Chapter Three

When the major themes of the 66 pattern are compared with those of the 91, it becomes evident that while it is Roland who is the protagonist of the 66 pattern by his identification with the dominant number 11, it is Charlemagne, by his identification with the dominant 13, who is the protagonist of the 91 pattern. Thus, to borrow terms which Menéndez-Pidal has borrowed in turn from Pauphilet, in the story of Roncevaux of the 66 pattern we have the *Chanson de Roland*, perhaps that very *Cantilena Rollandi* which William of Malmsbury tells us was sung at the battle of Hastings, while the story of the 91 pattern would be more accurately entitled the *Chanson de Charlemagne*.

From the foregoing interpretations of the significance of the numbers 11 and 13 in the poem's context, it can also be said that the dominant motif of the 66 pattern is *Démesure* and that of the 91 pattern Vengeance. When some of the narrative points on which these patterns are developed are examined in the light of what is now generally held to be the provenience of the Oxford *Roland*, it becomes evident that the motifs manifest origins in cultural milieux which are chronologically quite distinct, and that the 66 pattern may have been in existence as early as the beginning of the eleventh century.

The Problem of Olivier

The theme of Roland's *démesure*, stated in terms of narrative points treating Olivier's death, the horn dispute, and Olivier's initial characterization of Roland as a man of valor lacking pru-
dence, obviously depends for its development upon the inclusion of Olivier in the story. This character, who bears the only name of Latin origin in all the Roland matter, and whose identification as the son of a certain "duc Reiner" who holds the marches of the "val de Runers" (lines 2208-9) cannot be verified historically or geographically, is generally conceded to be a poetic invention. In 1943 Leo Spitzer demonstrated that the name Olivier, as a derivative of oliva, connotes wisdom and peace, as symbolized by the olive tree. From this he infers that the creation of the character Olivier was an exclusively learned innovation which sought to allegorize the concept sapientia as opposed to the fortitudo of the hero Roland.  

Menéndez-Pidal agrees in essence with Spitzer's thesis, but favors a derivation of Olivier from oliva by means of the vulgar suffix -arius rather than by the classic -erius which Spitzer had proposed, arguing that -erius was rare and, in its uncontaminated form, relatively unproductive in Romance (pp. 345-47). The meaning would thus be a function or an attribute of the tree oliva such as "a merchant of olives" or "a bearer of a branch or crown of branches of the olive tree." Menéndez-Pidal mentions that Madame Rita Lejeune recalls the existence of a statue of Hercules bearing the inscription: Hercules invictus cognominatus vulgo Oliverius (p. 346). In the Latin documents discussed below the forms Oliverius and Olivarius are both attested.

From the recent investigations of Madame Lejeune, Paul Aebischer, and others, concerning the mention in legal documents of pairs of brothers or relatives named Olivier and Roland, it is to be inferred that the character Olivier was invented at some date prior to any year in the period from 985 to 1015. According to Madame Lejeune, the earliest document signed by persons named Oliverius and Rollandus which is so far known dates between 999 and 1031 and is located in Velay (Haute-Loire).  

Menéndez-Pidal reasons that, since the signatories would have to be adult, the youngest would have been born at the latest between 985 and 1015, and concludes that a story telling of
the compagnonnage of Roland and Olivier was, therefore, circulating in Auvergne at the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh centuries (pp. 355, 356). The earliest attestation found so far of the single name Olivarius was observed by Pio Rajna in a document dated circa 1000 of the Cartulaire de Savigny localized at Bribost (Rhone). 4

Spitzer's explanation of the invention of the name Olivier as the product of a learned ambience is somewhat in conflict with the tendency in neo-traditionalist thought to conceive the origin of the epic in the popular, oral tradition of the jongleurs. Nevertheless, some noted scholars of the modern school have accepted his proposal, reasoning that the Oxford version of the Roland in its form and artistry is simply exceptional and that during the eleventh century there must have been circulating a work of genius manifesting clerical influence whose popularity is witnessed by the prevalence, both inside and outside of France, of Roland-Olivier pairs who would have been born during that period. 5

However, in an extensive series of studies, the celebrated Swiss scholar, Paul Aebischer, 6 rejects in toto Leo Spitzer's interpretation of the name of Olivier and remarks that Spitzer's article, "étant donnée la notoriété de son auteur, exerce sa pernicieuse influence encore aujourd'hui" (p. 167). Paul Aebischer's position in this matter will be examined closely.

Aebischer expresses concern over the relative position of the names Olivier and Roland in the seventeen attestations of the pair of names which have been discovered in legal documents ranging from circa 999–1031 through 1183 (p. 155). In the six attestations up through 1115 which can be certainly dated, the names occur in the order Olivier and Roland; whereas, in the period 1123 to 1183, eight occur in the order Roland and Olivier and only two in the order Olivier and Roland. (An additional attestation in the order Roland and Olivier has been omitted from this count because of uncertainty regarding the date, although the probability is high that it could be assigned to the eleventh century rather than the twelfth.) 7 This ordering of
names has led Aebischer to infer that, during the eleventh century, stories about Olivier and Roland were circulating in which Olivier was characterized as the older of the couple and that parents were inspired by these stories to name the older child Olivier and the younger brother Roland. He reasons further that, conversely, during the twelfth century, the jongleurs must have been reciting a poem in which Roland was the dominant character and Olivier secondary, which inspired parents to name the older child Roland.

To explain this phenomenon, Aebischer advances the theory that the poem of the eleventh century which inspired the Olivier-Roland order was not a pre-Oxford version of the *Chanson de Roland*, but rather a “primitive” version of the epic *Girard de Vienne* of the Guillaume d’Orange cycle. This epic is known to us through the early thirteenth-century poem by Bertran de Bar-sur-Aube and by an early fourteenth-century translation in the *Karlamagnus saga*. Aebischer considers the Norwegian translation “un pâle resumé de la chanson farnçaise” but maintains that it reflects a primitive form of the legend (p. 159).

Aebischer restates points relevant to the topic under discussion in the Norwegian version of the story of the rebellious vassal Girard: The young Roland was armed by his father Milon and presented himself at the camp of his uncle Charlemagne, where he was tutored by four instructors. Girard, the uncle of Olivier, after having been besieged for seven years, resolves to make peace with Charlemagne and sends Olivier with Lambert to sue for the emperor’s pardon. The two ambassadors are badly received by Charles, and Olivier is provoked to demand a judicial combat to prove that his uncle Girard is not a traitor. Roland volunteers to champion Charles, and the battle is set to take place outside the walls of Vienne. Lambert and Naimes, to forestall the duel, use their offices to effect a reconciliation between Charles and Girard in which Girard will agree to give fealty for his lands to Charles. The reconciliation is made, and Charles himself disarms the two combatants and enters the city.

Aebischer notes that, in the fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Karlamagnus saga*, a character named Adeini is identified
as the daughter of Reinald, the jarl of Laramel, and that in another manuscript (of the late seventeenth century) she is called Audu and Audam and is described as the daughter of Reinar, the jarl of Kaliber. He argues that since Aude is "évidement" the sister of Olivier, the latter is also the son of Reiner, the brother-in-law of Girard.12

The facts stated here have persuaded Aebischer to formulate a hypothesis which, in summary, would be as follows: Toward the year 1000 a story was circulating concerning the stand taken at Ronceveaux by Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne. A jongleur engaged in telling of the revolt of the vassal Girard wished to create for Girard a nephew comparable to the nephew of Charles, but since Girard was the protagonist of his story, he wished him to have a nephew who was superior to Charlemagne's and thus made him older and stronger. For this reason, he invented Olivier and his father Reiner (p. 163).

The name which he contrived for his character, maintains Aebischer, was made up after the pattern of other names which he knew like Christehildis and Restemundus, that is, as a hybrid comprising a Latin base and a Germanic suffix (pp. 167–70). Thus he concocted Olivier from the Germanic -harja. Aebischer argues that the jongleur wished this name to be like any ordinary proper name and that he did not intend for it to have symbolic overtones (p. 168).

Such a story would thus give parents reason for baptizing the older son Olivier and the cadet Roland. Aebischer implies that, at the beginning of the twelfth century, the poet of the Oxford Roland borrowed the character Olivier and his identity as the son of Reiner from the primitive version of the Girard de Vienne and that the new characterization of the pair, with Roland now the protagonist, inspired parents to use the name Roland for the older son (p. 163).

In essence the distinguished Swiss scholar offers as evidence in support of his thesis the truncated version of the Norwegian translation which postdates the Oxford Roland by 200 years at the earliest and Bertran's Girard de Vienne by at least 100 years. Since such evidence could hardly be construed as a con-
crete proof of anything that was happening in the eleventh century, it becomes apparent that Aebischer's arguments are based entirely on speculation.

Basically Aebischer's thesis can be reduced to two propositions: (1) that the character Olivier was invented for the *Girard de Vienne* matter, and (2) that Olivier was not included in the *Chanson de Roland* matter until the beginning of the twelfth century.

The second proposition is demonstrably disproved by the *Nota Emilianense* of 1065-1075, which names both Roland and Olivier as two of the twelve "nephews" of Charlemagne who were with the king before Zaragoza. Thus this precious text stands as indisputable evidence that a story telling of the Roncevaux defeat at which Roland was killed was being told at least before 1075, and that in this story Olivier was one of the twelve peers on the expedition to Spain.13

However, Aebischer's first proposition must be examined from several points of view, of which perhaps the most important is the development of the two heroes in the *Girard de Vienne* epic. The probability that, during the twelfth century, the jongleurs were reciting stories treating the matter of this epic is not in question. The question is: how did Roland and Olivier get into the stories? And here we have to deal with the problem of the cyclic extension of the biographies of epic heroes, which, as Jean Frappier has so aptly remarked with reference to the Guillaume d'Orange cycle, "a procédé presque régulièrement à rebours de la chronologie."14 "Les fils ont engendré des pères," he maintains, to which might be added: the heroic death engenders the birth and youth. This phenomenon, so common to all legendary development, is of widespread occurrence in hagiographic material, where, as Hippolyte Delehaye has shown, stories concerning the "life before martyrdom" were created by popular imagination as elaborations of the few sparse facts given in the calendars.15 That it is met with again in the epic tradition is manifested as well in the vast quantity of *mocedades* material treating the youth of the Cid in the Spanish romances as in the various *enfance* epics (*de Vivien, de Garin, de Guillaume*) in the cycle of Guillaume
d’Orange. Clearly, the story of the young Roland and his older and wiser companion Olivier in another epic of the Guillaume cycle falls naturally into the normal pattern of cyclic expansion and borrowing. The jongleurs, inspired by the enthusiasm of their audience for the exploits of the two heroes on the field at Ronceveaux, and in response to popular demand, simply invented other stories to explain who the heroes were and how they came to know each other. Perhaps they also invented the character Aude to emphasize further the human reality of the pair. That the poet of the Oxford Roland borrowed back from the extended development of the enfance stories which could have been circulating in the eleventh century is perfectly possible, and that a popular conception of an Olivier older than Roland could have been derived in part from such stories is also plausible, but that the character Olivier was expressly invented for such an enfance is contrary to the normal progress of legendary evolution.

Given the reverse chronology of the normal cyclic expansion of stories concerning the birth and early years of epic heroes, it is certainly reasonable to suppose that the creation of the character Olivier and the invention of his name had occurred before the composition of the enfance material. The normal place to expect the invention would be in the context of the Ronceveaux poem, where the symbolism of the name is inextricably integrated with the role of the character in the central conflict of the poem. A logical explanation for this rather unusual name has been provided by Spitzer. When the logic fits into a broader pattern of logical sequences, why should a construct that works be rejected to favor, as Aebischer would do, an explanation based on fantasy and random choice?

However, the phenomenon which Aebischer originally sought to explain still remains: according to the limited data which we have, the epic material of the eleventh century seems to have inspired parents to name their older sons Olivier and their younger sons Roland, while in the twelfth century the situation was reversed. A partial explanation has been suggested above in the possibility that an enfance story could have been a con-
tributing factor in the order of the eleventh century. But the total situation becomes clear only if the possibility of clerical participation in the composition of the *Chanson de Roland* is admitted fully and if the evolving cultural ambience which produced the evolving poem is taken into consideration.

The *Nota Emilianense* gives the names of six of the twelve "nephews" of Charlemagne who were with him before Zaragoza as follows: "Nomina ex his Rodland, Bertland, Oggero Spartacurta, Ghigelmo Alcorbitunas, Olivero et episcopo domini Torpini." Aebischer remarks that, although in this text of 1065–75 the name Roland occurs before that of Olivier, the two names are not contiguous (pp. 170–71). He construes the separation of the names as evidence that the famous *compagnonnage* of the Oxford *Roland* had not been established by this date, and, although elsewhere he takes the position that Olivier was not in the *Chanson de Roland* at all until the Oxford version, he tentatively suggests when discussing the *Nota* that perhaps the mention of Olivier in the eleventh-century text is evidence that the character got into the Roland story in two waves: in the first simply as one of the participating knights; in the second, as the fully developed character of the Oxford version (p. 163).

It is to be noted, however, that Olivier is listed in the *Nota* as the next before the bishop Turpin, a fact which Aebischer has overlooked, and which might indicate, if the ordering of the names has any meaning at all, that Olivier is conceived to participate more in the ambience of the clergy than in that of the other knights.

During the tenth and early eleventh centuries, the clergy, in their efforts to subdue the continual internecine warfare of the period and to bring some order to an age of frightful violence, espoused the cause of the wisdom and prudence of *sapientia* as opposed to the destructive bravery of *fortitudo.* Thus it would be entirely with the limits of historic probability to suppose that Olivier was invented under the inspiration of the clergy as an exemplification of the clerical position and that, since wisdom is the natural concomitant of maturity, this character would
have been understood from the moment of its inception as the elder of the pair. No doubt, at the time of baptism the clergy would not have hesitated to explicate the poem to parents who showed inclination to misunderstand its meaning.

However, if the Olivier of the eleventh century was, with the help of the clergy, established in the popular mind as the elder and wiser of the pair, what could have caused the reversal of this understanding in the twelfth century?

Toward the end of the eleventh century the attitude of the church in regard to the effectiveness and desirability of emphasizing *sapientia* as a means of controlling the fratricidal warfare within the confines of Western Christiandom seems to have been shifting to a new position. The fighting energy of the feudal barons was now to be consecrated and directed toward a common enemy in the crusades against the Saracens. Thus when, at the Council of Clermont of November 26, 1095, Urban II made the famous pronouncement: “Let the truce of God be observed at home and let the arms of Christians be directed to winning Jerusalem,” ecclesiastical sanction was conferred on the *militiae dei*. Valor as a virtue could take precedence over prudence, since valor was to be directed, not against brothers, but against an enemy outside of the Christian community. The ancient virtues of Charlemagne’s time were resurrected, and the spirit of this mighty leader of the Christian world was invoked for guidance in the renewed fight against the pagan. A new version of the old song about Roland was needed, a version which would emphasize the vitality of Charles the Crusader. With a small amount of retouching to change the image of Charles from the portrait of the weak and rather indecisive Carolingian of the end of the dynasty to that of the avenger of Christendom the old song could be made to serve the purpose. (As will later be demonstrated, the reworking was really not very well done.)

And so the Oxford *Roland* came into being. Wisdom and prudence were old-fashioned now, and the fortitude of Roland became the new ideal. And no doubt, at the time of baptism the clergy again exercised their ingenuity to explicate the new version.
Thus it would seem that, with the invention of the character Olivier at the beginning of the eleventh century, there was inaugurated a special way of evaluating the deeds of Roland. In his more primitive conception, Roland would have been like all heroes, simply a man evincing bravery and strength in the face of catastrophe, and was not required to manifest perfection or wisdom or moderation. Then, in being counterpoised against Olivier, Roland was made to acquire a defective flaw, by reason of the excess of that very quality which had made him a hero. The invention of the 66 pattern, with arithmetic stress on the concept *excess*, is thus shown to be a device comparable to the choice of the name Olivier for expressing metaphorically the conflict *sapientia versus fortitudo*. Finally, with the Oxford revision, the revitalization of Charlemagne and the revival of emphasis on his crusading mission provided a setting for a reversion to the primitive, pre-Olivier conception of Roland. Thus, although the *sapientia-fortitudo* conflict remained in the work, under the guidance of the clergy, popular understanding of the relations between the heroes placed Roland in the dominant position.

That the arithmetic structure was introduced into the *Roland* material at the same time as the invention of Olivier cannot be stated with certainty, but to assume that it was not necessitates positing the participation of another revisionist equally as learned as the one who conceived Olivier and with the same inclination toward symbolic reasoning. Furthermore, since the inclusion of Olivier required extensive rearrangement of the material, it would be natural to assume that the arithmetic pattern was introduced at the same time. Finally, the probability that the arithmetic structure and the invention of Olivier were coetaneous is somewhat heightened by the chronological implications of another narrative point of the 66 pattern.

France at the End of the Carolingian Dynasty

Menéndez-Pidal discusses the inquiries initiated by Ferdinand
Lot and carried on by Robert Fawtier, Emil Mireaux, and René Louis, which lead to the conclusion that certain laisses retained in the Oxford *Roland* indicate that a revision of the Roland material took place during or shortly after the period between the years 987, when the Carolingian dynasty succumbed to Hugh Capet, and 991, when the last Carolingian, Charles of Lorraine, was captured at Laon (pp. 331–36). These conclusions are deduced from laisses which mention the age of Charlemagne, others which name the capital as Laon, and another which describes the geographical extent of France.

In 1943, Mireaux suggested that the age of 200 years, attributed to Charles by Marsile in laisses 40–42, could represent the two centuries, 768–987, during which the Carolingian dynasty occupied the throne. Mireaux offers substantial evidence to the effect that the identification of Charles with his dynasty was a current concept as late as 1015. He avers further (although Menéndez-Pidal considers his reasoning oversubtle) that a line in the Old Norse parallel to the dream in laisse 186 of Digby-23 refers directly to the capture of Charles of Lorraine and therefore must have been included in a version of the *Chanson de Roland* which was circulating shortly after 991. The line reads (Aebischer’s translation): “Le roi Charlemagne est vaincu, et jamais par la suite il ne sera digne de porter la couronne en France.”

However, the primary historical evidence favoring the probability of a revision toward the end of the tenth century is the description in laisse 110 of the geographical extent of France over which the storm and eclipse portend the death of Roland. The France described here has been shown to fall within the confines of ancient Neustria, and conforms with the France of the end of the dynasty, with a capital at Laon, after Lorraine was attached to the Ottonian empire. It is significant that laisse 110 is not only one of the focal narrative points of the 66 pattern, but, as will later be shown, occupies a dominant arithmetic position as well. It would be reasonable to suppose that the laisse was invented at the same time as the 66 pattern, for it is a laisse of transition which simply conveys the jongleur’s
comment and contributes nothing to the advancement of the narrative. As such it is of the type which serves for that kind of “stuffing” which is always needed to fill out or point up an arithmetic pattern.21

It is also to be noted that lines 1444-45 of this laisse seem to imply that the storm and earthquake presage the end of the world, which was generally expected to occur at the year 1000.

The inferences to be drawn from the foregoing discussion are as follows: Since, in using the number 11, which is dominant in the arithmetic pattern as a symbol for Roland’s excessive fortitude, the poet indicates a desire to stress the Démesure motif above all others, and since the narrative points in the Démesure set stress Olivier’s participation in the poem, it is highly probable that the revision in which the arithmetic pattern was incorporated was the same as that made to accommodate the inclusion of Olivier. It is reasoned further that, since laisse 110 attributed to the end of the Carolingian dynasty is a focal laisse in the pattern, and since the period of the end of the dynasty coincides with the period of the invention of Olivier, it is likely that the revision in which Olivier was introduced, that in which the arithmetic pattern was introduced and that made at the end of the dynasty, were one and the same revision.

Corollary to an assumption that the 66 pattern was invented at the same time that Olivier was created is the further assumption that this version of the Roland story was a written one, and that the revisionist of the end of the eleventh century who invented the 91 pattern when the Baligant story was added used the older written version as the basis for his new composition.22 Otherwise, it would have to be presumed that the sequence of the laisses in which the 66 pattern has been retained, and which comprises over sixty percent of the total of the Oxford version, was preserved intact during almost a century of oral transmission.

It should not be cause for wonder that an early written version of an epic poem and its later revision manifest the stylistic traits of oral poetry which are so characteristic of the Chanson de Roland, for the oral versions were no doubt the only models
for nonhagiographic narrative which the poet had at his disposition. The studies of Milman Parry and Albert Lord on the Homeric epic and the twentieth-century South Slavic epics, as well as those of Jean Rychner on the French, have demonstrated beyond question the function of formulaic expressions in oral poetry.\textsuperscript{23} Yet even in the \textit{Vie de Saint Alexis}, whose written origin has never been questioned, formulaic expressions similar to those of the French epic, when counted by a seminar group at the Ohio State University, were found to be equally as numerous as they are in the \textit{Roland}. In another instance, a computer comparison of the formulaic expressions in the anonymous twelfth-century \textit{Siège de Barbaste} with those in the thirteenth-century rhymed version by Adenet le Roi conducted by Joseph Duggan showed, rather surprisingly, that while forty-five percent of the lines of the oral work contained formulas, in the late written revision, the count was only reduced to thirty percent.\textsuperscript{24}

Nor should the narrative inconsistencies of the Roland be considered an indication that a revision was not written, for, after all, every manuscript extant is in some measure a “written” revision, and in every one inconsistencies abound. That they did indeed originate in oral renditions is not questioned, but, probably from respect for time-honored passages, subsequent rearrangements seem to have tended to leave intact large blocks of the narrative and to introduce a minimum of change to accommodate new material. Thus it becomes increasingly evident that the oral style of the narrative genre, once crystalized, continued to be imitated, both in writing and in oral renditions, long after the functional purpose of the stylistic traits was viable.

It should be noted, however, that the postulation of a written version need not preclude the possibility that numerous oral renditions were also circulating, some stemming directly from the written version, others perhaps reflecting versions antedating the written form. Indeed, that marked diversion between manuscript \textit{O} and all other manuscripts may well be accounted for in just this way. Thus, while the Oxford manuscript would manifest but two revisions, both written, one at the end of the
tenth century and the other at the end of the eleventh, other manuscripts, such as \( n, V4, V7 \), and so forth, would reflect the accretions and suppressions of an untold number of oral performances.

**Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers**

Since the 91 pattern necessitates the inclusion of Baligant matter, on the evidence of Henri Grégoire's identification of the events of the Baligant episode as a reflection of the expedition of 1085 against Alexius Commenius, this pattern could not have been invented earlier than that date.\(^{23}\) The good correlation between the symbolic interpretation of the dominant numbers of the pattern and the characterization of Charles in the Baligant episode renders the probability high that the Baligant revisionist invented the 91 pattern.

In the set of points in the 66 pattern which develops Charlemagne's absence as a factor in the catastrophe, it is the fact of the king's absence and the prediction of his belated return which seem to be stressed. In this connection it is to be noted that the vengeance of which Turpin foretells in laisse 132 is not the conquest of the pagan king Baligant, but the chasing off of the remnants of Marsille's army: Turpin says quite simply, "If the king comes, he can avenge us; the Spaniards must not return from here happy" (lines 1744, 1745). Although in these particular laisses there would seem to be no very cogent evidence of intent to characterize Charles as the weak and aged king who would be identified with his waning dynasty, it must certainly be said that the sober and realistic acts of Charles in the 66 pattern are sharply in contrast with the flamboyant deeds of vengeance and conquest which constitute the dominant motif of the 91 pattern. In the latter version Charles has become the myth of Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Emperor and conqueror of the pagan, evoked from the distant past to inspire the Christian world in the great venture of the twelfth century, the crusade for the conquest of Jerusalem. The revision to accom-
moderate the inclusion of the Baligant episode has, in the words of Menéndez-Pidal, transformed "la tragique épopée de Roland en un roman 'moralisateur,' au goûт des esprits les plus candides, insatiable dans le châtiment du méchant et la plus haute exaltation du bon" (p. 126).

The association of Charles with the number thirteen, as the Christian leader of the twelve peers analogous with Christ and the twelve apostles, is, of course, essential to the metaphoric significance of the 91 pattern. However, whether this association was already established in the tradition, or whether it was the exclusive invention of the revisionist who conceived the pattern is not certain. It is true, of course, that the Old Norse version, in which the twelve peers are compared with the apostles, and the Pèlerinage de Charlemagne, where Charles, the leader of Christendom, is explicitly mentioned as the thirteenth, are both presumed to postdate Digby-23, and thus would be subject to the influence of the Oxford Roland. Nevertheless, it is to be born in mind that, in the Oxford text, there is no direct statement that Charles was the thirteenth and no overt attempt to compare the twelve peers with the apostles. So to assume that the complete allegory in the Pèlerinage and the analogy in the Old-Norse version stemmed directly from Digby-23 would necessitate the further assumption that there was widespread knowledge and understanding of the details and metaphoric significance of the 91 pattern. Such may have been the case, but the possibility should not be ruled out that specific mention of Charles as the thirteenth may have occurred in a prototype common to all three versions, most likely in the form of an oral rendition circulating toward the end of the eleventh century.

In so far as the conception of the peers as a body of twelve is concerned, the Nota Emilianense, written between 1065 and 1075, stands as evidence that this was not the invention of the Baligant revisionist. It is especially to be noted that the Nota evidences no intent to compare the group of peers with the twelve apostles, but specifically explains their number as deriving from the apportionment of their service to the king in correspondence with the twelve months of the year. Menéndez-
Pidal states that mention of such monthly service by a group of twelve is not found in any other French *chanson de geste* known, and expresses the opinion that it was also not the invention of a Spanish *juglar* (p. 397).  

Ménendez-Pidal discusses the possibilities of assigning a date to the conception of the heroes who died at Roncevaux as a body of twelve peers (pp. 285–86, 370–72). In the royal annals, those who were killed in the battle were simply called *palatini*, i.e., members of the royal household charged with various types of personal service to the king; no fixed number of them is specified. As examples of the posts which the *palatini*, also called the *fideles* or the *aulici*, customarily occupied are to be mentioned that of the *camerarius*, or master of the king’s chamber and treasurer, the *senescales* or maître d’hôtel (this was the function of Eggihardus, mentioned by Eginhard in the *Vita Karoli Magni*), the *comes stabuli* or chief of the cavalry, and the *comes palatii* or *coms palatinus*, who presided over the tribunal of the palace when the king was absent. The *palatini* in general sat at the palace tribunal in judicial cases reserved for the king. 

In Carolingian times, the adjective *pars* (equal) denoted the great men of the realm, equal among themselves for their titles of nobility, but with no special assignment of service to the king. In the year 939, a group of nobles designated the *pares Francorum* revolted against Louis IV, d’Outremer, a historical incident which gave rise ultimately to the theme of *Renaut de Montauban*, in which twelve peers swear to kill Charlemagne.

Menéndez-Pidal remarks that, according to Emile Mireaux, the institution of the *pares curiae*—as a body of feudal vassals or peers, usually twelve in number, who assisted the suzerain in courts of justice—is attested as well-established in the north of France by the mid-eleventh century (p. 168n.). Menéndez-Pidal poses the question: Can one assign a date as remote as the end of the tenth century or the beginning of the eleventh to “la substitution, dans la *Chanson de Roland*, de ces pairs féodaux, chargés de fonctions judiciaires, aux palatins carolingiens?” He answers: “Nous ignorons complètement si cette modification a
pu intervenir dans le poème à la même époque que la création du personnage d’Olivier, ou postérieurement.”

The problem is, however, that nowhere in the Oxford Roland are the 12 peers mentioned in connection with any judicial function. The members of the various councils, both pagan and Christian, are mainly called baruns (lines 169, 180, 275, 536, 779, 877, etc.) or humes (lines 20, 79, 502, etc.) and more rarely dux et cuntes (line 14) or jugeors (line 3699). It is especially to be noted that, at the council in which Roland “judged” Ganelon as emissary to Marsile, when, in laisse 18, Olivier volunteers to take the place of Roland, Charles tells him to keep quiet declaring that neither Roland nor Olivier may go; then he adds: “Par ceste barbe que veez blancheier,/Li duze per mar i serunt jugez!” Thus Charlemagne seems to conceive li duze per as a body apart from the council. Furthermore, although some of the duze per are present at the council, not all members of the council are members of the group of twelve. Ganelon, for example, although a council member, considers himself distinct from the twelve when he says that, for what Roland has done to him, he will love neither him nor Olivier because he is Roland’s friend and that he defies the 12 peers because they love Roland so much: “Li duze per, por so qu’il l’aiment tante, / Desfi les ci, sire, vostre veiant (lines 325, 326). Thus the function of the 12 peers seems to be simply fighting, as good vassals and franc chevalier, and their designation per would seem to imply the sense of the pares Francorum of the early tenth century, i.e., the great nobles of the kingdom, equal in title and, in this case, loyal to the king, but not designated as a body for any particular service. Such would also be the sense of the term as it is used in line 285, where, with reference to Ganelon, it is said: “Tant par fut bels tuit ses per l’en esguardent,” and in line 362, where Ganelon tells his retainers to greet in his name “Pinabel, mun ami e mun per.”

With respect to Mireaux’s findings, then, it should be emphasized that the term palatini as employed in the royal annals with reference to those who died in the battle was hardly meant to connote anything more than “members of the king’s household,”
without especial stress on their judicial function. Nor does there seem to be any reason to insist that the concept of the peers in the Roland as a body of twelve which performs no judicial function had to derive from the concept of the twelve judicial pares curiae. It would seem more to the point to inquire why the body of the pares curiae numbered twelve, and whether there is any connection between the choice of this number and the custom mentioned in the Nota which has to do with the apportionment of service to the king over twelve months of the year. That some such monthly service could just as well have been antecedent to the limitation of the judicial body to twelve is a possibility which need not be precluded by the rigid chronology of the historical evidence.

It is to be noted furthermore that mention of the 12 peers occurs with much higher frequency in the Roncevaux episode than it does in the Baligant part of the story, and is, in fact, so inextricably interwoven in the fabric of the earlier version that it is hard to imagine that the Baligant revisionist would have set it in, for, as will later be shown, he was not prone to make extensive changes in the actual text of the material he inherited. Thus, in the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, it can be assumed that the concept of the peers as a body of 12 was either the invention of the Olivier revisionist or already present in the material which he revised. The inference would then be that the Baligant revisionist, having inherited the concept of the twelve from his predecessor, chose the number thirteen as the arithmetic symbol for Charlemagne, but could very well have been influenced in his choice by an interpretation current in the Roland tradition toward the end of the eleventh century which associated the group of twelve and Charles as the thirteenth with Christ and the twelve apostles.

2. “Etudes d’anthroponymie ancienne française,” PMLA 58 (1943): 589-
93. Cf. Ernst Robert Curtius (European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, pp. 167–82 and 536–37), who discusses the antecedents of the topos in classical antiquity and the Latin Middle Ages.


5. Menéndez-Pidal summarizes the general reaction to Spitzer’s proposal (pp. 349, 350). Notable among the neo-traditionalists who are in agreement is Jules Horrent, La Chanson de Roland dans les littératures française et espagnole au moyen âge, pp. 292–97, et passim. Menéndez-Pidal (p. 350) cites, as an acceptable resolution of the individualist and neo-traditionalist views, the opinion of Maurice Delbouille (Sur la genèse de la Chanson de Roland, pp. 162–63), who avers that only a fine poem in the vernacular, conceived by a cleric in conformity with the old scholarly topos, sapientia et fortitudo, could achieve the renown revealed by the onomastic vogue, and that this success entrained not only baptisms with the names Roland-Olivier, but also the fictional tombs at Blaye, false relics, local legends, apocryphal documents of authorization, and finally, at the beginning of the twelfth century, the “œuvre maîtresse” of Turoludus.


7. See the discussion of Menéndez-Pidal, (p. 356), and of Aebischer (Rolandiana et Oliveriana, p. 156), of the signatures to a document in the Cartulaire de Saint-Victor de Marseille discovered by Madame Lejeune, “La naissance,” p. 377.

8. Girart de Vienne Chanson de Geste.

9. Aebischer (Rolandiana et Oliveriana, p. 158) cites the edition of C. R. Unger, Karlamagnus saga ok kappa hans (Christiania, 1860), and states that the material treating the matter of Girard de Vienne is to be found in chapters 34, 35, and 38–42 of the first branch of this text. Cf. René Louis, Girart, comte de Vienne dans les chansons de geste. (Paris, 1947). In regard
to the ascription of the *Karlamagnus saga* to the fourteenth century, Aebischer (*Rolandiana et Oliveriana*, p. 274), cites Unger, p. xxvii, and also the *Katalog over den arnamagnoeanske Handskriftsamling* (Copenhagen, 1888) 1:148, 149.

11. See note 9 above.
13. See note 30 of chapter 2 above.
16. Curtius discusses the problem of *fortitudo* in connection with the rise of the crusading spirit in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (pp. 536, 537).
17. Menéndez-Pidal: "Tout au contraire, la Muse tragique de l'épopée, étrangère à cette inspiration religieuse et savante, a de tout temps compris que le héros n'est précisément un héros que pour n'être ni parfait, ni sage, ni modéré" (p. 340).
21. See note 25 of chapter 2, above.
22. Cf. the opinion of Delbouille, note 5, above.
25. See note 6 of chapter 2, above.
26. One might inquire whether the twelve captains appointed by David to serve one month each might not have suggested this concept. See I Chronicles 24:25.