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«*Roland, senator roman*»: Origins of the
Italian Literary Romance-Epic Trope

Leslie Zarker Morgan
(Loyola University Maryland)



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Via E. Vendramini, 13
35137 PADOVA

info@francigena-unipd.com

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«*Roland, senator roman*»:
Origins of the Italian Literary Romance-Epic Trope

Leslie Zarker Morgan*

lmorgan@loyola.edu

(Loyola University Maryland)

ABSTRACT:

The *Entrée d'Espagne*, from the first half of the fourteenth century, first presents Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, as Roman Senator. The source of that title derives from political usage of that time as well as from Classical Roman tradition through literary historiography, and illustrates aspects of a Roman Senator's responsibilities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For this reason Roland and his story appeals to the courts of Italian cities similarly structured, whose members aspire to such a role.

KEYWORDS:

Roland – title of 'Roman Senator' – the fictional and historical Roman Senate in post-Classical times – reception of *matière de France* in the Italian peninsula.

«Ed io son conte e senator romano» [I am both a count and a Roman senator]¹, Roland says to himself in anger at Rinaldo in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*. Roland's title of Roman senator has a long literary history before and after Boiardo². It appears initially in Franco-Italian texts wherever Roland appears: the *Entrée d'Espagne*, *Continuazione dell'Entrée d'Espagne*, *La Guerra d'Attila*, *Aquilon de Bavière*, and seems to begin with that tradition. The title also appears subsequently as an attribute for other fighters in literary works, for both historical and fictional characters. Literary critics have proposed symbolic meanings deriving from the Classical past; a few critics point out that events at the time of Franco-Italian literature offer contemporary sources for the expression; but why these combine to produce popular literature at certain courts has not been examined. The elements in fact combine with a revival of and admiration for the prestigious title through the Renaissance and beyond to a specific audience of internationally formed military and their support staff. To understand this use of the title and appreciation

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¹ Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato*: Book 1, canto 25, ottava 55, v. 8.

² It appears also in Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, 2 times; and Pulci, *Morgante*, 5 times.

for it, we will first examine the earliest appearances of the title *senator roman* in Franco-Italian *chansons de geste* in addition to the title's appearance in other written works both in Latin and in the vernacular. We will then contemplate the political situation of the time, the return of the Roman Senate (*renovatio senatus*) and its members. Finally, these considerations combined suggest how, why, and for whom Roland became a literary *senator roman*.

1. Franco-Italian use of «Roman senator»

The Old French (OF) *Chanson de Roland* is the earliest example and best-known of the *chansons de geste*. In its most famous and earliest form, the Oxford MS (O), Roland is called *quens Rollant* 38 times – he is called *ami(s)* (5 times), *le cataigne* (once), *li ber* (once), *cumpaign* (5 times) and *le barun* (twice), but no other title appears³. In other Old French (OF) texts, such as the Guillaume d'Orange cycle, the expression *Roman senator* does not appear. Similarly in the Franco-Italian versions of the *Chanson de Roland* – V4, V7, and Châteauroux – no honorary title other than those appears⁴.

In the tradition of the OF *chanson de geste* as it continued into Franco-Italian poems composed in the Italian peninsula⁵, specific manuscripts date from the beginning of the fourteenth through the fifteenth century⁶. There, Roland is regularly called *senateur de Rome* or *senator roman*⁷. Dated manuscripts include *Huon d'Auvergne* (B) (f. 84v, v. 12217), dated 1341 in the colophon; *Huon d'Auvergne* (T) (f. 183v, v. 11843), dated in the colophon to 1441; Niccolò da Verona, *Pharsale* (v. 3166), dedicated to Niccolò I of Este in 1343⁸; Raffaele da Verona, *Aquilon de*

³ *Chanson de Roland* (O): *ber* is used of multiple men; here in v. 2022, he is specifically «Rollant li ber»; Turpin speaks to him once addressing him as *ber* (v. 2221), and Charlemagne refers to him as *li bers* once, as an epithet (v. 2867). Similarly *barun/baron*, the object case, appears frequently for many men both as adjective and pronoun; here it is specifically *Rollant le barun* (vv. 623, 766).

⁴ Cf. *RLALFrI* for the versions of the Franco-Italian *Roland*. Notice that *RLALFrI* includes multiple versions of the same text, so total counts it provides will not always be correct; one edition alone is included in counts here.

⁵ Franco-Italian *chansons de geste* have, since the early twentieth century, been classified into several categories, from copies of Old French originals to rewritings to original compositions. For a summary, see Holtus – Wunderli 2005: 22-24.

⁶ Holtus – Wunderli give from the beginning of the thirteenth century through the middle of the fifteenth for the Franco-Italian phenomenon as a whole (2005: 18).

⁷ The form varies, since spelling is not standardized; in *RLALFrI*, the following totals appear: *senator*, with 44 appearances, is the most common; in order of appearance, with total appearances in parentheses, appear: *senators* (18); *senetor* (6); *senateurs* (5); *senatour* (3); *senetour* (2); *sanatour* (2); *senatorz* (2); *senateur* (1); *sanator* (1); *senetors* (1); *senetorz* (1). Of the total 86 forms, 37, nearly one-half, are modified by forms of «Roman» or «de Rome». These are specifically for one edition of the *Entrée*; one occurrence is omitted as it is a second edition of the same line (14768; 2, 14769). Totals as of 28. III. 2024.

⁸ Cf. Niccolò da Verona, *Opere*: 11.

Bavière (in prose, 7 books and 2 epilogues), where the epilogues give beginning and ending dates, 1379-1407⁹. These works offer specific dates in which to contextualize surviving Franco-Italian manuscripts in the northern Italian peninsula, though they may be copies of earlier compositions in whole or in part. The poems include the *Entrée d'Espagne* (*EE*) and the *Continuazione dell'Entrée* (*CdE*)¹⁰, where even *senetour* by itself is sufficient to understand Roland is the subject (e.g., *CdE*, v. 6013). In the *Guerra d'Attila* (*GdA*), the Christians also use «Mon joie, chevalier senator!» as a battle cry against Attila and his army (II, XVI, 3118).

However, the expression *senator roman* appears not only in *chansons de geste* derived from French tradition, but also in the «matter of France» in other formats derived from that tradition¹¹. *Aquilon de Bavière* (*AdB*), usually called the last narrative in Franco-Italian tradition, is in prose. It includes an episode in which the pope comes to Paris make «un senator» because «di senator de Rome» had died (which of course has no basis in history). Roland then receives the title *senator roman* directly from the pope (1, vii, 7-9)¹². The pope promises Roland twenty thousand knights wherever he might ride for the faith, and furthermore, that they would be paid from the treasury of the Church. Roland himself would have 100,000 golden francs per year. Roland, in return, promises never to fight against other Christians and that if he must fight, he will not lead the soldiers of the church:

– Bel fil, gie vos manderai sempre *in ogni part* che vos vorés civalcer por examplir la foi cristiane vint millia cevallier, e si li pagieray del texor de la sante Glixe. E por vetre *persone* aurés de *provexion* cent mille franc d'or *per an*.
E ly cont, che estoit *in ginoilon*, li *promet* de non civalcer a son vivant contre *cristian*, e se civauxer li *convenist*, ch'il non meneroit les soldaers de la Glixe¹³.

Thus, there is one senator alone in this position according to the *Aquilon de Bavière*. There too, as in the *Guerra d'Attila*, «senator roman» is the battle cry of Roland's troops (*AdB* 7, LXXXXI, 3; 7, LXXXXI, 4; 7, LXXXXI, 9) and an exclamation of rejoicing (*AdB*, 5, LXX, 9; 7, CXXXII, 10) beyond a mere epithet describing Roland.

In later *chansons de geste*, it is not just Roland who is so designated: the *chanson de geste Huon d'Auvergne* of 1341 (B), in rhymed laisses, narrates the trip of Guillaume d'Orange's descendant Huon into hell, as does the 1441 (T) version, which

⁹ Cf. Raffaele da Verona, *Aquilon de Bavière*. vol. 1: XXX-XXXI. Wunderli, the editor, accepts the dates with some hesitation.

¹⁰ An earlier edition of the *Continuazione dell'Entrée* was labelled *Prise de Pampelune* (Niccolò da Verona, *Prise de Pampelune*). There are also fragments of the *Entrée d'Espagne*: see Specht 1977-1978, and Specht 1984; and there is a fragment of *Aquilon* (Wunderli 1980).

¹¹ The standard division of subject matter is that of Jean Bodel (1165-1210) in the prologue to the *Chanson des Saisnes* 'Song of the Saxons', the *matières* of France (Charlemagne stories), of Brittany (Arthur), and of Rome (classical figures, like Alexander and Troy).

¹² In *RLALFrI*; Raffaele da Verona, *Aquilon de Bavière*. vol. 1: 11, lines 29-32. Afterward, Roland is frequently referred to by the title *senator*.

¹³ Raffaele da Verona, *Aquilon de Bavière*. vol. 1: 11-12.

is quite similar in content though in unrhymed stanzas¹⁴. There, not only is Roland a Roman senator (B 9111; T 8781), but so too is the protagonist Huon (B 4743, B 5184; T 5022, T 11838) descendant of Guillaume d'Orange, who goes to hell at the behest of the evil King Charles Martel of France¹⁵.

In addition, genres in Franco-Italian other than *chansons de geste* and their derivatives use the term *senator* and 'Roman senator' for protagonists both historical and fictional. These include vernacular versions of Classical works; didactic writings; popular fiction; religious narratives, many of which recount well-known Latin literary works in the vernacular; and finally, governmental proclamations. Niccolò da Verona's *Pharsale* retells Lucan's *Civil Wars (Pharsalia)*. Lucan uses various forms of *senator* for a total of 17 times, to describe the group as a whole¹⁶. Niccolò da Verona uses it both as a general term for a group, together with dukes, princes, and marquis (vv. 341, 452, 763, 1266, 1296, 1531, 1817, 2010, 2340, 2601), as well as for the individual Pompey (vv. 1075, 1314, 2134) and Pompey's (poetical, not historical) nephew, Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus (vv. 1695, 1712).

Among didactic works, Brunetto Latini, in his *Tresor*, uses the terms *senator* and *Senate* in retelling the story of Lucretia. There he attributes the origin of senators and other elected officials to Tarquinius's error (1, 36.4; 1, 36.6). He evokes Catiline speaking of his family before the Senate (2, 114.2; 3, 29.1), and also quotes speech before the Senate when discussing rhetoric (3, 6.3). The Catiline conspiracy again appears in Caesar's defense of the conspirators (3, 34.30). Finally, in his section about the government of cities, Brunetto Latini proposes a sample letter to an elected leader, using Charles I of Anjou (b. 1226/7–d. 1285) as his example:

A l'ome de grant vaillance et de grant renomée monseingnor Charle, cuens d'Ango et de Provence, li gouverneur de Rome et toz li consoilz salus et croissance de toz honors. Ja soit ce que toutes humanes genz comunaument desirrent la franchise que nature lor dona premierement, et volentiers eschivent le joug dou servaige, toutes fois por ce que la s[ui]te de male covoitise et le loisir de males huevres qui n'estoient pas chastices tornoit a peril des homes et a destruction de l'umane compaignee, esgarda la justise de çaus et dreça sor le pueple gouverneur en diverses manieres de seingnories, por enhaucier la seingnorie des bons et por confondre la malice des mauvais. Et ensi convint il, autresi come par necessité, que nature fust souz justise, et que franchise obeist a jugement. Et de ce avient, por les desirriers qui sont ores plus corrompus, et por les perversitez qui croissent a nostre tens, que nulle chose puet estre [plus] profitable a chascun pueple et a toutes communes que avoir droit seingnor et saige gouverneur. Et come pensissiens ensemble d'un home qui

¹⁴ On the format and relationship between the two, see Scattolini 2010: 31-81; Morgan – Schwam-Baird, forthcoming.

¹⁵ Cf. *Huon d'Auvergne*, Berlin text and translation, www.huondauvergne.org. All quotes from the *Huon d'Auvergne* texts come from direct transcription of the MSS: B, from Berlin Kupferstichkabinett 78 D 8; T from Torino Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, N.III.19.

¹⁶ Lucan, *The Civil War*: pp. 120-21; 238-39; 240-41; 260-61; 368-69; 374-75; 390-91; 396-97; 398-99; 412-13; 420-21; 444-45; 450-51; 454-55; 474-75; 582-83; 614-15 (the Latin is on the even-numbered pages facing the odd-numbered pages).

nos condue l'an après qui vient, et qui garde le comun, et mantieinge les estranges et les privez, et sauve les choses et les cors de touz, en tel maniere que drois n'apetisse pas en nostre ville, il nos avint ausi come par devin demostrement que entre toz les autres que l'en tient ores a saiges et vaillans a si haute chose come a signorie de genz, vos fustes triés et receu por le meillor. Et por ce, sire, nos par le comun assentement de la ville avons establi que vos soiez senator et gouverneur de Rome, de ceste prochane feste de la Toz Sainz jusques a un an¹⁷.

Brunetto thus works both with classical precedents in circulation at his time and with current political events and characters.

Tales about the Classical past also appear in popular fiction where works use the term *senator*: first, in the *Conti di antichi cavalieri*, *senators* appears twice in the first novella. There, Pompey and Cato are in Rome when word of Caesar's arrival comes. They depart with many other senators; and then, Caesar is with *senators*, unarmed, when he is attacked and killed¹⁸. Tommaso di Saluzzo, in the *Livre du Chevalier Errant*, also recounts two stories of Rome; first, Orosius's version of the history of Rome, with the origin of senators, attributed to Romulus (Chapter 44.146), and then the end of kings in Rome with Tarquin, with consuls and senators – these last ruling 2 per year – ruling instead (44. 174)¹⁹; and also, Hannibal's battle in which many *senateurs* and other nobles were killed (52.62); further battles

¹⁷ Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*. Book 3, Chapter 77, paragraphs 1-2, *RLALFrI*. [To the man of great valor and great renown, My lord Charles, Count of Anjou (Carmody adds: and of Provence – not present in all texts), governor of Rome, and the whole council, we send greetings and the wish for an increase in all honor. Even though all human beings in general desire the freedom which nature first gave them, and they would gladly avoid the yoke of servitude, nevertheless because the pursuit of evil desires and the opportunity for evil deeds which went unpunished was becoming dangerous for the people and destructive to human association, justice took heed of these people and a governor was chosen for the people with several duties, to promote the reputation of the good people and to confound the malice of the bad. Thus it was appropriate, indeed it was almost a necessity, that nature be subject to justice and that freedom be obedient to judgment, and from this it ensues because of people's desires, which now are more corrupt, and because of the perversions which are increasing these days, nothing can be more profitable to each group of people and to all communes than to have a just lord and a wise governor. 2. As we deliberated together about a man who would lead us next year, who would come and watch over the common good, and who would maintain both outsiders and insiders, and who would respect the property and the persons of all people in such a way that justice would not decrease in our city, it occurred to us, as if through a divine instruction, that of all men who are now considered to be wise and valorous enough for such an important thing as the governing of a people, you were to be selected and considered to be the best. For this reason, Sire, by the common consent of the city, we have determined that you should be senator and governor of Rome, beginning with the next feast of All Saints and for the period of one year] (Brunetto Latini, *Treasure*: 355-356). Brunetto was a known proponent of the Anjou; he had been exiled from Florence after the Battle of Montaperti, when the Guelphs were defeated.

¹⁸ Cf. *Conti di antichi cavalieri*: 87-104, 107-108, 111-112, 125-128, 131, 133, 135, 137-138, 141, 143, 149-154; cf. *RLALFrI*, <https://www.rialfri.eu/texts/sixContes|001> [cons. 7. VI. 2023].

¹⁹ Tommaso III di Saluzzo, *Chevalier Errant*; cf. *RLALFrI*, <https://www.rialfri.eu/texts/chevalierErrant|001>. All references are to that text.

all over the Empire for which the senators mourn (52.116); and the death of Caesar (52.128)²⁰.

Among works with religious connections, the *Leggendario di Lione*, from the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century uses the term. It contains various legends of the apostles: legends number 2 (St. Peter the Apostle), 3 (St. John the Evangelist), and 4 (St. Matthew the Apostle), include senators as characters. In each case, there are multiple senators and they are part of the government. Into this category also falls the *Complainte de Boece*, a reworking/translation of Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae*, where Fortune speaks to Boethius about honor's changeability, giving as an example the senators who had governed the great city of Rome and now, in their pride, are nothing (Book 2, Chapter 10)²¹.

Finally, among governmental works is the *Ordinanza in francese di Carlo I d'Angiò*, 27 octobre 1277. There Charles I of Anjou initiates the announcement of a decision using his full title, as is traditional in such proclamations:

Challes, par la grace de Dieu, Roy de Jerusalem et de Secile, du Duchee de Pulle, du Princee de Capes, *Senateur* de Rome, d'Anjo, de Provence, de Forquaquier et de Tonneurre Conte, et de l'Empire de Rome, an Touscane, par la seinte Yglise de Rome, vicare general; A ses amez, feaus et familiers, Maistre Guillaume Boucel, de Paris, cleric, Ris de la Marre, de Ballate, et Pierre Boudin, d'Angiers, receveurs et gardeurs de son tresor ou chastel de Salvateur en mar de Naples, lequel chastiau est apelez communement Chastel de l'Uef, sa grace et sa bone volonte²².

The *Cronaca del templare di Tiro* also refers to Charles I of Anjou and his time as senator (2, 91, 1; 2, 127, 2) to place the narrative chronologically²³.

Thus, while Franco-Italian *chansons de geste* based upon Old French precedents – copies, reworkings (*rimaneggiamenti / remaniements*) or derivations from them – might utilize the term of 'Roman Senator' or 'Senator of Rome', so too do works deriving from Classical tradition (*matière de Rome*)²⁴, historical works (not always

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

²¹ Boethius (F-I); cf. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 2, Prose 6: 208-221.

²² [Charles, by the grace of God, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, of the Duchy of Apulia, of the principality of Capes, Senator of Rome, of Anjou, of Provence, of Forcalquier and of the County Tonnerre, and Vicar General of the Empire of Rome in Tuscany, by [the grant of] the Holy Church of Rome; To his friends, vassals and familiars, Mastery William Boucel of Paris, cleric, Ris de la Marre, de Ballate, and Pierre Boudin of Angiers, receivers and guardians of his treasure in the Castle of the Savior in the Sea of Naples, Castle commonly called the Chastel de l'Oeuf, his grace and good will], my trans. from Durrieu *Notice sur les registres angevins en langue française conservés dans les Archives de Naples*: 12, in *RLALFrI*, <https://www.rialfri.eu/rialfriPHP/public/testo/testo/ordinata/ot|ORDINANZACARLO|ordinanzaCarlo|001|21/query/1#mark> [cons. 7. VI. 2023].

²³ Cf. *Cronaca del Templare di Tiro (1243-1314): La caduta degli Stati Crociati nel racconto di un testimone oculare*, in *RLALFrI*, <https://www.rialfri.eu/texts/cronacaTemplareTiro2|001> [cons. 7. VI. 2023].

²⁴ See note 11.

easily separated from the first), encyclopedias, religious pieces, and legal documents. The number of individuals holding the title in a given work varies, with a Senate and multiple Senators normal to a Classical work, and a single Senator for a work in or deriving from the *matière de France*.

In the fourteenth century, Roman senators existed not only in the literature involving Classical Rome, pagan or Christian, but also in contemporary Rome. As in Classical antiquity, those senators exercised the powers of state through wealth and political connection, more or less under religious aegis.

2. *Origin of the term 'Senator' and its subsequent reprise*

The Senate of Classical antiquity began, according to tradition, with Romulus at the founding of Rome in 753 BC²⁵. The Senators' responsibilities included «attend[ing] the assemblies of their province or diocese»; they had to «contribute to the gift of gold [...] to the emperors on their accession and successive quinquennial celebrations»; pay «a small regular surtax [...] on their lands» and produce «games at Rome and Constantinople», which could be quite expensive. The Classical Senate was clearly well-heeled²⁶. It was not a warrior class; they did not lead troops into battle. The Classical Roman Senate continued in various forms and functions into the fifth century AD under the Ostrogoths, when Justinian took senators hostage in the war against them, after which establishing the existence of a Senate and Senators becomes more complicated. Whether or not the Roman Senate actually disappeared or continued in another form is debated²⁷. Only four mentions of the Roman Senate appear after the return of imperial rule to Italy, the last of which is from 603 CE, when it is recorded as proclaiming statues to be placed in the chapel of the Imperial Palace on the Palatine²⁸. Salzman recently argues that the rising power and prestige of the Byzantine military coincided with a decrease in opportunities for Senatorial aristocrats in Rome, encouraging the ambitious from the Senatorial class to go to Constantinople or to

²⁵ Livy, *History of Rome, Volume I*: 33 (1, 8, VIII).

²⁶ Jones 1986: vol. 1, 536-540.

²⁷ Paravicini argues that the Senate continued to exist, but as a municipal body rather than an imperial one (1901: 20-21), aristocrats who were able to recruit the *popolo* to assist against the papacy, and lists all appearances of the Senate and Senators, even under the term *consules* (*ibid.*: 35-54).

²⁸ Gregory I, *Epistulae*, MGH, cited in Richards 1979: 246, 389, n. 59. Some general reference works repeat the 603 date from older histories as the end of the institution: e.g., «Wikipedia» (*Sénat Romain*; *Roman Senate*, and in other western European languages: German and Spanish do not even mention the use of the title by nobility after 603 CE [as of 26. VIII. 2023]); see too Ward-Perkins 1997: 33. Holmes notes, «The Senate, however, apparently did not survive, as a political unit, the ravages and disruptions of the Gothic wars and the neglect of its privileges that followed the imposition of the Byzantine rule [...]» (1997: 33).

Ravenna to improve their careers and potential earnings²⁹, while many others retreated to the countryside outside of Rome.

Among references pertaining to the development of the Senate in the following years is that of 684 CE, when Emperor Constantine IV directed an ordinance concerning the ratification procedure of a pope's election to the clergy, Roman citizens, and *felicissimus exercitus Romanus*, the Byzantine garrison. Arnaldi finds the three-part formula again in a document dated to 705/715 in which the elective body for the pope was so given³⁰. The choice of pope therefore was to be made by Roman citizens, clerics, and the *exercitus*, who then had to send messengers to the exarch for ratification³¹. These military forces are the beginning of an important part of the community. Ravenna was occupied by the Lombards at the beginning of 750, ending the exarchate, so Byzantine duchies such as Rome became more autonomous, but also needed more protection for defense. That can be seen as a vacuum of power³², or as an opportunity to be seized. The popes were able to use church funds to handle various territorial concerns, and the aristocracy became consultants to them as to a monarchy, a 'Senate' *de facto* if not *de jure*. The term 'Senate' then appears again in a 757 letter to Pepin³³, in which Pope Paul I asks for help on behalf of *omnis senatus atque universa populi generalitas a Deo servatae Romanae urbis* [the whole Senate and the entire community of the city of Rome preserved by God]. This document and date, Arnaldi suggests, announce the return of the Senate³⁴. It is also the era of the Donation of Constantine, which mentions the Senate³⁵. However, Wickham notes, «the plural words *consules* and *senatores*, as also *senatus* were systematically used in Rome to mean 'aristocrats' or 'leading men', throughout the eleventh century (and indeed earlier) and well into the twelfth, in narratives and documents. [...] Use of the term does not mark political change»³⁶. Maire Vigueur points out that the Senate did not

²⁹ Cf. Salzman 2021: 300-324. She looks at the names of those appointed to the rank of Senator, arguing that Justinian favored Easterners, noting that bishops became ever more active in the city, demonstrating that the senator class entered the clergy for political power or «merged into local landowning elites in the course of the seventh century» (*ibid.*: 321).

³⁰ Cf. Arnaldi 1997: 101, *Liber diurnus*, formula 60 ff.

³¹ Arnaldi also writes that the *exercitus* seemed «subentrato in tutto e per tutto al Senato» (*ibid.*: 103).

³² Cf. Hiestand 1989: 28-29; Bolton notes that between 1100 and 1304, popes were in residence in Rome for only 82 years, while they were outside the city for 122 visiting papal territories (2004: 96).

³³ Cf. Arnaldi 1997: 111.

³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*: 104.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*: 109-111 for a close analysis. It is, of course, entirely possible that the two form political maneuvers at the time.

³⁶ Wickham 2017²: 434, 436. Paravicini lists multiple Latin references, direct and indirect, to the senate in various documents, from 625 – 1130 CE (1901: 35-54). Similarly Salimei 1935. Cf. Internullo 2022: 183.

appear as a self-identified group until the revolution of the *renovatio senatus* of 1143-1144, and Wickham follows his interpretation³⁷.

The expression *renovatio senatus* symbolizes the development of the Roman Commune, essential to understanding the role of a post-Classical Roman Senator. While one can divide the regimes of its function and powers differently, overall three post-Classical periods can be distinguished; we elaborate here to cover the era of Franco-Italian literature. Officially dated from 1144, the Senate of the first period consisted of a group of some 56-60 senators, perhaps linked to the number of *rioni* of the city³⁸; after the 1190's, there was usually a single *Summus Senator*, though the post was shared in some years by two members of different aristocratic Roman families³⁹; then, from 1252-58 and again in 1261 the post was held by foreigners, and subsequently by the foreigner Charles I of Anjou for 14 years in three terms, 1263-66, 1268-78, 1281-84. From 1278, the popes frequently held the role themselves, delegating the duties to regents, following Nicholas III's 1277 legislation granting himself the right to be Senator, with the ability to delegate others to do the administration. He was subsequently elected by the people as Senator for life in 1278; and in 1280, the French Martin IV was elected Senator⁴⁰. The role of the *populus* and acclamation – how that might have been organized and who participated – is a question at many points, since, for example, Charles I of Anjou was elected Senator initially without papal approval⁴¹. Furthermore, the length of a term of office varied: one year, one semester, or a life term were among the possibilities. In the final period, ca. 1369-1398, two different bodies exercised power, seven *reformatori* (later three *conservatori*) and the *Felice Società dei balestrieri e dei pavesati*⁴². Finally, the pope prevailed: in 1398, the Roman Commune gave over all its powers to Pope Boniface IX.

³⁷ Cf. Wickham 2017²: 436-437; Maire Vigueur 2016: 214-215. However, Arnaldi argues that the Senate actions from the eighth through the mid-eleventh centuries demonstrate «tentativi compiuti [...] per assicurarsi controllo del patriarcato lateranense» (1997: 107).

³⁸ Since this is not the main topic here, details are omitted. For complete details, see Internullo 2022; Wickham 2017²: 447; Maire Vigueur 2016: 112-113 on the *rioni*; Brentano 1991: 96; Halphen 1907: 66-67. Miglio sets the end of the first phase at 1188, the date of the signing of the Commune's agreement with Pope Clement III for recognition of the Commune; he granted it various rights, and the Commune agreed to get rid of the *Patriarcus* (Miglio 1997: 130; cf. Hibbert 1985: 91). Some historians consider 1188 the turning point for the popes' control of the Senate (Halphen 1907: 56-57; Hibbert 1985: 91-92).

³⁹ The last election of 56 was in 1204, in between individual appointments; again, Halphen 1907: 66-67. The first time for a single senator was Benedetto Carushomo 1191-1193, followed by 56 senators (Maire Vigueur 2016: 221; Brentano 1991: 96; Boesch Gajano 1966).

⁴⁰ Cf. Salimei 1935: 84-85; Waley 1961: 202 on the process. Manco 2022: 82 – citing Terenzi 2019: 120-125 – notes that Robert of Anjou also served off and on as Senator from 1313-1335, but in fact, it was as *senatore-vicario del papa*, that is, as papal representative.

⁴¹ Cf. Terenzi 2019: 32-34.

⁴² Salimei gives 1369-1447, including 1408-1414 when Ladislao named himself senator (1935:

These three periods responded to different contemporary exigencies. Full details from the secular side are not available, unfortunately, at least in part because Charles V's forces destroyed numerous Roman archives in 1527-1528, but Vatican and private documents, together with others outside of Rome, have allowed events to be somewhat reconstructed⁴³. Recent years have seen revisions of long-held beliefs in developments that shed light on our argument here, demonstrating similarities between the Roman situation and that of northern Italian communes. Historians began by publishing many documents, including lists of senators⁴⁴. Between archeological surveys and archival publications, details continue to clarify events⁴⁵. Questions concerning the composition and nature of the *popolo* and the aristocrats lie at the basis of much of the discussion and this last suggests a model behind, and a reason for, the popularity of the literary role of Senator. The background of the uprising, like its surrender and the function of the Senate and Senator or Senators demonstrate what Roland's title meant; elements of similarity with northern Communes and outsize historical figures explain Roland's title in Franco-Italian texts and their successors.

The divisions of society in Rome derived only in part from ancient tradition. While Classical Roman nobles whose families had served as Senators removed themselves from the city, either by going to Ravenna or Milan for advancement, or retreating to their country estates to avoid arrest or difficulty with Byzantine forces stationed in the city to defend it against Lombard forces, some Byzantine forces stayed in Rome after Ravenna was conquered, becoming themselves landlords and merged into the local aristocracy⁴⁶. There was continual military practice and plenty of opportunity for military forays into neighboring countryside⁴⁷, be-

21). Maire Vigueur estimates the origin of the *Felice società* to 1358 (2016: 248). Senators were by *nomina pontificia* from 1355-1358 (Miglio 1997: 26).

⁴³ Maire Vigueur: «Part of the archive and the library of the popes escaped destruction, unlike the archives of the municipality of Rome and of numerous other Roman institutions, secular, civil and religious, of which not a single trace survived the sack» (2016: 8). Halphen cites specific examples of dates for senatorial terms by quoting from letters (1907: 67-69).

⁴⁴ See Wickham 2017²: 16, for a summary of research directions. For lists of senators, see Vendettini 1778, Vendettini 1782; Halphen 1907; Bouïard lists the senators and supreme magistrates from 1252-1347 chronologically; Bouïard 1920: 235-274; Gasparrini 1938; Bartoloni 1948; Salimei 1930-32; Bassotti 1955: 13-55 lists all the senators from 1204 to 1870 known at his time; Parenzi 1978. Fedele notes that the various references documented lead to define "Senate" as 'aristocracy', though in fact there were political actions (1933: 93-95); Fraccaro – Leicht – Rovelli 1936 quote that article. Maire Vigueur – Faini note, «La vera rivoluzione, nel campo degli studi comunali, non è avvenuta prima degli anni settanta o ottanta del secolo scorso» (2010: 2) [The true revolution in Commune studies didn't happen before the '70's and '80's of the last century].

⁴⁵ Vallecalle summarizes the importance of the Roman Senator in relation to governing, working from Halphen 1907 (2007: 776). There is also disconnect between Catholic and non-Catholic interpretations of events; see Wickham 2017²: 13-20 for a discussion of the historiography.

⁴⁶ Cf. Arnaldi 1997: 103.

⁴⁷ Paravicini 1901: 69-79, discusses the historical role and development of the *militia*. See too Fru-

cause at the end of the eighth century, with the end of the Byzantine Empire, the need for defense both within and without the city was urgent. These forces needed to be armed and many mounted, and ready to fight on short notice. Maire Vigueur in his ground-breaking *Cavaliers et citoyens* offers a panoramic overview of the civilian militia in Italian communes⁴⁸. His analysis of class structure, internal conflict, and administrative personnel led ultimately to a following volume focusing on Rome of the same era, and it places Rome's Commune squarely in the same tradition⁴⁹. There, he outlines the development of the civilian militia holding the primary obligation of defense of the Commune. For that defense, the participant received substantial privileges in varying proportions in different Communes: communal goods, fiscal benefits, various economic gifts and exceptions⁵⁰. The so-called *consul* position in other cities was in Rome the *Senator*, who provided service and advice⁵¹. Initially these were drawn from all levels of the *militia*, with frequent rotations – short, elected terms – that guaranteed the participation of all in Communal government and the regular redistribution of collective resources among families in the group⁵². A primary ongoing source of wealth was their military campaigns, during which they took booty of seized goods and ransom for captured enemies⁵³.

The role of these *milites*, a class of trained military men with a merchant background, rising into the old Roman nobility and marrying into it⁵⁴, is an argument that other historians accept to a lesser or greater degree; but their existence and high social position is uncontested and, in any case, essential to the political landscape of the era. In the conclusion to his first volume, Maire Vigueur defines the *militia*: «une classe sociale qui, dans chaque ville de l'Italie communale, se compose de plusieurs centaines de familles et qui tire sa cohésion, ainsi qu'une partie non négligeable de ses ressources, de la guerre et des privilèges qui lui sont reconnus par la communauté citadine»⁵⁵; in other words, he suggests, approximately a tenth

goni 1950: 162 on the military groupings within the city, and DeVries – Livingston 2019 on the development of military and fighting technology and forces.

⁴⁸ Cf. Maire Vigueur 2004².

⁴⁹ Cf. Maire Vigueur 2016 [2010].

⁵⁰ Cf. Maire Vigueur 2004²: 17-18.

⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*: 221-222 and Internullo 2022: 182-185.

⁵² Cf. Maire Vigueur 2004²: 19.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.* on the sources of income.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*; see Wickham 2017²: 454-455. It should be noted that the whole phenomenon of elites on horseback has been a long-term discussion, originating in early historiography. Otto of Friesing mentions the *ordo equestris* and the meaning of the expression has been debated at length; see Paravicini 1901: 69-79; Frugoni 1950: 172-173, Maire Vigueur 2016: 144. DeVries – Livingston 2019 argue that there was also a larger part of the militia in each city that were infantry or cross-bowmen, speaking specifically of the second half of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries.

⁵⁵ Maire Vigueur 2004²: 401 [a social class that, in each town of Communal Italy, consisted of several hundreds of families and which drew its consistency, not to mention a not inconsiderable portion of its resources, from war and privileges granted to them by the Commune].

of the city population. For most of the twelfth century, the power thus remained in the hands of a specific social class, which held access to the Senate⁵⁶. Owning and keeping up horses and armaments would not have been inexpensive; the leisure to train at armed warfare also required a certain status. These *milites* arose from city professionals (whose rising success Maire Vigueur documents with notarial records: merchants and purveyors of various products) who purchased *casali*, ‘farms’, outside the city walls, or interests in them, so as to invest their wealth and rise to higher status. Wickham also compares this process to that of other Communes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, noting that «all urban leaders were militarily trained», but also that in Rome the early Senate was directly opposed to *nouveaux riches*, new aristocrats⁵⁷. Wickham divides Roman social classes into elite nobles; a ‘medium elite’, who, he argues, led the Senate, since it was frequently opposed to *nobiles*; and the people; Wickham always notes a range of wealth across each class. He derives his information from looking at the Senator names that have survived⁵⁸. While these historians’ distinctions between classes vary somewhat, both emphasize the changes in members of the wealthiest and most influential classes over time, with the rise and fall of certain families and the growing restriction in numbers involved in government. In Rome from the mid-twelfth century on, the *baroni*, a few extremely wealthy and influential families of varying origins ruled the city, had a stranglehold on Senator positions, a unique situation in comparison to other city-states of Central and Northern Italy⁵⁹. In fact, two families from among the barons, in proportion to their power, shared the senatorship during the diarchic phase⁶⁰. Rome’s government compared to northern and central city-states in the thirteenth century, as it continued to do, with ongoing differences in titles, into the fourteenth century.

The beginning of the Commune in Rome, however, was unique in its violent nature. The *renovatio senatus* began in 1142-1144, when Rome rose up against the Church. Pope Innocent II, after Rome’s defeat in a bitter war against Tivoli that Rome had lost with a heavy death toll, returned to defeat Tivoli. However, the pope required only its submission, and permitted its continued existence. Popular

⁵⁶ Cf. Maire Vigueur – Faini 2010: 21.

⁵⁷ Wickham 2017²: 455; for the term *nouveaux riches*, see Maire Vigueur 2016, chapter 3 *passim*.

⁵⁸ Cf. Wickham 2017²: 447-449. For his explanation of ‘medium elites’ and their wealth, see *ivi*: 260-277.

⁵⁹ Maire Vigueur entitles his chapter 5 «A thoroughly Roman anomaly: the barons» (2016: 167-212). Wickham 2017²: 452-456 argues strongly for the similarity with northern Communes. Internullo also argues the parallel between the Commune and Senate (2022: 165-166). The list of terms of paired senators are those where two of opposing families shared to position; see Bassotti 1955: 11 for a summary. For the development of *baroni*, see also Carocci 1993. This would parallel French barons in such a way that substituting *senators* in a later text for *barons* in an earlier would make sense; see Collomp 2000: 93 on *Florence de Rome*.

⁶⁰ Cf. Maire Vigueur 2016: 15; as he remarks, the Orsini and Colonna were dominant.

Roman opinion, on the other hand, called for razing it to the ground. Romans wished to avenge their comrades and their honor. Crowds massed at the foot of the hill and seized the Campidoglio⁶¹, which was reputed to have been the site of the classical Roman Senate. There the *popolo* built their Senate. That this particular appropriation of power should have set off the reaction may offer some answers to the nature of the so-called *popolo* who initiated the Senate.

How the Senators were elected and by whom is not in the sources⁶². Thus, the actual people involved in the attack is debated. Its importance is not. For the Senate organized the municipal government, giving out municipal offices and commissions or approving them. It also summoned the army, made treaties, established weights and measures and pronounced legal decisions, giving justice as a parallel court to that of the Church. Brentano says, «whoever controlled the senate had already gained, in some very signal way, control of Rome»⁶³, for the role of the Senate, and then the Senator(s), was to govern the city. This involved judicial, financial, defensive, and offensive measures. For example, in 1363:

Lo Statuto formalizzava che il senatore doveva essere forestiero, di una terra lontana 40 miglia da Roma, che il suo incarico doveva durare sei mesi e non era rinnovabile, che non doveva avere rapporti di parentela o di affinità con i magnati della città. Il modello istituzionale è quello di altri Comuni dell'Italia centrosettentrionale, appena modificato per tener conto delle necessità contingenti romane. Il senatore era sottoposto a sindacato, stipendiato dalla *Camera Urbis*; doveva portare con sé giudici, notai, familiari ed ufficiali, ugualmente forestieri; era tenuto a riparare a sue spese, per un valore massimo di cento fiorini ed a giudizio dei Conservatori, il palazzo del Campidoglio. Il sistema d'elezione era articolato: da ogni regione della città erano scelte ventisei persone (due per regione) dai conservatori, dagli esecutori di giustizia e dai loro quattro consiglieri. I 26 prescelti, i conservatori della Camera, gli esecutori di giustizia e i quattro consiglieri scelgono altri 26 cittadini (sempre due per regione). Il giorno successivo i conservatori, gli esecutori e quattro consiglieri dei Consigli delle Arti, delle regioni, dei contestabili dei balestrieri e dei pavesati e dei primi 26 prescelti si riuniscono, con l'esclusione di questi ultimi, e procedono all'elezione *ad bussolas et pallocas* di 13 cittadini (uno per regione). I 13 eletti insieme con i conservatori, gli esecutori di giustizia ed i quattro consiglieri, nel giro di quattro giorni, voteranno una rosa di quattro proposte, la più votata indicherà il nome del futuro senatore: "che tuttavia non dovrà essere imperatore, re, principe, marchese, duca, conte o barone, o figlio o nipote di questi". Si precisava inoltre che questa elezione era da ritenersi valida come se fosse stata fatta da tutto il popolo romano. Il giuramento del senatore prevedeva, tra l'altro, l'obbligo di favorire l'inquisizione degli eretici, governare la città e il distretto in

⁶¹ Reasons for this choice are disputed; what buildings may have possibly been there and what they served for not clear. For possible explanations, see Paravicini 1901: 83-84, who suggests that the Senate, which had continued to exist, resided and deliberated in the Benedictine Cloister of S. Maria in Capitolio, later Aracoeli. This was supposedly enlarged at the end of the thirteenth century and made into a true Senate building. He (*ibid.*: 81-82) and Fraccaro – Leicht – Rovelli 1936 note that judging took place at S. Martina, today the Church of St. Martin.

⁶² Cf. Brentano 1991: 96-97.

⁶³ *ibid.*: 95.

pace e in tranquillità, allontanare da Roma i malvagi, difendere e recuperare diritti e giurisdizioni, difendere gli ospedali e le fondazioni religiose, vedove, poveri, orfani ed emarginati⁶⁴.

[The [1363] Statute formalized that the Senator should be a foreigner from a land [at least] 40 miles away from Rome, and that he should hold his office for six months and that it was not renewable; that he should not have family or business ties with the magnates of the city. The institutional model is that of other Communes in northcentral Italy, slightly modified to take into account Roman contingent needs. The Senator was subject to the regime, with a stipend from the *Camera Urbis*; he had to bring with him judges, notaries, family members [staff] and officials, also foreigners; he was required to repair, at his own expense, the palazzo of the Campidoglio. It elaborated the election system: from each city *regione*, 26 persons (two for each *regione*) were chosen by the counsellors, *esecutori di giustizia*, and their four counsellors. Those 26 chosen, the conservators of the *Camera*, the *esecutori di giustizia* and their four counsellors choose 26 more citizens (two per *regione*, as before). The following day, the conservators, the *esecutori* and four counsellors from the Consigli delle Arti, of the *regiones*, from the contestants from among the crossbowmen and the heralds [?] and of the first group chosen of 26 meet, except for these last, and proceed to the election *ad bussolas et palloctas* of 13 citizens (one per *regione*). The 13 elected ones, together with the conservators, the *esecutori di giustizia* and the 4 counsellors, over 4 days, vote for a roster of 4 proposals; the highest total give the name of the future senator: «who nonetheless will not be an emperor, king, prince, marquis, duke, count or baron, or son or grandson/nephew of these». It is stipulated furthermore that this election was to be as valid as if it had been voted by the entire Roman people. The senator's oath required, among other things, the obligation to forward the inquisition of heretics, to govern the city and county in peace and tranquility, to exile evildoers from Rome, to defend and recuperate rights and jurisdictions, to defend hospitals and religious foundations, widows, the poor, orphans and outsiders.]

These rules express aspects of contemporary practice: the desire to avoid internal conflict by bringing in an outsider, as in the case of the *podestà* in northern cities. That outsider should be carefully chosen by a council representing a large cross-section of the interested Roman parties. After 1190, the Roman single-senator or dual-senator model echoes that of the *podestà* elsewhere. For example, Brancaleone degli Andalò was brought in as Senator in 1252 from Bologna, having been nominated by Bologna at Rome's request. Like *podestà* of his time, he arrived «with a good team of assistants whom he had himself chosen [...] on the basis of their specific competencies, especially in juridical matters, and of their experience»⁶⁵. Similarly, Charles I of Anjou arrived with his own men, or brought them from his lands in Provence and those of his allies in northern France when he arrived in Rome to assume the post of Roman Senator. His job was similar, organizing through his *vicari*: «difesa militare, amministrazione della

⁶⁴ Miglio 1997: 165-166; my translation.

⁶⁵ Maire Vigueur 2016: 239. See also the preparation of *podestà* for going to a city they were invited to work in Maire Vigueur – Faini 2010: 44.

giustizia, tutela dell'ordine pubblico, controllo dei proventi fiscali»⁶⁶, with the addition of ejecting the Hohenstaufen from the peninsula and extending the rule of the Papacy.

Finally, in 1398, the Commune of Rome gave over all of its powers to Pope Boniface IX. Maire Vigueur suggests that this is the result of growth in the regional state, not unlike that of northern city-states. Factionalism resulted in one side (here, one group of *baroni*) preferring that the pope win over allowing the other side to do so. Other historians have different takes – for example, allies of the Colonna versus allies of the Orsini⁶⁷. The various social classes and their origins, with different socio-economic interests, lie at least partially at the origin of the factions⁶⁸.

So, while the Classical Senate served as a model for civic rule alive in the popular mind, it was also a historical governmental organ in Rome from the twelfth century CE on⁶⁹. Those elected as Senators had governing responsibilities that they handled either in person or through deputies, and they needed to be well-connected in order to succeed in fulfilling their duties. Charles I, for example, sent a vicar with a cohort (*familia*) of eight judges and twelve *notai* to Rome upon his election as Senator before he himself arrived, to handle senatorial duties⁷⁰. Successful Senators were well-educated and well-financed, able to support a good staff and were knowledgeable in the ways of justice. They could not be themselves rulers of another region or country, though the financial affairs background, military training, social skills necessary to handle governing and connections to those able to work with them would make the ideal candidate high in a socio-political hierarchy. At the end of the thirteenth and through the fourteenth century, a single Senator model was functioning in Rome and would have been familiar to those in political circles, though outside of Rome it might be named differently, e.g., *consul*, and was frequently based firmly in the warrior class and who so trained⁷¹.

⁶⁶ Terenzi 2019: 252.

⁶⁷ Cf. Maire Vigueur 2016: 258-59 for discussion and citation of Esch on the division and relationships of factions.

⁶⁸ Iorio (2018: 34-35) notes, tongue in cheek, that the Guelfs «didn't so much support the pope (who could, even formally, in those times, be against the Institution of the pope?), as much as, rather, the Angevine dynasty of Southern Italy» and the Ghibellines, «on their side, rather than supporting the Empire (who could be, in those times, even only formally against the Imperial Institution?) were simply tied to the Swabian dynasty [...]» (my translation).

⁶⁹ For the later history, through the nineteenth century, see Bassotti 1955; Arnaldi 1997-1998 (3 vols.). See Dupré Theseider 1942 for thoughts on the imperial role of Rome in the Middle Ages.

⁷⁰ Cf. Terenzi 2019: 252.

⁷¹ Cf. Wickham 2017²: 453-454.

3. *Codicological overlap*

The idea of Roman Senator derives not only from its contemporary history, but also from Classical texts that survived. The Franco-Italian epic is rooted in a literary tradition that shares the *chanson de geste*, *matière antique*, and history in various forms, as well as in contemporary chronicles.

Initially, Franco-Italian was defined to include primarily *chansons de geste*. As Günter Holtus wrote, in 1994, «‘Franco-italien’ sert d’appellation à un corpus de manuscrits qui furent pour la plupart rédigés en langue française en Italie du Nord dans la deuxième moitié du 13^e siècle et au 14^e siècle par des Italiens soit sous forme d’une imitation consciente de modèles français, soit en mettant en évidence une indépendance plus ou moi[n]s intentionnée» [‘Franco-Italian’ serves as a name for a corpus of manuscripts that were, for the most part, drafted in the French language in Northern Italy during the second half of the thirteenth century and the fourteenth century by Italians, either in conscious imitation of French models, or deliberately demonstrating their independence]⁷². Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli repeat this definition in their 2005 volume *Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne*⁷³. The name for the phenomenon has been debated, some using Franco-Venetian (*franco-veneto*), others proposing Franco-Lombard or other terms⁷⁴. More recently, however, Francesca Gambino has expanded the field; her *Repertorio Informatizzato Antica Letteratura Franco-Italiana, RIALFrI*, seeks to include «quelle opere scritte nel Nord Italia tra il XIII e il XV secolo in una lingua frutto della mescolanza di francese e di volgari della Penisola italiana» [those works written in Northern Italy between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries in a language [that is] the fruit of mixing French and vernaculars from the Italian peninsula]⁷⁵; these include personal mottos, engravings, and wall inscriptions, including instructions to painters. That website has thus expanded the original list proposed by Holtus. Similarly, *chansons de geste* are the point of departure for the title of *senator roman* given to Roland, though it also appears elsewhere. The first manuscripts where that title appears associated with Roland derive from the Gonzaga, Sforza, and Este courts in northern Italy – Ferrara, Mantua, and Pavia/Milan – where the texts initially appear listed in manuscript inventories.

In those inventories, which include both vernacular and Latin texts, appear also Sallust, Alexander the Great, and various versions of the fall of Troy. Jane Everson notes that among the «historians “much studied” in the Middle Ages [are] Caesar, Sallust, Livy», and that though Sallust may have been well-known in

⁷² Holtus 1994: 147.

⁷³ Cf. Holtus – Wunderli 2005: 18.

⁷⁴ For summaries of the debates, see Segre 1995; Barbato 2015; Gambino 2023b and Beretta 2023.

⁷⁵ Gambino 2023a.

the original, others came «through the grammarians, Isidore, and the summaries of Valerius Maximum and the *Fatti di Cesare* texts»⁷⁶. Cicero is also well represented; his speeches were much admired and considered models of rhetoric. His moral stances too were appreciated by the old nobility. Lucan's *Pharsalia* appears among the epics, along with Virgil and Ovid, and was «the central source of romances based upon Caesar»⁷⁷.

Both Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* (*Catiline's Conspiracy*) and the *Bellum Jugurtha* (*Jugurthine War*) tell of internal political struggles, war, and the role of rulers, topics of great contemporary interest for Italian communes. Sallust is known for decrying the decline of morals and the Roman state in both works. Cicero, known also and frequently cited as Tullio, in his four *Catiline Orations* offers another view of Catiline's offences and apprehension by the authorities. Because two of Cicero's orations are declaimed before the Classical Roman Senate, addressing the senators, that term appears. And Sallust as well describes the debates in the Senate, so again, the senators address each other by the title. *Pharsalia* (*De Bello Civili, On the Civil War*) narrates the war between Julius Caesar and Pompey leading the Senate forces, and it too frequently uses the title and term *senator* (in any of its various graphic forms).

More than 500 manuscripts of the *Bellum Catilinae* and the *Bellum Jugurthinum* now survive, of which two are from the ninth century, and the rest are mainly eleventh century⁷⁸. Not only were the individual works themselves recopied and shared, selections from them appear in collections, and excerpts from them were used – recycled – in versions of the *Faits des romains / Fatti dei romani*⁷⁹. More than 50 manuscripts of the *Li faits des Romains, compilé ensemble de Salluste, de Suétone et de Lucain* have survived, plus five whose current whereabouts are unknown⁸⁰. The Italian *Fatti* survives in some eight short versions and six long versions⁸¹. The technique of listing books – by binding, size, number of folios, and first and last line, with a title possibly in Latin – occasionally contributes some doubt into construing which items were intended in early modern lists, as does labelling blocks of manuscripts, where «French» may include Franco-Italian.

Popular classical texts are present in the same libraries as Franco-Italian romance epics and other material in the vernacular, such as the *Faits des romains*.

⁷⁶ Everson 2001: 57, following Sandys 1903: 632; Beer 1976: XIII, «at least fifty-nine manuscripts survive, eleven from the thirteenth century, eighteen from the fourteenth, and thirty from the fifteenth»; Parodi 1889: 241ff. for the structure of *Les Fets* and reasons for its appeal. See also Beer, who suggests it provides a model for a prince in Caesar and for virtue in Cato (1976: 169-184).

⁷⁷ Everson 2001: 55, again referring to Sandys 1903: 617.

⁷⁸ Cf. Sallust, *War with Catiline. War with Jugurtha*, p. LII.

⁷⁹ On exceptions, see note 76. For the text, see *Fatti dei Romani*.

⁸⁰ Cf. Parodi 1889: 241 ff.; Beer 1976: 59. For the total see *Arlima*.

⁸¹ Cf. *Fatti dei Romani*: 9-14.

Though inventories begin a century later than the first half of the fourteenth century – the date of many Franco-Italian manuscripts – those of both the Gonzaga and Este families contain the vernacular texts in which Roland is called *senator roman*, Latin texts, and vernacular renditions of these last. The first inventory containing Franco-Italian manuscripts dates to 1407, when it was drawn up at the death of Francesco Gonzaga I, fourth marquis of Mantua. Among the 392 volumes listed, described by appearance, incipit, explicit and number of *cartae* ‘sheets’, are 67 in French; they are in general separated by topic: 18 on the decretals; 12 on civil law; 57 on history (divided by 36 historiographical, 21 chronicles); 24 poets; 26 moral philosophy; 14 scientific (on nature); 17 on medicine, grammar and various; 28 on astrology; 33 in vernacular. Clough notes that the manuscripts appear to have been copied in the late thirteenth or in the fourteenth century, and that a letter dated 1366 attests that a few of these were already present at that time⁸². Among the historians are Sallust (numbers 21-25), for all of which the *incipits* are those of the *Catilinae Coniuratio*⁸³. There are also two copies of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (numbers 5-6); and 5 of Cicero’s works, listed all under «Tullio», except one of *Invective Marci Tullii Ciceronis* (number 14) that gives the incipit and explicit of Cicero’s Third Oration (*Oratio in Catilinam Tertia ad Populum*). Among the various ‘French’ works, in addition to the *Entrée* and other *chansons de geste* are ‘Histories’: number 9 the editors identify as St. Mark’s V 2 (=223), the *Livre d’Orose*; number 11 ends with the exact wording of Niccolò da Verona’s *Pharsale* («Azo ch’el n’eust Pompeu plus dignité»⁸⁴); and numbers 12 and 13 are both identified as «Cesarianus Ystoriatius» with identical incipits⁸⁵. The editors identify them as part of the *Livre d’Orose*, in which the second part is derived from Sallust and Lucan. These books continue in Este possession; Rajna documents the 1437 inventory⁸⁶, then a MS containing three lists, 1467, 1480, and 1481⁸⁷. Other librarians document the Visconti, subsequently Sforza, library in Milan, which includes in the vernacular *Cesarianus*, *Faits des Romains*, Brunetto

⁸² For the Latin manuscript totals, Girola 1921-1923: 33; for the dating, Clough 1972: 52.

⁸³ Cf. Girola 1921-1923: 54-55; for the incipit, see Sallust, *War with Catiline*; for the Latin *incipit*, p. 20.

⁸⁴ Subsequently recognized in Thomas 1911; see Veneziale 2017: 413, n. 4 about Thomas 1899: 166. In fact the first text in the manuscript is a chronicle, the incipit of which fits the 1407 inventory perfectly.

⁸⁵ Cf. Braghirolli – Meyer – Paris 1880: 506-507; number 12 is MS Marc. Fr. 3 (=224). Number 9 would seem to have an error in its explicit or in the transcription; they read «quant il sen repaire atome» which would be most likely «a Rome». For an updated list of the French volumes with their current locations, see Veneziale 2017: 429-431.

⁸⁶ The 1437 inventory contains 279 volumes with 58 in French (Dal Poz 1994: 398).

⁸⁷ Rajna 1873: 49-58, includes in the first again *Huon* (number 49 of the inventory); *Karlo Martelo* (number 33 in the inventory); *Rolando* (number 42, and perhaps also number 26, in the inventory); *Bovo de Anthona* (number 48, and perhaps numbers 31 and 34 in the inventory); for the second, he mentions 143 manuscripts in Latin as well as listing 59 manuscripts in French.

Latini, and *Livre d'Orose*, in addition to *Huon d' Auvergne* and other romance epics⁸⁸. Bertoni and Vicini provide the inventory of Niccolò III d'Este's goods from 1436 at the Castello of Ferrara; and among these are numerous manuscripts. All items are listed by rooms: the manuscripts of «nostro Signore» in the tower total 177, including 2 Suetonius, Orosius, «de inuentione de la troiana istoria», Turpin, 4 of Tullio (Cicero; 3 of these are *De officiis*); 2 of Lucan; 2 of Sallust; 2 «el Troiano»; along with various of Boccaccio's, Dante's, and Petrarch's works; one in German; etc.⁸⁹. 70 more are in another tower, again including various works in Latin, as well as 2 *Gutifre de buione, bruto de sauonia, alvernascho, ancise re de spagna, laspromonte, re ricardo, Karlo martelo, Rolando in francexe, troiano, and bovo de anthona* in addition to many romances, as before, which are here omitted from the list⁹⁰. Another room in a tower holds 26 more books, including Dante, Boccaccio, romances, fables, etc.⁹¹. So a total of 273 books (some of which are multiple contents bound together) appear among the 2909 items listed in the inventory.

Pellegrin and Albertini Ottolenghi edited the inventories of the Visconti and Sforza from the fifteenth century (1426, 1459, 1469, 1488, 1490, which they label A-E in chronological order), including both vernacular and Latin texts⁹². There appear *Invectiva ad Sallustium* (A221; A603; A617; A623; A766 [B490, AO]); *Orationes in Catilinam* (A18; A603; A617); *Flores Ciceronis* (A217); *Sallustus Bellum Catilinarium et Bellum Iurgurthinum* (A338; A849; A878 =B557)⁹³; A896; *Invectiva in Ciceronem* (A623; A766). These appear in subsequent inventories along with more copies of the same.

Because of their documentation and the origin of many of the Franco-Italian *chansons de geste* at St. Mark's Library in Venice, secular northern courts are well-represented in critical literature about library contents. Southern libraries are more problematic. As in historical literature, where different regions of the Italian peninsula have been analyzed separately and northern zones more closely appreciated – a phenomenon discussed by Maureen C. Miller at the most recent meeting of the Medieval Academy of America on the topic of the «Documentary Revolution» in medieval Italy – southern library contents are more difficult to assess⁹⁴.

In the pre-written phase, knowledge of chivalric romance in Rome is attested through onomastics and iconography, as elsewhere in the Peninsula⁹⁵. For exam-

⁸⁸ Cf. Thomas 1911.

⁸⁹ Cf. Bertoni – Vicini 1909: 94-103. A reader mentions, for the Estensi, a new volume by Tissoni Benvenuti, which has not yet been available here.

⁹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*: 106-110.

⁹¹ Cf. *ibid.*: 163-66.

⁹² Cf. Pellegrin 1955; Albertini Ottolenghi 1991: 1-238. Earlier, Mazzatinti 1883 had published just the 1459 and 1469 inventories.

⁹³ Pellegrin 1955, 363: London, British Library, Add 11944; Pellegrin 1955: 396: Paris, BnF, lat. 18272 (Italian translation).

⁹⁴ Originally read as plenary lecture at the Medieval Academy of America, Saturday, 25. II. 2023. Now available in Miller 2023: 674-694.

⁹⁵ Cf. Internullo 2016: 370.

ple, there were frescoes of Charlemagne at S. Paolo alle Tre Fontane. As far as production in our area of interest, three manuscripts can be positively identified: the first includes a *Faits des Romains* (now at Brussels), as well as *Historia bedificiorum Rome* in Latin (a section of the *Mirabilia Urbis*), and a few other items, which contains an explicit saying it was completed in Rome in 1293; the second manuscript is a copy of the French version of William of Tyre's *Chronicle* with a piece by Boniface VIII against Christians aiding 'Saracens', that a colophon dates to 1295 at Rome; and finally an elegant *Faits des Romains* with short biographical pieces about Roman emperors, one of which mentions Rome with a reference to the Colonna and Malebranche⁹⁶. How the antigraphs of those volumes arrived in Rome is not clear, but the *Faits des Romains* dates to 1213, so its appearance in the Peninsula was soon after its writing. Exchanges among imported and local Angevin officials could certainly have been a source of desirable volumes and trends in production⁹⁷.

Charles I of Anjou, Senator of Rome, is not known for appreciating romances himself. He is best known for arranging to have a Latin translation of the Arabic medical text al-Hāwī, in 1281-1282, and for having a staff of amanuenses, correctors, miniature painters, and binders⁹⁸. Law books, which were expensive, were kept in his *camera regia* at Castel dell'Ovo (Château de l'Œuf) in Naples, together with a missal and breviary⁹⁹. He sent for a *Roman de Godefroy de Bouillon* that may have been a prose version of the *Chevalier au cygne*, in 1278, and that same year, had prepared «des livres de nouvel»¹⁰⁰. Fuiano lists the books of a royal official, Leonardo da Verolli d'Acaia, as those appear in the Registri Angioni del Grande Archivio di Napoli (before the destruction of the archives in 1944), suggesting that these present a picture of an official with not only an excellent legal preparation but also an outlook on the wider world of culture. While specific titles do not appear, just a count by category, these include 14 romances and a chronicle in addition to religious and legal texts¹⁰¹. There is not enough information to know about any other literary works Charles I and his household might have read. Other than the volumes mentioned above, in the inventory of Queen Mary of Hungary (1371-1395), widow of Charles II of Anjou-Durazzo (1345-1386), a «Romanzo in gallico» appears, along with numerous devotional books, many

⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*: 373-376.

⁹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*: 371, 374.

⁹⁸ Cf. Fuiano 1974: 288; see Veit 2016 on Charles I's organizing a translation and copies of the medical text *Kitāb al-Hāwī fī al-Tibb*.

⁹⁹ Fuiano 1974: 291, notes that only law books were at Castel Capuano. For books on medicine, *ibid.*: 300 ff.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Barone 1885: 420; Orofino 1994: 380.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Fuiano 1974: 296; Minieri-Riccio 1875-1880, *Anno 1281, Indizione IX*: 15-16 (15 August 1281), <https://archive.org/details/MinieriRiccioRegnoCarlo12731283Completo/pdf/446-447> [cons. 28. VII. 2023]. See also Sabatini 1975: 92-106.

of which were in French, not her native language. Fuiano suggests that they may have come from her French in-laws, though some were perhaps acquired for her. Among Charles I of Anjou's men was Guy de Montfort, who accompanied Charles's wife to Rome from 1265-1267 while Charles made the trip more quickly by sea; a copy of the *Histoire ancienne* bears the arms of his family¹⁰². Perriccioli Saggese highlights the «vasta risonanza» of the illustrations in local tradition, citing two *Histoire ancienne* copies and the chivalric romances closely connected to them¹⁰³. Orofino notes the «politica d'immagine», 'politics of appearance' that involved miniaturists and scribes illustrating in an aristocratic enclave. She suggests that the texts chosen for illumination, and the style in which they were done, designate the aristocratic and feudal court of Naples, together with the «libri cortesi di lettura»¹⁰⁴.

Charles I's descendants appreciated vernacular versions of classics: *Les faits des romains* (Paris, BnF ms. fr. 295)¹⁰⁵ was illuminated at Naples by a Frenchman for Carlo of Calabria and Marie of Valois, whose arms it bears, as well as a second version of the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* (London, British Library MS. Royal 20 D.I.)¹⁰⁶ Perriccioli Saggese originally mentioned that at least 23 chivalric romances were illuminated at Naples during the years between approximately 1280-1362¹⁰⁷. While illumination is not necessarily manuscript production, since illumination can be completed elsewhere or at an earlier or later date, the volumes in which it appears, their origins and contents nonetheless offer evidence of who was reading what and when. While the physical evidence of romances at the court of Naples – in the form of inventories or borrowing records – is lacking, interest for the courtly way of life, in tourneys and chivalry, suggested to Perriccioli Saggese, following Léonard, Sabatini and Bologna, «una larga presenza di romanzi cavallereschi alla corte napoletana sia nell'età di Carlo I, che in quella del figlio Carlo II» [a conspicuous presence of chivalric romances at the Neapolitan court both in the era of Charles I and in that of his son Charles II]¹⁰⁸.

More recent studies suggest that the origin of some those manuscripts is the Pisa-Genoa area, with little actually originating in Naples. Furthermore, the production is in prose, and largely from either the Matter of Rome or Matter of Brittany, not that of France, the *chansons de geste*¹⁰⁹, though the matter of Rome

¹⁰² Chantilly, Bibl. du Musée Condé, MS 726 (Perriccioli Saggese 2010: 19-30; Perriccioli Saggese 2014). As Perriccioli Saggese 2010: 24 points out, Guy was the son of the more famous Simon of Montfort and died in 1265 at the Battle of Evesham.

¹⁰³ Rome, Vat. Lat. 5895 and Paris, BnF fr. 9685; for the romances, see list, Perriccioli Saggese 2000: 390.

¹⁰⁴ Orofino 1994: 375.

¹⁰⁵ Gallica, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9009573q/f9.item>, to see the manuscript.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Perriccioli Saggese 1979: 9-10.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *ibid.*: 10.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*: 26.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Lee 2015: 89.

clearly interests the argument here. In 2015, Lee lists two prose chronicles tying French rule to classical heroes, as well as two vernacular versions of classical texts (Seneca, Titus Livius), and a *Tristan*. The two chronicle versions – *Histoire ancienne* and *Faits des romains* – therefore are sources of knowledge for Roman Senator roles, and for links of the Anjou rulers with that historical tradition. Lee concludes that the role of Naples was that of «centro di irradiazione, di scambio di testi della letteratura francese in Italia» [center for transmission, for the exchange of French literature texts in Italy]¹¹⁰.

Political logic links the popularity of vernacular Roman history reworkings¹¹¹ and in them, the role of Senator. Beneath any direct genealogy of place (e.g., Romans – modern Rome) lies the nature of political discourse in Rome during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Yet remembering that the first references to Franco-Italian epic texts are in inventories from northern Italy, and that the families in question were mercenaries, the parallel is striking: the hero of the Empire is a nephew of the king and emperor, a military leader, and engaged to Alda, the sister of the second-in-command, his best friend and close war partner, Oliver. Alda, at Roland's death, turns down even the king and emperor's son as an alternative to him in the *Chanson de Roland*. Illustrating Roland as Roman Senator lauds the military chief while denigrating the ruling family's line, and clearly praises the military class. It also reinforces the importance of Rome as the center of Empire; Vallecalle says, «Faire de Roland un Romain, c'est exalter la ville autant que le héros»¹¹². In fact, calling him thus is not making him Roman, merely giving him temporary rule over the spiritual center of Western Christendom at the time – rule over the biggest and most powerful state in the Mediterranean World, in the estimation of many, as well as lauding Charlemagne's family and its descendants. Each of the *chansons de geste* where a Roman Senator appears plays upon elements of the Senator role, secular and ecclesiastical.

4. *Meaning for contemporaries of the Franco-Italian epic: reception*

Giving Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, war leader – one of the twelve *pers* 'peers', and part of the royal household – the title of *senator roman* in romance epic combines historical and fictional roles. Rome was unique in its continued, if briefly sparse, use of the title of *Senator* that designated an aristocratic background and financial stability since Classical times. Roland's responsibilities toward Rome, the symbolic Christian capitol, as well as to his men and territory – justice, defense, leadership – would have naturally fallen his way as part of the

¹¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*: 100.

¹¹¹ Italian *rimaneggiamenti*, 'reworkings', covers both prose and poetic forms.

¹¹² [Making Roland a Roman is flattering the city as much as the hero] Vallecalle 2007: 774.

ruling family of Charlemagne. King Philip III (1245-1285; ruled 1270-1285) in fact suggested that, since the papal court consisted of non-warriors, the logical solution was that a lay prince take care of the temporal concerns, as Pierre Dubois says after 1291 reflecting Philip IV's sentiment, when he said, «the King of France should be senator of Rome (appointing a vicar) and should hold the entire Papal State as a fief, paying the pope an amount equal to the revenues at present derived from temporal possessions»¹¹³. That cities in the northern Italian peninsula should be innovators in bestowing this renovated literary title nods to Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor of his time, head of Empire and crowned by the pope. It also indicates contemporary realities. Innocent II, upon his return in 1137-1138, labored to develop the Roman curia as a center for international appeals, a «vast traffic of litigation, with bribes attached»¹¹⁴. Roman *milites*, the upper middle class, rebelled at his attempts to take over secular decisions in 1143. That tension between Church – however much dominated by certain family hierarchies and the aristocracy and what Wickham calls «medium elites», the rising mid-level aristocracy – resulted in re-creating a formal Roman Senate.

Yet it is not about any of the «approximately 60» senators that the *Entrée d'Espagne* and other romance epics speak, but one alone. Among Roman Senators serving alone in the role, Charles I of Anjou, in the thirteenth century, was the Senator of Rome for fourteen years, over three terms, and was certainly among the most visible in the Italian Peninsula¹¹⁵. Normally the term was from six months to a year. Charles I of Anjou highlighted his name as first to hold it since Charlemagne. He also named his son Charles¹¹⁶. He was an outsider (as was formally required later, in the 1363 statutes that required the senator to be from at least 40 miles outside of Rome to prevent family factions from feuding)¹¹⁷. He was also to eject the Swabians from the peninsula and keep them at bay, to protect Rome itself, both within and from without, in addition to defending Church lands and increasing them by crusade. Charles I was son of King Louis VIII of France, youngest brother of the French king Louis IX (St. Louis), uncle of King Philip III. Charles was thus well-connected via his family, though unable to inherit the realm. He and his family appointed *podestà* and representatives of church rule (vicars) throughout the central and north-western Italian peninsula¹¹⁸. So too was

¹¹³ Cf. Waley 1961: 301, for the wording, citing Petrus de Bosco, *Summaria brevis*, ca. 1300. Dubois was loyal to Philip IV, and writing *The Recovery of the Holy Land* from the French point of view (I thank Kelly DeVries for highlighting the dating of the comment).

¹¹⁴ Wickham 2017²: 33.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Terenzi 2019; Dunbabin 2014.

¹¹⁶ On use of the name Charles, see Boscolo – Morgan 2023: 55, n. 93.

¹¹⁷ See note 64. The accord was frequently contravened.

¹¹⁸ Details of papal negotiation with Charles I listing his duties appear in Runciman 2002 [1958]: 70-84; Dunbabin 2014: 130-133, and more recently, in Anderson 2019: 179-188. For lists of the personnel Charles appointed, see, for central Italy, Terenzi 2019: 326-329 and Caciorgna 1995:

Roland an outsider from Rome, not holding any other position in the Peninsula initially¹¹⁹, called upon to defend it, both from without and within, as well as to campaign in the East and West to expand Christendom, with the promise of a realm of his own as a reward. Charles I of Anjou's family continued in influence both political and cultural. Manco also notes the importance of Robert the Wise, contemporary with the era of the *Entrée d'Espagne*¹²⁰.

The literary Roman Senator Roland defends Charlemagne, head of state and Church, as well as leading the Frankish army to conquer lands in the Iberian peninsula. The Franco-Italian romance epics narrate the time before and after Roland's death at Roncevaux. The *Geste Francor* narrates the birth of Roland, in Imola, and his childhood in Sutri, on the Roman road to Rome. He is, as a child, predicted to be *falcon de la Crestenté* (GF v. 11252). In the *Entrée d'Espagne*, Charlemagne is *roy de Rome* (v. 4471, etc.), and the pope, as is standard in OF tradition, is *l'apostoille de Rome* (v. 673, etc.). But Roland is not only the *senator Roman*: he asks Pellias if he has heard of *Karlemaigne*, and then introduces himself:

«[...] Cel roi de France», fait Rollant le gerer,
 «Une suer ot, que donna a muiler
 «Peppin le roi au duch Mille d'Angler;
 «Uns fils en ot, que l'ons fait appeler
 «Rollant: jel sui, *de Rome* justiser
 «Et chanppion et maitre tresorer.
 «Sous mon choulor et par moi coroner
 «Sunt in Espaigne cent mile civaler [...]» (vv. 13111-13118)

[“[...] That king of France,” said Roland the warrior,
 has a sister, whom Peppin the king gave as a wife
 to Duke Milon of Anglant;
 he had a son of her, whom men call
 Roland: I am he, governor of Rome
 as well as champion and master treasurer.
 Under my colors and in order to crown me
 one hundred thousand knights are in Spain...”]¹²¹

Roland, therefore, to the redactor of the *Entrée d'Espagne*, as Roman Senator, is also in charge of governing Rome and its territory, including controlling the fisc. During his angry *rumspringa* in the East, Roland defends the weak (Dionés,

202-206; for north-western Italy, see Grillo 2006: 95-101. These volumes contain extensive details. For other routes travelled, reasons for the travel, and indirect influences between Paris, Naples, and Sicily, see Dunbabin 2011.

¹¹⁹ His role in Sicily and Naples complicated that position, as did his serving as imperial vicar in Tuscany. See Dunbabin 2014: 86-88.

¹²⁰ Cf. Manco 2022.

¹²¹ I follow Gresti and Infurna (2021: 434) here in rendering *Anglant* as Milone's land; they translate “justicier” as *signore*, ‘Lord’; OF usually translates as something like ‘ruler’ or ‘governor’.

the Sultan's daughter who does not want to marry the chosen ally), mentors young warriors at the Arab court, converts various pagans, visits Jerusalem, meets the sinful but repentant son of a Roman count (v. 14812) in an otherworldly encounter, finally returning to Iberia complete his destiny. Literary scholars note the difference in Roland here from the one in the *Chanson de Roland*, though the *Roland's* plot action chronologically follows the *Entrée d'Espagne*. Here, Roland develops and is a multi-dimensional character¹²². In the *Continuazione dell'Entrée*, there are only six mentions of the *senator/senatour*, and those are in reference to battle or used as an epithet to vary narration. Furthermore, Le Long points out that Niccolò da Verona creates numerous parallels between Pompey in his *Pharsale* and Roland in his *Continuazione dell'Entrée*, and similarly with Christ in his *Passion* as model figures¹²³.

Other romance epic Roman Senators, like Huon d'Auvergne, perform related duties to those of Roland. Roland is therein also mentioned by that title. Huon, after Roland is dead (v. 111) stays a hostel where Roland (T, Orlando) stayed; Roland intercedes with God to send help to Huon (v. B9115, T8781). Huon himself is able to complete a superhuman pilgrimage, wandering more than seven years, conquering seven Near Eastern cities for Christianity, saving a noble lady and her maid from shipwreck then converting them to Christianity, rescuing an unfairly accused king's daughter from burning at the stake, putting a group of pirates on the righteous path, and resisting female devil temptation, to return from hell with tribute that carries off the lustful king Charles Martel to the devil. God speaks to him via signs: a white dove carrying a message with the name of an heir to a kingdom (v. B2255, T2236); a voice from heaven tells him how to save the French their honor against the Germans after the lifting the Arab siege of Rome (v. B11999-12016, T11628-11649). Huon refuses the French throne, making sure the legally entitled but less able William Capet is coronated. He then assists that king in rescuing Rome and the pope from pagan invasion. He finally dies in combat against the Germans for the Roman Empire.

The Roman Senator figure is not exclusive to Franco-Italian, though frequent there. In later Old French *chansons d'aventures*, there are also examples; Collomp documents the *sénateur hospitalier* in fourteenth-century French epic production. Among these are the Picard reworking of *Florence de Rome; Florent et Octavien; Lion de Bourges; La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*; and the thirteenth-century *La Mort de Maugis*. Part of the action in these poems is located in or near Rome, and Collomp argues that «le sénateur est un baron à la mode romaine» [the senator is a Roman-style baron], used to evoke the locale and events associated with it¹²⁴. He also

¹²² Cf. Bradley-Cromeay 1993; Vallecalle 2007; and Boscolo 2017, especially 110-120.

¹²³ Cf. Le Long 2009: 313-314, 328, 335-337 (of pdf, it is not paginated) etc. for comparisons with Christ. She also notes the addition of choice – election – of Pompey (*ibid.*: 319).

¹²⁴ Collomp 2000. For specifics, *Florence de Rome*: 92-94; *Florent et Octavien*: 97-99; *Lion de Bourges* and *La Belle Hélène*: 99-103; *La Mort Maugis*: 106-107.

notes, however, that it is the title more than the «fonction institutionnelle» [institutional function, that is, a job] that is kept by the epic, though he does not pause over the specific assignments of Roland in the *Entrée d'Espagne*, mentioning only the use of the title¹²⁵.

Roland and those following him in Franco-Italian thus embody a figure admirable to state, Church, and comrades. How each plays that role in individual works parallels authors' varying attitudes toward the relationship between church, nobility and mid-level aristocracy. Roland himself is offspring of an aristocrat (Milon/Mille, *EE*, vv. 82, 11065, etc.) and a royal scion (Berta, Charlemagne's sister, *EE*, v. 13684, etc.), unquestionably legitimate in Italian tradition¹²⁶. He demonstrates the courtesy inherent in his blood, teaching Arabs table manners and courtly behavior (*EE*, vv. 13704-13727, 13972-13990). He is also a religious exemplar in converting pagans (*EE*, his theological debate with Ferragu; conversions at Noble; the Sultan's son and daughter), in his sexual behavior (*EE*, v. 11275, thinking only of his fiancée Aude when the lovely Dionés laces his helm; vv. 13860-13886, avoiding Sidoigne where the men offer their wives to visitors), and finally, in undergoing martyrdom as the implied endpoint of the *Entrée d'Espagne* in the *Chanson de Roland*. Though he might appear foolish physically (bald; unibrow and squinty; mad for love¹²⁷), these faults do not detract from his final hours in the *Chanson de Roland* whereby he refocuses Charlemagne to defeat his enemies as he had promised.

It is logical that the noble scion Roland hold the position of Roman Senator with its religious and civic obligations, appointed by the pope to lead the defending armies against pagans and under the direction of the Emperor. He would also need to travel, as rulers of his time did, in order to maintain his hold over the relevant territories and maintain alliances. These are all roles that Roland plays as head of Charlemagne's rearguard, member of the 12 *pers* 'peers' and unmarried

¹²⁵ Cf. Collomp 2000: 107. The importance of the Anjou family and its connections in Franco-phone areas, as well as family connected to the Anjou, may also explain the fourteenth-century phenomenon in those *chansons d'aventures*. It is not the objective of this article to examine them. It would, however, be an interesting project to examine historical connections of those texts with Angevin courts.

¹²⁶ There is a long bibliography concerning Charlemagne's purported sin with his sister that would make Roland Charlemagne's son as well as his nephew. For a starting summary and bibliography, see *Geste Francor.* vol. 1, pp. 204-215 and *RI OPAC* http://opac.regesta-imperii.de/lang_en/suche.php?q=pech%C3%A9+de+Charlemagne [cons. 21. VIII. 2023].

¹²⁷ *Entrée d'Espagne*: v. 13660, he is bald; *Orlando Innamorato*: Book 2, Canto 3, ottava 63, v. 3 he has hairy brows and v. 4 one eye squinting; *Orlando Furioso*: cantos 23-25, 29-30, 34, 39 for the saga of Roland's madness. All citations from the *Entrée d'Espagne* have been verified against the MS: Venezia, Biblioteca marciana francese Z.21 (=257), available in facsimile at <https://www.inter.netculturale.it/jmms/iccuviewer/iccu.jsp?id=oai%3A193.206.197.121%3A18%3AVE0049%3ACSTOR.243.15237&mode=all&teca=marciana> [cons. 20. V. 2024].

though betrothed to the sister of the second-in-command, Oliver¹²⁸. Charlemagne himself played on the revival of the Roman Empire through his conquests and his crowning in Rome, not to mention modelling his Palatine Chapel in Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle on San Vitale in Ravenna, home of the exarchate for the later Roman Empire out of Constantinople.

The families from whose libraries the fifteenth-century inventories containing Franco-Italian, French and *Catilina* volumes survive – the Gonzaga; Sforzas, who continued from the Visconti; and Este – were *condottieri*. They not only defended their own lands, but were also mercenaries for other city-states and used their booty and wages to improve their lifestyles and cities. Francesco Gonzaga (1366-1407), for whom the first surviving inventory was prepared in 1407, was a *condottiere*, whom his son Gianfrancesco followed in that profession (1395-1444). The Visconti of Milan, for whom inventories exist dating to 1426, 1459, 1469, 1488, and 1490, include Gian Galeazzo (1351-1402), who greatly expanded Milanese territory, and his second son Filippo Maria (1392-1447), who continued the family tradition. The Estense of Ferrara, for whom Boiardo and Ariosto wrote, also followed the *condottiere* trade and in fact originated as mercenaries; Ercole d'Este (1431-1505) is quoted as bringing in 50,000 florins in peace and 80,000 in war¹²⁹: he followed his family profession, after Aldobrinio d'Este (unknown-1326); Obizzo III d'Este (1294-1352) and Niccolò d'Este (1383-1441). The military families were furthermore linked by matrimony; Guidobaldo, Duke of Montefeltro (1472-1508), of Urbino, another *condottiere*, married Elisabetta Gonzaga (1471-1526)¹³⁰; and Francesco Gonzaga married Isabella d'Este (1474-1539) of the Mantua family¹³¹. And there were, of course, other links to continental and peninsular nobility. As Internullo notes, the *consul* of northern states, primarily a military leader, was the *senator* of Rome¹³². Combining the benediction of secular and religious leader, Roland thus models the unity of the literary *matières* of Rome and France, primary sources of Commune and then seigneurial rulers' genealogical and intellectual claims to fame. Certainly the recent and ongoing positions

¹²⁸ In the *Orlando Innamorato*, he is married to Alda (Book 1, canto 1, octave 22, v. 2), a detail not included by Ariosto in the *Orlando Furioso*. On travelling rulers, see Vale 2001, which includes the Capetians, Charles of Anjou's family; Bove – Salamagne – zum Kolk 2021, which includes numerous useful essays; Senatore, who compares the travelling of the later Aragonese with those of Frederick II, Charles I and Charles II (2003: 284). For the popes, see Bolton 2004, n. 32 above, and Waley 1961: 100-101.

¹²⁹ Cf. Chamberlain 1982: 177.

¹³⁰ Legitimized son of Federico Montefeltro, also a *condottiere* and interesting in this context as being represented reading with the son at his knee («Portrait of Federico da Montefeltro and His Son Guidobaldo», painter unknown, ca. 1475, Galleria nazionale delle Marche, Urbino).

¹³¹ Cf. Chamberlain 1982: 154.

¹³² Cf. Internullo 2022: 166 for the equivalency; *ivi*: 182-187 on the choice of *senatus*, *senator*. Frugoni speaks of «la persistenza del mito dell'idea di Roma» (1950: 11).

in Rome were common knowledge, with Charles I of Anjou and his family playing important roles in the Italian peninsula as papal vicars through the fourteenth century, and his family continuing there through the fifteenth century as well as claiming descent from Charlemagne.

Defender of the faith and Senator of Rome, Roland epitomized an ideal of the military leader in a religious state, without the messiness of paying fighters, collecting taxes, or maintaining conquered lands and peoples once in possession of them. ‘Senator of Rome’ is a trope appropriate to romance epic literature, derived from Classical writings, contemporary politics, and *matière de France* tradition: it is furthermore adaptable to varying political authorial viewpoints through the centuries. *Huon d’Auvergne’s* 1341 redactor carries the senator role yet further in his saintly leader, with the evil King Charles Martel sending that Senator to hell for tribute. That Senator also leads troops in the East to reconquer cities for Christianity, as Roland does in the *Entrée d’Espagne*, and then must recruit armies for Rome to save the pope from an African siege. Finally Roman Senator Huon must restore order in the Christian ranks between Frankish and Germanic troops, giving himself up to death in the fight for peace. Symbolic at multiple levels, literary Roman Senators, like Roland and Huon, thus serve changing early modern Italian roles of statesman similar to those in contemporary political life and offer aspirational goals for *milites* and for their confessors to suggest as readings.

Maire Vigueur notes that, in spite of strife between families in Rome, «the barons were nevertheless faithful to a lifestyle which offered considerable scope to the rites, customs and styles of entertainment which best typified chivalrous or courtly culture [...] the court, with its luxury and its refinement, embodied the model of a culture and a style to which they were as strongly drawn as the French and Provençal nobles, who were admired throughout Italy for the undeniable superiority in the matter of ‘courtliness’»; it was «a form of snobbery in families who thus attempted to cloak in oblivion the comparatively recent origin of their fortunes and their social rise», and that it gave «the barons a way to wipe away the more distasteful aspects of their behavior and to don the guise of their chivalrous heroes»¹³³. No matter how refined their cultural tastes, the lifestyle still upheld a culture of violence, and thus Roland, the Roman Senator, donned the guise that fourteenth and fifteenth century elites fancied as aspirational and superior – knowing how to dine appropriately, behave in public, express themselves

¹³³ Maire Vigueur 2016: 203; cf. elsewhere where he says, on the rituals and culture (including literature) of the *milites*, «En réalité, les règles de conduite de ces lignages militaires découlent d’un système de valeurs où la haine, le conflit et l’esprit de compétition l’emportent sur tout autre type de considération mais qui possède néanmoins ses propres mécanismes d’autorégulation» [In truth, the behavioral rules of these military lineages derive from a value system where hatred, conflict and the spirit of competition overwhelm any other type of consideration, but which possess nonetheless its own mechanisms of autoregulation] (Maire Vigueur 2004: 18-19).

well – while they, themselves descendants of Romans, were ever in quest of more lands, titles and booty to support their excursions and public exhibitions of excellence and piety, perhaps fancying themselves perfect representatives of church and state.

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