronage by the king: he had finally come to realise the propaganda value of the work; and because of the Hundred Years' War and its course until 1350 the compiler saw a need to make some concessions in the account that would put Philip VI's actions in a prominent or obscure place as necessity demanded. Thus, although the account of the war to 1350 is not heavily underlined, Philip is given credit for being wise in his actions, or the blame is placed on others. This use of the *Grandes Chroniques* was an omen of things to come: the *Grandes Chroniques* came to be one of the propaganda instruments of the Crown.

When one turns to the years after 1350, one can no longer speak of a continuation of the *Grandes Chroniques*: Instead one must speak of a new recension. A manuscript of the British Museum, Royal MS 16 G VI²³, is actually a prototype for at least part of the new

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²² Jean Lemoine, 'Richard Lescot — un nouveau chroniqueur et une nouvelle chronique de Saint-Denis (1268-1364)', *Académie des Inscriptions et belles-lettres, Comptes rendus*, xxiii (1895), 145.

²³ This manuscript, copied during the first quarter of the Fourteenth Century, contains 447 leaves.

recension. This manuscript contains the *Grandes Chroniques* up to the death of St. Louis, but its table of contents, added at a slightly later date, indicates that the complete manuscript should end at the death of Charles V. Indeed what we must assume is that the completion of the manuscript is found in another of the British Museum's manuscripts: Royal MS 20 C VII²⁴ which concludes with a very brief account of the reign of Charles VI. Both manuscripts have been signed by their English owners: MS 16 G VI by the Duke of Gloucester:

Ceste livre est à moy Homfré,
duc de Gloucestre, du don
les excecuteurs le s. de Fauuhey.²⁵

And MS 20 C VII contains the signature of Richard Duke of Gloucester — later Richard III.²⁶ On the basis of this evidence we must assume that both manuscripts were in English hands during the Fifteenth Century.

There is, however, an important difference between the two manuscripts. MS 16 G VI was obviously copied about the middle of the Fourteenth Century — with the exception of the table of contents; while the other was probably copied about the end of the same century.

One might well ask what is the importance of MS 16 G VI for the study of the recensions of the *Grandes Chroniques*. The answer is twofold: the text itself is representative of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* — with the addition of a translation of the life of Louis from Guillaume de Nangis's *Gesta Ludovici*. Secondly, MS 16 G VI is important because of the additions found in its margins and

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²⁴ MS 20 C VII, probably copied during the late Fourteenth Century, comprises 216 leaves.

²⁵ B.M. Royal MS 16 G VI, f. 443^r.

²⁶ B.M. Royal MS 20 C VII, f. 134^r.

added not too long after the manuscript was copied — additions that range from a few words to extended phrases.

M. Delisle, who has carefully studied MS 16 G VI, has noted that the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* also contains marginal additions which fall into three categories.

(1) Notes that are derived from consulting another recension of Aimoin and those who continued his work: a recension different from that contained in B.N. lat. MS 5925. The annotator has in effect compared the different accounts and has indicated their differences. The recension to which the annotator had access seems to have been one held at Saint-Germain-des Prés: he says for example, 'Vide in cronicis Sancti Germani ista etc' or he uses similar terms.

(2) The annotator also indicates in MS 5925 the chapter divisions and the changes in the order of its material as found in the first recensions of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

(3) Also in the margins of MS 5925 are found some French words taken from the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*, indicating the manner in which they have been translated into the vernacular. In fact some represent the incorrect translation found in the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*.²⁷

Many of the additional phrases taken from the recension of Aimoin and his continuation as found in the manuscript of Saint-Germain-des-Prés have become additions to the margins of MS 16 G VI. This would seem to indicate that after MS 16 G VI was copied, an annotator —

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²⁷ Leopold Delisle, 'Notes sur quelques manuscrits du Musée Britannique', *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, iv (1878), 191-212. B.M. Royal MS 20 C VII is also discussed in this article. *Ibid.*, 212.

having both MSS 5925 and 16 G VI at hand — made notes on the margins of both manuscripts, indicating in MS 5925 the Latin phrases found in what he calls the *cronica Sancti Germani* and then translating them into the margins of MS 16 G VI.

One indeed wonders why such trouble was taken to annotate both MSS 5925 and 16 G VI. Although it is not as richly illuminated as MS 20 C VII, MS 16 G VI of the British Museum nevertheless contains much artistic work. In light of this one wonders who would have been able to take the liberty of annotating this volume as well as the revered *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*; and who would have had access to the recension of Aimoin as found at Saint-Germain-des-Prés; to be able to do this he must have had considerable prestige or very important backing.

The answer to these problems is found in yet another manuscript: B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MS 2813.²⁸ This manuscript represents a new or rather a second recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* in which the annotations of MS 5925 are incorporated. Because of this, MS 16 G VI can be seen as the intermediate stage between the first and the second recensions of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

The second recension has been attributed to Pierre d'Orgemont, councillor of the King and of the Duke of Normandy in the 1350's; later president of the Parlement of Paris; and finally in 1373 the chancellor of France.

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²⁸ The manuscript contains 543 leaves, as bound ff. 492^v-543^v are blank. The illuminator has expended a great deal of his talents in decorating the manuscript. Some relatively minor additions are added in the margins.

The *Grandes Chroniques* had indeed lain dormant until the reign of Charles V. This king, who quickly turned from a frivolous youth to a prudent man after his father's capture at Poitiers, saw the need for continuing the *Grandes Chroniques*: he wished to perpetuate the memory of his father's reign — in a favourable fashion — and he wished to increase his own image.²⁹

The results of Poitiers, the fact that Charles had to act as regent under such circumstances (the capture of his father), as well as the popular revolts of the 1350's were not, as such, the ideal material for the *Grandes Chroniques*. It would seem that Charles realised that such delicate subjects should be treated in a careful manner. The monks of Saint-Denis had to this time performed their tasks faithfully, but Charles was obviously in doubt as to their ability to perform as well under strained circumstances: at times their simplicity and lack of perspective were evident.

Because of the previous outlook of the monks of Saint-Denis, Charles decided to turn elsewhere for an author to record his father's reign and at least a part of his own reign. The chosen one had to be one who could appreciate the political situation and its ramifications. When the choice had to be made, who was more qualified than one who had already rendered faithful service to the Crown — Pierre d'Orgemont.

It was indeed d'Orgemont who performed these duties and was charged with the task of making a new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

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²⁹ Leon Lacabane, 'Recherches sur les auteurs des Grandes Chroniques de France dites de Saint Denys', *BEC*, ii (1840-1841), 66.

Evidence of this can be found in the text of the *Grandes Chroniques*. When speaking of those who were deprived of their offices in 1359 — d'Orgemont being one of them — at the demand of Etienne Marcel and his cohorts, the tone of the writer is one of great bitterness.³⁰ But later, when these men were reinstated, the tone changes to one of justification of the King's actions in the previous situation.³¹ Other evidence of d'Orgemont's role has been found by M. Lacabane in an order given by Charles V:

Item pour les hez et chemises *Des Chroniques de France et celles que a faittes* nostre amé et féal chancelier, pour deux volumes pour nous une pièce de baudequin
xxvi franz ³²

It would be wrong to see the work of Pierre d'Orgemont as nothing more than a continuation of the *Grandes Chroniques*: the order of Charles V indicates '*Des Chroniques de France et celles que a faittes* nostre ... chancelier'. The fact that the *Grandes Chroniques* was connected with further material seems to indicate that d'Orgemont's interest was with more than a continuation. Added to this, it must be pointed out that MS 2813 bears many of the additions made to MS 5925 and MS 16 G VI.

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³⁰ Et toutes choses avoient esté faites, si comme disoit l'evesque, par le conseil des dessus nommés chancelier, et autres qui avoient gouverné le roy au temps passé. Dist lors encore ledit evesque que le peuple ne pouvoit plus souffrir ces choses; et, pour ce, avoient délibéré ensemble que les dessus nommés officiers et autres que il nommeroit lors, ... maistre Pierre d'Orgemont, ... seroient privés de tous offices royaux perpetuellement
Les Grandes Chroniques, ed. Paulin Paris, VI (Paris: 1838), 53.

³¹ Le mardi vint-huitiesme jour du moys de may, ledit régent prononça par sa bouche que, à tort et sans cause raisonnable, il avoit privé de ses offices les vint-deux personnes qui avoient esté privées par l'ordonance des trois estas, l'an cinquante-sept; et qu'il les avoit tousjours trouvés bons et loyaux; mais l'evesque de Laon et les tirans traitres qui avoient empris le gouvernement le firent faire par contraincte, si comme il dit lors. Et les restitua en leurs en leur estas et renommés. *Ibid.*, 154.

³² Lacabane, *loc. cit.*, 68.

Because of this we must treat MS 2813 as a new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*.

We cannot assume that it was Pierre d'Orgemont himself who annotated MS 5925 and MS 16 G VI: it may have been done at his direction or perhaps the direction of Charles himself.

There can, however, be no doubt that MS 2813 represents d'Orgemont's work: although it is no longer in two volumes, as it was in the order given by Charles V noted above, the miniatures do carry the tri-colour band that désignates the reign of Charles V — and it does agree with the description of a two volume work found in two inventories.³³

When did d'Orgemont undertake this work? We know that by November 1377 the work was bound.³⁴ The text as such ends with an account of Charles V in 1375, but there are a few entries for 1377, 1378, and 1379. However, it must also be pointed out that there are blank leaves within the section on Jean and Charles V. And after the end of the account on 492^r there also follow blank leaves: ff. 492^v to 543^v, as bound, were probably intended for a continuation. As noted before, d'Orgemont became the chancellor in 1373. If we look at the scope of the work, including the problems involved in making the second recension, work must have begun by at least 1373 or earlier. That d'Orgemont would have been known to Charles long before this is evident in the fact that d'Orgemont became a councillor of the king in 1350 and after 1359 was the vice-president of the Parlement of Paris. It is entirely possible that the massive undertaking of a second recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* may have been begun shortly after Charles's

33 *Ibid.*, 71.

34 *Ibid.*, 69.

accession in 1364. There is no concrete evidence for this, but one must assume that the composition of the account covering the reigns of Jean and Charles required some time and that the correction of the *Grandes Chroniques* would have involved extensive work.

MS 2813 does not itself represent an autograph of Pierre d'Orgemont, instead it is the work of Henri Trévou to 1350.³⁵ It is interesting to note the method used in the copying of the manuscript. It is obvious that the work to 1350 depended on the annotated MSS 5925 and 16 G VI; but it should also be noted that MS 782 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève was also involved: within that manuscript are found indications of where the miniatures were to be placed in MS 2813. After 1350 the hand changes and continues to 1377. This may give us some clue as to when d'Orgemont himself ceased work. One must assume that from 1350 to 1377 a new copyist worked from a manuscript that d'Orgemont had prepared for him, which contained the accounts of Jean and Charles's reigns. At this point the work was acknowledged by Charles V, as noted above, but many blank pages were included for a continuation. After the death of Charles V in 1380, d'Orgemont resigned his position in the government and retired to his château until his death in 1389. During that time his additions to the *Grandes Chroniques* for the later years of the reign of Charles V were made and then given to a copyist who included them in MS 2813.

Finally in respect of the second recension, a few words should be said about d'Orgemont's account from 1350 to 1377. From 1350 the account carries the tone of an official and therefore biased writer.

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³⁵ Molinier, *Sources de l'histoire ...*, IV, no. 3099.

Although documents are used, only those which represent the Crown's interests are included. Overall, the result was what Charles V desired: an account that would place the monarchy in the right in both internal and external affairs. By choosing one so loyal as d'Orgemont, Charles was assured of, and did get, a recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* that fulfilled his aims.

In light of the work that Pierre d'Orgemont carried out, one might ask why he was not considered in the preceding section on the progression from *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* to the *historiographe du roi*. The most obvious answer is that he neither made claim to the title nor was it acknowledged in any way. As far as we know, he carried out none of the duties of the *chroniqueur*: he produced no universal chronicle or Latin biography of the king(s). By the side of this one must note that he fulfilled one of the requirements of the canons of Notre-Dame for the position of *Francorum regum chronographus* in that he '... estoit serviteur et familier suivant et demourant à la court [of the King]'³⁶ But this is the only way in which he fitted into the position as outlined above. And it must be noted that in their enumeration of the list of *chroniqueurs*, the canons make no reference to him: he could not have been designated *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*, but surely if he had held the title of *chroniqueur du royaume* they would have pointed it out and used it in their defence. Thus, d'Orgemont's position was unofficial — or at least unconnected with any other official or semi-official one. It may well have been that his performance viewed in retrospect influenced future monarchs to follow

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³⁶ H.-François Delaborde, 'La Procès du chef de Saint Denys en 1410', *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de l'Ile-de-France*, xi (1884), 358.

this lead by appointing men with official positions to be the paid propagandists of the Crown.

After the death of Charles V, the political situation in France and the problems of her monarchs prevented the work of a new recension: biographies of her kings were written but little interest in the *Grandes Chroniques* as a whole was evidenced. The third recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* was in fact not made until the second half of the Fifteenth Century. Then the account of the reign of Charles V was supplemented for the years 1377-1380; and, as noted before, the works of Jean Juvenal des Ursins and the héraut Berry were used to cover the reign of Charles VI. Finally the *French Chronicle* of Jean Chartier was included for the reign of Charles VII. This new recension was evident in the first printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*. The compiler of this recension is not known, but it may have been Jean Castel who died only a year before its publication. Jean Chartier may have been apprised of the idea of a new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*; but we cannot attribute the new recension to him. Instead, if anyone was responsible, it was Castel, or at least one of his contemporaries. The first printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques* ends at the death of Charles VII; and it was based on the second recension as found in MS 2813 (there are annotations in MS 2813 that are incorporated in the printed edition).

After this we cannot speak of recensions: for, as noted before, later printed editions of the *Grandes Chroniques* are to a great extent dependent on the work of Robert Gaguin and his quasi-humanistic ideals.

CHAPTER XIII

THE *GRANDES CHRONIQUES*
AS HISTORY AND LITERATURE

The distinction between history and literature was not great for the contemporary reader of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Indeed for medieval writers, history was a genre of literature. That it was a branch of rhetoric can be seen in the imaginary discourses that were put in the mouths of their subjects to illustrate or to put forward their points. This does not mean that medieval writers completely lacked a sense of history, but simply that they tended to mix it with other purposes. In fact the French reader of the medieval era would hardly be content with modern histories: to him history and stories were almost inseparable: criticism and interpretation were for the most part alien to him; a simple narrative could provide him with what he needed to know; a little poetry made the task of reading more pleasant; and justifications of acts were merely additions to the tale. Indeed, if the works that he read contained accounts of deeds long past they were considered an integral part of the work.

The fact that the writers were for the most part ecclesiastics and that the Church was the centre of focus for all men led to the writing of hagiographic literature, forced the inclusion of a Christian tone and outlook on all works, and introduced accounts of popes and other ecclesiastics in works that might otherwise pertain simply to lay affairs.

History was not purely factual, but it did not come to any conclusions: the French medieval 'historian' produced a chronological narrative — at least in most cases — that was derived from other works, oral tradition, and eyewitness testimony. Very little attempt was made to be impartial: it was clear whom the writer supported. Impartiality in general was characteristic of only the shortest of yearly accounts as found in the form of annals.

All of these points must be taken into consideration when one turns to the *Grandes Chroniques*. To its contemporaries it was both journalism and history: it combined accounts of heroes with those of more mundane, but also important affairs. The foremost aim of its compilers was to present an account of the French kings and to apprise readers of their merits and actions. If conflicting information was present, it was only necessary to preface that information with 'Aucun des actors racontent', 'comme aucunes croniques dient', etc. No interpretation was given and justification was involved only when necessity demanded it: when, for example, an unseemly act on the part of one of the heroes needed to be explained away.

From its inception, the *Grandes Chroniques* was almost always polemical and panegyric in nature: it was to draw attention to the deeds of the monarchy and to emphasize its merits. But it was not propaganda in the true sense of the word; only from the account of 1350 onwards does it take on this character. It is true that when the monks of Saint-Denis became their own authors the tendency toward propaganda began to appear, but it was not until Pierre d'Orgemont, an employee of the Crown, made the second recension that this aspect of the *Grandes Chroniques* emerges. For these reasons it is necessary to separate a

discussion of the contents of the first recension from the second and third: they are different entities, changes being made to the first part of the text to fulfill the needs of the second recensor, etc.

Before assessing the literary and historical value of the *Grandes Chroniques*, it must be emphasised — as in previous chapters — that Primat and those who continued the work after him to the reign of Philippe le Hardi were translators and compilers: they had little concept of editing. The *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* was their guide; their efforts to include additional information were dependent upon its availability. The availability of B.N. lat. MS 12710 obviously influenced some of their choices; familiarity also guided them to other works. Because of these factors the translators made themselves victims of their own sources and their qualities. The information given to the reader was that contained in the Latin texts with only occasional personal additions and explanations.

Thus, should the reader have read Latin¹ and have had access to the sources used in the *Grandes Chroniques* he would have gained little further information from reading the vernacular text; in fact by reference to the Latin texts he would have learned of the few items that the translators omitted or mistranslated.

It is obvious, however, that no matter how many read or had access to the Latin sources, the *Grandes Chroniques* was compiled and translated for the benefit of another sort of reader: one who could learn of the events only through French.

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¹ The extent of Latin readers among the laity has often been underestimated. For further information on this subject see J.W. Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages*, reprint (New York: 1960).

Edification through literature (and history) was an aim of the *Grandes Chroniques*. The account is for the most part chronological, including occasional flashbacks and attempts at continuity. Through its pages the reader can trace the lineage of the French kings, the concepts of kingship, relations with the papacy, changes within the Church and attitudes toward it, information concerning Saint-Denis, etc. These and other items were new information — rather than mere reference material — for the average reader of the era. For us they represent history and historiography; to contemporaries they were the past made known through the medium of literature.

One sees in the *Grandes Chroniques* an effort to justify the changes of dynasty that had occurred throughout the span of the monarchy. When one looks at the account more closely, it is obvious that it involves not only a justification for the changes, but also an attempt to create continuity from the monarchy's inception to the Valois. One cannot deny that this had propaganda value: continuity indicated validity and the right to rule; but on the other hand it had historical value: the medieval man through learning the succession of the French kings was perhaps influenced to recognise the value of tradition. We in turn are able to observe the justification of the changes made.

Primat began his account of the French monarchy by using the formula of tracing the origins of the French and their kings to the Trojans.² Although he may have realised that this was nothing more than a legend, it was a popular one that could not be neglected. Thus, he continued

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² The legend of Brut is also noted. *Les Grandes Chroniques*, ed. Jules Viard, I (Paris: 1920), 9-12. Unless indicated, references to *Les Grandes Chroniques* in this chapter will pertain to this printed edition.

on the same path and, from Aimoin, added explanations as to how the French received their name: one version saying that it was given to them because of their fearless and ferocious activity during battle; another that it was derived from the name of their king, François.³ To lend the final touch of some authenticity, he traces them to their settlement on the banks of the Seine where they founded the city Leuthece. He then notes the arrival of a direct descendant of Priam, Marcomire, who because of kinship temporarily became their leader and renamed the city Paris in honour of their famous Trojan ancestor.⁴

Added to the above items an element is introduced that establishes a 'national' identity for the French: it indicates why they became a separate people and also establishes the origin of their monarchy.

Li François, qui vourent avoir roi ausi comme les autres nations, prisrent celi Pharamont par le conseil Marchomire son pere; seigneur et roi le firent leur iaus et li laissierent le país à gouverner. Cil Pharamonz fu li premiers rois de France, car à ce tens n'i avoit ainques eu roi, ains estoit li país sous l'emperere de Rome.⁵

It must be mentioned that there is a possibility that Pharamond was not simply a legendary figure;⁶ nevertheless even Primat records:

Jusques ci vous avons recitées les opinions d'aucuns actors, mais pour ce que nous ne volons pas que nuls puisse trouver contrariété en ceste lettre, nous prendrons la matiere si comme ele gist es croniques⁷

and then quickly repeats the movements of the French to the coronation of Pharamond. Throughout the legend, Primat made no value judgments:

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³ *Ibid.*, 12-15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19, n. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

he had informed his readers of their supposed origins, and at its end he does nothing more than indicate that it is accepted by his source(s).

In a methodical fashion the reign of the second king, Clodion, and his conquests, are set down. This too carries a legendary tinge: he was invincible and the expansion of territory under him was of fantastic proportions.⁸ Thus, Primat has informed his readers of their supposed ancestors.

To this point he had simply repeated the legends of the French, but after the death of Clodion comes the first test of his ability to convince his readers of the validity of dynastic changes and to instruct them in the history of their kings. Mérovée, founder of the Merovingian dynasty, succeeded Clodion. Primat records the fact that he was not Clodion's son and then adds '... mais il fu de son lignage. De cetui eissi la premiere generation des rois de France'⁹ In this way he neatly side-steps the issue of the exact relationship between the two kings and also prepares the way for similar situations in the future when succession was not direct.

But Primat was not able to neglect the Trojan legend. It is again mentioned in the account of the conversion of Clovis when the king supposedly proclaimed to his people:

'Seigneur François, qui estes descendu de la haute lignie des Troiens, vous devez estre remembrable de la hautece de vostre non et de vostre lignage, et devez ramener à memoire quex diex vous avez servi jusques au jor d'ui.'¹⁰

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⁸ In the *Grandes Chroniques* as in Aimoin the land conquered is mistakenly described as being divided in the fashion used by Julius Caesar — actually the divisions correspond to those used by Augustus. *Ibid.*, 22, n. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

And after admonishing them that they should come to the realisation that the old gods are false and come to accept the one true God, he added

'... ce sera fet droitement se vous regardez les faiz des plus granz de nostre lignage. Si prenez vostre premier exemple à cele noble cité de Troie la grant, que l'en cuidoit qui deust estre si fort par l'aide et par la defense de tant de damedieix, qui point ne la desfendirent que ele ne fust prise et craventée par les Griex, et plus par boisdie et par traïson que par armes.'¹¹

As can be seen, this spells a transition from Trojan allusions to Christian ones: the legend is corrected in favour of a Christian image. And because of the dating of the baptism as set down by Gregory of Tours — and the *Grandes Chroniques* through the medium of Aimoin — Clovis is depicted as the champion of Christianity for more than one campaign.

Primat's task of tracing a continuous and hereditary line of French kings became difficult after the death of Clovis. Up to this time he had not been confronted by the Frankish tradition of dividing territory among their heirs. Indeed this very practice made Primat's task difficult for both the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties. When the first such division occurred after the death of Clovis it was necessary to focus the reader's attention on the main point: whom could they consider as the king of France:

Et jasoit ce que en France ait eu pluseurs rois en divers sieges et en diverses parties dou roiaume, nous ne metons ou nombre des rois de France fors ceus tant seulement qui furent roi dou siege de Paris.¹²

It is obvious that Primat was also interested in pressing the principle of primogeniture. In rejection of the concept of inheritance

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¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 95.

by division, the *Grandes Chroniques* notes that very little time passed without fratricidal wars. For example, after the death of Clovis the kingdom was divided into four parts and war continued until all but two sons had fallen; then the third, Childebert, died from illness as he was about to set out to fight his brother Clothaire. Even children of the dead, who were a potential threat, were exterminated.

All of his brothers dead, Clothaire assumed control of the entire kingdom. And, after his own death, the kingdom was again divided between four sons — the eldest, Caribert, receiving what is styled '... le royaume de Paris'.¹³ Once more the wars began.

The account of the Merovingians in the *Grandes Chroniques* continues in this fashion through the era of Brunhild, the wife of Sigebert, and Fredegund, the mistress and then wife of Chilpéric I, who vied with each other for the honours of the most treacherous and powerful women in the divided kingdom. With these examples and more, the *Grandes Chroniques* depicts the treachery resulting from multiple inheritance. It spares none of the bloodshed, but it does assume the right of the Merovingian dynasty to rule.

As the account continues to trace the Merovingian line we find the mayors of the palace being given some attention. Pepin I's death is in fact mentioned twice,¹⁴ and it is recorded that his death was mourned throughout Austrasia '... car il estoit de touz amez et proisiez pour sa bonté et pour sa loiauté'.¹⁵ In contrast to this praise, however, it must be noted that the mayors are also censured when it is merited. The actions of Pepin's son and successor, Grimoald, are

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¹³ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 186 and 195.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

sharply criticised. This incident also gives evidence of the Merovingians' right to rule: Clovis II¹⁶ was called upon to deal with him.

Grimoald's actions, however, do not prevent the *Grandes Chroniques* from preparing the way for the Carolingians by noting: 'Dès lors, comença li roiaumes de France à abaissier et à déchaoir, et li roi à forlignier du sens et de la puissance de lor ancesors'.¹⁷ In fact the later Merovingians are all but forgotten in the section supposedly devoted to them: material concerned with this era was limited, but one must also remember that Primat, in tracing the history of the kings of France, had to provide a relatively smooth transition from the Merovingians to the Carolingians. Thus, Primat duly notes the accessions and deaths of the Merovingian kings as the fiction of their monarchy continued. He had indicated their weaknesses, but he also allows them hollow virtues, such as the ironic compliment of saying in the course of their obituaries that they were glorious. He treats the later Merovingians very matter-of-factly, but by their sides is the image of the powerful mayors of the palace of Austrasia.

The transfer from the Merovingians to the Carolingians can be inferred from the tone of the *Grandes Chroniques* as well as from the obvious weakening of the Merovingians:

Après lui [Chilpéric II], eslurent li François I autre et li princes Kalles le conferma; Theoderis avoit non, droiz hoirs estoit, car il avoit esté fiuz le secont Dagobert et norriz en l'abbaye de Chiele; si regna puis XV anz. En tel maniere fu Kalles, li nobles princes, maistres du palais de France et princes du roiaume d'Austrasie.¹⁸

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¹⁶ Primat in calling him Louis rather than Clovis indicates that he consulted the *Gesta Dagoberti* and not Aimoin. In the mention of his birth the *Gesta* gives him only the name of Louis, but Aimoin gives both names.

¹⁷ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, II, 201.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 221-22.

The subject may have been the crowning of yet another impotent king, but Charles Martel is the centre of focus and his power is evident. In fact when a new king was not crowned after the death of Thierry IV, and Charles ruled alone, no comment is made.

From this we can gather that Charles Martel's following was growing. That he was considered as a ruler in his own right can be seen in the fact that 'Par le conseil de ses barons departi son royaume à ses fiuz à son vivant'.¹⁹ This would seem to indicate that an even larger number of the nobility was aware that a change was at hand: those who had sought the protection of Charles under the budding feudal system wished to prevent a power struggle after his death. Thus, they sought to protect their own and the Carolingians' interests.

At Charles's death it is recognised that 'Les II roiaumes governa XXV ans'²⁰ The kingdom was divided in two between Carloman, who was granted Austrasia and other allied areas, and Pepin who was given Neustria and its territory. They assumed the mayoralty in these areas. It was the third and youngest son, Grifo, who had received a bit of land without sovereignty — the *Grandes Chroniques* is somewhat cloudy on this point — that created the problems. It was he who began the wars that were inevitable from such a division. First he fought both Carloman and Pepin and then, after Carloman retired to the monastery of Montecassino, he fought Pepin alone until Grifo was killed in 753.

Pepin, unlike his father, did not feel secure enough to rule without a puppet Merovingian when in control of both Austrasia and Neustria. Although the *Grandes Chroniques* do not point this out, it was far

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¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 237.

easier to be the power behind the throne than to assert one's sole authority at the start: those nobles loyal to other lords would not readily accept the actions of a new dynasty, but they would if it was clothed in the fictions of the Merovingian rule and a power behind the throne. Thus, Pepin found a Merovingian heir who was crowned Childéric III.

It was obvious before this that the Merovingian monarchy was a figure-head for the real ruler, but it is nowhere more apparent than during the early years of Pepin's mayoralty: Childéric is ignored. The reader might indeed assume that the Merovingian line had died out: before this at least some allusions were made to the Merovingian kings. In fact the only reference to Childéric by name is made when Pepin sought and gained recognition for his own kingship.

Li princes Pepins, qui bien vit que li roi de France qui lors estoient ne tenoient nul profit au roiaume, envoia donc à l'apostoile ... messages ... pour demander conseil de la cause des rois des France qui en ce tens estoient, liquiex devoit mieuz estre rois, ou cil qui nul pooir n'avoit ou roiaume, ne n'en portoit fors le non tant seulement, ou cil par cui li roiaumes estoit governez et qui avoit le pooir et la cure de totes choses? Et li apostoiles li remanda que cil devoit estre rois apelez qui le roiaume gouvernoit et qui avoit le souverain pooir; lors dona sentence que li princes Pepins fust coronez come rois.²¹

Only after this was the reader told that 'Childeris, qui rois estoit apelez, fu tonduz et mis en une abbaie'²²

The account in the *Grandes Chroniques* of the Carolingians' transition from mayors of the palace to the throne is simply stated with no comment: the Merovingians had ceased to be capable of ruling; thus someone else took their position. What the *Grandes Chroniques* fails to

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²¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

²² *Ibid.*, 243.

point out is Pepin's supposed descent from Clodion, the successor of Pharamond. As justification for the position of king, however, the *Grandes Chroniques* notes the popular concept that the king, if worthy, protected the Church and this Pepin did in his wars against the Lombards. This alone may have been enough to support Pepin's title, but his efforts to reform the liturgy of the Church in France and his general interest in its affairs gave it further stability.²³

Once the Carolingians were established, no pains were spared to assert their legitimate right to rule. Lands were still divided among the sons, but the eldest inherited the most important area. No one could doubt Charlemagne's right to rule and, through Einhard, the figure of a powerful king emerges: the legends added to the account showed him as a popular hero and added to the reader's credulity in Charlemagne's right to rule. As in other cases, this is an example of the connection of history and legend during the Middle Ages.

Although there is repetition of material both before and after the account devoted to Charlemagne, this did not deflect the reader's attention, but merely reminded him of previous accounts and set the stage for a new one. Here it must be noted that the flashbacks were probably accidental on the part of the compilers and translators, but their 'incompetence' in this respect served a good purpose.

From the viewpoint of our current topic, the reign of Louis the Pious was uncomplicated. Charlemagne had envisaged the problems that might arise after his death:

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²³ *Ibid.*, 243-44.

... Challes ... sentoît bien ... que il aprochoit de la fin de son aage; si se doutoît moult que li roiaumes qui en si haut estat et si noblement ordenez estoit ne venist à confusion après sa mort et que il ne fust troblez par estranges guerres ou par les dissensions des princez meismes dou roiaume.²⁴

Supposedly at the time that these thoughts were set down, Louis was Charlemagne's sole heir: and he was called to join Charlemagne so that he might learn of the duties that were to fall on him. Charlemagne and Louis ruled the Empire alone, but after the death of the latter, and the division of his territory, rivalry broke out between his sons. The centre of power was transferred to the eastern part of the Empire. Because this move would seem to slight the French, the *Grandes Chroniques* has consoled its readers by stating that Louis and Lothaire waged war against Charles '... qui estoit rois de France Moult avoient seur lui grant envie, pour ce que il avoit à sa part le plus nobles des roiaumes'.²⁵

From this it would seem that the reader would gain a false impression of the reigns of the kings who followed Louis the Pious: in fact a great deal of space is actually devoted to the Emperor at the expense of the King of France. Later, however, the division of land ceased and the control of various areas was stabilised. Neither the recensor of the *Grandes Chroniques* nor his sources take advantage of this: Primat in this instance could have underlined the beginnings of the true French kingdom. In fact there were several indications that this was happening: there had been a division of territory at the death of Louis the Pious, at the Treaty of Verdun, and then after the death of the Emperor Lothaire; yet the reader is not really shown that these

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²⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 40.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 164.

and the Oath of Strasbourg spelled the beginning of the final division and the development of two different peoples.

Within France the Carolingian line weakened rapidly. Unlike the account of the later Merovingians, the weakness is not spelled out so clearly. Again the scarcity of material was one of the problems of the compiler: he is forced to combine an account of the Dukes of Normandy with that of the kings of France. This does provide some indication of the state of the Carolingian line: there is a contrast between the growing power of feudal lordship in the Dukes of Normandy and the power of the kings.

The transfer of power from the Carolingians to the Capetians was more difficult to convey than that of the transition from the Merovingians to the Carolingians. No comment is made when Raoul, the Duke of Burgundy, is crowned king after Charles the Simple was imprisoned. And, the only indication that the *Grandes Chroniques* gives of the situation after his death is

En ce tens, n'avoit en France point de roi, car li enfes Loys et la roine Algive sa mere, s'en estoient fui au roi d'Engleterre son pere, et Hues li Granz et li autre baron de France envoierent ... l'arcevesque de Sanz, en Engleterre, à la roine Algive qui fame ot esté le roi Kalle le Simple et à Loys son fil, et li mandoient que seurement retornat en France²⁶

As befitted a king in the eyes of the *Grandes Chroniques* the account of the arrival and life of Louis d'Outre-mer is respectful; but, as before, the accounts of his reign and that of Lothaire, his son, are more concerned with other events, such as the activities of the Normans.

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²⁶ *Ibid.*, 325-26.

Both this and the fact that the Capets are brought into the picture at an early stage tallies to some extent with the manner in which Primat handled the later Merovingians. It must be noted, however, that the presence of the Capetians was not emphasised as much as that of the early Carolingians.

Although Lothaire the son of Louis d'Outre-mer receives a bit of attention, the last Carolingians (Louis V and Lothaire's brother, Charles) are treated in a cursory fashion. Only the coronation, the number of years of his reign, and his death are given for Lothaire; and, in the case of his uncle Charles, it is indicated that he came to the kingdom, tried to recover the inheritance, was refused, and was imprisoned — along with his wife and children. The *Grandes Chroniques* carefully notes that 'L'estoire ne l'apele pas roi, pour ce que il n'avoit ainques esté coronez'.²⁷

Charles had been the Duke of Lower Lotharingia. Nothing is said of this in the *Grandes Chroniques*, but it is obvious that his claim to the throne was vague. It is true that this claim would have been recognised in an earlier era, but because of the power that the Capetians had developed it was not possible. The power wielded by Hugh Capet is indicated in the fact that he and his men were able to imprison Charles and his family, and to keep them incarcerated.²⁸

The justification of Hugh's acts is as simple as for those of Pepin: he found that the Carolingian contender for the throne was too weak to rule the kingdom. Thus, Charles was rejected. Hugh was not a mayor of the palace as Pepin had been, but he did have considerable

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²⁷ *Ibid.*, 366.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

power. Hugh Capet, according to the *Grandes Chroniques* — if it is read in that light — may have been considered ruthless. The *Grandes Chroniques*, however, can see that his actions are the logical prelude to the change of dynasty that occurs almost immediately.

In light of this the *Grandes Chroniques* states:

Puis que li dux Hues vit que tuit li hoir et la lignie
du grant Challemaine fu destruite et ausi come falie,
et que il n'i ot mais nuli qui li contredeist, si se
fist coroner en la cité de Rains.²⁹

The transition from the Carolingians to the Capetians is more abrupt than that from the Merovingians to the Carolingians. Primat was of course dependent on his sources, but it does seem strange that, in deference to the reigning dynasty, he did not make the transition smoother. Perhaps he was unable to do anything else: the new monarch neither had clear hereditary rights, nor was he elected.

Hugh Capet did have a very complicated descent from Louis the Pious. At the outset it was made clear that the Capetians should have hereditary rights: the Carolingians were defunct; thus the Capetians took their place and for some years each Capetian had his son crowned during his own lifetime.

Unlike his treatment of the beginning of the Carolingian dynasty, Primat reinforces the Capetian succession with a special preface at the beginning of their dynasty. In some respects this is a justification of Capetian rule:

Ci faut la generation du grant Challemaine et decent
li roiaumes aus les hoirs Hue le Grant que l'en nome Chapet,

.....
²⁹ *Ibid.*, 366-67.

qui dux estoit de France au tens du bon roi Phelippe Dieudonné, car il espousa tout apensément, pour la lignie le grant Challemaine recovrer, la roine Ysabel qui fu fille le conte Baudoin de Henaut; et cil Baudoins fu descenduz de madame Hermenjart qui fu fille le roi Challe le Simple et fu li v rois après Challemaine le Grant, de sa lignie meismes, et fu cil que li cuens Herberz de Vermandois fist morir en prison ou chastel de Perone, si come l'estoire a desus conté.³⁰

The indication that the line of Charlemagne was recovered by the marriage of Philip Augustus to Isabel of Hainault expresses some sense of continuity for the Capetians: this in addition to the claims of Hugh to Carolingian blood made the Capetians more acceptable. Yet it must be mentioned that Isabel's connections with the Carolingians is also doubtful.³¹ The reader, however, was probably satisfied and did not question this hypothetical connection. No matter how tenuous, he was probably convinced that this was continuity: at the beginning of the reign of Louis VIII, in the genealogy of the kings, it is noted that

En yce roy retorna la ligniée du grant Charlemaine, qui fu emperere et roy de France, qui estoit faillie par VII generacions, car il fu estrait de la lignie Charlemaine, de par sa mere, si comme nous orrons ci après.³²

Those who read the *Grandes Chroniques* were thus shown, through the example of the Capetians, that hereditary succession by primogeniture was the best system to prevent internal conflicts.

The transfer from the Capetian to the Valois line was also indicated in the *Grandes Chroniques*. The crisis began when, in 1316, Louis X died and his son, who was born shortly after Louis's death, died

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³⁰ *Ibid.*, V, 1-2.

³¹ One cannot say definitely that a daughter of Charles the Simple married a count of Namur and thus was an ancestor of Isabel.
Ibid., 1-2, n. 2.

³² *Ibid.*, VII, 3.

soon after birth. Thus for the first time in Capetian history the question of succession to the throne arose. The manuscripts of the *Grandes Chroniques* give alternate versions of what followed. The simplest is that contained in MS 2813:

... Phelippe conte de Poitiers se mist en possession des royaumes. Mais le duc de Bourgoigne et sa mere li estoient contraires, et disoient que la fille son frere le roi Loys devoit heritier. Mais les autres disoient que femme ne puet heritier ou royaume de France. Pour ce ledit Phelippe fu coronné en roy³³

Other manuscripts add to this account by pointing out that Jeanne was the niece of the Duke of Burgundy and indicate that Philip's uncle, Charles of Valois, and even his own brother refused to be present at the coronation.³⁴

According to the *Grandes Chroniques*, however, there seems to have been no opposition when Philip V was succeeded by his brother Charles IV. But Charles also died without a male heir; thus the *Grandes Chroniques* is forced to say 'Et ainsi toute la ligniée du roy Phelippe le Bel, en moins de XIII ans, fu deffaillie et amortie, dont ce fu très grant damage.'³⁵

What the account should have added, but later points out, is that after Charles's death a daughter was born. Before the birth of this daughter, however, the nobility had given the regency to Philip, the son of Charles of Valois and grandson of Philippe le Hardi. After the birth of Charles's daughter, Philip was crowned.

Et pour ce que fille ne herite pas au royaume, li vint le dit royaume et en fu coronné par raison, combien que le roy d'Angleterre, et autres ennemis du royaume, tenissent

.....
³³ *Ibid.*, VIII, 335-35.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 334, n. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, IX, 65.

contre raisonnaible oppinion, que le royaume appartenist mieux audit Anglois comme neveu du roy Karle, filz de sa suer que audit roy Phelippe qui ne li estoit que cousin germain.³⁶

It should be noted that other manuscripts give a much elaborated account of the refutation of Edward's claims to the French throne and also of the question of Navarre.³⁷

From the above discussion it can be seen that both contemporary and modern readers can trace the changes of dynasty and see the justifications for them. Also, the *Grandes Chroniques* reveals the systems of inheritance used from the Merovingians to the Valois.

In the course of the text, the *Grandes Chroniques* indicates the various stages through which the monarchy went. One can see in the strengths and weaknesses of the Merovingians that they were more interested in expansion and wealth through their conquests than in governing their kingdom. In fact during the whole of the section devoted to them, the scene is one of conquest or of fratricidal wars when it directly concerns the Merovingians. Very rarely, as in the case of Dagobert I, is there any indication that governing was involved.³⁸ Although we must consider the founding of religious institutions, the conclusion of peace treaties, and affairs of other territories, one must admit that the impression gained of the Merovingians until the rise of the mayors of the palace is of a people constantly at war. Authority as such was relegated to various officials such as the bishops and the mayors. Through this the Merovingians lost control, and others began to gain support.

.....
³⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁷ B.N. fr. MS 17270. cf. *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IX, 72, n. 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 116.

Wealth through land and treasure was the most coveted possession. the simple fact that the *Grandes Chroniques* notes that the division of the kingdom was almost always in dispute and that the treasure of the dead king was the object of avarice indicates this point. To cite one example, the *Grandes Chroniques* records 'Lors furent message envoié en France au roi Loos et à roine Nantheut de par le roi Sigebert, qui requeroit tel partie des tresors son pere com à lui afferoit'.³⁹

While the Merovingians were occupied with these matters, the mayors of the palace came to be looked to for protection and stability. Through this they were able to gain enough support so that Charles Martel could dispense with the formality of a puppet king and Pepin could become king in name and fact.

The expansion of territory during the reign of Charlemagne is well illustrated in the *Grandes Chroniques* by its constant reference to his campaigns: his wars against the Saxons, the Lombards, the Bretons, etc. are the almost constant topic.

The exceptions to this are accounts that indicate his interest in the Church: for example, his concern for the chant:

Moult li pesoit que li chant et li servises des eglises de France se descordoit de celui de l'eglise de Rome, et pour ce que il voloit mieuz boire et puisier en la fontaine que ou trouble ruissel, envoia-il à Rome II clers pour aprendre la maniere et le chant des Romains.⁴⁰

The forced propagation of Christianity is also indicated:

... Thudons ... qui estoit uns des princes des Huns, vint au roi Baptisiez fu et tuit cil qui avec lui furent venus.⁴¹

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 119.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

This happened in many cases, for Charlemagne considered that it was his duty to spread Christianity at any cost. It should be mentioned here that this was Charlemagne's own policy: Alcuin himself recognised that compulsion did not produce true converts.

Through these and other items we can see that the *Grandes Chroniques* also presents the Emperor as guardian of the Church, just as Pepin had been; but because of his position as emperor, he could (like the Eastern emperors whom he was emulating) claim to be master in many spheres.

About Charlemagne's government, however, little is said. The Capitularies are mentioned as though they had no importance: 'Partout son royaume et son empire fesoit fere droite justice par ses menistres; si compila et fist XXIX chapitres de loys'⁴² Other aspects of government seem to be of no interest to those who compiled the *Grandes Chroniques*.

Concerning the Carolingian 'renaissance', again, the *Grandes Chroniques* say very little. The arrival of Alcuin is given some attention; Alcuin's talents are noted; Charlemagne's interest in the arts is recorded; and the education of his children is also mentioned. Indeed, what little is said about the revival of learning is gained through vague references.

In fact one gains a little more knowledge of Carolingian affairs in the section devoted to Louis the Pious. The campaigns are still a central feature; and an interest in the affairs of the Church can be seen; but it must also be pointed out that the corrupt organisation of the palace was reformed. As we know, Louis divided the empire among his

⁴² *Ibid.*, 120.

sons. We find, however, that the Oath of Strasbourg is inferred and that the Treaty of Verdun is only referred to — and then not by name. The Treaty of Mersen is, however, given in great detail.⁴³ The division of the Empire as we know spelled the beginning of a separate identity for France and for Germany.

If one can follow the confused account of the later Carolingians, one comes to realise that their weakness is counterweighted by the growth of powerful lords. The Northmen carry out their raids; and at first, according to the *Grandes Chroniques*, it would seem that the Carolingians were able to repulse them. When finally, in 882, Charles le Gros treated with them, we are told that

... par deseur tout ce dona-il grant somme d'or et d'argent à Sigefroi et Grimone et à leur compagnons que il avoit et tolu ou tresor Saint Estiene de Mez et aus autres eglises.⁴⁴

Thus, it was inevitable that the Northmen were there to stay. Their raids did not cease with the payment of the geld, but continued until the final settlement of the Northmen in Normandy. It is obvious from the account of the *Grandes Chroniques* that the Carolingian kings were unable to protect their people against the raids. Thus, more and more men began to seek the protection not of the king, but of the strongest local lord.

It is interesting to observe that the *Grandes Chroniques* does not indicate the development of feudalism from its beginnings in the reigns of the Merovingians, or the antecedents found under Charles Martel, or its rapid growth in the face of the Viking threat. It is probable that feudalism was such a common feature even at the time of the first re-
cension of the *Grandes Chroniques*, that there seemed no need to explain

⁴³ *Ibid.*, IV, 190-95.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 296.

its existence, nor was it known how the system grew.

The growth of feudalism explains the growth of a strong nobility during the reigns of the later Carolignians. The most powerful lords in the 10th Century were Hugh the Great and his son Hugh Capet. Both, as already noted, wielded great influence: they chose the puppet Mero-vingian and then Hugh himself was crowned king.

The territory that the Capetians actually controlled was small and unruly. This is not mentioned in the *Grandes Chroniques*: in fact this would have damaged the character of the early Capetians since there were no other lords who could be considered to have the right to rule, if it was on that criteria alone. Instead it is emphasised that the king was the ruler of the entire kingdom — a very loose term.

The indications we have that their control was limited are found when Louis le Gros is depicted by Suger — and thus the *Grandes Chroniques* — can be seen trying to bring order to the royal domain. As in the case of so many kings before him, very little is said of his government. The emphasis during the rule of the Capetians up to Louis le Gros was placed on their campaigns, concern with Church affairs, and something new: the acquisition of territory by marriage alliance and gaining dominance within their own territory.

The picture of Louis le Gros, as noted before, was that of an ideal theocratic monarch. Thus, within the pages devoted to his reign (and to some extent that of his father — a part being taken from Suger's *Vita Ludovici*) we find only scattered references to the seneschal. This, however, is one of the few references to the government of the era.

It was during the reign of Louis VII that the king began to reach outside his own domain and assert his authority. In fact the transition from feudal lord, which Louis le Gros was, to king in name and deed was a long process. Because of the paucity of material and the abbreviated nature of it, the importance of his reign does not seem great in the *Grandes Chroniques*. On the other hand the importance of the reign of Philip Augustus can be seen in the text. It is clearly noted how he sought to undermine English authority within France by playing Richard against Henry II, John against Richard, and Arthur against John. The *Grandes Chroniques* does not indicate that Philip was really upset by John's capture of Arthur. In fact the account of Philip Augustus in the *Grandes Chroniques* is studded with confrontations between him and the Kings of England as well as other lords. It must be noted, however, that Philip added to his territory in a number of ways: marriage, war, and the crushing of the Albigensians⁴⁵ under the supervision of Simon de Montfort.

It is clear that the successors of Philip Augustus completed the job as far as they were able, being unable to get rid of English control in Aquitaine. It was during the reigns of Louis IX and Philippe le Hardi that the identity of France emerged.

The *Grandes Chroniques* still contain the usual accounts of battles, affairs of the Church, etc., but the nascent nationalism of the French was beginning to emerge. This supported Philippe le Bel in his quarrels

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⁴⁵ It must be noted that Philip himself did not take part in the crushing of the Albigensians, nor was the action completed by the time of his death. In fact his son, Louis VIII, took part in the 'crusade' after his father's death. Details of the Albigensian Crusade can be found in *Ibid.*, VI and VII.

with Boniface VIII and the Templars. It is also shown in the refutation of Edward's claims to the throne, as was evident in the simple or elaborated reasons for the right of Philip de Valois to be crowned king. This support for the king can also be seen in the fact that Philip was able to gain support to face Edward's superior military strength — albeit without success. Not until the defeat at Poitiers did the French begin to doubt their king and nobility. It was then that the propaganda of Pierre d'Orgemont's recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* became important. The *Grandes Chroniques* does not state bluntly that the French were behind Philip, but it can be inferred from the text. For example the account of the defeat at Crécy accuses only the excesses and the vanity of the French nobility for the defeat: 'Et pour ce, ce ne fu pas merveille se Dieu volt corriger les exces des Francois par son flael le roy d'Angleterre'.⁴⁶

As noted above, the *Grandes Chroniques* provides us with an account of the French version of relations between king and Pope. In fact the Church is a constant theme within the *Grandes Chroniques*: episodes from the lives of saints and various miracles were, as indicated before, often added to accounts of the monarchs.⁴⁷ This, however, was not the only aspect of the Church to be included in the *Grandes Chroniques*: one also finds accounts of the popes as well as relations between Church and monarchy. Much of this material is included for the simple reason that it was found in the sources of the *Grandes Chroniques* and for the most part, in spite of their titles, the early sources were akin to

.....
⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, IX, 285. Accusations were levied against the manner of dress in the French army.

⁴⁷ *Supra*, Chapter XI.

universal chronicles. Through them and later through Sigebert de Gembloux's *Chronicon*, the *Grandes Chroniques* traces the history of the popes. As found in the *Grandes Chroniques* the account of the popes is disjointed because it is scattered through the chronological narrative. The reader, however, can trace the accessions, deaths and elections of most of the pontiffs from the death of Symmachus in 514 and accession of his successor Hormisdas (514-523) onward, if he cares to take the trouble to ferret out the information.

In addition to this, information about the papacy can be derived when the paths of king and pope cross. Charlemagne's coronation as king by Hadrian I is an example. The state of the papacy is of course also revealed when Leo III sought the aid of Charlemagne to clear him of the charges levied against him; and Charlemagne accomplished this by compurgation. It is interesting to note that the *Grandes Chroniques* does not take the account of Charlemagne's consequent coronation as emperor from Einhard⁴⁸ — which indicates that Charlemagne was surprised and discontented with it. At this point the compilers of the *Grandes Chroniques* do not realise and do not think that the implications of the coronation of Charlemagne were important. When the first recension was made this fine point had yet to become clear.⁴⁹

Charlemagne, as we know, was zealous in his pursuit of reforming the Church as seemed to him most befitting. Einhard has recorded his activities and in the *Grandes Chroniques* they were translated.⁵⁰ One

.....
⁴⁸ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, III, 92-94.

⁴⁹ The controversy surrounding the exact circumstances of Charlemagne's coronation is discussed in many modern works.

⁵⁰ *Supra*, pp. 233-34.

can imagine that the liberties that he took were of interest to laymen who later disputed the question of who was supreme — the king or the pope.

The account of the conflicts between monarch and pope was biased in favour of the ruler or at least diplomatically silent. When the Council of Clermont is described, for example, its frame of reference is simply that of the Crusade.⁵¹ It is only later indicated that Philip I had already been excommunicated.⁵²

It should be pointed out that the Investitures controversy was the topic within the Church at that time; but nothing is ever mentioned about how the problem was treated in France or England. It is true that in France a controversy as such never occurred — as it did in the Empire and to a lesser extent in England. We must, however, remember that there were problems to be overcome in France: the French kings had used the weapon of their control of bishoprics (at one time within but now) outside the royal domain to press their authority.

The *Grandes Chroniques*, however, diplomatically says nothing of this. Instead, it speaks of the arrival of Pope Paschal — Gregory VII is not mentioned — in France:

... por soi conselier au roi Philippe et à Louis son fil et à l'Eglise de France, d'une novele querele d'androit une maniere de revesteure, de quoi li empereres Hennis le travailoit et baoit encores plus à travailier et lui et l'eglise de Rome.⁵³

The *Grandes Chroniques* also gives a brief account of the actions of Henry V: it sets down the statements supposedly made by Paschal and

.....
⁵¹ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, V, 76.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 114.

the messengers of Henry V; the return of Paschal to Rome; and then Henry's treachery. The 'resolution' of the situation is forgotten in the course of events, but nevertheless the reader would have been able to follow the hostility between the papacy and Emperor through the section devoted to Louis le Gros. Louis's role here is of course prominent: the account was taken from Suger who saw that one of the duties of a theocratic king should be defence of the Church.⁵⁴

It must be emphasised that even in the context of a theocratic king there was no question of the king's authority in his own sphere: he should be pious and respect the role of the pope in the spiritual sphere, but there is no intimation that the pope is supreme in temporal affairs.

As a matter of interest, it should be pointed out that Philip Augustus's repudiation of Ingeborg and his attempt to have the marriage annulled is treated in a manner that seems to indicate that Philip was misled:

Mais li rois, qui par sorceries fu enpeechiez, si com l'en disoit, la cuilli en haine en cele journée meismes que il [l'] ot cognue, et en poi de tens après fu li mariages desjoint par l'egart de sainte Eglise, pour ce que leur lignie fu nombrée et prochainetez de lignache provée par les prelaz et par les barons de France.⁵⁵

Only later was the promulgation of the interdict mentioned, and Philip took action against it.⁵⁶ Indeed the facts of the controversy are scattered throughout the text of the account of Philip Augustus until he reconciled himself — at least in theory — to Ingeborg. In the course of the section devoted to Philip's reign, references to

.....
⁵⁴ *Supra*, Chapter I.

⁵⁵ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, VI, 220-21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 254-55.

Innocent III can be found: these include a very brief passage on such an important event as the Lateran Council and then the recording of Innocent's death.⁵⁷ For someone who held himself in such esteem, Innocent would have been disappointed in the French account of his pontificate.

One can see in the account of Louis IX, evidence of his piety and concern for the Church. But, it is true that it was St. Louis who began to deflect attention from the Church toward the monarchy. In this section we see that direct contact between the king and the pope is less than during previous reigns. The relations between the two powers are cordial: Lyon in fact provides a refuge for Innocent IV who was fleeing from Frederick II in 1244.⁵⁸ While at Lyon, Innocent excommunicated Frederick, the reasons being carefully set down.⁵⁹

Louis, however, had yet to meet the pontiff: when he did, the meeting took place on the semi-neutral ground of Cluny. The great entourage that accompanied him and the lack of formality between the two rulers seems to indicate that there had been some change in attitude: the two met on what must be described as equal terms. Louis le Gros had expressed his own authority in the temporal sphere, but he had also given deference to the pope when he came to France. In contrast we must see Louis IX's actions as an effort, not to ignore the pope, but to meet him as an equal on Louis's own ground.

Le roy entra l'abbaye de Cligni et le pape vint encontre lui et le reçut a grant joie: si demourerent ensamble par l'espace de XV jorz et ordenerent de la voie d'outre mer.⁶⁰

57 *Ibid.*, 369.

58 *Ibid.*, VII, 105.

59 *Ibid.*, 109-110.

60 *Ibid.*, 113-114.

The meeting between king and pontiff as Louis sets out on his crusade is even briefer:

Le roy et son ost passerent parmi Bourgongne et alerent
à Lions sus le Rosne par leur journées, et i trova le roi
le pape Innocent. Quant il orent parlé ensamble,
le roy reçut beneyçon et se parti de Lyons⁶¹

After this the papacy and its relations with the Empire, particularly Manfred, are still recorded. The deaths and elections of popes are also noted. An appeal from Urban IV against Manfred is also noted in the form of a request for aid to Charles of Anjou. But the direct relations with the pope are no longer there: the papacy is no longer a centre of focus. Louis does reveal his piety, misplaced and misdirected at times, through two disastrous crusades. As with Charlemagne, Louis (not the Church itself) was looked to as an example — this is indicative of the change of view and allegiance.

French relations with the papacy as indicated in the *Grandes Chroniques* were good until Charles of Anjou became embroiled in Sicilian affairs. As we know Charles's coronation by Clement IV and his conquest of the Kingdom of Sicily was part of the papal policy of extermination of the Hohenstaufen. The *Grandes Chroniques*, as can be expected, presents a very favourable account of the affair. Without comment it indicates that Manfred's name was freely discussed in Rome:

... l'Apostoile manda les cardinaus et leur dist que
Mainfroi avoit mout greve ses devanciers et dessaisis
de toute la seignorie du reamme de Sezile.⁶²

As can be expected Charles is given very gentle treatment in the *Grandes Chroniques* in comparison to his greed and ambition, and the

.....
⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 237.

bravery of his army is praised.⁶³

With Sicily in his obedience, Charles was able to embark on other schemes. The *Grandes Chroniques* is silent about Charles's part in diverting Louis's Crusade to Tunis. It also omits the election of Nicholas III and the measures that he took in an attempt to reduce Charles's power and enhance that of his own family. In fact the *Grandes Chroniques* chooses to ignore Nicholas completely: he might never have existed. It does, however, record the election of Martin IV — Charles of Anjou's protégé — who at once restored Charles's power.

As we know, there was discontent in Sicily and there was also another claimant for its throne. The version of the claims of Pedro of Aragon through his wife Constance, the daughter of Manfred, is of course the French one. In fact these claims are never made clear:

... Pierre d'Arragon roy fu moult en volenté des malices sa femme et la crut de quanque elle disoit. Elle affermoit certainement et faisoit entendant à son baron que elle estoit hoir du royaume de Cezile, et que ceulz de Cezille le tenoient pour trop failli pour ce que il ne se offroit à eulz à estre leur seigneur⁶⁴

The account of the Sicilian Vespers that follows this is also very terse; for the most part it simply bemoans the massacre of the French without stating its cause. The *Grandes Chroniques* does note that the Sicilians were reported to have held some allegiance to the King of Aragon. In spite of this rather indiscreet admission, Pedro is of

63 After the initial moves the *Grandes Chroniques* notes:
'Ne ce ne fu pas por neant que la chevalerie de France deservi merites de loenges; car leur anemis estoient plus assez et mieux armez sanz comparison que il n'estoient, et avoient contre euls des plus fors chevalier du reamme d'Alemaigne.'
Ibid., 251.

64 *Ibid.*, VIII, 82-83.

course condemned when he has himself crowned King of Sicily. As the *Grandes Chroniques* points out, Martin IV took the proper action when he excommunicated Pedro for acting against the will of the Church: the Church had made Charles of Anjou king.

As noted before, Charles had used Louis IX as much as possible in his efforts for self-advancement; he was also able to convince his nephew Philippe le Hardi of the need for justice to be done. The result was that Philippe le Hardi became involved in a war against Aragon — to satisfy Charles's greed. With the papacy on his side, Charles was able to endow the war with the aura of a crusade: 'Messire Colet, cardinal, preescha de la croiz pour aler sur le roy d'Arragon si comme homme dampne et escommenie qu'il estoit.'⁶⁵

Charles did not live to see Pedro withdraw from Sicily; and after his death in 1285, Martin IV made Robert of Artois regent of the kingdom for Charles's son (who had been captured by the Aragonese). The war and its periods of truce continued until 1291. By that time many of the characters had changed, but the situation remained the same. In 1288 Charles was freed on what the *Grandes Chroniques* obviously considered outrageous terms. After Charles's release and his coronation the affairs of Sicily were forgotten or mentioned only in passing. The final withdrawal of the Aragonese came when James, also king of Sicily, succeeded his brother, Alfonso III, on the throne of Aragon.

Through this we can see the 'co-operation' of the papacy with the French. But this relationship was not to last: the breakdown occurred during the reign of Philippe le Bel. Nicholas IV, like his predecessor

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

Honorius IV, had supported the cause of the French. After his death, the papacy remained vacant for 'II ans, de III mois et de II jours'⁶⁶ until the election of Celestine V. The *Grandes Chroniques* gives some attention to this event and to the virtues of Celestine. In contrast to this, the notice given of his abdication and the election of Boniface VIII is stated blandly:

Item. Environ l'Advent Nostre Seigneur, ledit pape, en plain consistoire, devant touz, renonça à tout office et benefice de papalité. Après lequel, fu Boniface le VIII^e né de Champagne, lequel fu le C IIII^{xx} et XVII^e pape. Or avint que ledit Celestin ... s'en vouloit retourner au lieu dont il estoit venu. Mais le pape Boniface ... ne le vult pas souffrir, mais le fist honnestement et à très grant diligence, en honneste lieu estre gardé.⁶⁷

At this point no scandal surrounds Boniface's election: it must be inferred. But shortly after this the campaign against the pope begins, indicating that the account was written during the conflict. The language is different.

En celi meismes an [1296], mourut Celestin le pape qui s'estoit deposé. Et en ycel an, Pierre et Jaques de la Colompne cardinaux, afermoient la deposicion du pape Celestin avoir esté indeuement faite, et que la promocion de Boniface estoit injuste et irraysonable, et par ce maintenoient la cour de Rome estre en erreur.⁶⁸

Almost immediately after this, a chapter titled 'De la bataille du centiesme et du cinquantesme' appears in the text.⁶⁹ It, as one may gather, tells of Philippe le Bel's taxation for his war against the king of England. It also very briefly indicates Boniface's reaction to the taxation of the clergy: without naming the bull, the *Grandes Chroniques* has outlined the contents of *Clericis laicos*.⁷⁰ In the text there is no

66 *Ibid.*, 156.

67 *Ibid.*, 157.

68 *Ibid.*, 166.

69 *Ibid.*, 167.

70 *Ibid.*, 167-68.

indication that Boniface's statements were directed toward Edward I as well, nor is there an indication of the reprisals taken by both kings.

To indicate these things would have put Philippe le Bel in an unfavourable position: withholding bullion from Rome would have been interpreted as an unworthy deed. Instead nothing is said about Philippe le Bel's reaction. The next indication of the dispute is the recording of Boniface's concession to the king that he might tax the clergy when it was deemed necessary. The passage, in both tone and use of words, clearly indicates that Boniface was backing-down. This concession, a note on the punitive action taken against the Colonna, and action concerning confession to mendicants are detrimental to Boniface's image. It is only somewhat counterweighted by the following passage:

Après ... pape Boniface, aucunes constitucions nouvelles, lesquelles avec courage diligent et aveques grant cure, pour l'estat et pour le profist de l'universe Eglise, avoit fait compiler⁷¹

And without indicating the actual reason — to placate Philippe le Bel — the *Grandes Chroniques* also states that Louis IX was canonised by Boniface.⁷²

As yet the criticism of Boniface is mild. The jubilee of 1300 is mentioned in a cursory fashion.⁷³ Later it is noted that in 1301 Charles of Valois was well received by Boniface in Italy.⁷⁴

In that same year the confrontation between Boniface and Philippe le Bel began anew. The issue was of course the arrest of Bernard

71 *Ibid.*, 179.

72 *Ibid.*, 180.

73 *Ibid.*, 189-90.

74 *Ibid.*, 193.

Saisset, Bishop of Pamiers — in the *Grandes Chroniques* it is Pavie. The charges against Saisset, no matter how spurious, are stated strongly.

Et ... premier evesque de Pavie, qui du roy de France paroles coutumelieuses et plaines de blasme et de diffame, en moult de lieux semé, et pluseurs, si comme l'en disoit, avoit fait espuiier et esmouvoir contre la majesté. Pour ce fu appellé à la court le roi⁷⁵

In the *Grandes Chroniques*, Boniface's reaction is abbreviated. Although they are not quoted directly, an accurate paraphrase of the strong terms used by Boniface in *Salvator mundi* and *Ausculta fili* is given: it indicates that Boniface revoked the privileges granted in *Clericis laicos* and emphasises Boniface's claims to sovereignty in both the temporal and spiritual spheres.

At this point the text is broken by a mention of an eclipse of the moon. Although this does interrupt the account, it also provides a break between Boniface's machinations and Philippe's actions. Nothing is said about the forged abstract that was made of *Ausculta fili*, that aroused sympathy among the French for the king's position and was publicly burned: there was no need to involve the king in such affairs, for it would have detracted from Philippe's efforts to press his claims to supremacy in the temporal sphere.

As depicted in the *Grandes Chroniques*, the actions of the king are laudable: it is noted that Saisset was released, but told to leave the kingdom post-haste. This was not detrimental to Philippe le Bel's image: he had been the wronged party as presented in the *Grandes Chroniques* and he was showing charity as befitted a king in releasing Saisset. Also, through this gesture and in not giving Saisset over to

.....
⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 195-96.

the ecclesiastical jurisdiction (as Boniface demanded) Philippe le Bel demonstrated his supremacy in what he contended were temporal affairs.

The threat to his sovereignty was actually Philippe le Bel's only concern. This is emphasised in the remainder of the account concerning the relations between king and pope. One can see it in the reasons for calling the three Estates together, possibly for the first time, in 1302:

... car adcertes la magesté royal doubtoit, pour ce que le pape li avoit mandé tant de temporelz comme des espiri-
tuelz li estre à li sousmis, que ne vousist le pape de
Romme dire que le royaume de France fust tenu de l'eglise
de Rome.⁷⁶

Both the gathering of the Estates and the reasons for it are important to French history. For modern readers it indicates the uses made of the Estates of the kingdom: they were called together for the dissemination of propaganda and to rubber-stamp actions already taken by the king. This function was not openly stated, but it could be inferred by the contemporary reader. If he did not realise this inference, the meeting would have been viewed in an entirely different light: the king had summoned the Estates for their counsel and, in return, they had pledged their allegiance to him. Nothing is said about the letters of protest sent by the Estates to the Pope at this point.

The *Grandes Chroniques* in their paraphrase of *Ausculda fili* had noted that Boniface had called the clergy to a council in Rome. The Council was held. The *Grandes Chroniques* underplays the attendance at that council. The reason for this — its effect on the monarchy — was valid. According to the *Grandes Chroniques*

.....
⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.

... les prelas du royaume de France, qui en l'an devant prochain estoient appellez et semons de venir à court de Rome, si orent conseil ensemble et regarderent qu'il n'i pooient aler Mais pour ce qu'il ne peussent estre repris de desobeissance, envoierent pour eulz trois evesques qui denoncierent pour eulz au pape Boniface la cause de leur demourance.⁷⁷

In fact about forty French prelates did eventually attend the council, the defeat at Courtrai had temporarily weakened Philippe to the extent that some did not fear reprisals. The *Grandes Chroniques*, in contrast, notes that Boniface sent cardinal Jean le Moine to France to resolve the situation, but that he did not meet with success.⁷⁸

But the entire hand of Philippe le Bel had yet to be shown. In 1303 he called the first and second Estates, and the *Grandes Chroniques* clearly records in a long passage:

... en cest temps, les barons et les prelas du royaume de France ... à Paris au concile s'assamblèrent, et ilec fu traité de touz; c'est assavoir d'aucuns agrevemens du royaume et du roy et des prelaz, qui à eulz, si comme à l'opinion de moult estoit veu affermer, le pape de Rome en prochain entendoit faire. Et fu ensement ycelui pape, d'aucuns chevaliers, ilec devant les prelas, à la royal magesté, de moult de crismes blasmé, diffamé et accusé. C'est à savoir de heresie, de symonie et d'omicide et de moult d'autres vilains mesfaiz droitement sus lui mis touz vrais, si comme aucuns estimoient. Et pour ce que à pape et à prelaz herites, selon ce que l'en treuve es sains canons, ne doit pas estre paiée obedience, fu ylec, du commun conseil de touz appellez jusques atant que pape eust son concile appellé et assamblé, et que de ces crismes et de ces cas que l'en li avoit mis sus, s'espurgast et qu'il en fust du tout en tout purgiez.⁷⁹

.....
 77 The primary reason given in the *Grandes Chroniques* is that they were not permitted to carry gold or silver out of the kingdom. *Ibid.*, 209. This prohibition had of course come into being after the first dispute.

78 *Ibid.*, 216.

79 *Ibid.*, 219-20. For some reason the *Grandes Chroniques* mentions that the abbot of Cîteaux was among those who appealed to a future council; his name is not mentioned in other sources. *Ibid.*, 220, n. 2.

The situation grew worse and as the *Grandes Chroniques* notes: one of the pope's emissaries who carried an order of excommunication was imprisoned.⁸⁰ It is surely now obvious that the *Grandes Chroniques* represents the official French attitude to the situation. The final episode in the conflict between Boniface VIII and Philippe le Bel is also recorded in the *Grandes Chroniques* — the incident of Agnani. In measured tones it points out that Boniface refused to submit to a council that would investigate his crimes and fled to the safety of his native city, Agnani. There he found the protection of the misguided cardinals and citizens — at least this is the version put forward by the *Grandes Chroniques*. In fact the role of the French in the outrage at Agnani is underplayed in the text: the Colonna, Boniface's enemies from the start, are given the spotlight; and Nogaret and his band are given only a small share of the limelight. The entire account is compressed: if all of the details had been included Philippe le Bel's prestige might well have suffered. After Agnani, only the bare details of Boniface's fate are given: his flight to Rome, the entrustment of French affairs to one of his cardinals, and finally

... au chastel de Saint Ange dedenz Rome s'en ala et s'i reçut, et par le flux de ventre, si comme l'en dit, en cheant en frenaisie, si qu'il mengoit ses mains, furent oys de toutes pars, par le chastel, les tonnoirres et veues les foudres non acoustumées et non apparans es contrées voisines, ycelui pape Boniface sanz devocion et profession de foy mourut.⁸¹

It must be mentioned that the *Grandes Chroniques* has included the legend surrounding his death, but it adds to Philippe le Bel's case. The very fact that it states that he died 'sanz devocion et profession de foy' does complete the picture of a scheming pope who was the 'enemy'

.....
⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 225-26.

of France. In this manner the *Grandes Chroniques* has given an account of the confrontation between Philippe le Bel and Boniface VIII. Through it, the *Grandes Chroniques* has conveyed to its readers the fallacy of the pope claiming power in all spheres with some power delegated to kings — but only under his supervision. It has also shown the manner in which Philippe le Bel gained the support of his subjects, and was able to refute outrageous claims and protect his kingdom.

As we know the question of papal supremacy lay dormant after the death of Boniface VIII. Instead the pope, while not completely subservient, fell prey to the power of the kings of Europe. Thus, the *Grandes Chroniques* can note that Benedict XI

... absolait le roy, la royne, les enfans, les nobles, le royaume et touz les adherens de toute sentence de escommenement et d'entredit, se aucune en eulz ou en l'un de eulz avoit esté gettée par le pape Boniface en quelque maniere.⁸²

Added to this was the granting of financial resources from the Church to Philippe.

The *Grandes Chroniques* informed its readers that after the death of Benedict XI, the election of a new pope was delayed for almost a year. When the new pope, Clement V, was elected and then consecrated at Lyon in 1305, no surprise is registered in the text of this change from the traditional Italian orbit. In fact all of Clement's actions are taken for granted: the restoration to cardinalship of the two Colonna, degraded by Boniface; the granting of further financial benefits; the elevation of ten cardinals, mostly French; etc.⁸³

.....
⁸² *Ibid.*, 237-38.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 247-48.

Clement's election and consecration in France was not the end of his connection with France. He remained in the kingdom for some time until he settled in Avignon in 1309. Although the *Grandes Chroniques* do not admit the circumstances — pressure from the French king — Clement absolved Philippe le Bel '... et les adherens à lui ...'⁸⁴ of the action against Boniface VIII.

Also scattered throughout the pertinent section of the *Grandes Chroniques* are references to and accounts of the dissolution of the Templars. There can be no doubt that the relationship between pope and king was instrumental in bringing this about. The true motives for this are not stated. Instead the list of the official accusations against the Order are given; and it is interesting to note that these are a translation of a document that the compilers had at hand and not simply from one of the chronicles that they used. As before, the scattering of references to the Templars can be considered as a result of the chronological nature of the work, but it also serves the purpose of masking Philippe le Bel's pressing for action against them. It is true that much could be said against the Order, whose members with their wealth had ceased to carry out their original mission and were the object of accusations of corruption. Their numbers were large in France. Their preoccupation had become finance — they were also the guardians of the royal treasure. Their wealth and their numbers made them a target for Philippe le Bel.

The phrases used in the *Grandes Chroniques* on the matter of the imprisonment of the Templars reveal the relationship between the king

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

and pope:

... touz les Templiers du royaume de France, du commandement de celui meismes roy ... et de l'ottroi et assentement du souverain evesque pape Climent ... souppeçonnez de detestables et horribles et diffamables crismes, furent pris par tout le royaume de France⁸⁵

According to the *Grandes Chroniques* there is no question of the justification for the subsequent burning of the Templars: their souls were lost because of the number of people whom they had misled and mistreated, as well as their heretical practices.⁸⁶

The finale to this incident came at the Council of Vienne in 1312. Nothing in the text of the *Grandes Chroniques* indicates that Clement and Philippe le Bel had agreed to two trials after much haggling, nor is it noted that very poor evidence was brought against the Order in other areas. Instead the account of the Council of Vienne is indicative of the relationship between pope and king that the *Grandes Chroniques* seeks to present.

... là [Vienne] vint roy Phelippe avec ses freres et ses filz ... et avoit moult grant compaignie de barons et de nobles hommes, et se sist le roi à la destre du pape plus haut que les autres; mais il estoit plus bas que le pape⁸⁷

At this council the Order was dissolved, their wealth was given to the Hospitallers, and Clement renewed the king's right to tax the Church. All is carefully set down in the *Grandes Chroniques*: the king had once more triumphed over a pope. An additional note on the matter, the burning of the Grand Master and one of his regional subordinates, is given

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⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 272-76. It is noted that 'Desquieux l'un estoit l'aumosnier du roy de France, qui tant de honneur avoit eu en ce monde; mais onques de ses forfaiz n'ot aucune recognoissance'. *Ibid.*, 273.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 236.

immediately before the mention of the death of Clement V and the problems surrounding the election of his successor (a dispute between the French, Italian, and Gascon cardinals).

A new pope was elected in 1316; John XXII; and in the presence of the regent Philip (later Philip V), as well as other members of the royal family, the pope was consecrated once more at Lyon. After this event the papacy once more falls into the background of the history of the kings of France. No comment is made on the Babylonish Captivity, the popes at Avignon, being near to the French king, tend to be influenced by him. They are mentioned only sporadically: they are no longer a main source of opposition to the French king. Their efforts to secure peace between the French and others are noted, as well as their deaths and elections. The visits to Avignon that the *Grandes Chroniques* records on the part of the king uphold the fiction that the pope and the French kings are continuing a close relationship — in spite of the character of some of the Avignon popes.

The fiction is broken in some cases. When John XXII sent an army to Italy to fight the Ghibellines whom he had excommunicated, rumours of his departure from the policy of consulting the consistory were rife; and the papal troops were defeated. With this defeat in mind John sought financial aid in France. In reply, Charles IV demanded and received further permission to tax the Church.

The one theme that keeps reappearing through the account from the reign of Charles IV until its solution, is the conflict between Louis of Bavaria and the papacy over the recognition of Louis as emperor after his election to the office. There is irony throughout the account of this dispute, which in usual fashion is scattered for chronological

purposes. The dispute is similar to that between Philippe le Bel and Boniface VIII: it is a question of supremacy in the temporal sphere. The *Grandes Chroniques* prefaces one of its episodes with 'Comme l'emperere Constantin eust donée à l'eglise de Rome et à Saint Silvestre la dignité de l'Empire perpetuelment à tenir et possider es parties d'Occident'⁸⁸

The papacy had been vacant at the time of Louis's election and the *Grandes Chroniques* notes that there had been a dispute over the election. In effect this was one of the principal reasons cited in the *Grandes Chroniques* for John's refusal to recognise Louis after he came to the papal throne. At this point the *Grandes Chroniques* was favourable to the papacy and because of this hides one of John's other reasons — perhaps his main one: John's fear of a new power in Italy.

The ideas of both Jean of Jandun and Marsiglio of Padua are represented in a later account and their ideas are condemned by the papacy. As time goes on the *Grandes Chroniques* passes from a position of opposition, to neutrality, to favouring Louis's cause. When Louis marched to Rome and put a friar as anti-pope on the pontifical throne, the *Grandes Chroniques* is naturally hostile: it was a threat to the pope at Avignon. When John is accused of heresy by the trio of the anti-pope, Louis of Bavaria, and the head of the Franciscans, the tone is a bit neutral. But, John's criticism of Nicholas V made known at Paris is strong:

... il estoit contenu ledit Pierre [Nicholas] avoir esté marié avant qu'il eust esté religieux. Et depuis qu'il fu entré en religion, sa femme l'avoit fait semondre par pluseurs foiz; et avoit à nom sadite femme Jehanne Mathie.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, IX, 37-38.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

Soon after this the inevitable excommunications began. The submission of the antipope, as the *Grandes Chroniques* indicates, spelled the beginning of the end of the dispute: one of its members had been dropped from the scene. When Philip's personal fortunes were at stake with the English threatening his throne and a promise of friendship from Louis possible, all pretence was abandoned and he appealed to a new pope, Clement VI, for Louis's absolution. The failure of this appeal is laid at Louis's door: '... pour cause que ledit duc ne demandoit pas sa reconciliation vers l'Eglise, par maniere deue, si come il devoit'.⁹⁰ The *Grandes Chroniques* fails to indicate, however, Louis's exact role in the events that took place between Philip VI and Edward III in the course of the first years of the Hundred Years' War: Louis's dropping of an alliance with the English and his turning toward the French. After this, Louis's cause is dropped by the *Grandes Chroniques*; only his death is mentioned, because something more important has arisen: the conflict between the Kings of England and France. This, indeed, shows the character of the text: it indicates events when they seem important, but there need be no conclusion to a sequence, and the attention given to such items varies with their relative importance to the text and its subjects.

The references to the problems of Louis of Bavaria are but one example of the manner in which the affairs of other kingdoms and Empires are introduced into the *Grandes Chroniques*. The introduction of such material may be for any one of several reasons: it might have a direct bearing on French affairs; it may be there because it was not edited out of the source being translated; or it may simply be a matter of interest.

.....
⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 234.

During the course of the account of the Merovingians up to roughly the era of Dagobert I, the interests and activities of the barbarians and the Empire receive a fair bit of attention. One might in fact say that this section is not really a history of the French kings, but an account of world affairs in that era. Some incidents from Theodoric's career are noted, such as his defeat of Odovacar and his intervention in the dispute between Clovis and Alaric II, and later his death. In yet another section the two defeats of the Vandals in Africa by Belisarius are noted with the erroneous addition that Belisarius was killed by the Franks in Italy, when in fact he died in Constantinople. It must be noted that the exploits of the Franks are treated in a somewhat different fashion: it seems that the translator does not realise that they too are of the same ilk — barbarians. The legend of their noble ancestors the Trojans was perhaps responsible for this. The Arianism of some, the inbred cruelty of others, also seems to separate them from the Franks who had become Christians, but were not strangers to pre-Christian habits. One gains the impression from the *Grandes Chroniques* that the French were a chosen people from the start: that they were a type of human different from the people around them.

The status of the Eastern Empire could not be ignored. To a certain extent this was also due to the sources used by the compiler: they contained material on this subject for the reason of the fiction of imperial control in Italy. In this sphere, Justinian is of course mentioned; but the coverage of his reign is a bit disappointing. The account, as in so many other cases, is scattered through the chronological narrative, thus any consistent policies are difficult to follow. One in fact learns more about his generals, Belisarius and Narses, than about Justinian himself: the campaigns in Africa and Italy are described,

but the reasons for them are vague. In the case of the Vandals the reason given was that they were '... une gent fort et hardie et batailleuse, qui aucunes foiz avoit vaincue la force des Romains, souzmis et humiliez des plus nobles princes et des plus de Rome'.⁹¹ The reason for the Italian campaigns is stated more clearly: the warfare of the Goths, their cruelty, and the ravaged state of the countryside that led to famine. The piteous state of the Romans for example is graphically described in the *Grandes Chroniques* at the time of the invasion of Totila the king of the Goths:

Li Romain, qui dedenz estoient, furent si destroit de fain que il vourent mengier leur enfanz⁹²

The Romans were defeated, but as the text points out their treatment was not as harsh as expected. As the *Grandes Chroniques* indicates, the city was practically deserted — the result of the ejection of the population by Totila — and a few senators gathered together to request aid from the emperor. Narses's campaign was successful and as we know he became the emperor's instrument in Italy. The *Grandes Chroniques* compares his lot to that of other conquerors in the ingratitude shown to him by the Romans.⁹³

The Nika revolt is noted, as is the mistrust that Justinian showed toward Belisarius from time to time. In his obituary in the *Grandes Chroniques* Justinian is praised for his good government, charity, conquests, and the construction of Santa Sophia — with an attempt to

.....
⁹¹ *Ibid.*, I, 109-110.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 182.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 215-18. For example:

Li granz Scipio, uns des senateurs qui estoit apelez Aufricanz, pour ce que il avoit souzmise à l'Empire toute Aufrique, et qui moult estoit nobles et renomez des granz victoires que il avoit tantes foiz eues contre ceus de Carthage, perdi la grâce de la cité, et s'en ala come essilliez, puis fu morz en essil de duel et de tristece. *Ibid.*, 216.

explain the meaning of *Agya* — whose beauty is attested by those who have seen it.⁹⁴

What is perhaps more interesting about the attention given to Justinian is what is omitted. Some indication of the religious problem is given and it is noted that Pope Silverius was deposed in favour of Vigilius at the behest of the empress. But who was the empress? Theodora is never mentioned. Instead Justinian is said to have married the courtesan Antonia. This error robs the *Grandes Chroniques* of much of the intrigue and direction of affairs by Theodora. Justinian's great contribution in the legal field is only intimated. Thus, with few exceptions, the *Grandes Chroniques* — perhaps because of its sources — has confined itself to the affairs of the West during Justinian's reign.

After the death of Justinian the Empire falls into the background. The accession of Tiberius is mentioned, and it is noted that he sent messages to Chilpéric. The assassination of Maurice receives some attention, as does Heraclius I, during whose reign the Saracens took Jerusalem. In fact the Eastern Empire is mentioned only briefly during the reign of Charlemagne. It is natural of course that it should not be mentioned that Charlemagne wished for recognition from the East (it came to his son after Charles's death). Instead we have the accounts of embassies confirming peace and friendship, the gift of an elephant, and a misinformed statement of Irene's assumption of power:

.....
⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 213-214.

... en grec est nomée *Agya*, en latin *Sophia*, et pour cete raison la noma li empereor Sainte Sophie. Cele ovre est de si grant noblece qu'ele sormonte de biauté et de bonté toutes les eglises du monde, si com cil tesmoignent qui l'ont veue.
Ibid., 213-214.

L'empire gouvernoit cele Helene, car ses fiuz Constantins avoit esté pris et avuglez par ses genz meesmes pour son orguel et pour ses mauveses mors.⁹⁵

The East only becomes topical again after the start of the Crusades. Those who went on the First Crusade are mentioned; but, aside from indicating the cities captured and the establishment of Godefroy de Bouillon as king of Jerusalem, nothing more is added. Thus, the first and most successful Crusade is given very short shrift.

As already noted, the account of the Second Crusade, in which Louis VII participated, was taken from Guillaume de Tyr's work. The participants in addition to Louis and his queen, Eleanor, are listed. It is noted that they took the Cross at Vézelay after the stirring speech of Saint Bernard to whom the mission had been entrusted. It is also indicated that Emperor Conrad set out earlier than Louis because he had many more men and required the advantage of a head start in order to feed them. The account of the Second Crusade is given in detail: the treachery of the emperor is indicated, two versions of the place where Louis spent the night after the French met the Saracens at Laodicea are given (from Guillaume de Tyr and Odo of Deuil); the rigours of the journey are recorded; and it is noted that Louis left his men on foot and set sail for the Holy Land — no comment on this act being made. After noting the arrival at Antioch the compilers have exercised some editorial responsibility: a passage on the conduct of Eleanor is omitted and it is simplified to a rather vague statement that when Louis considered the possibility of moving onward '... la roine sa fame mist-il à ce que ele le vout laissier et partir de lui'.⁹⁶ The ill-advised siege

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 82.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, 39.

of Damascus is recorded and then, very quickly, follows the note that Louis returned to France.

Although it is indicated that by divine inspiration Philip Augustus took the Cross to deliver the Holy Land, one can question how anxious he was to undertake the task. It is stated that 'Ensi s'en alerent li dui roi crestien [Philip and Richard of England] et s'abandonerent aus venez et aus periuz de mer pour l'amor de Nostre Seigneur et pour la crestienté defendre'.⁹⁷ Throughout the account Philip Augustus is pictured as the peace-maker, Richard as the treacherous trouble-maker. (Frederick Barbarossa, as the text notes, died on his way to the Holy Land.) Philip's illness and his suspicion that Richard was treating privately with Saladin are given as the reasons for his return home after so short a time. But as events later show, once home he recovered very quickly and took advantage of Richard's absence. Philip, we are told, had carefully provisioned his men: according to the *Grandes Chroniques* he is the upright man, and Richard, who did manage to conclude a truce, is condemned for his actions. Further justification for the correctness of this view is seen in his capture when returning home.

Up to this point we can see that with the exception of the First Crusade and Richard's achievement, the crusading movement had done little more than fire men's enthusiasm for adventure and wealth. The contribution made by the French kings was nil. But the accounts to the contemporary reader of the *Grandes Chroniques* would have provided excitement, a faith in their kings, and perhaps vicarious enjoyment. One wonders if they were able to compare the first three Crusades to the

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

débauches of St. Louis; or to the Fourth Crusade.

The Fourth Crusade and Louis's two are also treated in the *Grandes Chroniques*. The reader was given an official version of the former. The background of the internal problems of the Eastern Empire is recorded, and then the account quickly switches to the actual arrival of the Crusaders in Venice. The account of their dealings there is much abbreviated: the problems with the Venetians are inferred; and Alexius makes his promises of money for their passage, help in recapturing the Holy Land, provisions, and emphatically '... feroit obeir l'eglise de Constantinoble à l'eglise de Rome et les joindroit ensemble'⁹⁸ The agreement was made and, without any mention of the fiasco of Zara, the Crusaders arrive at Constantinople. Concerning the role of the French at the siege of Constantinople, the *Grandes Chroniques* gives them full marks:

Li François qui n'estoient que un petitet de gent au regart de la grant multitude des Griex atendoient la bataille en grant liée, car il se fioient segurement de la victoire.⁹⁹

The picture given of the siege is amusing, the blind doge of Venice, Dandolo, is said to have rushed to the aid of the French because he was impressed with their ability in the face of the Greeks. Upon seeing him rush to their aid they renewed their '... hardement et leur vertu'¹⁰⁰ and 'En tel maniere fu la citez prise des François et des Venisiens'.¹⁰¹ Nothing is said of the sack of the city; and the founding of the Latin Empire is accomplished by stating that the emperor Alexis, who had been aided by the French, died and the French elected the Count

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 266.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 267

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

of Flanders to replace him. The fiction of the union of the Eastern and Western Churches ends the account. Once again the *Grandes Chroniques* has presented the image of the virtuous and upright French, fighting for the cause of the Church. No further comment was made; the reader, who had no other stories about it, could not help but admire his countrymen — though by Primat's era the Empire had crumbled — and believe that their cause was true. This was distortion, if indeed Primat knew of any other version. It is characteristic, particularly of the latter part of the first recension when the integrity of the king and of his subjects was necessary. This view, it should be noted, would have been upheld by Louis IX.

It is a view that is also characteristic of the manner in which Louis's own Crusades are described. Earlier in the account of his reign it is noted that some French nobles departed for the Holy Land, but met defeat in their efforts to restore the situation of the past. Louis, as we know, was determined to convert all men to his Faith. For example, he pursued the possibility of converting the Khan to Christianity. This persistence was — in addition to the subterfuge of Charles of Anjou — responsible for the failure of his Crusades. He refused again and again advice of treating with the Saracens, though it was tendered by wise advisors. In one instance the Master of the Templars counselled moderation, but it is stated in the *Grandes Chroniques* that the master was in league with the Saracens and cared only to protect his wealth.

Although the Crusaders were first plagued by disputes between the mariners, and then rough weather, they made some initial progress: Damietta was taken. Disease is quite rightly blamed for the deaths and torments of the Crusaders. But nowhere does Louis receive the censure

that he deserved. Even at the defeat and capture at Mansourah the army is credited with having fought bravely, in spite of their small numbers and illness. It is noted that Louis himself was so ill that he had to be carried by a Saracen. Louis was advised to negotiate. When an offer was made by the Sultan, he accepted and was released. He and his barons, it is said, arrived at Acre '... dolent et corroucié por la perte que il avoient fait'.¹⁰² In spite of the reality that the Saracens had killed the ill after their capture, Louis clung to the hope of recovering those of his men whom he had left in captivity. It was in vain: only a few were ransomed. But the *Grandes Chroniques* ends the episode with a moral for its readers: some had renounced the Christian faith for Islam

Par le torment que il reçurent, li pluseur renierent Dieu et sa douce mere et se tornerent du tout à la loi Mahommet. Les autres, qui furent très bons champions ... en la foi crestienne, se tindrent forment en leur propos, tant qu'il soffrirent mort et conquistrent la vie pardurable sanz fin et la couronne de gloire.¹⁰³

A moral was certainly needed to end the account of such an episode in a reasonable fashion.

As is known, Louis remained in the Holy Land, in spite of the fact that his presence might have been useful in his own kingdom. There, so the *Grandes Chroniques* tells us, he was most useful in having towns fortified (although the masons were attacked by the Saracens) and in settling the disputes that arose; and he also found time to make a pilgrimage to Nazareth.

Finally, in 1254, after 'entrusting' the Holy Land to someone,

.....
¹⁰² *Ibid.*, VII, 157.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 158.

the king returned to his kingdom — his move being prompted by the news of the death of his mother, the regent. Louis, however, was not finished with Crusading. In 1270 he set out again '... pour ce qu'il li fu aviz que la premiere voie ne fu pas mout profitable à la crestienté'.¹⁰⁴ Again Louis met with initial success and was able to take Carthage, but when on the request of aid from Charles of Anjou they went toward Tunis, illness again began to take its toll among the army and the king also succumbed. The *Grandes Chroniques* indicates that he had enough time left before his death to instruct his son Philip in his duties.¹⁰⁵ Throughout even this last Crusade, the text remains faithful to the image that Louis was valorous, but ill-advised, in his attempts to fight the enemies of Christianity.

Even in the face of adversity, the *Grandes Chroniques* is able to edify the reader and instruct him on the virtues of a king who, as they admit, was ill-advised in many cases, but whose deeds showed the strength and persistence of the French monarchy. Philippe le Hardi in spite of some success after his father's death was sensible enough to realise the simple truth that the mission was unprofitable. Thus, with the mediation of Charles of Anjou, he accepted a truce with the king of Tunisia and was dissuaded from going on to the Holy Land — returning to his kingdom instead. These facts are mentioned in the *Grandes Chroniques*. No apologies are offered for this turning away from the chimera of restoring all of the Holy Land to Christianity; only a vague statement is made that one day Philippe le Hardi intended to continue his pilgrimage. He never did.

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¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 260.

¹⁰⁵ The *Grandes Chroniques* has recorded the Enseignements. *Ibid.*, 277-80.

After this the interest in the Eastern Empire, the troubles that drew attention to it, the Holy Land, and the Saracens fade in the *Grandes Chroniques*. An attack of the Tartars in the East is mentioned, the death of the sultan of Egypt is of interest, the gradual conquest of the remaining Christian strongholds in the East is also included, and the conversion of the Tartars is worth recording. Crusades are proposed, some are even planned, but interest in them had waned. The Saracens, who were once considered a prime topic for the *Grandes Chroniques*, also fade into the background, relegated to those times that the French actually come into contact with them in Sicily and when French interests come into contact with the Reconquista in Spain. Once more one can say that the *Grandes Chroniques* had found more important and relevant topics such as the conflict between pope and king and then the threat to the very centre of their focus, the king, in the form of the Hundred Years' War.

Treatment of the Scandinavian kingdoms, Hungary, Poland, and Russia, is similar to that of the Eastern Empire: bits are scattered throughout the text. One cannot consider that the *Grandes Chroniques* has actual historical value in most of these cases: none are given any real attention in comparison to even the consideration given to Justinian. References to them vary in importance. The following examples will serve as a sampling: passing references to the deaths of kings; requests by the Northmen in France for help from Scandinavia; notes of conversion to Christianity; mentions of attacks on other kingdoms; details about marriage alliances; and the recording of the reception of emissaries of their kings. The accounts themselves can be considered of passing interest or curiosity, but they are only of historical value when they directly concern France.

Of more historical value are the events recorded that pertain to France's neighbours: the Empire, Spain, and England. Many aspects of the Empire have already been revealed in this and previous chapters. It was pointed out earlier that the distinctions between France and Germany, although not made clear in the *Grandes Chroniques*, began to emerge in the divisions of territory made in the 9th Century. But even after this, until the very last of the Carolingians is propped up in France, affairs of Germany are still indicated to some extent in the *Grandes Chroniques*.

Germany did not cling to the Carolingian dynasty as long as France: after the death of Louis the Child in 911, Conrad of Franconia was elected by the nobles as their king. For a time Lorraine, the homeland of the Carolingians, gave its allegiance to Charles the Simple. But by 925 it had again turned toward Germany. As noted before, the sources available to Primat were few in the case of the later Carolingians: the *Grandes Chroniques* reveals none of these incidents. In fact very little indication is given of the new German monarchy: Otto I is mentioned as is Otto II; Otto I's imperial coronation is neglected, but Otto II is styled emperor.

When Emperor Henry II is mentioned on the topical point of the discovery of the supposed body of St. Denys at Saint-Emmèran, the relations between the two rulers seem to be cordial: 'Grant affinite et grant amor avoit entre lui et Henri le roi de France, car li rois Henris avoit eue une soue niece par mariage'.¹⁰⁶ Henri I of France's reply to the claims of the abbey are directed to Henry II. The reply

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¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 59-60.

is stern, but courteous and cites the evidence on the side of the French to prove that the body of St. Denys was held at the abbey of Saint-Denis. This and the subsequent evidence provided by the opening of the tomb of St. Denys and displaying its contents,¹⁰⁷ was only the beginning: this account was repeated by Rigord and the *Grandes Chroniques*¹⁰⁸ and, as we know, the head of St. Denys was the centre of focus in the dispute between the monks of Saint-Denis and the canons of Notre-Dame in the early 15th Century.¹⁰⁹ For the purposes of the *Grandes Chroniques* this incident had importance: it revealed to its readers the false claims that could be made, and refuted, in reference to this patron saint.

One cannot help but note that the *Grandes Chroniques*'s coverage of the affairs of the Empire does not compare with the number and magnitude of its problems. As noted before, it contains very little. In fact most of the events recorded are in some way related to French affairs. As mentioned before, the Investitures Contest is given practically no attention.¹¹⁰ Henry IV and Gregory VII are not mentioned. In actuality, references to the continuing conflict between Paschal and Henry V are only a sequel to the conference between Philip Augustus, his son Louis, and Paschal. Suger had little regard for Henry V, and the *Grandes Chroniques* echoes his sentiments. It pictures his disloyalty to the pope, and his other sins, and then concludes

Et par son pechié, fu li empires tresportez en autrui mains par le droit jugement Nostre Seigneur, après son décès, et en furent si hoir deserité par son pechié, et vint en la main Lohier le duc de Saisoigne, un chevalier mervelous¹¹¹

.....
 107 *Ibid.*, 63-69.

108 *Ibid.*, VI, 144-46.

109 *Supra*, Chapter V.

110 *Supra*, pp. 312-13.

111 *Les Grandes Chroniques*, V, 127.

The contrast between France and Germany was clear — at least at this point. The king of France was a staunch defender of the papacy and the Church; the Emperor was not. Even those who may have read the account at the time of the conflict between Boniface and Philippe le Bel would not have questioned the propriety of Louis's attitude in contrast to Henry's, although Henry's was much closer to the attitude of Philippe le Bel. Instead, Philippe le Bel's motives would have seemed the same as Louis's, for he too was defending the Church — in the face of danger from a dishonest pope. To modern readers it reveals a double standard in the actions of Louis: he faithfully defended the Church, but he himself would have brooked no such interference.

As noted several times before, Suger's *Vita Ludovici* is filled with accounts of the monarch's military involvements. The *Grandes Chroniques* has translated them, including Henry's abortive invasion of France in 1124 at the instigation of the other great foe of France, Henry of England. In this the reader derives a final picture of the Emperor and a heightened one of Louis: Henry withdrew in the face of the great army that Louis was able to amass.

By this time it should be realised that the *Grandes Chroniques* omits many external items: unless directly brought to Primat's attention they are neglected. The reader, if he did not have access to additional information, would have learned almost nothing, for example, about Frederick Barbarossa except his involvement with the anti-popes Victor IV and Paschal III, and the great losses that he suffered during the siege of Rome in 1167. Frederick's interest was turned toward Italy and not France, thus it is fair that Primat neither sought nor gave any other information of the Emperor: the compiler's concern was with the Kings of

France and matters associated with them, not the Emperor. For this reason, Henry VI's conquest of the Sicilian Kingdom, its submission, and the recognition of his wife's right of inheritance rate only a passing reference. One can question whether Primat was aware of the future implications of Henry's actions: he makes no reference to Charles of Anjou's actions in this sphere, which had begun before the *Grandes Chroniques* was completed. This does reveal Primat's lack of ability to see the connection between events, an inability to see cause and effect. It is true that the account of Charles of Anjou's activities was not contained in the first recension, but in its continuation; yet Primat obviously felt no need to inform his readers of the connection between Henry's conquest and events of their own time.

Primat does cite the reason for Innocent's refusal to recognise Philip of Swabia and censures Henry:

... qui par sa force avoit prise toute la terre de Sezile et avoit occis et mis à destruction maint grant prince païs, et contre la chrestiane religion avoit enprisonez les evesques et les arcevesques de la terre, et toz jors avoit grevée sainte Eglise à son pooir ausi comme si devancier.¹¹²

This is indicative of only one of the many contradictions in the *Grandes Chroniques*: in the next line he does indicate that Philip was related to Henry, but does not seem to realise at this point that Philip had been supported by the French monarch and his opponent Otto by the English.

It is in the dispute over the emperorship that Innocent III's character and actions stand out most clearly in the *Grandes Chroniques*: in a matter that is not strictly an internal ecclesiastical concern nor

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 112 *Ibid.*, VI, 241-42.

one that is concerned solely with France. Innocent, like popes before and after him, claimed supremacy in both the temporal and spiritual spheres. This included action taken in incidents such as the case of Philip's repudiation of Ingeborg. It also included his right to determine the suitability of the man chosen to be Emperor.

As we know, the reason given by the *Grandes Chroniques* for refusing to recognise Philip of Swabia was only a half-truth: it neglected to mention the infant Frederick; it failed to point out that Otto was a friend of the papacy, while Philip, as a Hohenstaufen, could be considered a foe; furthermore it ignored Innocent's fear of encirclement by the Hohenstaufen. Not until 1200 did Innocent, in the secret *Deliberatio de facto Imperii*, claim that the Empire belonged to the papacy; but even before this the act of coronation by the pope had made his role obvious.

The *Grandes Chroniques*, as indicated above, did not at first seem to realise that the French and English supported the opposing candidates for the imperial crown. This is only made clear later when the text notes that Philip Augustus and Philip of Swabia concluded a treaty against Richard of England, the Count of Flanders, and Otto IV. Both parties sought to gain from this move: Philip of Swabia's motives were obvious; but Philip Augustus's were, as outlined in the text, to bring Richard and another of his allies, the Count of Flanders, to heel. It was with the aid of these two, plus the archbishop of Cologne, that Otto was crowned at Aix in 1198.

This indirect involvement of Philip Augustus with Innocent was of course not the only contact between king and pope: Innocent did try to

promote peace in the war between the kings of France and England; he of course put Philip Augustus's kingdom under interdict for his failure to repair his marital problems;¹¹³ he made some attempts to reform the Church in France. It must be noted that in internal affairs Philip Augustus refused to follow Innocent's direction unless its result might lead to his own profit: he failed to recognise Ingeborg until 1213; and although the request by Innocent for aid against the Albigensian heresy in Toulouse was made to the king and barons, he did not take part in the Crusade.¹¹⁴ The *Grandes Chroniques* says little about Ingeborg; it devotes space to the Albigensians, but does not indicate the reason for Philip's absence. It does note in the section devoted to Louis VIII that he took some part in the Albigensian Crusade.

While these events were taking place, the contest in the Empire continued. Although it is not indicated, Innocent treated with Otto and received promises from him; but after Otto's defeat by Philip, Innocent turned to Philip of Swabia. Because these episodes are scattered through the text — and because of the complicated nature of them — there can be no doubt that the reader would have become confused when trying to follow the account. This is especially so where the *Grandes Chroniques*, when noting the assassination of Philip of Swabia in 1208, misreads Henry for Philip (as found in Rigord).

After Philip's death, Otto was crowned as Emperor by Innocent '...
contre la volenté le roi Phelippe, sanz l'asenz des plus granz de tout

.....
¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 254. After repudiating Ingeborg, Philip Augustus formed a liaison with Agnes Meran. The *Grandes Chroniques* repeats an error made by Rigord in calling her Marie. *Ibid.*, 236 and 259. After the death of Agnes, Innocent III legitimised their children. *Ibid.*, 259.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 282.

l'empire et en la contradiction des Romains¹¹⁵ The *Grandes Chroniques* now becomes more coherent and seems to understand its material. The sequence of events and the details are accurate from Otto's actions to Frederick's election. One flaw seems to be a failure to understand that, after Philip of Swabia's death, Philip Augustus's support went to Frederick. Another flaw is the lack of connection between Innocent's outlook, the interdict of England, Philip's plan to attack England, and his reconciliation with Ingeborg. They are treated as separate items. One reason for the attack on England is inferred when the three excommunicants, Otto, John of England, and the Count of Flanders, ally against Philip. Others are listed in a justification for Philip's plans: to re-establish the English bishops who had sought refuge in France; to lift the interdict brought about by John's actions, and to punish the king who had been disloyal and mistreated so many people.¹¹⁶ An account of Philip's thwarted attempt to attack England is given: the text says that he was counselled to abandon it, but it says nothing of John's submission and the fact that the pope forbade Philip to go.¹¹⁷

With only the interruption of the victory of Simon de Montfort in Toulouse, and John's ineffective campaign in the South, the text now follows a straight line of reciting the events of the confrontation leading up to the battle of Bouvines, the final section being under the rubric of 'Ci commence la bataille de Flandre'.¹¹⁸ As can be expected,

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¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 306.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 311. Sor ce li rois se conseilla à ses barons qui ja estoient venu de France, de Borgoigne, de Normendie, d'Aquitaine et de toutes les provinces du roiaume de France. Par leur conseil lessa son propos que il avoit de passer en Angleterre, si retorna en Flandres et prist un chastel qui apelez Kasel et puis Ypre, et tote la terre jusques à Bruges. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 326.

the French show exceptional bravery against their adversaries, but the account is an accurate one from the French point of view. The battle of Bouvines — considered by some to be the crowning point of Philip's reign — is treated in minute detail. The French reader of the time would have gained much knowledge of the battle from the text; he could marvel at the expertise and valour shown by the French; learn of the tactics used; find the names of the principal persons involved; etc. Without doubt this is one of the best accounts given in Primat's section of the *Grandes Chroniques*: it has life and continuity; it is interesting and reasonably accurate; and it is of historical value. The fact that it was written by a contemporary, Guillaume le Breton, adds to its value. The account was of value to the contemporary and it is of historical interest to the modern reader. One final note on the subject must be made: the decisive victory of the French at the battle of Bouvines must have provided some comfort to those who read the account during their days of defeat during the Hundred Years' War.

Once the complications of the contest for the title of emperor were resolved, French involvement with the Empire lessened. In the few references to Frederick II in the section devoted to Louis IX, the treachery of Frederick is contrasted with the honesty and piety of Louis. The excommunications of Frederick and the reasons for them are listed. In the first, the contrast between the Emperor and the King is made very clear: the reason for the excommunication was the persecution of the clergy, followed by retaliation in the form of the capture, by the Emperor's son Manfred, of several prelates — including a papal legate — followed by their imprisonment by Frederick. The contrast comes with Louis's request that they be freed. Frederick's

reply is insolent

'Ne se merueille pas la royal majesté de France se Cesar Auguste tient estroitement ceus qui Cesar vouloient metre en angoisse et qui venoient à Romme pour lui condampner et metre à execution.'¹¹⁹

Louis's answer to this is stern, but carries a milder tone: he speaks of respect for the Empire, but also a great love for the Church and interest in the welfare of its clergy. Supposedly Frederick was moved by this and the clerics released.

The reasons for the second excommunication are cited: in addition to accusing Frederick of disrupting the peace and showing malice toward the Church, the pope states that Frederick was guilty of heresy.¹²⁰ This contrasts with Louis's pious act of meeting a distinguished body of prelates and taking the Cross.

Nothing more is said of Frederick, except the recording of his death. The *Grandes Chroniques* has given very little information about this remarkable man: his contacts with Louis were few. Thus the reader could only gain information about this Emperor through some other source. It should also be noted that Frederick's actions, with the exception of those above, did not fit into the framework of Louis's successes and failures.

The Empire and the Sicilian kingdom deteriorated after Frederick's death and that of his son. The *Grandes Chroniques* indicates some of the succession problems, the excommunication of Manfred, and the English and Spanish interests in the emperorship. Little more is said until Charles of Anjou, as indicated earlier, laid claim to the Kingdom of Sicily. The Empire was forgotten except for occasional reference to the election

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¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, VII, 83-84.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

of an Emperor or the death of one, while the *Grandes Chroniques* devoted its attentions to Charles of Anjou and later to the quarrel between Philip le Bel and Boniface VIII.

The election of Henry VII and his campaigns are mentioned, the disputes between Louis of Bavaria and Frederick of Austria are also indicated, but these are simply treated as minor incidents. Only the attempts of Louis of Bavaria to gain recognition of his election receive much attention. Louis was of course of interest to the French for his possible role in the Hundred Years' War. But when he failed to come to their side, interest in the Empire as such is lost. In fact one can say that the *Grandes Chroniques* reveals very little about the Empire. It becomes topical and receives attention when, as in the case of Philip Augustus, the king's interests are involved. Only in these cases can one say that the account of the Empire is of true historical value. Other items must be considered as there by chance and only informative to a slight extent. The reader would have learned something of the neighbouring Empire, but his understanding of its problems would have been very limited — very little is revealed of them.

The above discussion of the Empire, though rather detailed, serves to indicate the manner in which one of France's close neighbours was treated. It is also indicative of the manner in which scraps of Spanish history are included in the *Grandes Chroniques*. It is said that Childebert went to Spain to avenge the treatment of his sister at the hands of Almaric, whom she had married; and that the king captured Toledo and its treasure.¹²¹ Until the time of Charlemagne the above is indicative

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¹²¹ *Ibid.*, I, 114-18.

of the few references to the Peninsula. And in the case of Charlemagne, one must separate fact from fiction. The contemporary reader probably was not concerned with this: the legends of Charlemagne were too familiar. Thus, he gained the impression that Charlemagne's contact with Spain was far greater than it was in reality, and that Charlemagne was indeed the champion of Christians persecuted by the Saracens. It is true that Charlemagne did carry out campaigns in Spain, but the legend of Roland magnifies them; and, although it is not indicated, his incursions were not particularly appreciated by the Christians of Navarre. The capture of Barcelona is mentioned, but there is no indication that this was the beginning of the separation of Catalonia from the rest of Spain. In fact the account of Louis the Pious gives more information about the Carolingian campaigns in Spain. It is this account which gives the reader a more accurate indication of the extent of conquest. It is this account, and not that of his father, that provides information about Spain, for interwoven through it are the actions of the Saracens who threatened the areas conquered.

Other affairs occupied the attention of the authors of the sources of the *Grandes Chroniques* and the compilers of the work themselves. One can question how much interest there was in fact in Spain: for quite some time even the South of France was a foreign country. One cannot say that the Pyrenees provided the barrier of interest: the Alps were a barrier to Italy. It was simply that Spain did not have anything as important as the Papacy to interest the French. If it was a question of the Saracens, the Crusades surely provided enough contact with them to satisfy the readers of their excesses and cruelty.

From the time of Louis the Pious until the reign of Louis IX

practically nothing is said about the Iberian Peninsula. Navarre enters the picture when Thibaut IV of Champagne inherited the kingdom through his mother, Blanche of Navarre, in 1234. After this the affairs of Spain are mentioned a bit more frequently, but still they are of little greater importance than the succession of the kings of the Iberian kingdoms. As in the case of other areas, Aragon is discussed in those parts that pertain to the claims of Pedro to the kingdom of Sicily and the war subsequently waged against him by Philippe le Hardi. For some time its concerns affecting France are mentioned until the war peters out. Then Spain fades into the background once more with only occasional references to its affairs. The exception to this was of course Navarre, which was of importance after the marriage of Jeanne, heiress to Champagne and Navarre, to Philippe le Bel in 1284. The title of King of Navarre was given to their son Louis. For a time, during the reigns of Philippe le Hardi and then Philippe le Bel, Navarre is mentioned occasionally. But after the death of Louis X, it too falls into the background — only to emerge with increased importance in the Hundred Years' War. In the meantime the other kingdoms of Spain also remain in the background and are only mentioned when an alliance occurs with France, or some item of interest is noted. Once again we have an instance when we must say that very little knowledge historically valuable is imparted by the *Grandes Chroniques*: only for short periods of time is there any coherence in the account of Spain's history — those periods when it was concerned with France. The gaps between these are even greater than in the case of the Empire, and little is learned about its internal problems.

Much the same can be said of Italy with the exception of the papacy. During the era of the Carolingians, it assumes importance; after

that, references to it are first in connection with papal claims to territory, then with Imperial affairs — when they are mentioned — and later in connection with Sicilian events. The communes of Italy are mentioned occasionally: their wars, heresies within them, references to their leaders, etc. But indications of their activities are very rare. It is strange that the *Grandes Chroniques* could pass over this area so easily, but the explanation is that the concepts being brought forth there were scarcely acceptable to the monks who so slavishly tried to write the history of their kings as supreme rulers. Thus, no coherent picture of the whole of Italy is found, what is there is only of passing interest.

Only with England does there seem to be coherency in relations. This was of course natural, since the Norman kings of England held territory in France and, later, Eleanor of Aquitaine's inheritance passed into English hands. Until the reign of Philip I very little is actually said about England or its kings. Louis d'Outre-Mer, for example, is cited as having sought refuge at the court of his grandfather, Athelstane. There is an allusion to the legend of Brut when the Trojan origin of the Franks is discussed. Only very brief references, such as these, are made to England before the Norman Conquest. Even this event rates only a few words: 'En cel an meismes, avint que Guillaumes, li dux de Normendie, passa en Angleterre; le roi occit et saisi le roiaume'.¹²² Nothing more is said.

But from this time onward the English and French are almost constantly at war with each other. The war over the Vexin is noted; in

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¹²² *Ibid.*, V, 75.

this account William Rufus is described as courageous, but greedy for land and renown. It is in the context of citing William's desire to control the kingdom of France, as well as England, that Suger's famous statement concerning the relationship between France and England is translated.

Mès por ce que ce n'est pas droiz ne chose naturel que li François soient en la subjection d'Anglois; ainz est droiz que Anglois soient sugiet à François¹²³

This may be considered as the rallying cry for the whole of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Although this is never directly quoted anywhere else in the course of the text, it is the obvious sentiment of the compilers as well as the king himself.

It would be an impossible task to indicate all of the references to Anglo-French relations in the *Grandes Chroniques*: the actions taken by the English against the French are many. The motive behind them was a desire to extend English control in France; the French actions were the result of a desire to bring the English to heel, to enlarge the royal domain, and to have the English render homage for the territory that they held in France. All of these sources of conflict are revealed in the course of the text. Later Edward III's claims to the French throne can be added to the list. One may state that very rarely is a kind word said about the English.

As we know, Louis VII when he married Eleanor of Aquitaine had added Aquitaine to the areas that he controlled. The reference to the break-up of the marriage in the Holy Land was only slight. The account of the annulment of the marriage is, however, more detailed and the

.....
¹²³ *Ibid.*, 85.

reason for it—consanguinity—is cited. The importance of the annulment is never mentioned. Only a brief statement indicates the magnitude of it:

Si avint après ce deseurement, que la roine Alienors s'en aloit en Aquitaine sa terre; si l'apousa li dux de Normandie Hennis qui puis fu rois d'Angleterre.¹²⁴

Through this the English gained another foothold in France. The *Grandes Chroniques* ignores this: it was a blow to the pride of Louis VII. The reader on the other hand, being familiar with the feudal system, would have realised the consequences of the marriage, if he had caught the brief allusion to it.

During the reign of Philip Augustus the conflict between the king of France and the king of England began. The importance of it is underlined in the rubric 'Ci commence la guerre du roi Phelippe et du roi Richart d'Angleterre'.¹²⁵ The rubric is slightly misleading: for the war began during Henry's lifetime. The reasons for it are carefully given: the failure of Richard to render homage for Poitiers and the question of the return of the dowry of Marguerite of France, widow of Henry's son who died without heirs. These were of course not the only, but the official, reasons. Underlying this was Philip's desire to extend his authority.

Throughout the following account of the reign of Philip Augustus, the almost constant conflict between England and France can be traced. In fact on Philip's return from the Crusade, he immediately began to attack English territory. The reader would have had little trouble in pursuing the actions of Henry, then Richard, and then John. He was

.....
 124 *Ibid.*, VI, 68.

125 *Ibid.*, 160.

informed of the areas taken and then retaken, of the truces and peace treaties, of the confiscation of John's territory for his failure to reply to Philip's summons, of Louis's action against John of England shortly before the battle of Bouvines, the confrontation between the two kings over the question of the imperial crown, and the journey of Philip's son — Louis — to England.

In the latter case the whole story is not told. Nothing is said of the reason for Louis undertaking the journey except that he went to fight John; that internal conflict had broken out between John and his barons after the Magna Carta was annulled; and that, faced by John's formidable forces, the barons had offered the crown to Louis if he aided their cause. It is noted that after John's death his son Henry was crowned and Louis lost the allegiance of those who had previously supported him. Louis realised that his cause was lost. The final line supports all that had happened in this incident, as in others past or yet to come: 'En France retorna quant il ot esprovée la fauseté et la traïson des Anglois'.¹²⁶ It was a fact which the *Grandes Chroniques* continually drove home: it was the explanation for many events. It was one of the lessons of history — at least from the French point of view. The reader could be edified by Louis's experience in England: the English were not to be trusted. This was particularly important when later the English returned to battle on French soil: it made a sham of English pretensions. For the modern historian the account, although clear, leaves something to be desired. It has value in the reiteration of the sequence of the conflict and of the places and some of the people involved. On the other hand, it is not complete; there are omissions.

.....
¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 367.

One can trace the actions, but the reasons behind them are either neglected or vague; and in some cases only the most superficial ones are given.

During much of the minority of Henry III a series of truces suspended the confrontation; only the peace made shortly after the battle of Bouvines and before Louis's expedition to England is noted. The fact that the account of the end of the reign of Philip Augustus is abbreviated may have been the reason for this; but during the reign of Louis, also, they are not mentioned. The state of truce was ended in 1224 when Louis undertook a campaign against the English in Poitou, but nothing is said to indicate that King Henry was still a minor.

Even before Henry came of age he began to take an interest in recovering his inheritance in France that his regents there had lost for him. In this and other efforts that he made, Henry was unsuccessful: the credit being given to the force of the French rather than to Henry's mismanagement. Indeed the *Grandes Chroniques* has informed the reader, in detail, of the might of the French under Louis IX against the English forces in the abortive campaign mounted by Henry in 1242. Throughout the contest with the English, the French may lose ground at times, but rarely is it their own fault. In the face of all the French success, and the submission to Louis of those who had supported Henry, the latter, it is indicated, sought a truce. It is here that the *Grandes Chroniques* strove to increase the image of the French monarch and display his sense of justice:

... mais le roy ne li volt pas legier otroier devant qu'il en fu prié des plus haus hommes de sa court, qui mout amoient le conte Richart [of Cornwall] pour ce qu'il leur avoit fet bonté en la terre d'outre mer.¹²⁷

.....
 127 *Ibid.*, VII, 101.

The account after this becomes disjointed: Louis's Crusade intervenes. We are told that in 1259 Henry came to France and was well received. In that same chapter one finds a sub-heading: 'Ci après la teneur de la chartre comment le roy Henry d'Angleterre renonça à toute la duchiee de Normandie'.¹²⁸ There follows the substance of the treaty of 1259 between Henry and Louis in which Henry also renounced his claim to Anjou, Maine, and Poitou. In addition to this the charter reveals that Henry had agreed to grant

... à nous ou à noz hoirs en fiez et en demaines, nous et nos hoirs li ferons hommage lige et à ses hoirs roys de France, et aussi de Bordiaux, de Baionne et Gascoïnage, et de toute la terre que nous tenons delà la mer d'Angleterre en fiez et en demaines, et des isles, s'aucunes en y a que nous tiengnons qui soient du royaume de France, et tendrons de lui comme per de France et dux de Aquitaine.¹²⁹

Thus, Henry had agreed to a territorily reduced Aquitaine as well. The terms of the treaty, as given in the *Grandes Chroniques*, are accurate. Henry had lost a great deal: his claim to territory. In comparison Louis's concessions were relatively minor: he agreed that a part of Saintoge and Agenais — then part of the appanage of Alphonse of Poitiers — should be returned to Henry when Alphonse died without heir: and vague allusions were made to concessions in Limousin, Périgord, and Quercy.

This, plus a later reference indicating that the terms of the treaty were approved by Richard of Cornwall and the barons of France, demonstrated to the reader the official position of the King of England in France. This may well have puzzled them when, in perhaps their own time, the English king, Edward III, refused to render the required

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¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 211-12.

homage. Another point that is missed is the motivation for Henry's action. In the *Grandes Chroniques* the treaty is recorded in a matter-of-fact fashion: Henry realised that his pretensions were no longer viable. In reality, it was the political situation within England that had forced Henry to come to terms with Louis IX. Just as John had been forced to abandon any hope of further French campaigns after internal conflict, so Henry could not hope to press his claims further in the face of baronial revolt. In both cases some indication of the internal problems was given in the *Grandes Chroniques*: John's, through Louis VIII's attempt to gain the throne of England, and Henry's through an account of the meeting of 1264 when Simon de Montfort took control and imprisoned Henry and his son Edward. In the text, an allusion is made to the Provisions of Oxford and Henry's failure to abide by them, but on the whole the reasons for the battle of Lewes are vague. No matter what their differences had been in the past, Louis intervened on behalf of Henry and approached Simon de Montfort for the release of Henry and Edward. As we know, Simon refused: Edward escaped; and Simon was killed by the royal forces at the subsequent battle of Evesham. The *Grandes Chroniques* wavers in its loyalties in this account: Simon deserved to be upheld by virtue of his reputation, gained — as his father's before him — during the Albigensian Crusade; but on the other hand the supremacy of the king in his own kingdom was also important. The jealousy within Simon's own party is revealed, but the excesses supposedly committed by Edward and his men in killing Simon are described with distaste, and credit is given to the monks of Evesham who gave the body a proper burial. In the end, the *Grandes Chroniques* takes the part of Simon:

Duquel à sa sepulture, mout de malades de diverses maladies

orent santé, si comme il fu tesmoigné des genz du país.¹³⁰

The account had value for the contemporary reader: it provided him with some insight into English internal problems: and it again served to underline the treachery of the English. For us it serves to illustrate a dual standard held by Guillaume de Nangis, from whom the account is taken, and by those who continued the *Grandes Chroniques*: the right of the king to rule and the deference due to a popular hero. This was a dilemma that the *Grandes Chroniques* was not able to resolve: its compilers were not able to make a choice in this case, but the detestable nature of the English allowed them enough leeway to avoid one. Had the subject been France, it is obvious that the king would have been supported at all costs.

Some further indication of English internal affairs is given in the recording of a brief passage on the Welsh wars. By now it should be realised that such internal items were included by chance: there was no effort made to be selective about what was included.

In its relations with France, England remained quiet from the treaty of 1259 to the time of Edward I. To the satisfaction of Philippe le Bel, Edward did render homage for his possessions in France. The *Grandes Chroniques* gives a description of Edward's war with Philippe le Bel. Again and again the *Grandes Chroniques* recites the now standard formula of the greed and untrustworthiness of the English king. It informs the reader that Edward refused to obey the summons of his lord, Philippe, to his court to account for his actions. The *Grandes Chroniques* gives his supposed reply and comments on it:

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 130 *Ibid.*, 233.

Mais pour ce que à fausse conscience et à conseil plain de fraude peüst l'iniquité qu'il avoit commenciée parfaire, dist l'en qu'il manda au roy de France que il li quittoit quelconque chose qu'il tenoit de li en fié ne poursivoit, car il cuidoit et esperoit en ce, et plus par force d'armes acquerre, et pour ce seulement sanz hommage de quiconques, dès ore en avant mais tenir.¹³¹

Through this the text conveys the idea that Edward had no intention of adhering to the treaty of 1259, but that he sought a loophole through accusing Philippe le Bel of violating the treaty first.

Further details are given of the war that dragged on during Philippe le Bel's reign. The Count of Flanders, another one of Philippe's troublesome vassals, allied with Edward, creating a greater problem for the French king. For a time Philippe's fortunes rose, and he was successful in putting down Flemish opposition that was supported by Edward with the result that Edward sought and received a truce. Later, after Philip's defeat at Courtrai, he encountered Edward again. This time Philippe le Bel was not as fortunate. As the *Grandes Chroniques* styles it '... le roi de France avoit esté deceu, si s'en departi ainsi ...'¹³² And, in the peace treaty that followed, he relinquished Gascony to Edward. One wonders to what extent people were able to read through such justifications. Surely there must have been a line drawn somewhere on the credibility of such things. On the other hand, by this time the reader was undoubtedly indoctrinated: from the time of Suger he had been told that the English were not to be trusted and the Hundred Years' War was contemporary proof of just that.

It can be said that when the French fortunes were good the *Grandes Chroniques* magnified them, but the account is fairly accurate. So it

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¹³¹ *Ibid.*, VIII, 151.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 211.

is with the outbreak of the war in 1324, in which both kings were represented by proxies. Through this incident Edward II managed to lose what his father had gained. During his reign too, the *Grandes Chroniques* records that Charles IV received news that the French in England were being massacred; retaliatory measures against the English in France were taken, but in time Charles learned that the rumours were false and that only imprisonment was involved.¹³³

The *Grandes Chroniques* has to this point given a relatively accurate picture of Anglo-French relations. The war between the two countries was continuous, in spite of the truces and peace treaties. It was not a desultory affair: there was continuing animosity. From one time to another the specific goals changed, but at the heart of it was the problem of English-held territories within the French kingdom. One does gain the impression — and a correct one — from the *Grandes Chroniques* that, although prosecuted in earnest, other affairs of the kingdom could take precedence as the occasion demanded. Neither the French nor the English ever reached the stage where the other was the sole objective: nor was the whole of the population drawn into the fight. As the *Grandes Chroniques* reveals, it was Edward III who changed the entire nature of the conflict.

As noted earlier in this chapter, Edward's claims to the throne

¹³³ *Ibid.*, IX, 51-52.

Et pour ce fist le roy de France tantost delivrer et metre hors de prison touz les Anglois; mais de ceulz qui estoient riches leurs biens furent confisqueiz; ouquel fait touz les preudhommes du royaumes de France furent courrouciez et troublez et escandalizieiz; car au roy et en ses conseillers apparut clerement la mauvaise tache et l'ort vil pechié d'avarice et de convoitise, dont plusseurs disoient et avoient, ce sambloit, cause que les Anglois avoient esté plus pris pour prendre leurs escheoites que pour vengier l'injure et la vilennie du royaume. *Ibid.*, 52.

of France were made after the death of Charles IV. In some manuscripts the claims are elaborated upon and refuted, but in the continuation of the first recension they are simply stated, and refuted by the reiteration of the Salic law.¹³⁴ Many reasons have been given as causes for the Hundred Years' War: the issue of inheritance was only one.

One can find many of the others in the text. In 1327 Charles IV had demanded the required homage of Edward III. 'Si s'excusa le roy bonnement n'i pooit venir pour la mort de son pere qui estoit mort nouvellement; si l'ot le roy de France ceste foiz pour excusé'.¹³⁵ The next time, however, there was no pardon: the demand was issued by Philip VI. Buoyed by his successes in Flanders, Philip determined to obtain the homage of Edward. The *Grandes Chroniques* tells us that the messengers sent to make the demand did not speak to Edward, but to his mother '... laquelle leur donnoit responses non convenables, en manière de femme'¹³⁶ The events that followed are clearly outlined: the threat of confiscation and the French king's assumption of the revenue of the territory until stronger measures could be taken or homage was paid; Edward's arrival at Amiens; the discussion of restitution of lands; and the act of homage. The question of whether or not the homage paid in 1329 was liege homage is never mentioned: instead this is assumed and a charter of Edward III recording that liege homage had been rendered is included in the text. The Scottish question is also mentioned: it is noted that Edward Balliol was put on that throne through Edward's efforts and that Philip, not able to find a means to intervene, at

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¹³⁴ *Supra*, p.303-304.

¹³⁵ *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IX, 63.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

least provided refuge for the deposed David Bruce. Of the causes of the matter very little else is said. The alliances with Spain and Scotland are indicated.

Suddenly the text notes that Edward was making preparations for war. From the *Grandes Chroniques* one gains the impression that Philip was reluctant to believe that any conflict was going to take place. It is true that his demands of Edward for homage were his right as a feudal overlord; that his encroachments in Gascony — not found in the *Grandes Chroniques* — were nothing more than had been done before in the Capetian extension of authority; and interest in the Scots was a long-standing affair. Therefore he might not have thought that he had provoked Edward.

As we know, Edward's first invasion of France was nothing more than a raid. The *Grandes Chroniques* mildly censures Philip for being persuaded to wait until the next day to mount a battle against the English: '... laquelle dilacion et le quel conseil tourna à très grant damage et déshonneur au roy et à tout le royaume. Car quant le roy d'Angleterre sceut la puissance du roy de France, il se departi'¹³⁷ But this is only a half-truth, for in fact Philip refused to take the offensive during the time that Edward was in the country. One item is added that was certain to arouse the anger of the readers: it is recorded that Jacques van Artevelde rendered homage to Edward as king of France.

The defeat at Sluys is admitted by the *Grandes Chroniques* and the reasons that it gives for the annihilation of the puny French fleet are accurate to a point. The text blames the quality of the sailors —

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¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

fishermen, rather than nobles — as one factor; it also censures the admirals for their dissension and lack of knowledge.¹³⁸ Nothing is said of the Castilian and Genoese boats that were involved: perhaps it was not considered wise to mention that there were also experienced men involved.

After this defeat, according to the *Grandes Chroniques*, the French rallied. We know that from the time of the battle of Sluys to the truce of Esplechin, little more than skirmishes took place — Philip once more refusing to take an offensive position. The text has built up this era into a period of victory for the French, as a means of overcoming the despondency of defeat. It has also cited the names of the principal men involved in this period on both the French and English sides. The terms of the truce are also listed. Later the terms of the truce of Malestroit are also given. All of these items were of interest to the reader of the era; they also confirm our knowledge of the time.

The *Grandes Chroniques* neglects very little concerning the war and the affairs within France. It indicates the succession problem in Brittany and reiterates the reasons for supporting the claims of Joan of Penthièvre and her husband Charles — Philip's nephew — against those of Jean de Montfort. Charles's reasons were the complete opposite of the Salic Law. But the reader, who may have become confused, is told at the start that Charles had claimed that he should succeed '... par rayson de coustume approuvée et courant par toute Bretaigne ...'¹³⁹ that applied to nobles as well as other people. Nothing is

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¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 181-84. For example, 'Adonc respondi Nichole Beuchet que mieux se saroit meller d'un compte faire que de guerroyer en mer'.
Ibid., 183.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 218.

said to indicate, however, that the English were also involved in supporting John and that Brittany became a secondary battlefield for England and France.

Several minor skirmishes are mentioned in the text. Philip is noted as having demanded additional money to support his war effort. Edward's greatest invasion was yet to come. When it did, the *Grandes Chroniques* carefully charts his course across France. The English are pictured pillaging and burning as they make their way toward the Seine. No explanation is given for Philip's tardiness in going to meet the invaders; but once he did, the details are again accurate: the kings travelled on the opposite banks of the Seine toward Paris ('... l'ost de l'un pooit veoir l'autre.'¹⁴⁰). The text also reveals that Philip had entered Paris in preparation for battle when he heard that one of the bridges, which the French had destroyed, had been rebuilt by the English. The account in this instance gives the impression that Edward was avoiding a battle with the superior French force. In fact the French had sat waiting for the English to come to them. Normal life had resumed, and disbelief was expressed when the fact that Edward had crossed the Seine was made known. One cannot avoid noticing that even the *Grandes Chroniques* reveals Philip's inertia in getting under way. It is possible that he was wary of the treacherous English, but even the text seems impatient with him.

Some attempt is made to preserve Philip's image: the English on hearing that he was getting very close to them broke camp, leaving so hastily that the French were able to eat the food they had left behind.

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¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 275.

It is also noted that the king remained a day in Abbeville out of deference to the feast-day of St. Louis.

The account of Crécy is a fairly accurate one with a few embellishments.

A la parfin, environ heure de vespres, le roy vit l'ost des Anglois, lequel fu espris de grant hardiesce et de courrouz, desirant de tout son cuer combatre à son anemi, fist tantost crier 'A l'arme', et ne vult croire au conseil de quelconques qui loyaument le conseillast, dont ce fu grant douleur.¹⁴¹

It is noted that the Genoese archers blamed their retreat on the rain: it had prevented them from using their bows. But it is also added that some thought it treason ('... mais Dieu le scet.'¹⁴²). Many nobles and soldiers retreated after them.

In fact treason is the principal justification for failure.

Quant le roy vit ainsi faussement sa gent resortir et aler ... le roy commanda que l'en descendist sus eulz. Adonques les nostres qui les cuidoiest estre traitres les assaillirent moult cruellement et en mistrent plusseurs à mort. Et comme le roy desirast moult à soy combatre main à main au roy d'Angleterre, mais bonnement il ne pooit, car les autres batailles qui estoient devant se combatoient sus archiers, lesquies archiers navrerent moult de leurs chevaux et leur moult d'autres dommages, en tant que c'est pitié et douleur du recorder, et dura laditte bataille jusques à souleil couchant.¹⁴³

Through this the *Grandes Chroniques* attempted to gain the sympathies of its readers. There can be no doubt that a reason for the defeat at Crécy had to be given, but the guilt had to be spread. As noted before the clothing of the nobles and their greed were also criticised: the defeat was the punishment for their excesses.

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¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 282.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 282-83.

The account of Crécy is very terse: the excesses of France were punished by the king of England:¹⁴⁴ and a defeat of this magnitude, although it had to be mentioned and justified, was painful for those who continued the first recension. This was a difficult era for those responsible for the continuation of the *Grandes Chroniques*. It was suggested in the previous chapter that the account from 1340 to 1350 seemed more official and that perhaps Richard Lescot was its author. No evidence for this can be found, but it must have been an experienced man who was able to handle and glorify the few victories and justify the major defeats.

It also required a clever man to gloss over the siege of Calais and Philip's failure to take action to relieve the citizens of the town. As can be expected, the account is scattered through the text. It is recorded that Edward, being unable to enter the town, laid siege to it by land and sea. The actions taken by Edward are carefully noted for a reason: to help to explain Philip's failure to counteract them. Later the text notes that Philip was counselled to take action; but he was delayed, according to the *Grandes Chroniques*, because he was forced to await the arrival of his men. The siege had begun in September 1346, but Philip took no action until March 1347. His own progress was slow: after time spent here and there, he finally approached Calais in late June. This of course is not revealed in the *Grandes Chroniques*: the reader may not have been aware of the time sequence, and any who were aware of the delay, or had suffered because of it, were given the reason noted above. They were also told that

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¹⁴⁴ *Supra*, p. 366; and *infra*, p. 374.

... le roy d'Angleterre et le duc de Lencastre ... et les Anglois qui de nouvel estoient venuz à leur seigneur, avoient fermée et enclose la ville de Kalais de si grant siege, tant par terre comme par mer, que vivres ne pooient en nulle maniere estre portez à ceulz qui estoient en laditte ville de Kalais, pour laquelle chose il vivoient en grant desesperance et en grant misere, jusques atant qu'il sorent la venue du roy et qu'il se vouloit combatre contre son anemi et lever le siège d'entour laditte ville.¹⁴⁵

Later we are told that Philip again made an attempt to relieve Calais, but was unable to accomplish anything. But after the surrender of the town he did receive those who sought his protection.

The continuation of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* ends at the death of Philip VI. In the course of the last portion of it, in addition to the surrender of Calais, the clash between the English and Charles of Blois in Brittany is noted; the recapture of some territory by the French after Charles's defeat is recorded; and the truces arranged between Edward and Philip are mentioned. Nothing is said of the problems that Philip experienced in getting money from his subjects and the demands that they made. Instead, according to the *Grandes Chroniques*, in 1347 a spirit of optimism still pervaded France: Philip summoned the Estates and they supposedly

... li conseillierent que il feist tost une grant armée par mer pour aler en Angleterre, et aussi par terre; et ainsi pourroit finer sa guerre, et non autrement, et que volentiers li aideroient et des corps et des biens.¹⁴⁶

Nothing more is said about this proposed expedition. Philip died in 1350. But even before that, another event intervened to make it impossible: the Black Death. To 1350, the account of the Anglo-French confrontation has historical value: it revealed to the contemporary reader

145 *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IX, 293.

146 *Ibid.*, 312.

some of the reasons behind that confrontation, and how it was conducted; above all, the account justified the actions of the French kings. Today its value is different: one must read it with the knowledge that the report is biased. It does reveal the manner in which the conflict was viewed by at least one part of the population — the official one. But it also gives many details that are historically accurate and, for the most part, not tampered with for the sake of the semi-official line.

In coming upon a reference to the Black Death, we are once again reminded that the *Grandes Chroniques* is made up of diverse elements — not simply the history of the kings of France. Aside from the recurring themes of the papacy and references to foreign affairs, miracles and strictly ecclesiastical affairs as well as internal conflicts within France are noted. In its account of these things the *Grandes Chroniques* has historical value. One must remember that the account may be slanted to give the king's point of view in some cases; but the monks of Saint-Denis followed their sources carefully for the most part — sources that were not always biased in favour of the monarchy. For the internal history of France, it presents a comprehensive account. Some items may be missing, but through the text the reader gains a feeling of the progress of France; learns what the problems were; who caused them; and how they were solved.

The history presented was not always political. Economic and social history is represented as well. The exiling and recalling of the Jews are mentioned when these events occur during the reigns of various kings. The Jews are also referred to in other contexts: in some cases some sympathy is revealed for them, in others they are totally condemned. The Lombards and their role at the fairs of

Champagne, for example, are also discussed: it is said that their usury was draining the kingdom, and that the king was justified in taking action against them.

In the latter part of the continuation to the first recension — when the account was contemporary — items of interest that reveal the state of the French economy are added. The debasing of coinage is remarked;¹⁴⁷ prices and shortages of some commodities are listed;¹⁴⁸ and the extent of taxation is dwelt upon.¹⁴⁹ The inclusion of items such as these indicates the extent of their influence: the monks of Saint-Denis were aware of them and felt that they were worthy of mention. In the case of famine that resulted from the shortage of food items, they probably became aware of the extent of the problem through the duties of the Church to care for the people. One can see that the economy of France in the 14th Century, even before the beginning of the Hundred Years' War, was not stable. Unfortunately, the sources used by Primat in compiling the *Grandes Chroniques* did not include such items in their accounts: one cannot trace the state of the economy before the continuation.

Initially, through its sources, the *Grandes Chroniques* presents a picture of the world and of people in France. Many peculiar customs

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 147 For example, *Ibid.*, 244-45 and 327.

148 *Ibid.*, VIII, 341. A rhyme is given to demonstrate this:

L'an mil CCC XIII et III,
 Sanz vendengier et sanz blé batre
 A fait Diex le chier temps abatre. *Ibid.*

149 In fact the *Grandes Chroniques* notes the complaints against the taxation when the king had other sources of income. cf. *Ibid.*, 361.

are not explained, but revealed only by inference; however, descriptions are given of some of the kings, the mode of dress is indicated in various cases, and the pastimes of the people are mentioned.¹⁵⁰ One can also gain an impression of the effect of the Black Death upon the people. It is first reported in the South of France in an account noting that only a sixth of the population survived and that the cardinals left Avignon to escape the scourge.¹⁵¹ Later it spread northward. The text gives some indication of the mortality rate there as well.¹⁵² We also find the more warmly human side of the situation: the monks of Saint-Denis on coming into a village at that time comment on the feasting and are given the reply

'Nous avons veuz nos voisins mors et si les veons de jour de jour mourir, mais pour ce que la mortalité n'est point entrée en nostre ville, ne si n'avons pas esperance qu'elle y entre pour la léesce qui est en nous, c'est la cause pour quoy nous dançons'.¹⁵³

Although they do not recognise the connection, the authors of the *Grandes Chroniques* also note the actions and appeal of the Flagellants in France, but give them no sympathy.¹⁵⁴

Though the *Grandes Chroniques* claimed to be a history of the kings of France, it was much more, as can be seen through the preceding discussion. It is impossible to reveal all that it included. Its compilers were monks of Saint-Denis where many of its sources had been written. Thus one finds that the affairs of the monastery are often mentioned in the first recension and its continuation.

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 150 A description of Charlemagne and his dress is given, for example. Hunting is depicted as the favourite pastime of the early French kings. Dress at Crécy is also described.

151 *Les Grandes Chroniques*, IX, 313-14.

152 *Ibid.*, 314-15.

153 *Ibid.*, 315.

154 *Ibid.*, 323-25.

Also included were many of the documents that were held in the archives of Saint-Denis. Some found their way into the *Grandes Chroniques* through the medium of its sources. Others as noted in Chapter XI, were inserted in the French account directly. In such instances the historical value of the text is great, especially when the document itself is no longer extant. Then one must trust the translator and the copyist for its accuracy. In this case the importance of the *Grandes Chroniques* is great: only through it have some texts survived.

One must say, that the *Grandes Chroniques* as history must be viewed in two ways — contemporary and modern. The contemporary reader, as has been shown above, was given a biased account of the kings of France. Through it he learned about his heritage; was offered justifications for some actions; was given the necessary pride; and was edified by definitions and explanations of terms and symbols such as *cinque* and *fleur de lis*. It is true that there is repetition of the errors found in the Latin sources. And the text contains errors, misinterpretations, and mistranslations made by Primat and those who continued the account. In some cases the Latin source is acknowledged in the *Grandes Chroniques*: thus the reader, if literate in Latin, could check the accuracy of the French text. The intent of the *Grandes Chroniques*, however, was to provide an account for the non-Latin reader. This it did; and in comparison to the extent of its contents, the errors etcetera are negligible. Information, not complete accuracy, was its aim.

The reader today is influenced by a different interpretation of what history should be. It is of course impossible to equate the *Grandes Chroniques* with works that are written today. But one cannot

deny that the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*, in spite of its chronological nature, has value as history. Much of the material that it contains can be gleaned from other works; but what is more important is the manner in which such material was treated in this particular one. Through it one can ascertain what its 13th and 14th Century writers considered to be important; how they managed to present a favourable account of their kings; and what means were used to justify some actions. In other words, the *Grandes Chroniques* with its wealth of information gives us an insight into the medieval mind.

The *Grandes Chroniques* as literature.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the distinction between history and literature was not great in the medieval era. The *Grandes Chroniques* was both to contemporary readers. They derived their knowledge of the kings of France, and other matters, through the medium of literature. One must admit that the contemporary reader probably approached the *Grandes Chroniques* as a piece of literature. It was realised that it could not be equated with the *romans* or poetical works — it was still another form of literature. Yet historical writing did have some basic things in common with other literary genres: it had its heroes and enemies and it also had its edifying accounts of piety.

There can be no doubt that the *Grandes Chroniques* provided entertainment as well. The reader could be amused by the machinations of the earlier kings of France, for example: those whose actions were far removed from him. He could also find entertainment in the supposedly foolish actions of men from other countries who had opposed the early kings. The entertainment value remains today, but it extends throughout

the first recension and its continuation. Even with knowledge of the nature of the Middle Ages one cannot help but be amused by the tortuous explanations given to justify some of the king's failures or by the picture of the nobles going into battle at Crécy.

Car les uns avoient robes si courtes qu'il ne leur venoient que aus nasches, et quant il se bessioient pour servir I seigneur, il monstroient leurs braies et ce qui estoit dedenz à ceulz qui estoient derriere eulz Et les autres avoient leurs robes fronciées sus les rains comme femmes; et si avoient leurs chaperons detrenchiez menuement tout entour; et si avoient une chauce d'un drap et l'autre d'autre; et si leur venoient leurs cornetes et leurs manches près de terre et sembloient miex juleurs que autres gens.¹⁵⁵

One can hardly call this historical writing.

The reader expected to be edified by the hagiographic literature and other pious works. This too he found in the *Grandes Chroniques*, which contained the miracles and the lives of saints described in other forms of literature. This may have confirmed the value of the work to some extent. He was also edified by such things as an indication of how the involvement with England began. In fact he was given history through what he considered literature. Unlike the annals, for example, the text provided an account that, although confused by the intermingling of subjects, could be read as a story about the French people and their kings.

A further distinction must be made between the early and almost contemporary accounts found in the *Grandes Chroniques*: the contemporary accounts may have been read for information; if so, then that part may have to be considered as journalism. One doubts that the reader looked

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 155 *Ibid.*, 285.

at the *Grandes Chroniques* for information: he had undoubtedly heard of the events before in detail. Rather he looked to it for edification and pleasure: it was not, for the general reader, a reference work.

The *Grandes Chroniques* fired men's imaginations. The battles were experienced vicariously through the accounts, the Crusades gave the reader a taste of far-flung adventure; references to far-away places made them the objects of wonder and perhaps awe; and the accounts of the kings themselves may have increased respect for them. Even here the paths of history and literature are very close.

To us the definitions of literature and history are different. Literature encompasses many forms of expression; while history provides information and interpretation. If this definition is applied to the *Grandes Chroniques*, it seems to fall into the realm of history: it provides information and gives an indication of the outlook of the era. Even those parts of it that are clearly legends fall into the realm of history, because they were believed to be the truth. Because of its inherent nature the work cannot be considered as strictly literature, but only in the very broad scope of the literature of the period — the written matter of the era. Only within this framework can any textual criticism be applied to it. As a specimen of literature for posterity, the *Grandes Chroniques* is hardly in the same class as the achievements of Chrétien de Troyes or the troubadours.

One notes that when translating Einhard's and Turpin's accounts of Charlemagne, Primat retains the first-person narrative. On the other hand, this is not the case with Suger's *Vita Ludovici*. Yet, one must say that the use of the first person lends a certain intimacy and

credibility to the narration, and Primat has acknowledged his source at the beginning of the account.

Ci commence la vie et li noble fait du glorieus
prince Kallemanne le grant, escrit et baillie en partie
par la main Eginalt¹⁵⁶

Suger, however, is credited with being the author of the source translated for part of the reign of Philip I and that of Louis le Gros, during the course of the account and not at its beginning.¹⁵⁷ Only, however, when the source is a personal work of a well respected man, and one who can easily be identified, does Primat give any credit to the authors of his sources: Rigord is not mentioned in the account of Philip Augustus.

Primat tends to retain his own anonymity in the text. He has indicated his identity in the verses at the end of his work, but in the course of the text he uses the first person very rarely; and then in an admission of ignorance. For the most part these admissions are couched in terms of the fact that the sources do not reveal any further information; that they fail to identify time or place; etc.

Although in most cases Primat did not refer to the authorship of his sources and the changes from one to another, it is possible to note them in the text of the *Grandes Chroniques*: the style found in the translation reflects that found in the source. That this should be so can be explained by the fact that, for the most part, the translations are literal ones. Primat may use the same words, but the degree of

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¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 3-4. A reference is also made in the text: *Ibid.*, 258. The author of the account of Louis the Pious, although not mentioned by name, is indicated in that account. *Ibid.*, IV, 142.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, V, 115 and 230.

sophistication of the Latin in his source can be seen in the French translation.

As noted before, the *Grandes Chroniques* is surprisingly accurate for a work of its size. There are of course mistranslations, some minor and some that change the sense of the subject and mislead the reader. Some of the mistranslations stem from the possibility that Primat had trouble in reading the hand found in MS 5925; others from Primat's confusion; and still others from his own weakness and lack of understanding of the material.

Primat became generally confused at times. One example of this is the creation of an entirely fictitious Carolingian king whom he calls Louis le Fainéant.¹⁵⁸ In the account it is revealed that this Louis was the father of Charles the Simple: Louis le Fainéant was simply Louis II le Begue whose reign had already been recorded. The events that are attributed to his reign are really those that occurred at the end of the reign of Carloman (882-884) and under Charles le Gros (884-888).

It is true that because of the wide dissemination of the *Grandes Chroniques* inaccuracies due to confusion, mistranslation, and misunderstanding were perpetuated. But one must again emphasise that, if taken as a whole, the work was reasonably accurate and the Latin sources are by no means completely accurate. Accuracy was not in such demand as it is today.

M. Viard, in his edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*, has indicated

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¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, 300-302.

the mistranslations, the errors, and the misinterpretations that occur in the *Grandes Chroniques*. Thus there seems no need to list them here.

A few final words must, however, be said about the translation of the Latin sources and its organisation. It would appear that when he first undertook the task of translation, Primat was somewhat hesitant, but as time goes on he seems to have gained confidence. At first he follows the practice of giving both the Latin and then the French translations of Biblical quotations; later he may give only the French or Latin, but no consistent policy is followed in this matter. Primat's vocabulary also becomes more varied, but certain words are always translated in the same way: *autumnalis* invariably becomes some form of *septembre* — *vers septembre*, *le mois de septembre*, etc.; reflective of his times, *cives* is sometimes translated as *borjois* (occasionally by *citaien*); *conventus* becomes *general parlement* — in spite of the fact that *parlement* as such had already had its start in France. Primat also seems aware of at least some geographical terms: he uses for example 'Europe'; and he does split up the Latin accounts referring to Spain, dividing them among specific kingdoms. On the other hand, place names in Latin — places that he should have had some knowledge of — are mangled; some of this can be blamed on the crabbed hand of MS 5925, but not all of it.

In his organisation of his material, Primat sometimes improves on that of his sources by making divisions, each bringing together relevant material; but this is only on occasion. This can also be said of those who continued his work. In general, Primat tends to follow the divisions given by his sources, and in these divisions he also places material from other sources that should be included in the same chronological

chapter. Only occasionally does he transpose material for the sake of continuity or a more coherent account. His original intent, according to the prologue, was a logical division of the Merovingians, Carolingians, and Capetians:

Et pour ce que III generacions ont esté des rois de France puis que il commencierent à estre, sera toute ceste hystoire devisée in III livres principaus: ou premier parlera de la genealogie Merovée, ou secont de la generation Pepin, et ou tierz de la generation Hue Chapet. Si sera chascuns livres souzdeviséz en divers livres, selonc les vies et les faiz des divers rois; ordené seront par chapitres, por plus pleinement entendre la matiere et sanz confusion.¹⁵⁹

One must assume that, unlike the previous reigns, reference to a king produces the book subdivision.

This form of division is retained through much of the first recension. In the case of the later Carolingians it becomes confused: the subdivisions are only indicated by the reigns of the various short-lived kings and the chapter divisions within their reigns are brief. Later Primat gives up all hope of his initial plan and simply separates his divisions by a table of contents.

Primat's ambitions may have gone astray, and his contemporaries followed his lead. In the end, it must be noted that they produced a fairly accurate account of the kings of France, and affairs affecting the kingdom, with some insight into the problems of neighbouring kingdoms.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 3-4.

CHAPTER XIV

THE *GRANDES CHRONIQUES* AS PROPAGANDA AND HISTORY

As noted earlier, B.M. Royal MS 16G VI represents a transition from the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* and its continuation to the second recension made by Pierre d'Orgemont.¹ The marginal notations corrected some passages, making a better translation, while others added bits of information that had previously been omitted. Some additions were made in the text itself, suggesting that changes had been made on the basis of another manuscript at the time of copying.

One can say that an attempt was made to translate everything, whether significant or insignificant. And, although there is an attempt to improve the translation, it is not always successful; at times the annotator becomes as confused as Primat did on occasion, with the result that the sense of the text is lost. So too, the copyist of B.N. fr. MS 2813 had problems with reading some names and words with the result that the text is sometimes misleading.

For the purpose of information, MS 2813 could not afford such mistakes. Its primary purposes were propaganda and edification. In the earlier parts of the second recension mistakes were not of too great an importance: the immediate need was to provide an account intended to present the case of the monarchy in the face of adversity — the defeat at Poitiers, the capture of the king, and other calamities.

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¹ *Supra*, Chapter XII.

Pierre d'Orgemont carried out his task with fervour, as well as sophistication. The naïveté characteristic of the monks of Saint-Denis was gone; their whims were put aside; the dating of accounts became more careful; and there is a matter-of-fact tone about the writing. All of these things were necessary for the image that Pierre d'Orgemont sought to put forward. They are factors also evident in parts of the printed editions that might be styled the third recension.

More than justification was involved in Pierre d'Orgemont's undertaking: he had to underplay or understate events, as well as introduce and explain some of them to his readers. Earlier writers of the *Grandes Chroniques* had been orientated toward the monarchy, but until the beginning of the reign of Philip VI the need to be careful and restrict the tone of the text had not been as urgent. From the time of Philip VI the writers of the *Grandes Chroniques* were careful, yet their lack of sophistication sometimes betrayed them: their justifications were not completely convincing.

The writing of propaganda had, of course, begun earlier, but it reached a new high in the 15th Century. As Professor Lewis points out

The inevitable characteristics of propaganda — the slander of one's opponents and the ridicule of their opinions, the use of emotional symbols, the claim to wide support and the assertion² of inevitable victory — were still to be found in these treatises.

Following this pattern, the second recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* at times descends to this level. It is more than a diatribe against the English in its account of contemporary affairs — as are

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² P.S. Lewis, 'War propaganda and historiography in fifteenth century France', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, x (1964), 2.

the printed editions. It combined an historical account with propaganda: propaganda that not only slandered the English, but also pointed out the official line of the French monarchy on other matters. Past events — prior to 1350 — were treated in much the same way as Primat and his successors had dealt with them; the treatment of items within men's memories became the important thing. Because of this, the second and third recensions of the *Grandes Chroniques* show an abrupt change when one comes to the account of Jean II and another when, after 1380, it again becomes a compilation — of the works of Jean Juvenal des Ursins, le héraut Berry, Chartier, etc.³

The account from 1350 to 1380 has continuity: for the first time the authorship of the *Grandes Chroniques* was entrusted to one man, Pierre d'Orgemont: Primat was not an author, and those who continued his recension wrote within the framework of one source or another. Pierre d'Orgemont, on the other hand, was given the opportunity to work on an account of two reigns with the full knowledge of how things stood at the time of writing. His account may have been the source, as well as the forerunner, of the propagandistic treatises produced in the 15th Century.

Even the accounts that are added to form the third recension do not carry quite the same flavour as d'Orgemont's work — in spite of the fact that Jean Juvenal was a writer of treatises, that Chartier was *chroniqueur du royaume*, and that those who produced the accounts that followed Chartier's were patriots or at least paid apologists.

One cannot help but notice that in the second recension one event

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³ *Supra*, Chapter XI.

carefully follows another: it is unhurried, hoping to gain as much as possible from each phrase. The copies that make up the third recension, because of their varying authorship, lack this feeling of continuity and care in spite of the fact that they are extended and almost the length of d'Orgemont's.

Turning to the text we can see how d'Orgemont treated matters of grave importance. Both internal affairs and those pertaining to the English are treated. Through it all both Jean and Charles V seem model kings. Jean is revealed as a chivalrous man. In particular, we see the propaganda working in d'Orgemont's account of Edward III's refusal of Jean's offer of hand-to-hand combat.

Mais ledit roy anglois refusa la bataille et s'en repassa par mer sans plus faire en celle fois, et le roy de France s'en revint à Paris.⁴

In effect, all men who could be considered as enemies are described as such — no explanation being required. Furthermore, Jean is pictured as heroic in that he at least took some action against the English — a suitable explanation being given for the capture of French prisoners. Through this, the second recension presents an about-face: it perpetrates the idea that the English and not the French are reluctant to come to battle. In the continuation to the first recension it was Philip VI who refused in unfavourable circumstances; now it is the villain, Edward.

Indeed the account of the battle of Poitiers is most interesting from the point of view of the handling of material. The capture of the

⁴ *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. Paulin Paris, VI (Paris: 1838), 18.

king is noted: 'En ladite bataille furent pris ledit roy de France qui si vassaument se porta comme chevalier peust faire'⁵ As for the defeat itself, it is stated that the English were in the best position, and it is noted that some say that there were traitors in the French forces. The account is short for a good reason: the battle of Poitiers had aroused animosity toward the monarchy and the nobility. Therefore it was best only to say a bit about the defeat and those who were captured.

In contrast, a great deal of space is given to the discontent that followed when Charles requested help in ransoming his father. Here the grievances of the Estates are recited matter-of-factly, and the help given by the Estates of Languedoc is set in contrast. It is subtly, but clearly, underlined that the attitude of the latter was the patriotic one and best for the kingdom: their willingness to make sacrifices was proclaimed.

Later one finds a chapter titled 'Comment ... [Charles] par droit ennuy et pour paix avoir, accorda au prévost des marchans et ses aliés plusuers requestes que il fuy firent sans raison injustement'. This sets the tone for the whole of the account of the revolt of the Estates led by Etienne Marcel. Charles is pictured as shrewd but reasonable in the hope of preserving the kingdom of France. There is understatement as to the extent of the events that took place during that era. The king of Navarre comes in for censure as do the rebels of Paris. But there is a certain calm in the way in which the events are described.

Such events must have presented a great problem to d'Orgemont.

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⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

The manner in which the English should be treated is obvious: they were the enemy. But it is noted that Jean was well treated in England and given the deference commensurate to his station: for d'Orgemont this indicated that the English recognised his position and actually realised that their cause was unjust. The treatment of the account of Marcel presented greater problems: here was division within the kingdom of France; something that should not occur. Thus, the matter was handled in the gentlest way possible: it was not a revolt, but a misguided effort. Only when Marcel becomes completely unreasonable does the *Grandes Chroniques* change its tone. After Charles had fled to Compiègne it is noted that there was

... une grande division au royaume de France. Car plusieurs villes, et la plus grant partie, se tenoient devers le régent leur droit seigneur; et autres se tenoient devers Paris.⁶

This provided a reason for his flight. The end of the affair is scattered throughout many chapters, but it is made clear that the royal position was the proper one and that those who were responsible for the upheaval were at first misguided and later traitors.

One might well wonder why d'Orgemont spent so much time in recording these events which were so difficult to handle. The answer is obvious. For his purpose of putting forward a favourable image of the monarchy he needed to show how problems were solved in a reasonable fashion, and had also to reveal how those who tampered with the governing of the kingdom were not only misguided and wrong, but also traitorous. The lesson was given: it was propaganda for the Crown.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

An explanation was also given for the conferring of the regency on Charles. His authority in the peace negotiations with England, and in other affairs, had to be indicated as absolute and above reproach.

D'Orgemont wisely revealed all of the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Brétigny. The indignation of the people at the first proposal of the English is recorded, intimating the patriotism expressed by the people of France against such a perfidious enemy. The text also gives an indication of why, for a time, the French were able to repulse the enemy: with all working for the sake of the kingdom, things were accomplished.

A great deal of space was devoted to the Treaty of Brétigny and the letters of negotiation and confirmation are included. The texts of these are given in meticulous detail. The *Grandes Chroniques* also notes that changes in the Treaty were made at Calais. From the relation it is obvious that d'Orgemont was given access to the relevant documents and felt that it was necessary to indicate to his readers the complete account. Given the concessions made by the French, one could well question the merits of including the contents in the text. But there are justifications for it: it had historical merit and it did serve to indicate again the nature of the English and their realisation that all of France could not be theirs. In the dark days of the 15th Century this may have been of some comfort to the French. It probably reinforced the attitude of the people when the French recovered and began to push the English out of the kingdom later in the 15th Century.

After his return to France, Jean again comes into the spotlight, and his movements are recorded. Finally it is noted that Jean went to

England

... traictier avec le roy d'Angleterre de la délivrance
de son frère ... son fils ... et de plusieurs autres ducs
[etc.] ... qui là estoient hostaiges pour ledit roy de
France ...⁷

It is also mentioned that he died in England. One can see here that the second recension has saved face for Jean and for those who had caused him to return to England. The true reasons remain hidden from view and the king remains the honorable and concerned monarch.

During the entire account of Jean's reign the focal points are the activities of Marcel and his followers, the machinations of Charles of Navarre, and of course the English confrontation. Very little else is mentioned. The inheritance of Burgundy is noted very matter-of-factly, the *routiers* rate very little attention, and some insights are given about the economy and monetary values. This provides evidence of d'Orgemont's attitude toward the period: those things that could be used to prop up the sagging monarchy and make it seem stronger than it actually was were included. Nothing could be said about the exhausted state of the kingdom; nothing could be said about the incessant requests for money — except when they were of prime importance and could offer a lesson for the readers — and there was no need to give any more than cursory attention to the popes at Avignon. D'Orgemont was trying to put forward the official view of the monarchy: he was appealing to the patriotism of his readers with the hope that they would respond and aid the kings in their battle against the English threat.

This theme is continued throughout the account of the reign of Charles V as well. But Charles's reign was a bit less traumatic than

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⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

that of his father. Charles's worth had also been proven during the era when he served as regent. Thus, one can say that the line of justification for the sake of propaganda was relaxed a bit. The account of the reign of Charles V bears some resemblance to earlier parts of the *Grandes Chroniques*: it treats a variety of subjects. This does not mean that the French cause against the English is neglected, but rather that it is not discussed to the exclusion of other subjects. The prowess of du Guesclin is indicated in his various campaigns against the English — his capture in Spain rates only a mention. French successes against the English are recorded and copies of the correspondence on the renunciation agreement made at Calais are included. English support of Pedro of Castile is noted; and at his death it is said

... et certainement moult de gens tenoient que ce fust avenu audit Pierre pour ce qu'il estoit très mauvais homme et avoit murdri malvaisement et traytreusement sa bonne femme espousée, fille du duc de Bourbon et seur de la royne de France.⁸

Very little is said about the French involvement in the campaigns in Spain. It is recorded that the *routiers* who went there had done damage to the kingdom of France: there seems to be a tone of relief when speaking about their departure for Spain. The perfidy of the English is underlined in their involvement in the Spanish affair: it served to demonstrate the folly of intervening in the affairs of another country. Pedro's death is evidence of the inability of the English to act effectively: it provided further evidence against the enemy.

Thus, the presence of the English continued to be felt and the accounts that concern them still emphasise the rightfulness of the

⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

French against them. But other things are also discussed in the section pertaining to the reign of Charles V. Papal affairs once more enter the picture: the return to Rome is indicated and the beginning of the Schism is treated in detail. When the time came for declarations of allegiance to one pope or the other, Charles is pictured as having carefully deliberated on the matter and consulted with many men. He, of course, supported the pope at Avignon, and the reason given was flatly that the cause of Clement was the most just and the best for the Church. It is noted that not all monarchs agreed with him. In this way Pierre d'Orgemont showed his readers the manner in which they came to support the Avignon popes: he gave them an historical account of the events that led to this. For the modern reader the account is interesting from the point of view of the bias that it reveals, and the manner in which it was set down to convince the contemporary reader. There was an absolute conviction that Charles's reasoning was correct and that the others were wrong. It therefore showed that the king of France was not to be swayed by the actions of others or their failure to accept his decision. Thus, the Hungarians, the Germans, even his own troublesome subjects (the Flemish), or others failing to follow his lead were fools.⁹

In addition to matters such as those pertaining to the English and the papacy, other matters of State are considered: the rendering of homage by John de Montfort, the duke of Brittany; the activities of Charles of Navarre, and later the censure of his officials and their statements are included; rebellions — for whose causes very little reason, if any, is given — are quashed; almost no indication of the

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⁹ *Ibid.*, 447-48.

reforms undertaken by Charles V is made. The latter were underplayed for one of two reasons: either because they reflected the incompetence of previous monarchs or because their importance was not realised. As before, financial affairs receive little attention, except when they are educative or important. The requests made by Charles for financial support in 1369 are duly noted: it is stated that '... il ne povoit gouverner sans avoir finance de son peuple'¹⁰ And in the course of the account the amount of duty and manner of levy for each item is listed. It is obvious that d'Orgemont was aiming to convince his audience that such taxes were necessary and that, as he notes, some of them were no more than had been demanded when Jean's ransom was being raised.¹¹ How well such sentiments were taken during the era of the familial conflict during the reign of Charles VI cannot be estimated.

The section devoted to the reign of Charles V carries a heavier personal element than the relatively straight-forward account of Jean. As noted before, the reign of Charles V was a bit less fraught with catastrophic events. The author, in his efforts to present the image of the monarchy, could afford to relax the propagandistic line a bit and to appeal to his readers' sentiments by introducing other affairs. It must be noted that these can be considered political as well as everyday events, but they did appeal to the emotions of the readers. Thus, one finds a variety of subjects being introduced. The emphasis on them is not as great as found in the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* and its continuation, and the account has greater continuity. The second recension, during its section on Charles V, contains accounts of the marriage of Philip — the brother of the king, and now almost

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¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 321-22.

by magic Duke of Burgundy — to Margaret, the daughter and heiress of Louis de Maele, Count of Flanders. The negotiations for what Charles hoped would be a profitable alliance are noted. Only by inference can one gain the knowledge that the king had made use of the pope in fending off a proposed match with a member of the English royal family. To make the match seem of more than ordinary importance the terms of the marriage alliance are enumerated. Little did Pierre d'Orgemont realise that he was placing before his audience propaganda that ultimately justified Louis XI's actions against Burgundy. The failure to indicate that Charles V (possibly at his father's request) had invested Philip with Burgundy may have been tacit in light of the disruptions during the early years of the regency of Charles VI.

Among other personal items recorded by d'Orgemont were the births, baptisms, and — in some cases — the deaths of children of the king; the death of the queen is also bemoaned. The death of du Guesclin is noted in the course of enumerating efforts to protect the country against the incursions of the *routiers*. His death was to be mourned because it

... fu grant dommage au roy et au royaume de France.
Car s'estoit un bon chevalier et qui moult de biens
avoit fait au royaume de France, et plus que chevaliers
qui lors vesquist.¹²

Even the visit of Emperor Charles IV is reiterated in the manner of old: it is accompanied by pomp and display such as the French had perhaps not witnessed on their own side since the beginning of the Hundred Years' War. His route through France, the entourage that went to meet him, his arrival at Saint-Denis, the viewing of relics, the

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¹² *Ibid.*, 466.

gifts exchanged, the ceremonies, the deference shown to him, etc. are all duly noted. This must have satisfied those who were longing for a taste of splendour. D'Orgemont continues his account of this visit by noting in detail that Philip in one session outlined the history and woes of the kingdom from the era of Charlemagne to the English threat. The response of the Emperor was one of perpetual friendship and support for Philip — a great change from the situation that was portrayed in earlier portions of the *Grandes Chroniques*. There seems to have been no justification for such a visit except that of friendship, according to the *Grandes Chroniques*. This was probably enough. One may well try to imagine how the reader of the account was affected by it. It was certainly impressive, but the very fact that Philip had at hand a diamond to present to the Emperor in return for another gift of jewels may have sounded a sour note to those who were feeling the weight of monetary demands from a supposedly penniless monarchy. In spite of this, a visit of such a person when there were few friendly visits to the kingdom may have raised the spirits of the reader. It did increase the stature of the king, who was pictured in a truly regal manner.

As bound, MS 2813 ends with a brief account of the reign of Charles VI from the death of his father to 1381 — ending with a discussion of the adoption of Louis d'Anjou by Joanna of Naples.¹³ Leaves 492^v to 543^v are left blank for further continuations.

When looking at the second recension of the *Grandes Chroniques*

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¹³ Included in this short section is a chapter outlining Charles's provisions for the regency of his son. Some indication is given of the quarrels of the dukes, but no comment is made on the extent of the dissension. *Ibid.*, 470-471.

it must be admitted that Pierre d'Orgemont accomplished his purpose of putting forth propaganda in favour of the monarchy. This can be said of at least the section on Jean and Charles V: the changes made to earlier portions were not of real significance in this context. Initially, d'Orgemont wrote for the king and, we must assume, at his command. Charles probably had his new recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* some time in 1378, because the hand changes in 1377. The continuity of style and method from 1350 to 1381 indicates that there was but one author. The change of hands can be explained by the fact that Charles acknowledged the work of his chancellor during his own lifetime and that the manuscript was presented to him with many more pages left blank. From his retirement in 1380 to his death in 1389 d'Orgemont would have had the time to complete the account of the reign of Charles V and to add a few words on the beginning of that of Charles VI. But another scribe was responsible for making the additions to the manuscript.

Initially d'Orgemont wrote for the king, but both king and chancellor must have been aware of the inevitable dissemination of the material that the product contained. Charles wanted to believe in the effectiveness of the reigns of his father and himself; but one must also assume that by putting so many documents and other material at the disposal of d'Orgemont, he realised the value of the account for general consumption. Thus, d'Orgemont was writing for a broad audience. The contents of the second recension, and the manner in which they were expressed, indicate that he realised that the audience for his account would be varied. The audience was, in the first instance, the king's subjects; but it could be, and was, composed of men outside the kingdom, for French had long been an internationally used and admired language.

Thus, to be convincing, it was necessary not only to inform and propagandise, but also to present an account with continuity and coherence. This he did. Unlike the first recension, the second recension — in spite of the fact that it retains the form of a chronological narrative — tends to contain itself and, through the omission of extraneous material, has managed to present a more coherent account of French affairs by means of continuity. In this sense the section devoted to Charles V falls a bit short of its goal through the introduction of more varied subject matter. In spite of this, it still presents a more readable and less confusing account than that put forward by Primat and his successors at Saint-Denis: the section devoted to Charles V still combines propaganda and history in a reasonable fashion. It is often difficult to determine just where false propaganda begins and historical fact ends. Although there are some out-and-out lies in d'Orgemont's recension, the modern reader is able to find much undistorted history in it; but given little else to go by, the medieval reader probably accepted most distortions as fact.

As noted earlier, the writing of propaganda reached a new high in the 15th Century. For much of that century, while propagandist treatises were being written, the *Grandes Chroniques* lay dormant. The only official material for the period 1350 to 1381 was the second recension made by Pierre d'Orgemont. This contained effective but not immediate material. The access to accounts for the reign of Charles VI was to be had through the Religieux's Latin work, or the accounts compiled by Jean Juvenal des Ursins. Not until Chartier succeeded the Religieux (in 1437, so he says) was there any hope of receiving the official attitude of the monarchy. Thus, the 15th Century French propagandists

had to manage on their own for quite some time. There seems to have been no direct dependence on the *Grandes Chroniques* by such writers, but given its authority and popularity, one cannot help feeling that they might have consulted it as reference material for earlier reigns. But, only in some cases; for the propagandist appeals to the immediate feelings of his audience: only in restricted instances can he profitably dredge up the past.

Thus, the *Grandes Chroniques* could have been of little value to the propagandist until it was brought up to date. This was only done in 1476 when Pasquier Bonhomme published the first printed edition of the *Grandes Chroniques*, which ended with the work of Chartier.¹⁴ The propagandists were still writing their tracts at that time, but one wonders how great an influence this recension may have been on their work. Instead one must assume that its audience was a more general reading public which had survived the tribulations of the 15th Century and was ready to make an attempt to review the triumphs of the recent past and accounts of more ancient times.

The first part of the first printed edition was based for the most part on the work of Pierre d'Orgemont. Only minor things such as rubrics and the manner of handling *Items* and *Incidences* were changed. In both cases they were made plainer: the rubrics were simplified and the additional material was set out in separate paragraphs for clarity. The new part, as already noted, was composed of a compilation of the works of Jean Juvenal des Ursins, héraut Berry, and Jean Chartier.¹⁵

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¹⁴ *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, 3 vols. (Paris: Pasquier Bonhomme, 16 January 1476).

¹⁵ *Supra*, Chapters XI and XII.

In later editions the translated work of Robert Gaguin and then the *Chronique Martinienne* were added as a continuation. Jean Juvenal wrote propagandist tracts as well as an account of the reign of Charles VI. The latter was based on the Religieux's *Chronicle of Charles VI* with personal additions and, as already noted above, the Religieux was as much a patriot as Jean Juvenal even in the face of adversity.¹⁶

The dating of accounts falls down a bit from Pierre d'Orgemont's habit of constant reiteration of the date of the event that he is about to describe. Some of the continuity is also missing: in an attempt to disguise the state of the monarchy under Charles VI, varied accounts are introduced: accounts of the papacy, affairs in Italy, etc. Once again a king is pictured as the cordial monarch, although there are some references to his insanity. One must emphasize that the references to Charles's mental health are candid, being prefaced by phrases such as 'Dudit temps le Roy avoit aucunement recouvert santé'. And only very subtly is it revealed that for a time there is dissension within the realm between its dukes.

The events of the reign of Charles VI are covered in detail in the text. One must note however that, unlike the Latin text of the Religieux, one does not find copies of documents inserted in the text. Nor does one find the great discourses that the Religieux used as a vehicle for information. Jean Juvenal des Ursins in editing the account of the Religieux has abridged long discourses and documents. Le héraut Berry also used a different method when composing his work. The reader undoubtedly gained a great deal of knowledge about the years 1380 to

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¹⁶ *Supra*, Chapter V.

1422 by reading the printed edition, but he was forced to turn to other sources for additional information on some points. It must also be remembered that the account for 1402 to 1422 was taken from le héraut Berry's *Chronique du roi Charles VII* — thus an even more biting anti-English attitude is expressed and much greater attention is given to the affairs of the dauphin, later Charles VII. While he did not ignore items that might cast an unfavourable light on the dauphin, he did manipulate them. The work was a panegyric to Charles, whom he had served; and the *Grandes Chroniques* carried this flavour as well. The actions of Charles VI were not justified from his point of view, but from that of Charles VII. The change from Jean Juvenal's account to that of le héraut Berry is not so abrupt that the reader would have immediately become aware of a change in bias. Therefore he may have accepted without question the propaganda for Charles VII found in the account of Charles VI. In any case many of the actions of Charles VI required some justification; it just so happened that they were presented in the light of another man's problems.

The account inserted in the *Grandes Chroniques* for the reign of Charles VII was that of Jean Chartier. Chartier was the *chroniqueur du royaume*. This implied that he would be an apologist for Charles VII, and he was. The limitations and strong points of his *French Chronicle* have already been discussed.¹⁷ What must be pointed out is that the reader was presented with two accounts that were oriented toward Charles VII — le héraut Berry's and Chartier's. In the first printed edition this presented no problems, but when later editions appeared

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¹⁷ *Supra*, Chapter VI.

with additions to cover the reigns of later monarchs the reader may have become aware of the extended bias toward Charles VII.

In conclusion one can say that in the printed editions, as in the second recension, propaganda and history were combined to present the case of the monarchy against its enemies. The audience was enlarged by the printed editions; thus, the history and propaganda that these contained reached and enlightened more people to convince them of the glories of the French monarchy.

CHAPTER XV

DERIVATIVES AND PARALLELS OF THE *GRANDES CHRONIQUES*

There can be no doubt that the *Grandes Chroniques* held a place of importance in France: Charles V ordered Pierre d'Orgemont to make a new recension, and further additions were made for the recension that became the first printed edition. The fact that Robert Gaguin attempted to revise it in accord with Humanistic principles is also indicative of its importance. The *Grandes Chroniques* was official history and it was looked on as such. The great number of extant manuscripts¹ can be partly attributed to its official nature; but it must also be realised that the account was popular and widely known — Dukes Humphrey and Richard of Gloucester, for example, possessed copies.

A combination of these factors also explains why the *Grandes Chroniques* found its way into many other texts. The manner in which it was used varied: in some cases the account served as a framework for another work; in others it provided information; some authors continued it in their own fashion; while others copied it and inserted other items. The form of the *Grandes Chroniques* used also varied: it could be the first recension alone or with its continuation, the second recension, the third recension, or the Latinised version contained in the *Compendium* of Robert Gaguin. It should also be mentioned that the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* was supposedly consulted by some authors.

One of the earliest accounts that made use of the *Grandes Chroniques* was a work known as the *Chronique anonyme des rois de France*,

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¹ Appendix A below gives a partial list of extant manuscripts.

tracing the monarchy up to 1286 and begun in that year, its account from the reign of Philip I to 1224 being derived from the *Grandes Chroniques*. Not very long after this, in about 1318, a work titled *Chroniques de France* was made for Pierre Honoré of Neufchâtel by Thomas de Maubeuge. It was composed of a copy of the *Grandes Chroniques*, and relevant portions of Guillaume de Nangis's French chronicle continued to 1316. Later a continuation was added to de Maubeuge's work to bring it up to 1330.

These provide us with two examples of the manner in which the *Grandes Chroniques* was used. Others can be noted. It perhaps provided a framework for an anonymous French chronicle that ended in 1380, to which other material was added. Up to 1461 the *Annales et croniques de France* of Nicole Gilles also used the *Grandes Chroniques* in combination with other sources. The remainder was more original. But through it, its first printed edition in 1492, and its numerous continuations to 1621, material of the *Grandes Chroniques* survived.

The *Grandes Chroniques* supplied information and passages for such works as the *Miroir historial* written by Jean de Noyal and completed in 1388. In this work it was combined with other sources and original passages. The contents of the *Grandes Chroniques* were mingled with other work in the *Chronique romanes des comtes de Foix*, composed in the Fifteenth Century and containing an account that stretched to 1436. These two works present the extremes of use of the *Grandes Chroniques*: in the first, works such as Bernard Gui's *Flores chronicorum*, Guillaume de Nangis's *Chronicon*, and the *Chronique normande* were also consulted; in the second, the first section was imaginary and the second combined the *Grandes Chroniques* with a *roman*.

One can also find works or fragments of works that are in some way connected with the *Grandes Chroniques*. There is for example an anonymous chronicle ending in 1356 that is analogous to the *Grandes Chroniques* from 1296 onwards. And a work known as the *Chronique de France*, covering the years 1223 to 1377, that seems to have been composed at Saint-Denis, was added to the end of a manuscript of the *Grandes Chroniques*. Other works that pertain to the *Grandes Chroniques* could be cited: some have a direct relationship to it, while in the case of others their authors have said that they have consulted the *Grandes Chroniques* merely to lend authenticity to their accounts.

Although the above discussion serves to indicate the way in which the *Grandes Chroniques* provided a source for other works, it must be noted that Robert Gaguin's *Compendium*, based on the *Grandes Chroniques*, also had a great part in furthering the latter's influence. Some works derived all of their material from the *Compendium*, while others used only the continuation made by Gaguin for 1461 to 1500. The very fact that the *Compendium* was considered to be a principal source for the reign of Charles VIII ensured that Gaguin's Latin edition of the *Grandes Chroniques* would receive at least some attention. One might well say that the *Compendium* had become more respectable than the *Grandes Chroniques* itself because of its Humanistic pretensions.

Some of the examples of the use of the *Compendium* have already been indicated in the course of Chapter IX. But there are others. About the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, provincial chronicles began to appear. The era may have spelled national unity, but it also brought out an interest in local history. Although such works expressed local loyalties, their authors were forced to turn to sources

of a broader nature for much of their material. At that time the *Compendium* was a respected work, and so they looked to it for material. In this way accounts of the *Grandes Chroniques* came to be included in works such as *Les Grandes croniques de Bretaigne* by Alain Bouchard. As in the case of the *Grandes Chroniques*, the *Compendium* was also cited as a source of works simply for the sake of lending authenticity and importance to these productions.

Through the above discussion one can see that the influence of the *Grandes Chroniques* was felt throughout France: it was not simply contained within court or monastic circles. Its official nature caused men to consult it in the composition or compiling of their own works; many others found it expedient to cite it as a source. Through Gaguin's Latin translation and his editing of the text the influence of the *Grandes Chroniques* became even broader: the *Compendium* was treated with the respect that the French text had been given in previous centuries.

The French were fortunate in having a national history that they could use and consult. They can also be considered unique in the fact that they had, before Humanism made it fashionable, an appointed propagandist and apologist. Historiographers were a feature of almost every country of Europe, but their connections with the king were loose: they may have been patronised but there was no indication of a master-servant relationship. Though it is incredible, there seems to have been no thought of tying an author to a particular line: patronage was sporadic and no guarantee was required that the one receiving patronage would produce an account according to the wishes of the king.

In the late Fourteenth Century the Italian governments — Florence in the first instance — started to employ humanists in a position which rapidly became a feature of Italian life: that of historiographer. The duties were simply to eulogise the ruling family in a bombastic account that would overcome both fact and its own contradictions through sheer rhetoric. It was only in the latter part of the Fifteenth Century that this idea spread across the Alps: Charles VIII, and even Louis XI before him, captured it when they appointed *historiographes du roi* by the side of, or in place of, a *chroniqueur* — whose title implied old ideas.

Other countries were not so fortunate in having tradition to guide them when the desire to imitate the Italians arose. Other areas may have had some portions of the tradition, but they lacked the whole apparatus of an official history and a paid author, who wrote for the reader of the vernacular, or — as the Renaissance spread — in Latin.

Because of this, direct parallels in other countries are impossible, but one must note that some had at least something in common with the French tradition: accounts were continued, historiographers were appointed, close relationships developed between kings and monasteries that produced a chronicle of length. An example of an account that was continued in many areas was the *Chronik* by Jacob Twinger of Koenigshoven (1346-1420). First composed in Latin and then translated in the vernacular for the laity, it is a compilation until the author's own lifetime. The work, as with the *Grandes Chroniques*, was copied many times and continued in Germany and Switzerland.

In the Empire as well as in other areas town chronicles became popular in the 14th and 15th centuries. Most of them, however, were not

the result of a continuous effort as in the case of the *Grandes Chroniques*, but were written when the occasion demanded it. They could take the form of a universal chronicle or simply be a social rather than political account of the city. Mainz, Nuremburg, Regensburg, Cologne, etc. all had their chronicles. Conrad Justinger, a notary of the city of Berne, was ordered by the council of the city to produce an official chronicle. The result was the *Berner Chronik* which spanned the 12th to the 15th centuries. Justinger's work was the basis for a series of chronicles of Berne: Diebold Schilling at the order of the council wrote a vast chronicle of Berne, basing his work on Justinger's and a continuation of it to 1466 and then producing his own account to 1484. In turn, his work to 1477 was used by Valerius Rued for yet another account that stretched to 1536. In Metz one finds rather similar, although more limited, accounts: a journal for the years 1465 to 1512 was written by Jean Aubrion, a merchant and official of the city, and continued by his cousin. This provided material for two further works on Metz: Joachim Husson, who wrote an account that included the years 1200 to 1525, relied on an ecclesiastical source to 1464; from 1464 to 1500 on the work of Aubrion, and from 1500 to 1525 on his own work. The second was the work of Philippe de Vigneulles who compiled the works of his predecessors, including the Aubrions, as well as those of Gaguin and others, to form an account to 1525.

In Italy there were also town-oriented works before the advent of the official propagandist. Cities both large and small had at one time or another Latin annals or chronicles compiled — sometimes by clerics but often by laymen. In addition to Latin accounts there were vernacular ones such as the *Chronica di Pisa* that covered the years

1089 to 1389 with continuations to 1406. With this tradition behind them one can understand that it was but a short step to the employment of a Humanist to write apologias for the republics and tyrannies.

As in so many other of its aspects, Spain was isolated from the outside world in the field of historiography. Yet the kings of Aragon and Castile did their best to remedy this situation. In fact Latin was discarded in favour of the vernacular by the Castilian king Alfonso X, el Sabio (1252-84). He also departed from the well-trod path of using only Latin sources by turning for information to Muslim and Jewish writers when they did not contradict the religious precepts of Christianity. In this case the king played a direct part in the task of compiling the narrative of his reign from the Creation to his own time; the *General Estoria*, which unfortunately only got as far as the parents of the Virgin Mary. Alfonso not only provided the impetus, but also chose the form of the edition, selected his collaborators, edited the work, made additions to it and corrected his style and grammar.

Alfonso did achieve more when he ordered that the *Primera Crónica General de España* be written. The work was probably begun in 1270, because in that year he borrowed for copying books that were used in the account. Again Alfonso took an active part in the work on this text. It is not certain that the account was completed before Alfonso's death, but the text bears his stamp: the use of varied sources can be noted and the ideas expressed correspond to his own. One must assume that these and similar indications reveal that Alfonso was able at least to supervise the work during his lifetime. The annotations that seem to indicate that it was completed after his death may have been added during the reign of his son Sancho IV. The work served as

a basis for many others for several centuries.

In Aragon and Catalonia historiography was not as ambitious: at almost the same time as Alfonso X's work appeared in Castile the *Cronica o comentaris del gloriossim y invictissim Rey en Jaume Primer* appeared in Aragon and Catalonia. Although the king supposedly was the author, it is generally believed that there may have been a ghost writer involved. Even if Jaime's connection with his chronicle was not genuine, one can say that Pedro el Ceremonioso was involved in the composition of a work that appeared in Latin, Catalan, and later in Aragonese: *Crònica General de Pere III el Cermonios dita comunament Crònica de Saint Joan de la Penya*, as the title appears in Catalan. The work is thought to have been one part of a much larger work pertaining to the genealogies of the kings of Navarre and Aragon and the counts of Barcelona. References to it indicate that Pedro had a part in the composition of the text: with the aid of collaborators and texts derived from various sources. As in other kingdoms, an historiographer or *coronista* became a feature of court life in Spain once his value was realised.

Thus we have several parallels with some aspects of French tradition in other areas of Europe: town chronicles done at the request of the governing officials or simply because their worth was realised, and those in which the monarch took a direct part. In the case of Spain the works used were probably derived from monasteries, but nowhere except in England was there a relationship between king and a particular monastery as there was between the king of France and Saint-Denis. The English parallel is found in the monastery of St. Albans, which was on the principal route north about a day's journey from London.

This alone made St. Albans popular with the king and other visitors to the realm. But one can speak neither of official patronage — as in the case of Saint-Denis — nor of one continuous account — as the *Grandes Chroniques* — in the case of St. Albans. Even the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* can be considered as a single work as against the multitude of accounts that make up the amorphous body known as the *St. Albans Chronicle*.

Constant parallels between Saint-Denis and its work and St. Albans and its conglomeration are necessary to make clear the distinction between the two monasteries and their products. It is true that the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* may have been charged with producing a universal chronicle and that the monks of St. Albans also produced similar accounts; but in no one manuscript were their contemporary accounts gathered together as in the case of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis*.

Both Saint-Denis and St. Albans were well-known and were situated in a convenient place; and the abbots of both houses were men of importance in their respective kingdoms. The abbots of Saint-Denis and the kings of France seem to have been in closer personal relationship than their English counterparts. In turn both Saint-Denis and St. Albans were popular with their respective kings: St. Albans was often visited by the king and his entourage, but, one must note that St. Albans did not hold such a privileged position in England as did Saint-Denis in France: it was not the burial site for her kings; it did not have a centuries-old tradition of royal patronage; it did not hold the royal standard; nor was it the repository of the body of the patron saint of England (the monks of Saint-Denis in a series of disputes claimed that they possessed the major part of the relics of St. Denys).

In essence, notwithstanding the frequency of visits to St. Albans, there is no reason to think that it held a privileged historiographical position in England.

In spite of a lack of supporting evidence, some historians have concluded that St. Albans had a titular historiographer. But, as Professor Galbraith points out, there is no reason to suppose that there was a titular historiographer at St. Albans: there was merely the tradition, as found at other monasteries, involving one monk occupying a position held by one of his predecessors.² But certainly St. Albans was in a position to gain much information from the visits of the monarchs and other distinguished guests; and the best known of the St. Albans' chroniclers, Matthew of Paris, has been acknowledged as a personal friend of Henry III. So, there might indeed have been some unrecorded financial connection between Henry III and Matthew Paris: for, as Professor Vaughan observes, it is possible that Matthew was preparing an expurgated version of his *Chronica Majora* which would have shown Henry in a more favourable manner.³

One cannot doubt that initially Saint-Denis and St. Albans followed similar paths: both had a *scriptorium* under the direction of a precentor who chose the texts to be copied. The scribes were trained, and their age and experience determined their duties: the younger monks were involved in simple copying; the elder in copying the Bible, service books and the translation of an original work or perhaps in the compilation of a chronicle.

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² V.H. Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris* (Glasgow: 1944), p.10.

³ Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge: 1958), p. 117.

The St. Albans tradition, as Professor Galbraith notes, began after 1200 and lasted for almost three centuries. During the 12th century historical writing had been undertaken at St. Albans, but this was not part of what became known as the *Chronicle of St. Albans*. What became known as that work was begun by Roger Wendover (*obit.* 1235). He was succeeded by Matthew Paris. Thomas Walsingham, in about 1400, indicated something of the succession after Matthew Paris: '... William Risangre, Henry Blankfrount, Simon Bynham and Richard Savage successively wrote chronicles'.⁴ The list, however, does not include the anonymous chronicler who continued the work of Matthew Paris, nor does it include John de Trokelowe, who is credited with the account from 1307 to 1323 — the so-called *Annals of John de Trokelowe*. Whatever their names might be, we have evidence of a sequence of chroniclers who produced an account that ended in 1461.⁵ Thus, as at Saint-Denis, the writing of history ceased in the late 15th century: but the two efforts differ in that the Saint-Denis tradition was perpetuated outside the monastery, in the court itself, while the St. Albans chain was completely severed.

Part of the Saint-Denis tradition was the vernacular account, the *Grandes Chroniques*. As noted many times before, there is no evidence to suggest that the work of the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis* or the *chroniqueur du royaume* was directly concerned with the *Grandes Chroniques*: the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* bears a closer relationship

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⁴ *The St. Albans Chronicle 1408-1420*, ed. V.H. Galbraith (Oxford: 1937), p. xxvii.

⁵ The last work (1455-1461) was the *Register* of the abbot Whethamstede. Charles Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: 1913), p. 151.

to at least the *chroniqueur de Saint-Denis*. What is more important is that an official and popular vernacular account was connected with Saint-Denis. St. Albans had nothing similar: no king had encouraged a break with tradition in the form of a vernacular work; and no vernacular work of St. Albans reached an outside audience. Instead, when in need of information the monarch turned not only to St. Albans, but also to other monasteries.

Wendover and Paris wrote chronicles stretching from the Creation to their own age. The *chroniqueurs* at Saint-Denis produced universal chronicles, but in this their task was defined. The successors of Wendover and Paris, however, had no well-defined task: their compositions have the tone of self-contained and unrelated accounts. They produced fragments concerning their own eras which might be tied to previous chronicles by interpretation — but seldom, if ever, through consequence. It was not until Walsingham set to his continuation of Matthew Paris's work that the sequence bore any intentional linkage; and this was severed when Walsingham died. There was no goal in sight such as there was at Saint-Denis: there was no specific use for their work.

Both chronicles were dependent on information derived directly from their kings and other sources. But the attitudes that they expressed were opposite in ideology. According to Professor Galbraith, '... Wendover fixed the tradition once and for all for his contemporaries. The "constitutional attitude" which masks the ... history to the very end was first set out by him. Henceforth for two centuries the St. Albans history is ... an *apologia pro baronibus*'⁶ The

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⁶ Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris*, p. 20.

product of Saint-Denis was in most cases an apologia for the king.

In any event there did not develop an alliance with the Crown which might have given the work of St. Albans the same importance as that of Saint-Denis. The two seem parallel only in the sense that they both consisted of a fairly continuous line of chroniclers; and whether or not royal patronage provided an inducement is a minor point: the tradition of Saint-Denis was begun before it was patronised. It was only in the Seventeenth Century that the English — and the Scots — realised the value of appointing an historiographer royal.⁷

⁷ Denis Hay, 'The Historiographers Royal in England and Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review*, xxx (1951), 15-29.

CONCLUSION

It must be stressed that throughout its duration at Saint-Denis the *Grandes Chroniques* remained intrinsically medieval in both outlook and execution. Until the account of the reign of Philippe le Hardi it was merely a literal translation of its Latin sources. From then until 1340, though the chroniclers made editorial moves toward becoming authors in their own right, the rigid framework of the earlier period continued to govern their efforts. In the 1340's the work was to become truly original for the first and only time in all of its period of composition at Saint-Denis. Away from Saint-Denis in the hands of Pierre d'Orgemont the originality of the work continued from 1350 to 1380. From that time onwards it was composed of other vernacular works — except for the period in which it was a translation of the pretentious Latin of Gaguin, the pseudo-Humanist.

What the *Grandes Chroniques* lacked in originality was more than compensated for by its authority and respectability: it was the official history of the kings of France — probably from the time that Louis IX commanded that it be compiled.

The declared intention of the first recension of the *Grandes Chroniques* was, through history, to edify and enlighten Frenchmen who could not read Latin. Perhaps Louis's idea was to convince them through Truth; but by the time Charles V came to have Pierre d'Orgemont execute the second recension, the motive was purely to convince through presentation of material — carefully selected material. In the third

recension the *Grandes Chroniques* became more thorough propaganda.

The growth of the notion of official historiography was contemporaneous with the sprouting of the *Latin Chronicle of Saint-Denis* into the *Grandes Chroniques* and the blossoming of its various recensions. Perhaps the paying of Guillaume de Nangis is an indication that official historiography was recognized as a plant worth cultivating. In any event, the position of *chroniqueur du royaume* was to become a Crown office. We have seen that the subsequent titular shift to *historiographe du roi* was a matter of fashion in so far as the first word of it was concerned; but perhaps we might also attach some significance to the last two; to the semantic shift from the general to the particular that can be seen in the use of *du roi* instead of *du royaume*. For those styled *du roi* did become apologists for their particular monarch rather than the entire succession.

Despite Gaguin's best efforts, the *Grandes Chroniques* was not a success as a sample of 15th Century Humanism. And perhaps this very failure was in a large part responsible for its sustained popularity. The number of extant manuscripts indicates its early wide appeal, and the fact that printed editions remained in demand until well into the 16th Century is shown in the number of reprintings that took place until 1533.¹ Later in the 16th Century, when the vogue for Humanism

¹ The first printed edition appeared in 1476. After that time the following can be noted:

Les Grandes Chroniques de France, 3 vols. (Paris: Antoine Vérard, 31 August 1493).

Les Grandes Chroniques de France continuées jusqu'en 1513; avec la chronique de Robert Gaguin, contenue à la chronique Martinienne, 3 vols. (Paris: Guillaume Eustace, 1514).

It was also published with a continuation to 1516 under the title *La mer des histoires et croniques de France*:

La mer des histoires et croniques de France, 4 vols. (Paris: 1517-1518).

La mer des histoires et croniques de France, 2 vols. (Paris: 1533).

finally caught on, the *Grandes Chroniques* and Gaguin's *Compendium* waned in popularity — perhaps as outrageously-failed specimens of the new thing.

The 18th Century brought a revival of interest in the *Grandes Chroniques*. In 1741 the editors of the *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* began to print portions of it. These printings, scattered through Volumes III to XXI, continued until 1855, but included no accounts beyond 1328. Historians of the time were interested enough to write articles about the *Grandes Chroniques*, its origins and authors. In the meantime Paulin Paris also produced an edition that took the account to 1381. This was done from 1836 to 1838, and was based almost solely on B.N. MS 2813. There is very little annotation in the Paulin Paris edition, and the text is of poor quality: words are changed at will, and few attempts have been made to collate the material with that of other manuscripts.

In the present century the *Société de l'histoire de France*, under the direction of Jules Viard, has produced a partial edition based in the first instance on MS 782 of the Bibliothèque de Sainte-Geneviève. This edition, which stops at 1350, is excellent; but is apparently not to be continued. It was undertaken between 1920 and 1953. The Viard edition contains textual criticism, reference material, and indications of alternate readings from other manuscripts; but there is still a considerable need for suitable presentation of the account subsequent to 1350.

As can be seen in the bibliography below, there have been numerous articles written in the 19th and 20th Centuries about the sources,

origins, authors, and titles connected with official historiography in France.

The *Grandes Chroniques* ceased, but the concept of historiography and the title of *historiographe du roi* were to remain intact until the French Revolution.² The title was taken from Saint-Denis and given to the Italian Paul Émile in 1488; and though it was to return to Saint-Denis at times, Émile's appointment signalled substantial changes in the nature of the office and the work involved. When a memorialist, rather than a chronicler, became the desired thing, the door opened for men such as Racine and Voltaire.

History was written at the English court before ever an Historiographer Royal was appointed. These earlier writers were principally apologists; but at least one — Polydore Vergil — was committed to the writing of History as such. One might say that when the title was at last instituted in 1661, the job was dead and buried. But this would hardly be apparent from the opening flourish of the man who was to become the first appointee:

'The prudentest and best policy'd states (i.e. France) have a Minister of State appointed and qualified with the title historiographer . . . to digest in writing and to transmit to posterity the actions and counsels of that state as also to vindicate them.' Such an officer should disdain to make his history a mere diary; he should be prepared to make research into past causes of present problems; he should have right of access to state papers current as well as ancient; and he should be allowed 'a liberal allowance out of public stock'.³

2 The names of some of the men who held the office are listed in Appendix B.

3 Denys Hay, 'The Historiographers Royal in England and Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review*, xxx (1951), 23. I am indebted to Professor Hay and the above journal article for information on the subject of the Historiographers Royal in England and Scotland.

Curiously enough, James Howell, after the above suggestion was taken up — the result being his appointment as Historiographer Royal — became conspicuously abstemious in the use of his pen: his only recorded publication subsequent to his rise to the post being an offering entitled *Poems*.

That the office was a sinecure from an early point is shown by the lack of historical writing, the very names of the appointees, and the nature of their publications: Shadwell followed Dryden; and others along the path produced little by way of political pamphlets and less by way of historiography. A selected list of their publications gives us an insight into the spirit of the thing: *Instructions for Foreign Travel*; *Sullen Lovers*; *Enchanted Island*; *Short View of Tragedy*; and *Historical Memoirs of Shipwrecks*. An appointee named R. Stonehewer (1728?-1809), apparently given the title because the Duke of Grafton wanted a place for him, appears to have published nothing.

The office lapsed in the Victorian era after the appointment of G.P.R. James. We know that this incumbent was able to write at least sixty novels and a works of 'fireside history' before he died at age fifty-nine; but all we know of his work as Historiographer Royal is that he wrote a few pamphlets. Shoddy as James's example might look, it would seem that these few pamphlets represent one of the more prolific examples of royal historiography in England.

In Scotland the position would seem to be a more substantial thing. The very fact that it has survived into the present age (except for an apparent gap during the troubled period 1736 to 1763) bears this out. Unlike the English position, the appointment held

by the Historiographer Royal in Scotland from 1704 was not terminable at the command of the sovereign. From the very beginning the Scottish incumbent has been paid; and up until 1763 he was charged with compiling a history of Scotland. However, no distinguished body of work has issued from the efforts of the long line of Scottish Historiographers Royal — at least while they held the office.

Despite what has become of the title Historiographer Royal, official historiography — which had an early and significant impetus from Saint-Denis — lives on today in the official recording and interpreting of history. In countries behind the Iron Curtain it can be seen in re-evaluations of the past; and in Western countries it is continued through the work of archivists and historians appointed to write official histories.

As already noted there are many extant manuscripts of the *Grandes Chroniques*. One could not hope to list all of them, but a sampling of the collection contained in the Bibliothèque nationale provides a reasonable idea of the various states that they are in. Their contents range from including simply the portions devoted to the reigns of Jean and Charles V as found in B.N. n.a. fr. MS 6776 to the entire account to 1381, found in B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MS 2813, as well as a set of manuscripts B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MSS 2613 and 2614.

One can also cite a number of manuscripts that contain the whole of the account to 1380, ending with the words '... et y morut grant foison de leurs gens et leurs chevaux. Et s'en alerent aucuns et emmenerent grant foison de leurs biens'. This comes at the end of an account of the raising of the siege of Nantes by the English in 1380 and the subsequent departure of some for their homes. Among the manuscripts that end in this way are B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MSS 2604, 2605, 2608, and 2609. B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MS 2606, and a set of manuscripts that make up the entire account, B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MSS 2616 to 2620, are unfinished: they end with the phrase '... et emmenerent grant foison de'.

Still others are noteworthy for the additions that they contain. B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MS 17270 which ends at the death of Philip VI, for example, includes an elaborate statement of the Salic law at the beginning of the account of the reign of Philip VI. On the other hand, B.N. ancien fonds (fr.) MS 10132 carries a more abbreviated account of the homage of Edward III. Through these examples it must be seen that there was not one *Grandes Chroniques*, but several. In fact one might well say that almost every manuscript was a separate entity.

APPENDIX B

As noted in the text the office of *historiographe du roi* lasted until 1789. Many of the men who held the office can be identified. The following is but a partial list of those who held the title. One can see among them not only historians, but also literary artists.

Jacques Boujou	Charles Sorel
Pierre Paschal	d'Albancourt
François Hotman	Henri de Valois
Denis Sauvage	Adrien de Valois
François Belleforest	Denis Godfroy
du Haillan	Michel Félibien
J. de Serres	Guillaume de l'Isle
Claude Fauchet	Mézeray
Pierre Matthieu	Pellisson
André Duchesne	Boileau
Scévole de Sainte-Marthe	Racine
Louis de Sainte-Marthe	P. Daniel
Vittorio Siri	Voltaire
Guez de Balzac	Duclos
Théodore Godefroy	Marmontel
Jean Sismond	J.-N. Moreau

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Only those consulted in the course of the text are listed:

for additional manuscripts see Appendix A.

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British Museum Royal MS 20 C VII.
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Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS 5925.
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Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS 5959.
Bibliothèque Nationale lat. MS 5960.
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