Declaration: This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Date: 19/05/2016 Signature: ______________________________
From *Fierabras* to *Stair Fortibrais*:

A Comparative Analysis of the *Chanson de Geste* and its Adaptations in Ireland

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Abstract

Despite its apparent popularity in fifteenth-century Ireland—as attested by its presence in eight manuscripts—Stair Fortibrais, the Irish adaptation of the twelfth-century chanson de geste Fierabras has received very little scholarly attention. This fact proves especially unfortunate since the text possesses particular relevance for two important trends in recent scholarship, one concerning Celtic Studies and the other more broadly Continental in scope. In the case of the former, researchers have begun to consider how translations can inform the interpretation of the greater corpus of medieval Irish literature. The latter relates to an interest in the person of Charlemagne himself as a pan-European figure. As an Irish translation of a poem from the geste du roi, Stair Fortibrais has much to contribute to both these academic discussions.

Because the text remains relatively unknown, this thesis is by design intended largely as a scholarly introduction to the material. It seeks to present data about the text and serve as a guide to some of its most important themes. The Introduction will provide basic information about Stair Fortibrais and its Hiberno-Latin source Gesta Karoli Magni and their unique place amongst Irish translation literature. The body of the thesis is composed of four chapters. The first examines all manuscripts containing the Irish adaptation as well as the single codex featuring its Latin source. More specifically, it considers how its placement within the manuscripts provides guidance for interpreting the text. All three remaining chapters compare the Irish adaptation—and, where appropriate, its fragmentary Latin source—with Fierabras. The second chapter discusses additions, reordering, reduction/omission and substitution in Stair Fortibrais in an attempt to determine the adaptor’s translation technique, with a particular emphasis on patterns in his approach. The penultimate chapter analyses the adaptation’s treatment of some of the chanson de geste’s important themes. It is divided into three sections: Character Studies, Religion and the
Supernatural and Religion and Historiography. The final chapter studies topics both political—rank and feudal duties—and cultural—family, unity, and moderate behaviour—which appear to have particularly interested the adaptor but which do not feature prominently in the French poem. The conclusion of the thesis will postulate that, through a series of subtle but carefully-considered alterations, the adaptors not only translated but also re-appropriated their source material for its Irish audience. It will also briefly consider some of the numerous avenues for additional exploration of the tradition of Charlemagne in Ireland.
Lay Summary

Despite its apparent popularity in fifteenth-century Ireland—as attested by its presence in eight manuscripts—*Stair Fortibrais*, the Irish adaptation of the twelfth-century *chanson de geste* (French epic poem) *Fierabras* has received very little scholarly attention. This fact proves especially unfortunate since the text possesses particular relevance for two important trends in recent scholarship, one concerning Celtic Studies and the other more broadly Continental in scope. In the case of the former, researchers have begun to consider how translations can inform the interpretation of the greater corpus of medieval Irish literature. The latter relates to an interest in the person of Charlemagne himself as a pan-European figure. As an Irish translation of a poem from the *geste du roi* (Cycle of the King), *Stair Fortibrais* has much to contribute to both these academic discussions.

Because the text remains relatively unknown, this thesis is by design intended largely as a scholarly introduction to the material. It seeks to present data about the text and serve as a guide to some of its most important themes. The Introduction will provide basic information about *Stair Fortibrais* and its Hiberno-Latin source *Gesta Karoli Magni* and their unique place amongst Irish translation literature. The body of the thesis is composed of four chapters. The first examines all manuscripts containing the Irish adaptation as well as the single codex featuring its Latin source. More specifically, it considers how its placement within the manuscripts provides guidance for interpreting the text. All three remaining chapters compare the Irish adaptation—and, where appropriate, its fragmentary Latin source—with *Fierabras*. The second chapter discusses additions, reordering, reduction/omission and substitution in *Stair Fortibrais* in an attempt to determine the adaptor’s translation technique, with a particular emphasis on patterns in his approach. The penultimate chapter analyses the adaptation’s treatment of some of the *chanson de geste*’s important themes. It is divided into three sections: Character Studies, Religion and the
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Introduction

Despite a recent increase of academic interest in both medieval Irish translation literature and in depictions of Charlemagne throughout Europe, *Stair Fortibrais*, the Irish fifteenth-century prose adaptation of the twelfth-century *chanson de geste* *Fierabras* has received very little scholarly attention.\(^1\) While some works such as Erich Poppe’s *Of Cycles and Other Critical Matters: Some Issues in Medieval Irish Literary History and Criticism* mention it briefly as supporting evidence,\(^2\) the only study dedicated to the Irish *Fierabras* tradition is Michael Davies’ unpublished thesis ‘Fierabras in Ireland: the transmission and cultural setting of a French epic in the medieval Irish literary tradition’.\(^3\) Given that the latter’s primary purpose is to provide an edition of *Stair Fortibrais*’ immediate source, the fragmentary early-fourteenth century Hiberno-Latin prose text *Gesta Karoli Magni*, it has proven an invaluable resource for this project.\(^4\) However, it must be acknowledged that the focus of his work allows him to spend comparatively little time analysing the texts’ content. Such a study is necessary as a foundation upon which later scholarship may build.

Furthermore, not only the dearth of secondary material, but indeed the text itself—the only edition of which was produced by Whitley Stokes in 1898—provides ample reasons why additional consideration of it is warranted. *Stair Fortibrais* apparently enjoys a unique place amongst the corpus of Irish adaptations. These works may be broadly divided into two categories: the translations of classical material beginning in the tenth century and their vernacular counterparts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\(^5\) Naturally, the former derive

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\(^1\) While the text’s date means that it would generally be considered medieval, it is worth noting that linguistically, this text belongs to the Early Modern Irish Period.


\(^4\) *Gesta Karoli Magni*, the Hiberno-Latin version of *Fierabras*, should not be confused with the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle *Historia Karoli Magni*, which also possesses an Irish translation entitled *Gabháltais Shéarluis Mhóir*.

from Latin sources, but all of the latter—even *Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás* (The History of Hercules and his Death) which as the title indicates concerns classical subject matter—have as their direct source Middle English texts. As an adaptation of an Old French poem via a Hiberno-Latin intermediary, *Stair Fortibrais* proves the sole exception to this rule. Moreover, while its early fourteenth-century predecessor *Gesta Karoli Magni* survives as a fragment in only a single manuscript, its Irish translation, probably produced around 1400, apparently enjoyed exceptional popularity in fifteenth-century Ireland as attested by its seven manuscripts dating to this period. Its eighth codex was produced only slightly later between 1513 and 1514. In addition, manuscript distribution indicates the interest in the text spanned all four provinces. Finally, though such a consideration is beyond the scope of this project, *Stair Fortibrais* itself served as the source material for a later adaptation of the legend, *Tóruigheacht na Croiche Naoimhe* (The Pursuit of the Holy Cross) which appears in two eighteenth-century manuscripts.

Given Davies’ focus upon *Gesta Karoli Magni*, this thesis devotes the majority of its attention to *Stair Fortibrais* in order to provide a complete picture of the Irish *Fierabras* tradition. Aside from the first chapter, which presents information on the Irish manuscripts and thereby the context in which *Stair Fortibrais* appears, the remainder of the study compares the French and Irish texts in order to identify patterns in the latter’s translation technique, to consider to what extent and in which manners it develops important characters and themes and finally to identify topics that appear to have been of greater interest to the adaptor than the original poet. Admittedly, given that the Irish work very closely follows its

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6 Davies, p. 3.
7 The dating of the texts is based on Davies, pp. 275-76.
8 For a more detailed consideration of the manuscripts see pp. 14-32.
9 The manuscripts are Egerton 106 and Egerton 174. Flower’s catalogue dates the former to 1715-17 and the latter to the first half of the eighteenth century. Both were written in county Meath, although parts of Egerton 106 were also recorded in county Dublin. See Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum Volume II* (London: British Museum, 1926), pp. 329-41, 13-19.
Latin predecessor, comparing *Gesta Karoli Magni* with *Fierabras* may appear to be the more logical approach. However, there are two important reasons for preferring *Stair Fortibrais* over its direct source. First, the fragmentary nature of the Latin text would necessitate a recourse to the Irish translation for nearly half of the poem. Thus, it seems preferable to analyse a single, unified narrative throughout the study. Secondly, while the adaptation undoubtedly originated with *Gesta Karoli Magni*, apparently in a scholarly, monastic context, to all indications it was as a more readily-accessible vernacular translation that the tale gained cultural currency. Consequently, studying *Stair Fortibrais* allows for a consideration of the work which was more relevant in medieval Ireland. This fact should not imply that a consideration of *Gesta Karoli Magni* does not have much to offer. Indeed, on occasions when the Latin text presents a unique reading or could in some manner enrich the analysis, it will be discussed alongside its French and Irish counterparts.

Finally, a few points on terminology, textual editions, translations and related matters must be addressed. 1) To avoid unnecessary repetition, the terms translation/translator and adaptation/adaptor will be used interchangeably. Although one could certainly draw distinctions in defining the words, the nature of medieval literary translations means that both terms accurately describe the texts composing the Irish *Fierabras* tradition. Conversely, the term scribe will appear only in analyses of a single manuscript’s reading. 2) References to the adaptations appearing in the body of the thesis always feature their complete editorial titles *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais*. In the footnotes, the works appear as *GKM* and *SF* respectively. 3) The variable nature of medieval orthography, combined with texts written in three different languages, results in a proliferation of forms for the same name. Where viable, the standard English form of a particular name is used—such as Charles, Oliver, Roland,

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10 See pp. 61-66 and p. 31.
11 See pp. 49-52 for an overview of the subject in its Irish and broader European context.
Richard, Guy or even Ganelon. More frequently, however, such a recourse proves impossible; thus, this project will adopt a single common variant of a given name in each language. When referencing a character within a particular text, only the single corresponding form will appear—for example, Fierabras in the French poem but Fortibras in the Latin or Irish texts. If speaking of a character more generally, a slash appears between the various forms of the name: Fierabras/Fortibras or Reignier/Reyner/Nemer. In all cases, the French variant appears first followed by, if applicable, the Latin and concluding with the Irish form.

4) Although Stokes’ edition of *Stair Fortibrais* served as an invaluable resource for this study, it possesses one serious limitation which requires acknowledgment. Apparently only three of the eight extant manuscripts were known to him and thus he provides a rather incomplete picture of the text’s possible variants, alternative readings and perhaps even more substantive divergences. His edition is based on Egerton 1781 and provides significant variations from Laud 610 and TCD H.2.7.12 Accordingly, while Chapter 1 considers *Stair Fortibrais’* placement in all known manuscripts, the analysis of the text itself is constrained to these three codices.

5) Davies’ and Stokes’ editions both provide English translations of the texts which are used throughout this thesis. The latter has been modernised where appropriate—replacing paynim with pagan, for example—but otherwise both may be presumed unaltered. Any additional modifications will be expressly indicated. Since no English translation of Marc Le Person’s edition of *Fierabras* exists, literal renderings of excerpted passages have been provided.13

6) This study includes three appendices. The first is

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12 ‘The Irish Version of *Fierabras*’, ed. by Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, XIX (1898), pp. 14-57, 118-67, 252-91, 364-93 (pp. 14-15). Stokes records the significant variants in footnotes except when one of his supplementary texts includes words not found in Egerton 1781. These appear in brackets in the body of the main text. This thesis notes these manuscript variants only when pertinent to the analysis of a given passage. Both Stokes and Davies indicate editorial expansions of scribal abbreviations. However, given that such matters are not particularly relevant for this thesis, they have not been preserved.

a tabular summary of Stair Fortibrais’ and Gesta Karoli Magni’s basic manuscript data. The
second, a narrative summary of Fierabras and Stair Fortibrais which is designed to allow
readers to situate particular episodes discussed throughout the thesis within their proper
context, and also to assist experts from one field in acquainting themselves with an unfamiliar
version of the story. The third provides a list of all the locations appearing in each work, and
relates primary to the geographical case study in Chapter 3.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14} See pp. 226-41.
Chapter 1: The Manuscripts

Introduction

The Importance of Manuscripts and their Compilation

An important recent trend in scholarly circles has been the call for a return to the manuscript. Modern editions, while performing an invaluable service by making texts widely accessible, almost invariably obscure the original context of the given work thereby rendering inaccessible much potential information on how its contemporary audience may have interpreted the text. As Mary and Richard Rouse remark:

Every manuscript that survives was created not casually but deliberately, as the result of someone’s decision that it should exist, as a result (in some cases) of someone else’s request of the maker that it be made, as a result of a common or group decision that it should be made in this fashion and not another. Subsequently, virtually everyone who owned it, everyone who read it seriously, every copyist who made a copy from it, each of them left marks, made notes, entered corrections, added an index, composed a continuation—in short, left revealing personal and cultural fingerprints. The fingerprints do not necessarily tell us the names of the makers or users of the manuscript, but invariably, and directly, tell us a great deal about them.15

Although such information rarely proves as consistent or complete as scholars might hope, through their colophons, marginalia, layout (glossing, chapter/book divisions, numbered marginal references, litterae notabiliores, paragraph marks, running titles, tables of contents, alphabetical indices) and indeed the selection and ordering of the texts themselves, the codices can yield a wealth of valuable knowledge. In particular, this chapter will focus primarily upon the compilatory context of the eight Stair Fortibrais manuscripts.

Fortunately, the subject of compilation proves to have interested medieval grammarians as well as modern critics. One important source for the discussion of the compilator’s role is found in St Bonaventure’s twelfth-century commentary on Peter Lombard’s Sentences:

Quadruplex est modus faciendi librum. Aliquis enim scribit aliena, nihil addendo vel
mutando; et iste mere dicitur scriptor. Aliquis scribit aliena, addendo, sed non de suo;
et iste compilator dicitur. Aliquis scribit et aliena et sua, sed aliena tamquam
principalia, et sua tamquam annexa ad evidentiam; et iste dicitur commentator, non
auctor. Aliquis scribit et sua et aliena, sed sua tamquam principalia, aliena tamquam
annexa ad confirmationem; et talis debet dici auctor.

There are four ways of making a book. For one writes another’s things, augmenting or
changing nothing; and he is truly called a scribe. Another writes another’s things,
augmenting, but not from himself; and he is called a compiler. Another writes both
another’s things and his own, but another’s things as the first, and his own having
been attached as evidence as it were; and he is called a commentator, not an author.
Another writes both his own and another’s things, but his own as the first, another’s
things having been attached for confirmation so to speak; and such a man ought to be
called an author. 16

Admittedly, the definition of a compiler as one who added nothing and thus bore
responsibility solely for the ordering of texts may not have been universally accepted by other
medieval writers, or at least interpreted more fluidly than Bonaventure’s analysis implies.

Even so, while from a modern perspective, the role and importance of the compiler may seem
limited, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw an increasing interest in the role of the
compiler and a tendency on the part of commentators to redefine important classical authors
including Apuleius, Vergil, Horace and Ovid as compilers. These facts lead Alastair Minnis
to conclude that ‘the practice of compilatio was accepted as a major and valuable modus
facciendi librum . . . The fact that so many authoritative works could be described as
compilations amply demonstrates the rapidly-acquired prestige of compilatio as a literary
form’.17 Under such circumstances it is only natural that although the genre originally
developed from the desire to make religious and classical material more readily accessible,
‘as a literary form compilatio influenced works in vernacular literature’.18

17 Alastair Minnis, ‘Late Medieval Discussions of Compilatio and the Rôle of the
As Bernard Cerquiglini rightly remarks ‘the medieval manuscript in form, and probably in function, was an anthology, a collection’. However, this fact does not imply a lack of thoughtful design. Keith Busby’s study of Old French manuscripts leads him to conclude that ‘while many reasons may determine the choice of texts for inclusion in a manuscript and their order of presentation, the contents are usually not random. It is consequently illogical to suppose that texts appear in each other’s company as a result of hazard and happenstance’. Even so, it must be acknowledged that in comparison to their continental and even English or Anglo-Norman counterparts, Irish codices often exhibit remarkable variability; they combine contemporary with antique, secular with religious, prose with poetry. In addition, the length of the individual units could vary widely with entries such as short poems, scholarly notes, triads and anecdotes being inserted between more substantial pieces. Even so, despite the complications inherent in analysing the compilatory content of Irish manuscripts, in her study of the twelfth-century *Book of Leinster*, Dagmar Schlüter dismisses the notion that its scribes were merely ‘the antiquarian bearers and transmitters of the past who simply copied down everything they could gather’, and argues instead that ‘a survey of the complete manuscript has shown that the arrangement in thematical clusters seems to be the main organising principle’. According to this theory, a text’s position within a manuscript and indeed the other contents of the codex in general could provide a great deal of valuable information regarding how it may have been understood both by its scribe and its audience. Thus, this chapter seeks to examine *Stair Fortibráis*’ manuscripts to determine whether they exhibit thematic clusters and, if so, how the text’s placement may inform its interpretation.

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Classification and Organisation in the Irish Manuscripts

The first step in analysing the categorisation of Irish texts must be to address potential modern misconceptions. The primary point here is that the current classification system of the prose sagas into four cycles (Mythological, Ulster, Kings and Fenian) does not derive from medieval practice. The issue also emerges in relation to other categories sometimes applied to the works by modern commentators. For example, in her discussion of *Imtheachta Æniasa* and *Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás*, Diana Luft warns against considering translation literature as a medieval classification: ‘It seems unlikely that contemporary audiences would have drawn generic similarities between them, and placed them in the same category simply because both are versions of works originally written in other languages’. 22

However, this should in no way imply that the Irish literati did not engage in textual criticism. In fact, the manuscripts offer quite a bit of insight into the thought processes of their compilers. At the most basic level, the colophons acknowledge entertainment as a goal of literature. They use the term *gairdiugud*, a verbal noun translated as a shortening [of time]. Patrick Sims-Williams and Erich Poppe extrapolate the basic definition into a broader one meaning ‘a useful as well as pleasant mental diversion’. 23

Moreover, Irish commentators during the Middle Ages adopted the Latin hermeneutical triad for aiding in the interpretation of religious and secular material, even translating the terms *sensus historicus*, *sensus allegoricus* and *sensus moralis* into the vernacular as *stair*, *sians* and *morolus* which Poppe defines as ‘literal/historical meaning’, ‘sense/mystical meaning’ and ‘morality/moral interpretation’ respectively. 24 Native literary

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terms also underwent a process of defining and clarification. For instance, Brian Ó Cuív points out that in the fifteenth-century manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 512, a scribe analyses the difference between the terms *scél* (tale), *arrumainte* (argument) and *stair* (history): ‘*Scél* . . . is not the truth, but it is something like the truth; *arrumainte* tells of things which could happen even though they did not happen; *stair*, however, reveals things which really did happen’. Naturally, knowing the extent to which such definitions of these terms gained broad currency proves impossible, but the very fact that the subject was under discussion provides important insights into the literary culture of medieval Ireland.

In terms of categorisation, two medieval Irish tale lists (called List A and List B) have survived in five manuscripts. The earliest copy, found in the Book of Leinster, dates to the twelfth century. These lists catalogue by tale-type the titles of sagas which the *ollam* (the highest grade of poet) must know. The categories include *togla* (destructions), *tána* (cattle-raids), *tochmarca* (wooings), *catha* (battles), *uatha* (terrors), *immrama* (sea-voyages), *aideda* (violent deaths), *fessa* (feasts), *forbossa* (sieges), *echtrai* (expeditions), *comperta* (conceptions/births), *aitheda* (elopements), *oirgne* (slaughters), *tomadma* (burstings forth, i.e. of lakes or rivers), *fisi/baili* (visions), *serca* (loves), *slúagid* (hostings), and *tochomlada* (settings forth, i.e. origin legends). While the stories found in the list belong to the native tradition, it is worth noting that works translated into Irish sometimes bear titles which classify them under one of the tale-types.

Beyond this documentable system of organisation, some modern scholars have proposed another unspoken guiding principle behind compilatory practice. This theory

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26 List A manuscripts include the Book of Leinster (Trinity College Dublin MS 1339) and Trinity College Dublin MS 1336. List B has been incorporated into the tale *Airec Menman Uraird maic Coisse* and appears in three manuscripts: Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson B 512 and London, British Library MS Harleian 5280. See Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980), pp. 33-34.
derives primarily from three peculiarities of the native prose literature. First, much of the corpus contains a common personnel and geography. Second, it incorporates a large amount of chronological and genealogical information. Third, the common framework of the sagas often consists of the primary story augmented with other material such as remscéla (foretales), scélshenchas (narrative lore) and dindshenchas (place-name lore). These facts have led Sims-Williams and Poppe to conclude that ‘this corpus was part of a massive historical project, the creative appropriation and interpretation of Ireland’.27 Furthermore, they compare these tales with other Irish genres such as genealogy and hagiography in which ‘works about the past met the needs of the present, and were adapted accordingly’ to conclude that the sagas may be ‘understood as an exemplum for appropriate present conduct’.28

**Methodology**

In seeking to analyse the compilatory context of *Stair Fortibrais* specifically, a series of challenges arise. These difficulties seem to fall under two rubrics: the Commentary Tradition and Data Presentation.

**The Commentary Tradition**

For obvious reasons, exploring medieval reader-reception poses challenges not faced by scholars studying the modern period. Virtually all the information must be gleaned directly from manuscripts themselves. Sometimes scribes and less frequently readers make direct comments in colophons or marginalia which offer some insight. In other cases, valuable information is incorporated directly into the narrative of a text. However, such instances do not occur as commonly as critics may wish and as a result, many turn to the vibrant medieval commentary tradition to augment their knowledge.

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27 Sims-Williams and Poppe, p. 306.
28 *ibid.*, pp. 306-07.
Certainly, the educated classes spilled a comparatively large amount of ink on the subject, but their focus proves unfortunately unbalanced. Naturally, they directed the majority of their energy toward Biblical exegesis, but other sorts of texts also receive their attention. For example, in the process of using classical texts to teach Latin, the grammarians developed an impressive critical apparatus which provided not only linguistic instruction, but also contextual information garnered from a variety of sources ancient and medieval. The Irish translations of classical Latin material often incorporate this commentary directly into their prose narratives.\textsuperscript{29} To a certain extent, some purely native works operate in a similar fashion such as the \textit{Táin Bó Cuailgne}, particularly Recension I, which derives much of its length from explanatory \textit{scéla} adapted from outside sources that function to explain characters as they appear in the main story and ‘to portray its material as being as exhaustively complete as possible’\textsuperscript{30}. Parsing the different layers in such texts can yield valuable information on the thought processes of their authors and readers alike.

A text such as \textit{Stair Fortibrais}, however, which has come into Irish from another vernacular (albeit via a Latin direct source), cannot boast an extensive and venerable commentary system nor even much textual layering. As a result, much of the theoretical basis for any discussion of it must be extrapolated from works which are more happily situated in this regard. If nothing else, such an approach would hopefully allow an interested party to determine the established scholarly framework which informed the text’s creation and the sorts of theories on literature likely espoused by educated members of its contemporary audience. For more specific information it would prove beneficial to turn to the compilatory context of \textit{Stair Fortibrais}’ manuscripts. Analysing the types of texts with which it

commonly appears, and their potential thematic relations to each other, could provide a valuable window into how its original readers interpreted the text.

**Presentation of the Manuscript Data**

Given the diverse nature of Irish manuscripts’ contents as discussed above, presenting the data in a transparent manner without simply reduplicating the catalogues proves to be a significant challenge. The contents as listed below constitute an attempt to create a representative sample which inventories important texts and proves consistent with the overall trend within each codex, selected on the basis of four criteria.

1) Any text occurring in multiple manuscripts, regardless of whether it meets the other conditions, will be included.

The reasons for this criterion should be self-apparent. The more frequently two works recur together in different manuscripts, the greater the likelihood that they had important links in the minds of the audience, shared source material or both. These texts will be marked with at least one * symbol preceding their title. The number of symbols indicates how many additional manuscripts possess a copy of the text. Footnotes will identify the precise codices in which the recurrences appear.

2) Prose Only

In terms of genre, the Irish composed the majority of their works in prose. While it would be absurd to deny the place in the literary corpus occupied by metrical genealogies or *dindshenchas*, and far more importantly, the vast societal significance placed on praise poetry and satire, such verses do not appear to be affiliated with *Stair Fortibrais* to a degree substantial enough to justify their inclusion below.
3) Only Works of Sufficient Length

Given the vast number of very short entries found in many of the manuscripts, it can hardly be a valuable use of limited space to include them all. This guideline should in no way imply that such small items held no significance and indeed some are included on the bases of criterion one or four. However, much of the shorter material has been omitted. Any text of four folios (eight pages) will appear on the theory that the longer the work, the greater the probability that it formed a portion of the original blueprint for the codex and that it was deemed valuable enough to warrant inclusion despite the relatively expensive medium.

4) Any text appearing to be otherwise significant, regardless of whether it meets the other criteria, will be included.

Admittedly, the final category serves as something of a catch-all, but on occasion material which would be omitted based upon the grounds detailed above demonstrates interesting thematic links that should not be ignored, especially when the entries occur in close proximity to Stair Fortibrais. Any texts included under this rubric will be specifically discussed in the analysis section.

Description of Manuscripts and their Contents

The eight manuscripts of Stair Fortibrais will be considered first, followed by the single codex containing the fragmentary Gesta Karoli Magni. Of the former, Egerton 1781—as the manuscript reproduced in Stokes’ edition—appears first. Laud 610 and TCD H.2.7, the codices from which he recorded supplementary readings, are presented next. Thereafter, manuscripts are ordered based upon the completeness of their copy of Stair Fortibrais.31

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31 For a chart summarising the date, provenance, patron and folio/page numbers of SF/GKM in all the manuscripts discussed in this chapter, see p. 267. Some of Stair Fortibrais’ manuscripts have been digitised. Laud 610 may be found on Early Manuscripts at Oxford University <http://image.ox.ac.uk> [accessed 5 May 2016]. RIA 23 O 48, RIA 24 P 25 and King’s Inns 10 appear on Irish Script on Screen <https://www.isos.dias.ie/english/index2.html> [accessed 5 May 2016].
**London, British Library, MS Egerton 1781**

Fifteenth Century. Colophons specifically mention the years 1484 and 1487. Two scribes apparently produced the codex. The first—who remains anonymous, but has been tentatively identified by Robin Flower as Conall ballach Mac Parrthaláin—penned folios 1-56b and 147-153b. The second identifies himself as Diarmaid bacach Mac Parrthaláin. They produced the codex for the Mac Samhradháin (MacGovern) family of Tullyhaw in southern Ulster whose patronage they enjoyed. However, the Ó Ruairc family came into possession of the manuscript in the following century and augmented the codex with some poetic quatrains, notes and a table of contents. Flower describes the manuscript as containing ‘translations of theological and romantic texts’.32

**Charlemagne Material:**

*De Inventione Sanctae Crucis:* Concerning the Finding of the Holy Cross (fol. 1)

*Stair Fortibrais:* The History of Fortibras (fols. 2a-18b)

***Gabháltais Shéarluis Mhóir:* The Conquest of Charles the Great (fols. 19-35)33

**Hagiographies:**

*Betha Jacobus Intercisus:* The Life of Jacob Intercisus (fols. 41-42)

*Betha Iuliana:* The Life of Juliana of Nicomedia (fol. 43)34

**Betha Elexius:* The Life of Alexius (fol. 44)35

*Betha Cirisiuis 7 Iulite:* The Life of Cyrius and Julitta (fols. 45-47)36

**Betha Cathraigh:* The Life of Catherine of Alexandria (fol. 48)37

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32 Flower, p. 526.
33 Also appears in TCD H.2.12 and King’s Inns 10. A Latin version of the text appears in TCD F.5.3.
34 Also appears in RIA MS 23 O 48.
36 Also appears in King’s Inns 10.
37 Also appears in RIA 24 P 25 and TCD H.2.17.
**Betha Margrec: The Life of Margaret of Antioch (fols. 49-52)**

**Religious Tracts:**

**A oide et a athair inmuin insim mo cair do Dia**: form of confession (fols. 53-54)

*Da airtecul dec in creidme annso*: the twelve articles of faith (fol. 55)

*Adeir in canoin in each inedh co dlighinn cach Cristuidhe corp Crist do cathem uair cach bliadhna*: tract on the Eucharist (fol. 55)

*Ase int eg crich betha cach en duine 7 ise int eg maith ina faghter sacramant na heglaisi*: tract on the administration of the sacrament of extreme unction (fol. 56)

*Deith mirbhuile Crist annso*: tract on the miracles of Christ’s body in the sacrament (fol. 56)

*Deo patri carismo Petro Dei gracia inaprotucenci adhon a n-onoir de athar 7 Petair dar tinnsgnadh an leabharsa ana onoir 7 Innocent neoch dobhi na dheochan 7 ina carthanail ag tinnsgra in leabhairsi*: translation of Innocent III’s *De Contemptu Mundi* (fols. 57-74)

*Digail Tit meic Uespesain for Iarusalem i nDighail Fola Crist*: fragment of a gospel history on the infancy and youth of Christ (fols. 76-85)

**Translations:**

*Togail na Tebe*: The Destruction of Thebes (fols. 87-127)

*Seon Maundauil*: John Maundeville (fols. 129-46)

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38 Also appears in Laud 610 and RIA 24 P 25.
39 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48 and RIA 24 P 25.
40 Also appears in RIA 24 O 48.
41 Also appears in RIA 24 P 25.
42 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48.
43 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48.
44 Also appears in Laud 610.
Religious Material:

*Aroile duine truagh bocht 7 muirer mor cloinne [aige] tainic co Dabid: the tale of David and the Poor Man (fol. 150)\(^{45}\)

Prespiter Johannes voluntate Dei 7 domini nostril Isu Christi rex regum terenorum 7 domnis dominand. tra Romano imperatore salute gaudere .i. o righ na righ 7 o tigerna na tigernadh a talmain .i. o Shean sagart don imper Romanach betha 7 slainti: translation of Prester John’s epistle to Emperor Emanuel (fol. 151)

*Tri neithe treoruidius duine dinnsuidh ifirn: Moral Sentences (fol. 151)

*Da apstul dec na hErenn: the account of Saint Brendan’s voyage and encounter with Judas Iscariot (fols. 152-53)\(^{46}\)

**Is iatso na se cuinghill .x. dlighis in fhaisidin do beith indti mur ader Sanc Tomas super quarum siencium disdingiussionem (sic): an exposition of the common verses on confession (fol. 154)\(^{47}\)

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 610

Fifteenth Century. Colophons specifically mention the years 1453 and 1454, but the earliest works in the manuscript seem to have been recorded around 1410.\(^{48}\) It was produced along the border of Munster and Leinster for the Buitilléar (Butler) family. The current codex is a conflation of two separate manuscripts that occurred when portions of the earlier White Earl’s book were inserted at two different points into his nephew Éamonn’s codex.\(^{49}\) Its cataloguer Brian Ó Cuív describes the contents of the manuscript as ‘miscellaneous prose and verse; genealogies’.\(^{50}\)

\(^{45}\) Also appears in RIA 24 P 25.

\(^{46}\) Also appears in RIA 23 O 48.

\(^{47}\) Also appears in RIA 23 O 48 and RIA 24 P 25.


\(^{50}\) *ibid.*, p. 62.
Religious Material:

*Betha Senáin*: The Life of Senáin (fols. 1r⁴-5v⁵)

*Scéla Silvester in Papa 7 Consatin indister sund*: story of Saint Silvester and Emperor Constantine (fol. 6v⁵)

***Betha Margrec*: The Life of Margaret of Antioch (fols. 7r⁵-8v⁵)⁵¹

*Slicht leabuir i[n] prepain Cunga innso*: story of the exaltation of the cross (fols. 10v⁵-11v⁵)

*Dúncad húa Brain .i. comarba Ciaran*: story of Dúncad hua Brain (fol. 14r⁴-14v⁵)⁵²

**Pais Sansalmus*: dialogue on the passion between Saint Anselm and the Virgin Mary (fols. 15r⁵-18v⁵)⁵³

*Dighail Fola Crist*: The Revenge for Christ’s Blood (fols. 18v⁵-22v⁵)⁵⁴

[D]ia mboí Bernard noém aimser cian maille deraib 7 irnaíghti 7 aíntib: dialogue on the passion of Christ between Saint Bernard and the Virgin Mary (fols. 23r⁴-24v⁵)

*Dormitio Mariae*: The Dormition of Mary (fols. 34r⁴-38r⁵)

*Patraic mac Alpraind mac Fortaide*: genealogies of Irish saints (fols. 38r⁵-42v⁶)

*Adeir in scribtuir do tomail Crist*: note on the passion of Christ (fol. 43r⁴)

Charlemagne Material:

*Inventio Sanctae Crucis*: The Finding of the Holy Cross (fols. 43v⁴-45r⁴)

*Stair Fortibrais*: The History of Fortibras (fols. 45v⁶-57r⁶)

From the White Earl’s Book:

*Féileire Óengusso*: Martyrology of Óengus (fols. 59r⁴-72v⁵)

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⁵¹ Although its language is less ornate than that of Egerton 1781, both belong to Plummer’s Redaction A. Plummer, p. 264. Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 24 P 25.

⁵² Also appears in RIA 23 O 48.

⁵³ Also appears in RIA 23 O 48 and TCD H.2.17.

⁵⁴ Also appears in Egerton 1781.
Reference Material:

Sanasán Saltrach Cormaic: Glossary of Cormac's Psalter (fols. 79r-a-86r-c)

[Im]gabail emeltusa i. issed 7 ise cend in fhir: metrical tract (fols. 81v-b-92v-b)

Do miniugad senchasa fer Muman: genealogical tract (fols. 93r-a-102r-b)

Macc Ardae mc Figaig ba ri Ciarraig Luachrae co muir: genealogical tract (fols. 103r-b-112r-a)

From the White Earl’s Book:

Acallam na Senórch: Tales of the Elders (fols. 123r-a-146v-b)

Dublin, Trinity College, MS H.2.7 (1298)

The current codex is apparently a compilation of four different fifteenth-century manuscripts. Stair Fortibrais is missing a leaf after p. 453 and p. 456 is illegible.55

(1)

Fragment from the Book of Hy-Many:

Assorted genealogies (pp. 1-53)

Book of Oriel (pp. 54-177)

Pedigrees of Irish Saints (pp. 178-89)

Paiter coimgi Ciarain fabar cataib: on the virtues of St Ciaran and the history of Clonmacnois (pp. 232-35)

(2)

Translations:

Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás: The History of Hercules and his Death (pp.258-99)

Beathadh Sir Gui o Bharbhuiic: The Life of Sir Guy of Warwick (pp. 300-47)

Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir: The Life of Bevis of Hampton (pp. 348-63)

Saga:

* Tair Nuadat Find Femin: The history of Fair Nuada of Femin (pp. 364-75)

(3)

In Cath Catharda: The Civil War (pp. 376-417)

Charlemagne Material (pp. 435-56):

* De Inventione Sanctae Crucis: Concerning the Finding of the Holy Cross

* Stair Fortibrais: The History of Fortibras

(4)

* Togail Troí: The Destruction of Troy (pp. 457-60)*

Dublin, Trinity College, MS H.2.17, 1 and 2 (1319)

This collection of fragments, formerly one codex, is now bound in two volumes. It contains material of varying ages and subjects. Stair Fortibrais is imperfect, beginning on ¶ 7 of Stokes’ edition and pp. 440-62 are almost illegible.57

(1)

Disordered Religious Material (pp. 1-82):

The Life of Christ

Biblical Canticles

**Betha Cathraigh: The Life of Catherine of Alexandria**58

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56 Also appears in H.2.17.
58 Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 24 P 25.
Account of the Bolgic and Tuatha Dé Danann Colonies and the Battle of Magh Tuiredh (pp. 90-99)

**Pais Sansalmus**: dialogue on the passion between Saint Anselm and the Virgin Mary (pp. 99-110)\(^{59}\)

*Breisleach Mhor* (*sic*) *Mhuighe Muirtheimne*: The Great Defeat of the Plain of Muirthemne (pp. 111-119)

*Togail Troí*: The Destruction of Troy (pp. 119-171)\(^{60}\)

*Agallam in da suad*: Dialogue of the Two Sages (pp. 185-87, 192-93)\(^{61}\)

**Treatises:**

*Uraicept na n-éigeas*: fragment of the primer of the bards (pp. 195-278)\(^{62}\)

Treatise on Medical Plants and Minerals (pp. 279-301)

**Sagas:**

*Táin Bó Cuailgne*: fragment of the Cattle Raid of Cooley (pp. 334-51)

*Cogad Gall le Gaodalaib*: The War of the Galls with the Gaels (pp. 351-97)

**Religious Material:**

Account of the Passion (pp. 400-19)

**Charlemagne Material:**

*Inventione Sanctae Crucis*: Concerning the Finding of the Holy Cross (p. 433)

*Stair Fortibrais*: The History of Fortibras (pp. 433-62)

\(^{59}\) Also appears in Laud 610 and RIA 23 O 48.

\(^{60}\) Also appears in TCD H.2.7.

\(^{61}\) Also appears in TCD H.2.12.

\(^{62}\) Also appears in TCD H.2.12.
Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 O 48 (476) (Liber Flavus Fergusiorum)

Fifteenth Century. Colophons specifically mention the years 1437 and 1440 and suggest that the manuscript is of Connacht provenance, although the evidence remains inconclusive. Originally a single codex, it has been rebound into two volumes. The first page of the manuscript, which contains Inventio Sanctae Crucis is defaced and Stair Fortibrais includes a gap corresponding to ¶¶ 41-52 in Stokes’ edition. Two folios, seven and nine, are no longer in the proper order. With twenty-two instances of correspondence, RIA 23 O 48 exhibits the greatest amount of overlap in contents with other Stair Fortibrais manuscripts, especially RIA 24 P 25 and Egerton 1781.

(1)

Charlemagne Material:

_Inventio Sanctae Crucis:_ The Finding of the Holy Cross (fols. 1r²-2r³)

_Stair Fortibrais:_ The History of Fortibras (fols. 2r³- 10r³)

Religious Tracts and Anecdotes:

_Rig rogabh an doman feacht n-aill .i. Constantin mac Elena a hainm:_ story of the miraculous cure of Constantine (fol. 10r³-10v³)

_Sedrus 7 cipresus 7 palma 7 oliua:_ on the four kinds of wood out of which the Cross was made (fol. 10v³)

_Tainic dano dearbairdi inguntacha cuçu:_ on miraculous signs that appeared in the Temple of Jerusalem (fol. 15v³)

*Bannscala maith dobi na hoigh sa domun toir:_ story of a woman who was in the habit of using bad language (fols. 20v³-21r³)⁶⁵

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⁶⁵ Also appears in RIA 24 P 25.
Athuir 7 a oidi inmhain innisim mo chair do Dhia: formula for a general confession (fol. 21r-a)\(^{66}\)

Is iad so na se cuingill dec dlighis an faidsi do beith innti mar adeir Sangctus Tomas: on the conditions necessary for Confession (fol. 21vb-22va)\(^{67}\)

Is se int eg crich beatha gac aen duine: office for the dying (fol. 22va-23rb)\(^{68}\)

Da airtical deg in creidme: twelve articles of faith (fol. 23rb-va)\(^{69}\)

Ar n-eiseirghi Crist a carcar corcara caeleapdha cliabhcumhuing: tract on Christ's descent into Hell (fol. 23va-24rb)

Dorinne Dia talumh do Adhumh 7 do Eua iar n-imarbus a Parrthus: story of Adam and Eve (fol. 25va-b)\(^{70}\)

Iacop 7 lasau da mac Abraham: on the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt (fol. 26vb-27ra)

Hagiographies:

Betha Phátraic: The Life of Patrick (fol. 29ra-30va)\(^{71}\)

Betha Elexius: The Life of Alexius (fol. 34va-35rb)\(^{72}\)

Moral/Religious Material:

Adeir Augustin naemh gebe neach eisdfeas aitfrinn o tosach co deireadh co faghann se ceathra hachainghi déc o Dia an la sin: on the fourteen benefits of the Mass (fol. 36va-b)

Dunchadh Ua Briain: two stories about Dunchadh Ua Briain (fol. 37ra-b)\(^{73}\)

Righ rogabh an domhun feacht n-aill .i. Consantin mac Elena a ainm: on the healing of Constantine (fol. 37vb)

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\(^{66}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 24 P 25.
\(^{67}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 24 P 25.
\(^{68}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781.
\(^{69}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781.
\(^{70}\) Also appears in RIA 24 P 25.
\(^{71}\) Also appears in RIA 24 P 25 and King’s Inns 10.
\(^{72}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 24 P 25.
\(^{73}\) Also appears in Laud 610.
Religious Material:

_Iacob mac Ioseb gabar na oileamhain_: life of the Blessed Virgin (fols. 2r²-6v²)

**Pais Sansalmus**: St Anselm’s Passion (fols. 6v²-9v²)³⁴

**Betha Iuliana**: The Life of Juliana of Nicomedia (fols. 9v²-10v³)³⁵

_La n-aen dar fiarfaidh [ ] cia he in [n]each doberadh uisce dom cheann 7 braen dom suilib_: tract in which Mary describes her Son's Passion to a holy man (fols. 10v³-12v⁴)

**Spiritus Guidonis**: The Gast of Guy (fols. 13r²-14v⁴)³⁶

_Is a naemhadh bliadhan deg do flaitheamhnas Tibir Cesair in impir romanaidh_: on the passion of Christ (fols. 26r²-32v³)

_Cadde int adbar fa dug Dia easbaidh do Maisi mac Amra_: story of Gaedel Glas and Moses (fol. 33v⁸)

_Ceas[t] caidi cet cos(t)adh ecailse Be iar peatarlaichi_: on the beginnings of the church in the Old Testament (fol. 34r³)

_It e annso immorro suighiughadh sunnrudhach tighi Solaimh meic Dauid_: on the ordering of Solomon's house (fol. 34v⁹)

*An Tenga Bithnua*: The Ever-New Tongue (fols. 35r³-37r⁴)³⁷

_In umhla is da hingheanuibh annso_: on the seven daughters of humility (fol. 39r³-b⁴)

_Nuimhir beg do sgelaibh Cuirp Crist annso_: tract on the Eucharist (fols. 39r⁴-40r⁵)

*Deich mirbuile 7 .x. cumachta cuirp Crist annso_: tract on the miracles of Christ's body in the Eucharist (fol. 40r⁵-v³⁴)³⁸

*Do Suighdhiughadh Cathrach Iarusalem_: tract on the city of Jerusalem (fol. 40v³-40v⁵)³⁹

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³⁴ Also appears in Laud 610 and TCD H.2.17.
³⁵ Also appears in Egerton 1781.
³⁶ Also appears in RIA 24 P 25 and King’s Inns 10.
³⁷ Also appears in RIA 24 P 25.
³⁸ Also appears in Egerton 1781.
³⁹ Also appeared in Egerton 1781 according to a sixteenth-century table of contents but does not constitute part of the manuscript as it exists today.
Feacht n-aen dar gab Dacianus [im]pir flaitheamhnus: life of St George (fols. 44r-48r)

*Eir Brenuinn Birre ata so: story of St Brendan (fols. 50v-51r)*

[B]aidh dal mor la hUlltu a Muigh Murrthuini: story of Conchobar mac Nessa and the crucifixion (52v-b)

**Dublin, Trinity College, MS H.2.12, No. 3 (1304)**

The current codex is a collection of texts originally belonging to other manuscripts and currently bound in fifteen different segments. As such, the works likely belonged to different time periods and provinces and need not exhibit any overarching connections to one another. Abbott and Gwynn provide dating for only three texts, two of which were written in the fifteenth century. This includes the copy of *Stair Fortibrais*, which was transcribed in 1475 by Teige O’Riordan. The remaining dated work was penned in the sixteenth century. *Stair Fortibrais* begins on ¶ 21 of Stokes’ edition.81 Speaking very broadly, most (but certainly not all) of the material in the manuscript seems to be medical or poetic.

(1)

*Morbus est cum membra actionis sui naturalis temperamenta egrediuntur*: commentary on Galen (7 fols.)

(2)

*Legtar . . . co tainic duine occ do indsaidi in tigherna nemda*: discourse on the Ten Commandments with a brief history of creation and the patriarchs (10 fols.)

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80 Also appears in Egerton 1781.
Charlemagne Material (12 fols.):

*De Inventione Sanctae Crucis*: Concerning the Finding of the Holy Cross

*Stair Fortibrais*: The History of Fortibras

***Gabháiltais Shéarluis Mhóir*: The Conquest of Charles the Great (fragmentary)\(^{82}\)

*Uraicept na n-éigeas*: fragment of the primer of the bards (16 fols.)\(^{83}\)

Treatise on the operation of various medicines (12 fols.)

*Deirbsiur do’n eagna in éigsi*: two Irish metrical glossaries (8 fols.)

*De Institutione Arithmetica* (in Latin)

Poetical Material (11 fols.):

*Agallam in da suad*: Dialogue of the Two Sages\(^{84}\)

*Cis lir fodlai aire*: tract on satire

*Incipit do na aistib*: rules for various kinds of versification

Fragment of laws relating to the seven poetical degrees

Biblical history fragment covering Moses to the Babylonian Captivity (8 fols.)

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\(^{82}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781 and King’s Inns 10. A Latin version of the text appears in TCD F.5.3.

\(^{83}\) Also appears in TCD H.2.17.

\(^{84}\) Also appears in TCD H.2.17.
(10)  
*Computus Manualis* fragment (1 fol.)

(11)  
**Medical Fragments (7 fols.):**

*Pantegni*: Constantinus Africanus’ treatise on medicine

*De Definition multipli potentiare animae*: Johannes de Rupella’s treatise on the nature of the human soul

*Aphorismi*: Hippocrates’ aphorisms

*Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum*: Latin medical maxims

(12)  
Fragment of a Grammatical Treatise (6 fols.)

(13)  
*De dosibus medicinarum*: Concerning the Dosages of Medicines (4 fols.)

(14)  
*Liberat te Deus fili amantissime a devio errorum*: Hippocrates’ aphorisms in Latin with Irish explanations (8 fols.)

(15)  
*Comhrac Fir Diad*: The Combat of Cú Chulainn and Fer Diad (2 fols.)

*Do trathaibh Asi cuis an cedleigis lagtaig dib so do denam oibrigthi contrardha:*

fragment of a treatise on simple and compound medicine (6 fols.)
Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 24 P 25 (475) (Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne)

Sixteenth century. Produced for the Fánad branch of the Mac Suibhne (Mac Sweeney) of county Donegal, Ulster, the current manuscript consists of three distinct sections each written at a different times.\(^{85}\) The first section (fols. 1r-65v), containing primarily religious material, is also the earliest with colophons indicating its production occurred between 1513 and 1514. The second portion (fols. 66r-71v) details the history of the Suibhne clan and was recorded 1532-1544. The third segment contains native poetry, but cannot be dated precisely.\(^{86}\) *Stair Fortibrais* is missing folio seven, which corresponds to \(\text{¶¶ 107-27}\) in Stokes’ edition.\(^{87}\)

Charlemagne Material:

*Inventio Sanctae Crucis*: The Finding of the Holy Cross (fols. 1r\(^{a}\)-2r\(^{a}\))

*Stair Fortibrais*: The History of Fortibras (fols. 2 r\(^{a}\)-14r\(^{a}\))

Religious Material:

*Scél in dá Lenam*: the Jew of Bourges legend (fol. 14r\(^{b}\))\(^{88}\)

***Betha Margrec*: The Life of Margaret of Antioch (fols. 16v\(^{a}\)-18r\(^{b}\))\(^{89}\)

*Legthur issin [n]óemad caibital .xx. do leabar Matha gu tainic duine óg dindsuide in tigerna*: homily on the ten commandments (fols. 18v\(^{a}\)-22r\(^{b}\))

*[O]chtífin Auguist ba hairdri an domain an tan rogenair Crist isin dara bliadain .xl. a fhlaithiussa*: on the infancy of Christ (fols. 23r\(^{a}\)-26r\(^{a}\))

*Stair Nicomeid ar pais Crist*: The History of Nicodemus concerning the passion of Christ (fols. 26v\(^{a}\)-33v\(^{b}\))\(^{90}\)

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\(^{85}\) *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, p. 1242.
\(^{86}\) *ibid.*, p. 1242.
\(^{87}\) *ibid.*, p. 1245.
\(^{88}\) A Latin version of this tale appears in TCD F.5.3.
\(^{89}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781 and Laud 610.
\(^{90}\) Also appears in King’s Inns 10.
Ar tri adhuraib gerruiges Dia saogal na pechtach: moral sentences (fol. 33vb)

**Spiritus Guidonis**: The Ghost of Guy (fols. 34r^a-37v^b)^91

Hagiographical Material:

*Betha Choluim Chille*: The Life of Colum Cille (fols. 39r^a-43v^b)^92

***Betha Elexius**: The Life of Alexius (fols. 47r^a-49r^b)^93

**Betha Patraic**: The Life of Patrick (fols. 49r^a-54v^b)^94

*Dia mbui Patraic oc senmoir ar fut Erend aimsir fada gan toradh air*: on St Patrick’s purgatory (fol. 54v^b)^95

***Betha Cathraigh*: The Life of Catherine of Alexandria (fols. 55r^a-56r^a)^96

Religious Tracts and Anecdotes:

**Is iad so na se congill dec dligis in fhaoisidi do beith innti amail adeir Sanctus Tomas**: on the conditions necessary for confession (fols. 56r^b-57r^a)^97

[R] o bai Bernard naom aimsir imcian maille deraib urnaigthi: the passion of Christ (fols. 58v^a-60v^b)

**[A] deir in canóin co ndligend gach cristaide corp Crist do caithem uair gacha bliadhna**: treatise on the blessed Eucharist (fols. 61r^a-62r^b)^98

**[A]oide 7 a athair innisim mo cair do Dia 7 daib-si ar mo pecthaib uile**: formula for a general confession (fols. 63r^b-63v^b)^99

*Don fuarcrabad*: tract on hypocrisy (fol. 64r^a)

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91 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48 and King’s Inns 10.
92 Also appears in King’s Inns 10.
93 Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 23 O 48.
94 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48 and King’s Inns 10.
95 A Latin version of this text appears in TCD F.5.3.
96 Also appears in Egerton 1781 and TCD H.2.17.
97 Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 23 O 48.
98 Also appears in Egerton 1781.
99 Also appears in Egerton 1781 and RIA 23 O 48.
*Araile banscal bai isin doman toir: story of a woman who was in the habit of using bad
language (fol. 64r)*\(^{100}\)

*[D]orone Dia talum da Ádum 7 do Éba arna n-indarbad a Parrthus: story of Adam and
Eve (fols. 64vb-65rb)*\(^{101}\)

*An Tenga Bithnuad: The Ever-New Tongue (fol. 65r-v)*\(^{102}\)

*Araili duine truag bocht doruacht docum: story of King David and the beggar
(fol. 65v-b)*\(^{103}\)

**Beginning of Second Section:**

*Craobhsgaoileadh Chlainne Suibhne: genealogy of Clan Sweeney (fols. 66r-71v)*

**Dublin, King’s Inns Library, MS 10**

Fifteenth century. Three different scribes appear to have produced the manuscript,
with a fourth hand appearing only briefly. The copy of *Stair Fortibrais* is incomplete,
corresponding to ¶¶ 26-158 in Stokes’ edition. The contents are exclusively religious in
nature.*\(^{104}\)

**Charlemagne Material:**

*Stair Fortibrais: fragment of the History of Fortibras (fols. 1-8)*

***Gabháltais Shéarluis Mhóir: The Conquest of Charles the Great (fols. 9-11)*\(^{105}\)

**Religious Material:**

**Spiritus Guidonis: The Gast of Guy (fols. 11-15)*\(^{106}\)

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100 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48.
101 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48.
102 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48.
103 Also appears in Egerton 1781
104 Pádraig de Brun *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in King’s Inns Library, Dublin* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for
105 Also appears in Egerton 1781 and TCD H.2.12. A Latin version of the text appears in TCD F.5.3.
106 Also appears in RIA 23 O 48 and RIA 24 P 25.
Hagiographies:

**Betha Cirisiuis 7 Iulite**: The Life of Cyrius and Julitta (fols. 15-16)\(^{107}\)

**Betha Phátraic**: The Life of Patrick (fols. 17-19)\(^{108}\)

*Betha Choluim Chille*: The Life of Colum Cille (fols. 21-26)\(^{109}\)

Religious Material:

*Stimulus Amoris*: The Goad of Love (fols. 28-32)

*Omno dicto exierunt in montem Oliueti*: on the Passion of Christ (fols. 36-39)

*Stair Nicomeid ar pais Crist*: The History of Nicodemus concerning the passion of Christ (fols. 43-45)\(^{110}\)

**Dublin, Trinity College, MS F.5.3 (667)**

Fifteenth century. More specifically, the manuscript was apparently composed around 1455 in County Clare by several Franciscans for use at their monastery. This Hiberno-Latin manuscript contains ecclesiastical material as well as the Latin version of *Stair Fortibrais* and some other texts found in the same codices. However, based on the higher quality of the vellum as well as the fading and ruling of its quire, *Gesta Karoli Magni* originally belonged to a different manuscript.\(^{111}\)

\(^{107}\) Also appears in Egerton 1781.

\(^{108}\) Also appears in RIA 23 O 48 and RIA 24 P 25.

\(^{109}\) Also appears in RIA 24 P 25.

\(^{110}\) Also appears in RIA 24 P 25.

Moral/Religious Material:

_Dialogus inter Magistrum et Discipulum de rebus Biblicis et ecclesiasticis et de futura vita:_ A Dialogue between Master and Pupil concerning Biblical and ecclesiastical matters and future life (pp. 1-32)

_Fabulae quindecim filii Imper. Diocletiani:_ Fifteen Stories of the Son of the Emperor Diocletian (pp. 42-54)

Religious Material

_De Inventione Sanctae Crucis:_ Concerning the Finding of the Holy Cross (pp. 68-71)\(^{112}\)

*De miraculis sancte Marie hystoria:_ Exemplum about a Jewish boy who took communion, was put into a fiery furnace by his father but was saved by the Blessed Virgin Mary (p. 73)\(^{113}\)

Charlemagne Material:

_De Inventione Crucis_ and _Gesta Karoli Magni:_ Concerning the Finding of the Cross and the Deeds of Charles the Great (pp. 85-100)

***_Gesta Caroli Magni per Turpinum Archiep. Remens:_ The Deeds of Charles the Great by Turpin the Archbishop of Reims (pp. 107-130)\(^{114}\)

Historiographical Material:

_De Octo Conquestibus Hiberniae:_ Concerning the Eight Conquests of Ireland (pp. 183-84)

Moral/Religious Material:

*De Purgatorio S. Patricii:_ Concerning the Purgatory of Saint Patrick\(^{115}\) (pp. 214-16)

_Meditationes S. Bernardi:_ Meditations of Saint Bernard (pp. 232-50)

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\(^{112}\) _De Inventione Sanctae Crucis_ serves as the introduction to _Stair Fortibrais_ and _Gesta Karoli Magni_ in every manuscript which preserves the beginning of the work, including this codex. However, this is the only instance wherein the text appears by itself.

\(^{113}\) An Irish version of this tale appears in RIA 24 P 25.

\(^{114}\) An Irish version of this tale appears in Egerton 1781, TCD H.2.12 and King’s Inns 10.

\(^{115}\) An Irish translation of this text appears in RIA 24 P 25.
Problems of Transmission and Reordering

While studying the compilatory context undoubtedly yields valuable information, particularly in the case of texts such as *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* which lack an established commentary tradition, it must be acknowledged that this approach also has its share of problems because it can by no means be taken for granted that the manuscripts have come down to the present period in their original condition. None of the nine manuscripts discussed above are without their difficulties in this regard. In the case of *Gesta Karoli Magni*, the only surviving copy apparently belonged to an unknown manuscript before being incorporated into TCD F.5.3.116

The status of *Stair Fortibrais*’ manuscripts varies considerably. The most extreme cases, TCD H.2.12 and TCD H.2.17, are mere collections of fragments containing texts produced in different centuries and on widely varying topics. TCD H.2.7 combines four manuscripts all belonging to the fifteenth century, the first of which originally belonged to the Book of Hy-Many.117 The remaining manuscripts have all shed some of their leaves. Egerton 1781 otherwise appears to be in good condition and the addition of the table of contents during the sixteenth century supports the notion that *Stair Fortibrais* originally occupied the leading position in the codex just as it does today.118 Kings’ Inns 10 contains a few illegible folios and has acquired a loose half-leaf originally belonging to RIA 23 O 4.119 The insertion of material from a different manuscript also occurs at the end of RIA 24 P 25 where two folios of Latin prose have been appended. It too is slightly disordered, although the disarray is limited to the reversal of two folios.120 The same problem occurs to some

116 Davies, pp. 295-96.
117 Abbott and Gwynn, pp. 78-80, 83-88, 110.
118 Flower, pp. 526, 544.
120 *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, p. 1242.
extent in RIA 23 O 48, and in addition this manuscript has three folios which are mere slips of vellum.\footnote{ibid., pp. 1254-55.}

Laud 610 has also become disordered. The current codex is a conflation of two separate manuscripts produced for the Buitilléar family. The disarray apparently occurred when portions of the earlier White Earl’s book were inserted at two different points into that of his nephew Éamonn’s. The combination of these manuscripts seems to have happened quite early judging by a colophon which indicates that they had already been bound together by December 1454.\footnote{Anne and William O’Sullivan, “Three Notes on Laud Misc. 610 (or the Book of Pottlerath)”, Celtica, 9 (1971), 135-151 (p. 144).} Even so, it remains unclear whether the White Earl’s folios were originally bound in the same positions they occupy today. The disorder is further compounded by the fact that catchwords and other internal indicators suggest even the later portion of the manuscript may have become muddled.\footnote{Ó Cuív, Catalogue, p. 65.} According to its cataloguer Brian Ó Cuív, the two gatherings containing *Stair Fortibrais* probably appear in their original order but the one preceding it may not be and the succeeding section is a portion of the White Earl’s manuscript (although the next segment of Éamonn’s book appears in its original position).\footnote{ibid., pp. 63-65.}

While they must be acknowledged, it is also worth noting that in most codices the issues appear relatively minor and do not seem to affect *Stair Fortibrais* directly. Furthermore, particularly given the tendency of Irish manuscripts toward miscellanea, much valuable information may still be garnered by examining broad trends in their compilation.
Analysis of Compilatory Context

Topical overlap between *Stair Fortibrais* and other works in the codices seems especially prevalent with four often interconnected sorts of material: Religious, Historiographical, Wonders of the East and Translation.

*Religious*

Given the central role of ethics in medieval reading, the preponderance of religious and moral texts in its manuscripts and *Stair Fortibrais*’ focus on Charles’ recovery of the relics of the passion, its original audience may have classified the text under the heading of religious literature. All eight of the manuscripts containing the work also feature religious material. This tendency is least strong in TCD H.2.7 in which only one overtly religious text—*Paiter coïmgi Ciarain fabar cataib*: on the virtues of Saint Ciaran and the history of Clonmacnois (pp. 232-35)—appears. On the other end of the spectrum, virtually every entry in King’s Inns 10 falls into this category. Despite the variety of the manuscript entries outlined above, the likelihood that *Stair Fortibrais* will occur in close conjunction with hagiographies, adaptations of Biblical material, homilies, moral anecdotes and spiritually-significant triads remains quite high. Many of these works have no obvious relation to *Stair Fortibrais* beyond this broad categorisation, but three types of texts with much stronger conceptual links occur.
The Relics of the Passion:

First and probably most obviously, are the texts focusing on the passion and/or relics. Seven of the eight manuscripts include at least one account of Christ’s crucifixion and RIA 23 O 48 has four independent treatises on the subject. Some of these texts recur throughout *Stair Fortibrais’* manuscripts. The most common, *Pais Sansalmus*, a dialogue on the passion between Saint Anselm and the Virgin Mary, appears in three different codices.\(^{125}\) The other recurrent text is the Irish version of the Gospel of Nicodemus, entitled *Stair Nicomeid*, which occurs in RIA 24 P 25 (fols. 26va-33vb) and King’s Inns 10 (fols. 43a-45b).

Admittedly, *Stair Fortibrais* does not concern itself with recounting the crucifixion directly, but its focus on the recovery of the relics thereof makes it something of a corollary text. Fortunately, RIA 23 O 48 exhibits a number of other works with a similarly affiliated nature. Intriguingly, two of these texts occur directly after the manuscript’s copy of *Stair Fortibrais*. The story of the miraculous cure of Constantine—beginning *Rig rogabh an doman feacht n-aill*.i. *Constantin mac Elena a hainm* (fol. 10rb-vb with another version appearing in fol. 37vb)—evokes not only the potential association of Constantine as the first Christian Roman emperor with Charles who later held the same title,\(^{126}\) but also the legend crediting Constantine’s mother (H)elena with the discovery of the True Cross—as detailed in *De Inventione Sanctae Crucis*. Reinforcing the latter theme is the following treatise, beginning *Sedrus 7 cipresus 7 palma 7 oliua*, which details the four kinds of wood out of which the Cross was made (fol. 10vb). Its appearance in this context underscores the focus on the Cross as a powerful symbol and relic, a major theme in *Stair Fortibrais*. Yet another text involving royalty and the crucifixion occurs later in the manuscript. *Aided Chonchobuir* (fol. 52ra-b) tells how Conchobar became the first Irishman to go to heaven because when he heard

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\(^{125}\) Laud 610 (fols. 15ra-18vb), RIA 23 O 48 (fols. 6va-9vb), and TCD H.2.17 (pp. 99-110).

\(^{126}\) For another Constantine text, see Laud 610 *Scéla Silvester in Papa 7 Consatin indister sund*: story of Saint Silvester and Emperor Constantine (fol. 6vb).
that Jesus—whom he considered his foster-brother since they had been born on the same day—had been wrongly crucified, he became enraged and as a result an old wound reopened causing him to die, while at the same time baptising him in blood.\textsuperscript{127} The combination of Conchobar’s presentation as a great Christian ruler in the tradition of Constantine or Charles and the focus on the crucifixion links it thematically with a number of other texts in the manuscript including \textit{Stair Fortibrais}.

\textbf{Crusades and Pilgrimages:}

The second recurring religious theme is that of crusades or pilgrimages to the east. The Irish translation of Prester John’s Epistle to Emperor Manuel beginning \textit{o righ na righ 7 o tigerna na tigernadh a talmain .i. o Shean sagart don imper Romanach betha 7 slainti} is found in Egerton 1781 (fol. 151). The letter’s subject matter lends itself to the crusading ethos in general as well as exhibiting possible links with Charles. According to the first text mentioning this legendary priest-king, Otto of Freising’s \textit{Chronicon} written in 1145, the great Christian ruler Prester John, a descendant of the biblical magi, had recently led his vast army to victory over the pagan Medes and Persians before attempting to march his host to Jerusalem to win the city from the Saracens. Otto claims to have acquired this information at the papal court of Eugene III from Bishop Hugh of Jabala whose report that the Turks had sacked Edessa helped to spark the Second Crusade. The letter itself dates to around twenty years later and emphasises the wonders of Prester John’s kingdom and his great piety, but also the plight of his Christian people surrounded by Saracens. In short, the epistle is a quintessential piece of crusading literature purportedly penned by a king who, like the Charles of legend, ruled a great Christian empire and marched against the Saracens to defend the faith.

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{The Death-Tales of the Ulster Heroes}, ed. by Kuno Meyer (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1906), pp. 4-18.
Another text, the Irish life of Bevis of Hampton, entitled *Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir* (TCD H.2.7, pp. 348-63), though not as specifically focused on crusading, still exhibits the martial prowess of Christians in the East. Few significant changes occur between the Irish and other versions of the text. The most important of these for the purposes of comparison with *Stair Fortibrais* actually lessens the connections between the two texts. In all variations Bevis travels eastward, but his precise destination differs. He journeys to India and Rhodes in the Irish text, Jerusalem in the English version and Jerusalem and Egypt in the French source. Naturally in this instance, the French version is most evocative of the *Stair Fortibrais* given Jerusalem’s obvious connections to crusading and Fierabras/Fortibras’ title as the King of Alexandria. Even so, the Irish adaptation is undoubtedly connected to the Christian warrior ethos, featuring a hero who regularly kills uncountable numbers of pagan warriors through the power of God. The more spectacular of these escapades include Bevis’ murder of his two gaolers although he was unarmed, slaughtering six armoured men using only a staff and single-handedly killing fifty-seven pagan knights who boasted that their ancestors were responsible for the crucifixion.

Furthermore, a series of incidents in the plot mirror occurrences in *Stair Fortibrais*, though admittedly at least some of the similarities may result from conventional motifs of the genre. For example, the tale includes a Saracen princess who, like Floripas, converts to Christianity in order to marry the knight whom she loves. Similarly, like his heroic counterparts Oliver in *Stair Fortibrais* and Roland in *Gabaltais Searluis Móir*, Bevis also does battle with the giant champion of a pagan king. In another scene, he manages to escape a pursuing army of pagans by crossing a river which could not be forded, much as Richard does in *Stair Fortibrais*. Finally, the episode in which his lord sends Bevis as an ambassador

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to the King of Damascus, whose men the hero has massacred in battle, is reminiscent of Charles forcing the unwilling peers to serve as envoys to Balan/Admirandus (although admittedly Charles is not maliciously plotting their deaths by so doing). Such similarities in topic indicate that *Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir* exhibits, at least in some ways, a spirit similar to that found in *Stair Fortibrais*.

Closely related to *Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir* is another work adapted by the same scribe Uilliam Mac an Leagha. This story, *Beathadh Sir Gui o Bharbhuiic* (the Irish life of Guy of Warwick found in TCD H.2.7, pp. 300-47) while still concerned with a knight travelling to the Holy Land privileges the pilgrimage aspect over its martial counterpart. Thematically speaking, the text exhibits intriguing connections not only to *Stair Fortibrais* itself, but also to another work that appears in manuscripts containing it. To provide an extremely skeletal summary of the tale: Guy of Warwick falls in love with a woman of higher rank and, in order to prove himself, becomes a knight and engages in all manner of chivalric adventures. After his marriage, however, he laments his violent history, goes on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and later returns home to become a hermit. In all versions of the story, the figure of Guy bears some resemblance to Saint Alexius (Egerton 1781 fol. 44, RIA 24 P 25 fols. 47r-49r and RIA 23 O 48 fols. 34v-35r) in that both left their marriages, travel to the east for religious reasons and ultimately become hermits in their own birthplaces. Furthermore, like the heroes of the Charlemagne legend, Guy is always portrayed as both a knight and a pilgrim. *Beathadh Sir Gui o Bharbhuiic* is also among the recensions of the tale which include an episode detailing how upon Guy’s return to England he finds his homeland invaded by the Norse and, on the instructions of an angel, the hero defeats their champion, a giant named Colobron. The single combat between a Christian knight and a pagan giant is

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129 *ibid.*, p. 15.
evocative of the battles of Oliver and Fortibras and of Roland and Feracutus in Stair Fortibrais and Gabháltaí Shéarluis Mhóir respectively.

Moreover, the Irish version is unique amongst the surviving material for adding several supplementary elements that strengthen the religious features of the story—such as the discursive treatment of Christian doctrine in chapter thirty-four, the frequent references to the hero’s and his wife Felice’s piety, the emphasis on the sacred nature of the knighting ceremony and the addition of prayers in chapters nineteen and thirty-five— and in some cases, even imply a crusading element (most notably the episode in chapter twenty-nine in which Guy engages in combat with a Turk).130

The final important text to delve into considerable detail on the subject of pilgrimage is Seon Maundauil, the 1475 Irish translation made of the Buke of John Maundeville (Egerton 1781, fols. 129-46).131 The Irish exhibits considerable condensation in comparison to its source text, with the details of John’s adventures in Asia particularly curtailed.132 Despite its abridgment the text still offers much of interest as a work appearing in the same manuscript as Stair Fortibrais, since both relay information regarding the relics of the passion and on the Saracens. In the case of the former, Seon Maundauil substantiates Stair Fortibrais’ claim that Paris serves as a religious centre not just for France but the whole of the Christendom and reiterates the story of Saint Helena’s discovery of the Holy Cross as found in De Inventione Sanctae Crucis. However, in other details, most notably the tale of how Charles acquires the relics, its account proves more consistent with that of Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus in which the emperor receives the holy items as a gift during his pilgrimage to Constantinople. The latter topic was apparently one of considerable interest to the adaptor who provides details on the political boundaries (encompassing Egypt, Arabia

131 Flower, p. 540.
132 ibid., p. 541.
and Syria), customs (particularly those of a dietary nature), the Qur’an, Ramadan and their views towards Christ and Christianity and thereby creates what Davies terms ‘the fullest account of the historical origins of Islam and the most precise definition of the term ‘Saracen’ in medieval Irish literature’. The travelogue’s appearance corroborates a number of the earlier suggestions regarding the possible interests guiding the compilation of the manuscript in its concern with the pilgrim’s journey and the activities of Christians in a largely pagan East. Such interests are certainly consistent with those found in Stair Fortibrais.

Interactions of Christians and Jews:

Lastly, the Royal Irish Academy manuscripts, particularly RIA 23 O 48, seem especially interested in material about Jews, including historiographical Old Testament accounts of them. While this theme may initially appear to be something of a non sequitur, it merits exploration for a number of reasons. Firstly, Stair Fortibrais is apparently unique in the Fierabras tradition—even in comparison with its Hiberno-Latin source text—for using the term Iubal (Jew) interchangeably with more standard terms like Sairris(t)inech (Saracen), págánach (pagan) or barbarach (barbarian). Secondly, works such as Seon Maundaul in which the translator obviously expends significant effort to present a fairly comprehensive analysis of a people, even if it is not the primary goal of the work, indicate some interest in what modern scholars might term early ethnography. Thirdly, such texts are prevalent enough to suggest that the subject’s appearance cannot be dismissed as merely coincidental. Twelve separate examples occur in five manuscripts with the text Do Suighdhiughadh Cathrach Iarusalem, a treatise on Jerusalem, appearing in two codices. Even so, the theme doubtless proves most prominent in RIA 23 O 48 which alone accounts for seven instances.

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133 Davies, pp. 176-77.
134 The five manuscripts are Egerton 1781, Laud 610, RIA 24 P 25, RIA 23 O 48 and TCD H.2.12. The two codices including Do Suighdhiughadh Cathrach Iarusalem are RIA 23 O 48 (fol. 40v–45b) and Egerton 1781 (in a sixteenth century table of contents detailing lost material).
More interesting, however, a few of these texts do not deal with Jews and their history in isolation but provide examples of interactions between them and Christians (or the ancestors thereof). One text, *Cadde int adbar fa dug Dia easbaidh do Maisi mac Amra* (RIA 23 O 48, fol. 33vb), apparently excerpted from the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (The Book of the Taking of Ireland), is a historiographical account of Irish history from the Creation to the Medieval period. The episode details the interactions of Moses and an ancestor of the Irish named Gaedel Glas. The story takes place in Egypt where a man named Nel aids Moses and the Israelites as they flee from Pharaoh. In return, Moses cures his son Gaedel Glas and by God’s authority prevents snakes from harming his offspring or living in his land. The descendants of this clan are driven from Egypt on account of their friendship with the Israelites and later come to Ireland. The anecdote links the Irish with the great biblical hero Moses who confers the blessing of God upon them, but also takes pains to disassociate the Irish from the Jews by having them refuse Moses’ offer to take them into the Promised Land along with his people. The story nicely illustrates the complex nature of the medieval Christians’ view on the Hebrews of the Old Testament and by extension to noble non-Christians such as Fortibras.

Another tale in the same manuscript (fols. 35ra-37rb) operates along similar lines, but advances the motif to its logical conclusion: mass conversion. *In Tenga Bithnua*, The Ever-New Tongue, features a dialogue between Hebrew sages and the spirit of Saint Philip. It combines a significantly expanded account of creation from the Old Testament with a description of hell, heaven and the final judgment largely derived from the New Testament and apocryphal sources. The Hebrew language is regularly referred to in glowing terms as a holy tongue and some ‘Hebrew’ is even quoted (though mangled to the point of

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unintelligibility). The adaptor presents the Jews in a highly favourable light in that they are apparently of high station including bishops and kings, and are virtuous individuals who lament for their sins when Philip brings them to light. As mentioned above, the poem, also like Stair Fortibrais concludes with a conversion, in this instance of all those gathered on Mount Zion.

However, the story with the greatest structural and thematic similarities to Stair Fortibrais doubtless occurs in RIA 24 P 25 (fol. 14r$^b$) directly after the conclusion of the Charlemagne material and in TCD F.5.3. This anecdote—entitled Scél in dá Lenam in the former and appearing under the heading De miraculis sancte Marie hystoria in the latter—is the retelling of the Jew of Bourges legend, probably taken from the Legenda Aurea. In it, a virtuous Jewish boy attends Mass with some Christians. However, this action enrages the youth’s father who promptly tosses his son into an oven. The Virgin Mary intercedes for the lad, preventing him from being harmed by the flames and many convert because of this miracle. The Christians, having heard the story from the boy, burn his wicked father alive in the very stove with which he tried to murder his son. In both Scél in dá Lenam and Stair Fortibrais, then, a virtuous Jew converts to Christianity thereby incensing his impious father who is subsequently killed by Christians.

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Historiographical

As discussed above, genres that would be considered entirely fictitious in modern terms, particularly epic, were freely used in the medieval tradition to augment and sometimes even create ‘historical’ accounts.\textsuperscript{138} Naturally, then, \textit{Stair Fortibrais}, being based on the life of a historical king, may well have been attractive to Irish audiences for this very reason.

Certainly, the original title given in the colophons—\textit{Sdair Serluis moir ag lenmain coroine Crist 7 taissi na naemh} (The History of Charles the Great Pursuing the Crown of Christ and the Saints’ Relics) or, in one case, simply \textit{Sdair Serluis Moir}\textsuperscript{139}—seems to suggest that the figure of Charles himself served as a significant point of interest in the material for the Irish.

In contrast, in the original French as well as in some later vernacular translations, such is not always the case. For example, the titles \textit{Fierabras} in the Old French poem and \textit{The Sowdone of Babylon}—in one of the Middle English adaptations of the story—suggest that the exotic pagans, while admittedly not the primary focus of the text, were considered important or attractive enough to warrant top billing. The appearance in five manuscripts of a title which focuses on the Christian king rather in his royal Saracen adversaries seems to attest to at least a reasonably widespread acceptance of its suitability for summarising the tale’s perceived content.

Furthermore, every manuscript containing \textit{Stair Fortibrais} save King’s Inns 10 also has (often legendary) historical information including material such as accounts of traditional Irish heroes, lists of men killed in specific battles, anecdotes on the kingdoms of the Old Testament mentioned above and notes discussing the invention of the alphabets. While the

\textsuperscript{138} For an analysis of this phenomenon as it relates to the \textit{Chanson de Roland}, the \textit{Pseduo-Turpin Chronicle} and \textit{Fierabras}, see Marianne Ailes, ‘From Epic to Chronicle and Back: The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle and the chanson de geste Fierabras’, in \textit{Thirty Years of Medieval Studies at the University of Reading, 1965-95: A Celebration}, ed. by Anne Curry (Reading: Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, 1995), pp. 17-24.

\textsuperscript{139} Some slight variation occurs in the colophons. Egerton 1781, TCD H. 2. 7 and TCD H. 2. 17 exhibit orthographic variants only. TCD H. 2. 12 displays some alternate word usage, but remains virtually identical in terms of semantics: \textit{Conid in sdair tserlais ac leinnain coroine Crist 7 taisi na naim comuici sin}. The shortened title occurs in RIA 23 O 48.
majority of these texts exhibit no notable thematic links to Charles, their placement in relation to *Stair Fortibrais* in two manuscripts—TCD H.2.17 and Laud 610—suggests that its potentially historiographical nature may have been a point of interest for compilers. Granted these two codices have some issues in regards to their ordering. However, while not all the material appears in logical groupings, series of texts in TCD H.2.17 with similar themes do occur with reasonable regularity and the eleven entries preceding *Stair Fortibrais* have a religious theme while the following six detail significant events from Ireland’s past.

Laud 610 seems to be loosely divided into sacred and secular sections. *Stair Fortibrais* appears approximately a third of the way through at the transitional point between primarily religious and mostly historiographical material. Before it, the codex focuses in the main on homilies, religious tracts or anecdotes and hagiographies. Immediately following the text (in the same gathering) are two pieces of native secular material *Interrogatio Cinn Faelad*, ‘the Settling of the Manor of Tara’ (fols. 57v-58r), and a poem apparently referencing *Scéla mucce meic Dá Thó*, ‘the Story of Mac Dá Thó’s Pig’ (fol. 58v). These works are typical of the remainder of the codex which seems to be primarily concerned with Irish poetry, epic history and synchronisms. *Stair Fortibrais*’ placement in TCD H.2.17 and Laud 610 could possibly indicate that it was regarded as both a religious and historical text and thus an appropriate work to appear in the transitional portions of the manuscripts.

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140 Ó Cuív, *Catalogue*, p. 82.
Wonders of the East

Texts dealing with people, places and events of the eastern world are scattered throughout Stair Fortibrais’ manuscripts. However, in the case of Egerton 1781, the compiler seems to have specifically been collecting texts detailing the Wonders of the East. In addition to De Inventione Sanctae Crucis (fol. 1), Stair Fortibrais (fols. 2a-18b), and Gabháltais Shéarluis Mhóir (fols. 19-35), the manuscript also contains Seon Maundaul (fols. 129-46) and Prester John’s Epistle (fol. 151), both of which delve deeply into the Middle Eastern world. Corroborating the theory, the Charlemagne material is succeeded by a series of six hagiographies all concerned with Christians in the east: Betha Jacobus Intercisus (fols. 41-42), Betha Iuliana (fol. 43), Betha Elexius (fol. 44), Betha Cirisiuis 7 Iulite (fols. 45-47), Betha Cathraigh (fol. 48), Betha Margrec (fols. 49-52). With the exception of the holy beggar Alexius, each legend recounts the saints’ martyrdoms at the hands of pagans. In addition, all the lives recorded above share certain broad chronological and geographical similarities: namely, they lived during the fourth or fifth centuries in the east (Persia, Nicomedia, Syria, Tarsus, Alexandria, and Antioch respectively). The inclusion of Jacob Intercisus in particular may point to a special interest in martyrdom at pagan hands, early saints and/or eastern believers because he was an Eastern Orthodox saint but never canonised by the Roman Catholic Church.141 This particular choice of saints taken together with the tale of Charles’ quest to attain the relics of passion and other texts detailing the wonders of the Holy Land may indicate a particular interest in compiling legends relating to the East.

141 The hagiography also exhibits possible thematic links with the Charlemagne material directly preceding it in that Jacobus Intercisus was among the Christians whose persecution led to the Roman-Sassanid War (421-422).
Translation

*Stair Fortibrais* frequently appears in conjunction with the adaptations of classical and vernacular material. Two classes of translation literature exist in the Irish tradition: adaptations from Latin sources and re-workings of vernacular stories. Strictly speaking, the vast majority of the religious material falls into the former category. However, its technical status as translation literature does not appear to be a focus of the compilers, but rather incidental to the assembling of Christian material originally written in Latin. However, three sizable works do seem to properly belong to this category. The most popular, *Togail Troi* appears in two manuscripts (TCD H.2.7, pp. 457-60 in which it is the text immediately following *Stair Fortibrais* and TCD H.2.17, pp. 119-171). *Togail na Tebe* (Egerton 1781, fols. 87-127) and *In Cath Catharda* (TCD H.2.7, pp. 376-417) each occur in only a single manuscript. All these texts are based upon Latin originals: Dares’ *De Excidio Troiae*, Statius’ *Thebaid* and Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* respectively.

The second category, vernacular translations, includes four texts each originally composed in French and translated into Irish by way of an intermediary insular adaptation: *Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás* (TCD H.2.7, pp.258-99),142 *Beathadh Sir Gui o Bharbhuíc* (TCD H.2.7, pp. 300-47),143 *Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir* (TCD H.2.7, pp. 348-63)144 and *Seon Maundaulil* (Egerton 1781, fols. 129-46).145 Perhaps as Luft cautions, translation literature is not a category recognised during the period, but the large number of Irish language adaptations appearing in conjunction with *Stair Fortibrais* is worth noting at least briefly for a couple of reasons. First, as a French text with a direct Latin source, it occupies an especially

143 Robinson, pp. 10-14.
145 Flower, p. 540.
interesting position between the two classifications of translation literature, a fact worth bearing in mind when parsing the adaptor’s strategy. Secondly, the appearance of a series of classical and vernacular translations within these fifteenth-century manuscripts has potentially remarkable ramifications as the product of a society experiencing an upsurge of native culture while at the same time looking to the past and outward to its neighbours.

**Conclusion**

*Stair Fortibrais* arose from an enduring and vibrant Irish manuscript tradition. Each of its eight codices has an individual contribution to make to a greater understanding of the text, which can be read in a variety of manners. Certainly, the work exhibits a strong connection to the religious tradition and thus lends itself all the more to an ethical reading. Furthermore, its original title and placement within some codices implies that it may have contributed to the ongoing historical project undertaken by Irish scholars. Based on the context of its manuscript compilition, *Stair Fortibrais* appears to function as a bridge between sacred and secular, East and West, Latin and vernacular.
Chapter 2: Translation Techniques

The Shaping of Medieval Translation Theory

As Ivana Djordjević notes, modern scholars often utilise dichotomies in their analyses of translations: form vs. substance, word-for-word vs. sense-for-sense, source-based vs. target-based, replication vs. replacement. Broadly speaking, according to these categorisations, the majority of medieval translation would be considered to privilege substance-oriented, sense-for-sense, target-based translation which aims to replace the source text for its audience. Its goal is domestication, which seeks to ‘move the writer to the reader’. While such a statement is generally correct, the situation naturally proves far more complex and interesting once modern classifications are set aside in order to explore the influences and assumptions which acted upon contemporary translators working with both literary and literal material.

Literary Translations

Medieval translation practice derives from two primary sources: the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition and St Jerome’s translation of the Vulgate Bible. Representatives of the former often emphasised the importance of adapting a work to its new linguistic context even at the expense of literality. In Cicero’s *De optimo genere oratorum*, he remarks on practice when translating the speeches of Demosthenes and Aeschines:

\[ \textit{Nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sententiis isdem et earum formis tamquam figuris, verbus ad nostrum consuetudinem aptis. In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi. Nom enim ea me adnumerare lectori putavi oportere, sed tamquam appendere.} \]

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147 This is as opposed to foreignisation, which seeks to ‘move the reader to the writer’. See *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. by Jeremy Munday (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 183-84, 189-90.
And I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the ‘figures’ of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not think I ought to count them out to the reader like coins, but to pay them by weight, as it were.

The phrase *non verbum pro verbo* has of course become one of the best-known aphorisms on the subject of translation, but naturally, it is important not to examine such a quotation without a proper understanding of its context. To that end, Rita Copeland makes two important points regarding Cicero’s register and intentions. First, he expressly states that he is engaging in translation *ut orator* implying a contrast between the production of rhetoricians and that of the grammarians whom, given their position at an earlier phase of education, one might reasonably expect to be more literal in their renderings. While such assumptions were certainly not always true, particularly during the medieval period, the fact that Cicero’s translations belong to a high register remains worthy of note.149 Secondly, through his adaptation, he is seeking to appropriate these Greek speeches and their associated cultural authority to the Romans.150 He emphasises this fact by immediately following the discussion of his technique with the statement: *Hic labor meus hoc assequetur, ut nostri homines quid ab illis exigent, qui se Atticos volunt, et ad quam eos quasi formulam dicendi revocent intellegant* (The result of my labour will be that our Romans will know what to demand from those who claim to be Atticists and to what rule of speech, as it were, they are to be held).151

Of course this process of re-appropriation did not occur solely within the context of pure rhetoric. For example in his *Ars Poetica*, which enjoyed a much broader literary application during the medieval period, Horace famously addresses the issue of translation by

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150 *ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
151 Cicero, 5.15.
asserting that ‘difficile est proprie communia dicere’ (it is difficult to render commonalities properly) and he further advises his reader that ‘nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus interpres’ (as a faithful interpreter you will take care not to return a word for word).\(^{152}\)

Douglas Kelly summarises his argument: ‘the interpres or ‘translator’ interpreting or rewriting his or her material should leave out what is unnecessary or inept, and even insert falsehoods in order to produce a new version that is coherent, consistent, and credible from beginning to end’.\(^{153}\)

These ideas received additional development in the works of later Roman authors such as Quintilian (who like Horace advised a melding of established topics and authorial innovation) and the writings of medieval scholars including Heiric of Auxerre (who avowed that originality required new meaning as well as new language) and Geoffrey of Vinsauf (whose Documentum provides specific advice for how a translator might purposefully modify his source).\(^{154}\) Such formulations imply that ‘the translator’s victory lies in producing a work better than the original’.\(^{155}\) In turn, this development led to a redefining of the translator’s role vis-à-vis the author, though its exact nature remains difficult to pinpoint and can vary significantly depending upon the text. At the least, it is worth bearing in mind Roger Ellis’ assertion that ‘even when translators publically assume a humbler role, more akin to that of the scribe of another writer’s work, they often allow themselves considerable leeway in the exercise of their scribal function’.\(^{156}\) Based upon the fact that the translator’s duty to his

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\(^{154}\) *ibid.*, pp. 50-51, 54-55.

\(^{155}\) Djordjević, pp. 9-10.

audience superseded his responsibility to his source, Jeanette Beer offers a stronger statement on his status: ‘In the fullest sense the medieval translator was master of the author’.\textsuperscript{157}

\textbf{Literal Translations}

However, medieval translators did not always strive to replace their sources. In general, they seem to have observed a broad distinction between literary and literal texts.\textsuperscript{158} The latter category often included scientific and legal works as well as philosophical and religious material.\textsuperscript{159} Of course, depending upon the languages in question, perfectly literal translation is not always possible regardless of the intentions of the writer,\textsuperscript{160} but the theory behind these works seems to have differed from that of their literary counterparts. Rather than replacement of the source, they appear to have been created as a means of making information available to readers in their own language in order to facilitate learning or study, an aim fundamentally incompatible with the notion of appropriation discussed above.\textsuperscript{161}

Broadly speaking, texts belonging to this category follow the same sort of method employed by Jerome in his translation of the Bible. Although he seems to have agreed in theory with the notion of sense-for-sense translation as expressed by Cicero and others, given its status as a sacred text, he felt it necessary to render the Bible without any omission or, insofar as possible, alteration. In practice, then, he provided a venerable model for a more literal sort of source-based translation. Obviously, not all texts which fell into this category were so sacrosanct as to prevent any modifications. For example, a translation of a medieval medical text designed to be consulted regularly by a working physician may omit information on ailments (such as lovesickness) which he would be unlikely to encounter in his practice.\textsuperscript{162}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{158} ibid., p. 1.
\textsuperscript{160} Beer, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{161} Copeland, p. 225.
\end{flushright}
Sometimes other modifications of the source also occurred. Particularly in the case of texts with an established and substantial commentary tradition, such as patristic sources, interpretive material which may have originally appeared as marginalia sometimes became incorporated into the body of the work.\textsuperscript{163} However, this sort of translation would appear to be different from its more literary counterparts in both intention and practice.

**Conclusion**

From the above, a couple of broad points can be drawn about medieval translation. First, the term could encompass a variety of meanings, ranging from fairly literal renderings on the one hand to highly metaphorical and allegorical re-workings of a text on the other. Perhaps most commonly, adaptations fell somewhere between the two extremes. Regardless of their exact nature, however, as Kelly notes ‘all these terms presume some restatement . . . They all illustrate interpretatio’.\textsuperscript{164} By the mid-fifteenth century if not before, the need for the vernacular to assert its status in relation to Latin was at the least greatly diminished,\textsuperscript{165} but the processes of ‘appropriation, substitution, rupture and reinvention’ continued.\textsuperscript{166} First, as the Middle Ages progressed, French began to enjoy, though to a lesser extent, the same sort of ‘hierarchical privileging’ traditionally associated with Latin and therefore became subject to the same impulses when works written in this vernacular were translated into other languages.\textsuperscript{167} Secondly, as Sif Rikhardsdottir notes, ‘The meaning of the Latin translatio ‘carrying across,’ captures the sense of movement not only of the text, but also of the entire cultural subtext contained within.’\textsuperscript{168} Any given translation, then, offers a concrete example

\textsuperscript{164} Kelly, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{165} Copeland, p. 229.
\textsuperscript{167} Ellis, ‘Textual Transmission’, pp. 121-22.
of interaction between different peoples and therefore creates a unique window into their disparate linguistic and cultural traditions.

**Irish Translations**

Unsurprisingly, attempting to make generalisations regarding literary translations in medieval Ireland proves rather challenging. In addition to the facts that they are generally produced by different translators for varied patrons and often serve disparate functions, they also boast considerable variety, ranging in chronology from as early as the tenth century to the fifteenth century and in length from a few pages to amongst the longest works in medieval Irish prose. Brent Miles’ remarks on the Irish redactions of classical material could easily find broader application for the whole of the translation corpus: ‘Beyond a certain stylistic consistency which is the common inheritance of much early Irish prose, the classical tales have little in common other than their Greco-Roman subject matter . . . Nevertheless, one cannot fail to detect among the many anonymous authors an awareness that they worked in a recognised field’. Therefore, it is possible at least to a certain extent to distil translators’ principles from their practice including style, narrative structure and content.

**Style**

In the arena of style, the most obvious point is that Irish translators convert their poetic sources to the prose medium generally used for narrative in the Irish tradition. Beyond this significant and consistent alteration, other less dramatic but nonetheless noteworthy trends also emerge. For example, many of the texts exhibit a highly alliterative style which features a proliferation of adjectives, particularly when describing an individual or battle. This technique appears in native material and a wide variety of translations of both classical and vernacular works. It does not enjoy universal usage; in addition to *Stair Fortibrais, Seon Mandaual, Leabhar Ser Marco Polo* and *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha* all either do

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not make use of this style or do so quite sparingly. On the other hand, an incomplete list of
texts in which the technique is found includes older material translated from classical sources
such as *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, *Togail Troi*, *In Cath Catharda*, *Togail na Tebe* as well as the
fifteenth-century texts *Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir*, *Beathadh Gui o Bharbhuiuc* and *Stair Ercuil
ocus a bhás*. The frequent use of this particular literary style would seem to imply that
adaptors considered it an attractive method of making imported material seem more Irish.
Scholars have developed a number of theories as to why some texts adopted this technique
while others did not. In a discussion of the fifteenth-century translations, Erich Poppe
tentatively suggested that a straightforward style may reflect that a text was intended
principally for didactic purposes but he went on to note that the alliterative style also
sometimes appeared in hagiographical texts, which must have had as a prime function the
moral and spiritual edification of their readers. Conversely, Miles proposed that perhaps
the use of this style amongst later adaptors signalled a deliberate attempt to define themselves
as the inheritors of an established and venerable literary tradition.

Irish translations can also be characterised by a lack of authorial intervention in the
narrative, particularly of the sort involving a direct, first-person address to his audience. For
example, Vergil’s famous formulation: *Arma virumque cano* (I sing of arms and a man) from
the opening line of the *Aeneid* does not appear in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*. These changes, Poppe
notes ‘are not simply a stylistic surface phenomenon, but mean a dramatic change in narrative
presentation. They are conditioned by the dominant mode of medieval Irish narration which

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170 Both styles find representation in SF’s manuscripts. Alliteration is not a feature of SF itself or Seon Mandauil
(Egerton 1781) but it does appear in *Togail Troi* (TCD H.2.7 and TCD H.2.17), *In Cath Catharda* (TCD H.2.7),
*Togail na Tebe* (Egerton 1781) *Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir* (TCD H.2.7), *Beathadh Gui o Bharbhuiuc* (TCD
H.2.7) and *Stair Ercuil ocus a bhás* (TCD H.2.7).
171 Poppe, ‘*Stair Ercuil*’, pp. 60-61.
172 Miles, p.51.
looks at the events from outside and is distanced, detached, and unemotional, very much without an intrusive narrator’s voice or presence’.  

Other figures of speech, such as the extended metaphors and epic similes found particularly in classical sources, experience a more varied treatment in their Irish versions. Thus, despite Vergil’s considerable use of such techniques, the translator of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* simply dispenses with the majority, often replacing them with alliterative descriptive passages. Conversely, *In Cath Catharda*, the Irish version of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, not only preserves a significant number of the similes in its source but also features instances in which the adaptor has composed his own classically-inspired metaphors such as likening Pompey to a rotting oak. One might tentatively suggest, then, that in cases where stylistic features of the original did not run contrary to Irish narrative practice, adaptors appear to have enjoyed a degree of leeway regarding their inclusion in translations.

**Narrative Structure**

As to the narrative structure of the Irish adaptations, the preference for natural order emerges as a prime organising factor. Vernacular sources tend to have been composed in adherence with this principle at least on a broad level. However, when dealing with classical material which begins *in medias res* such as the *Aeneid* or Statius’ *Thebaid*, the Irish translators reorder their sources so that events occur in a linear fashion. Certainly such an alteration brought foreign material into accordance with native texts, but it could also have served to facilitate the audience’s comprehension of an unfamiliar story. Perhaps more significantly, presenting events in a chronological fashion would be the natural choice for material which appears to have been regarded as at least broadly historical.

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174 ibid., pp. 79-81.
The readers’ need for additional information which the original audience would presumably already have known, combined with perceived historicity of the Classical texts in particular likely served at the least as a contributing factor for another sort of alteration to the narrative structure: the interpolation of related information from external sources. For example, Meyer not only asserts that the adaptor of *In Cath Catharda* must have been working from a copy of Lucan which possessed marginalia referencing other classical authors, but also finds evidence that the translator drew upon Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies* and Orosius’ *Historia Adversus Paganos*.177 Similarly, the translator of *Togail na Tebe* (Statius’ *Thebaid*) opens his composition by narrating Cadmus’ establishment of the city and the tale of Oedipus, neither of which occur in his source.178

As the addition of supplementary material implies, condensation in and of itself does not appear to be one of the organising principles of the adaptors. Beyond the use of external works, some translators expanded on their sources using their own personal creativity and knowledge. Such was probably the case for *Togail Troí* which—largely due to rhetorical expansion of dialogue—possesses a length twice as great as that of its rather terse source *De Excidio Troiae Historia*.179 In his discussion of the work, Uáitéar Mac Gearailt argues against the notion that the translator made particular use of supplementary text(s): ‘It appears more likely from the style, compositional method, and content of many of these new passages, and from the interweaving of classical and Irish elements . . . that such passages, even when they contain references to characters or events we know from Greek mythology, are based on the authors’ knowledge of such things rather than a textual source which they were following

177 Meyer, ‘*Pharsalia*’, p. 357.
178 Robert T. Meyer, ‘The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid of Statius*’, *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, 47, (1961), pp. 687-99 (p. 691). The preference of Irish adaptors for natural order as well as the tendency to augment Classical sources with thematically-related supplementary material proves typical of the broader European tradition of translation literature. This includes French adaptations such as *Roman d’Eneas* which also restructures its source to provide a linear narrative, and the *Roman de Thèbes* whose account also opens with the story of Oedipus.
closely’.

Similarly, Edgar Slotkin analyses the Irish translator’s treatment of different books of the *Aeneid*. He concludes that Book VI (treating the destiny of Rome) follows its source rather closely in comparison to Book X (recounting battles and describing the death of Pallas). While in Vergil the latter is longer by seven lines, this slight difference balloons in the Irish to one hundred and sixteen lines. Slotkin explains this variance by asserting that since Book VI ‘had more content of intrinsic interest to the medieval Irish, as well as to all of medieval Europe than any other part of the *Aeneid*, the Irish translator was correspondingly more careful and complete in his translation of this book’ while conversely ‘the battles of Book X could more easily be translated not so much into the Irish language but into the Irish saga idiom’.

These expansions, particularly when considered alongside the fact that only two Middle Irish prose texts (*Táin Bó Cúailnge* and *Acallamh na Senórach*) boast a greater length than *In Cath Catharda*, implies rather strongly that compression of their source did not serve as a primary concern of the Irish adaptors.

**Content**

In terms of content, most Irish translators follow their narratives with faithfulness, at least in the broad, thematic sense. On a more micro level, they appear to have been guided primarily by the question of what would be relevant and interesting to their audience. As John R. Harris remarks: ‘In all the adaptations curious or fine political, geographical and historical details tend to be garbled, passed over, or ‘updated’ so as to fit the world-view of a medieval Irish audience’.

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183 Harris, pp. 103-04.
and/or pagan material, which was often reduced, omitted or, less frequently, altered to fit a Christian context.\textsuperscript{184}

Beyond these modifications and the fairly common technique of reducing lengthy rhetorical set-pieces to shorter and more straightforward dialogue, the adaptors also sought to add distinctly Irish touches to their texts. For example, \textit{In Cath Catharda} and \textit{Togail na Tebe} both use the term \textit{ard-ri} (high king) to describe supreme rulers, refer to \textit{gessa} (taboos) and replace the Roman goddess Bellona with the Celtic figure Badb. In addition, the former describes the speech of the Massilians as ‘\textit{caín Gaedilg}’ (fair Gaelic) in two manuscripts.\textsuperscript{185} Likewise, the latter uses the Irish term \textit{oenach} (fair) in place of a literal rendering of the foreign notion of funeral games.\textsuperscript{186} Amongst the later translations, \textit{Bethadh Bibuis o Hamtuir} provides a couple of significant instances of alterations to its source—an unidentified Middle English text itself derived from the Anglo-Norman \textit{Boeve de Haumontone}—which bring the narrative more in line with Irish culture.\textsuperscript{187} First, the adaptor implies that a noblewoman has at least a theoretical ability to reject a marriage partner she finds unacceptable. Second, the narrative subtlety emphasises the importance of hospitality, an aspect of Irish culture so significant that refusing it could have legal repercussions.\textsuperscript{188}

In addition, sometimes audience expectations require a more dramatic transformation of the original material. For example, texts with vernacular sources in particular often provided a window into a character’s thoughts. In accordance with the more external and seemingly objective narrative style discussed above, Irish adaptors also had a distinct tendency to avoid providing information on their characters’ psychological states and instead

\textsuperscript{184} While a certain degree of suppression regarding such elements proves widespread, it is not universal. \textit{In Cath Catharda} often preserves and sometimes expands references to the gods. See Harris, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{185} Meyer, ‘\textit{Pharsalia}’, p. 361.
\textsuperscript{186} Meyer, ‘\textit{Thebaid}’, p. 694.
\textsuperscript{188} \textit{ibid.}, pp. 92-94.
sought to furnish the necessary information through dialogue, actions or on occasion by means of one character reproaching another for unacceptable behaviour. At times, the Irish preference for narrative climaxes featuring external events such as battles as opposed to internal occurrences like a character’s evolution has even more far-reaching consequences. Harris argues that *In Cath Catharda* covers only the first seven books of Lucan for this reason. Books eight through ten, detailing the aftermath of the Battle of Thessaly and the murder of Pompey were perhaps considered something of an anti-climax. As a consequence, the Irish author builds up his narrative to an apex at the battle, and moreover he expands Lucan’s account to occupy a quarter of the Irish text.

**Conclusion**

The above discussion of Irish translation literature has been of necessity quite broad. What emerges from the analysis with some clarity is that these adaptations were composed in (often alliterative) prose, featured distinct lack of authorial intervention in the narratives, followed natural order and appear to have based their judgment on what details to include and sometimes much larger-scale decisions on their relevance and interest to the audience. In this regard at least, the Irish adaptations appear to be very much synchronised with the wider medieval European tradition of what modern scholars would call target-based translation. In short, they were attempting to translate a source not merely to another language but to a new culture.

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189 Poppe, *‘Stair Ercuil’*, p. 94 and Poppe and Reck, p. 48. The externalisation of emotion also occurs in *chansons de geste*.

190 Harris, pp. 104-08.
Gesta Karoli Magni and Stair Fortibrais: The Direction of Influence

Although it seems reasonably clear that Stair Fortibrais serves to translate Fierabras into a new cultural milieu, the process has been complicated to a certain extent by the presence of the Hiberno-Latin translation Gesta Karoli Magni. Even the most cursory examination reveals that one of these texts served as the source of the other; therefore the re-appropriation of the text likely occurred in two distinct phases with the second translator continuing and building upon the work of his predecessor. Consequently, a brief discussion of the direction of influence proves necessary before any further analysis may commence. On the basis of the proper names appearing in the works, Michael Davies concluded that the Irish descends from the Latin.\textsuperscript{191} An in-depth examination of the narratives will serve to support his assertion. Whenever omissions or substitutions cause a divergence between the Latin and Irish texts, Gesta Karoli Magni consistently agrees with the French poem, and none of the few additions occurring in the Irish but not its Latin source would appear to derive from direct contact with Fierabras. Finally, there are four specific instances of variation between the Latin and Irish texts which strongly imply that the latter derives from the former.

Firstly, the name of the pagans’ leader proves significant. The French tradition (with slight variation) names him l’amirant Balan. The Latin text preserves this appellation as ‘Balant admirandus’ (Admiral Balant).\textsuperscript{192} However, despite the fact that the adaptor first introduces the character in paragraph three, his proper name does not appear until paragraph seventy-six when the Saracens return to Egrimor with their Christian captives. Prior to that time (and often thereafter) he is simply ‘admirandus.’ So strong is this tendency that his name appears only six times throughout the fragment whereas ‘admirandus’ is used as his sole identifier in fifty-five instances. This propensity of the Latin adaptor is realized fully by the

\textsuperscript{191} Davies, pp. 204–17.
\textsuperscript{192} GKM, p. 334-35, ¶ 76. For a more detailed discussion of his name and characterisation see pp. 191-98.
Irish translator who—either as a result of mistaking a common noun for a proper one due to Latin’s lack of definite article or more likely as part of his widespread policy of simplification—dispenses entirely with name Balan and refers to the character only as Admirandus.193 While admittedly not conclusive evidence, the evolution of this character’s name does appear to suggest that the Latin served as an intermediary between the French and Irish versions.

The second example of the text’s evolution arises from a disharmony in a seemingly inconsequential detail. As is typical of Saracen princesses in *chansons de geste*, Floripas is associated with the magical and consequently she possesses an Eden-like garden which contains within it a mandrake that ‘*de touz maux sanz demort enn a l’en ajutoire*’ (would cure a man of all ills without delay).194 The Irish preserves this detail but with a significant variation: ‘*do fasadh isin oriberd sin ubhull neoch do slánaighedh a n-uile galara*’ (in the orchard grows the apple which would heal all their ills).195 This leap from a mandrake to an apple is striking and without the survival of the Latin text one might have been forced into speculations about the horticulture of Ireland or perhaps the influence of the French poet’s *blason* of Floripas three *laisse*s previous which described her breasts as ‘*durres conme ponmetes*’ (firm as apples)196 on the Irish translator. Thus, it proves especially fortunate that the Latin fragment survives to provide the crucial link between the two texts. This adaptor deals with his source in a somewhat strange manner, interpreting the common French noun *madagoire* as a name ‘Magdeglore’ which he then glosses ‘*i. pomum omni morbo salutiferum*’ (that is the apple which cured every disease).197 Whether this change results

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193 There is one possible exception to this rule. See p. 192.
194 *Fierabras*, l. 2270.
195 *SF*, pp. 126-27, ¶ 92.
196 *Fierabras*, l. 2141.
197 *GKM*, p. 341-42, ¶ 93. The confusion may have resulted at least in part from the orthography. *Mandag(l)oire* would be the expected form and indeed this is the spelling found in the edition’s glossary. See Le Person, *Fierabras: Chanson de Geste du XIIe Siècle*, p. 653.
from a misreading of the French or from an attempt to make the text more relatable to an audience living in a region far from the Mediterranean homeland of the plant, what emerges clearly from the passage is that the Irish translator’s magical apple derives directly from his Latin source.198

Thirdly, the episode during which the knights debate who should stay behind to guard the gate during a sortie from Aigremore/Egrimor, while admittedly not as straightforward as the previous examples, provides supplementary evidence regarding the direction of influence. In the French poem, the episode serves a thematic function as an instance of the rivalry between Roland and Nainmon for the leadership of the peers. The former requests that the latter (along with their comrade Tierri) forgo the skirmish in favour of the important but unglamorous assignment of safeguarding the gate for the knights’ return. Seeing the task as an affront to his valour—and likely rejecting the younger man’s right to issue orders to him in any event—Nainmon adamantly declines: dont aie ge dehé / Se ge sui vo portier en trestout mon aé (a curse on me if I am ever in my life your porter).199 Roland accepts Nainmon’s refusal and proceeds to assign the task to Tierri and Basin. Tierri also objects to being left behind, but ultimately Roland convinces him of the mission’s importance and secures his assent.

In contrast, the Latin adaptor generally appears uninterested in exploring the occasionally contentious nature of the relationship between Nainmon and Roland and regularly removes or reduces the relevant passages,200 which admittedly play only a minor and largely inconsequential role in the overall narrative of Fierabras. As a result, he elects to abridge the episode by removing Roland’s original request and Nainmon’s subsequent rebuff—which prove irrelevant to the plot since Nainmon does indeed ride to battle—but still

198 For a more detailed discussion of the transition from mandrake to apple, see pp. 218-20.
199 Fierabras, ll. 3327-28.
200 See p. 94.
enforce the notion that none of the courageous peers wish to remain behind by preserving Roland’s assignment of the task to Tirri who protests before eventually agreeing.201

The Irish version of the episode reduces the scene even further. It agrees with the Latin text in having Roland address Tirri but not Nemer, while differing in its removal of any objections on the part of the peers.202 This omission could imply an emphasis on unity within their ranks in the Irish text or result incidentally from either the removal of a detail perceived as unnecessary (since the peers have previously proven their bravery) or from the adaptor’s regular strategy of minimising the role of less well-known knights such as Tirri.203

Admittedly, the Irish translator could have possessed the full episode as it existed in the French poem and independently chosen to omit the majority of its contents, but this seems unlikely for two reasons. First, his translation strategy overall suggests a close and systematic preservation of narrative detail which implies that he would be more likely to omit Tirri’s two lines of dialogue in the Latin text than two laisses’ worth of debate in the French poem. More convincing, however, is the identity of the second knight to whom Roland assigns the task.

As mentioned above, Basin receives this duty in Fierabras. In contrast, the adaptations are in agreement that Richard serves as Tirri’s fellow guard. The change should hardly be surprising given the tendency to replace less famous knights with their more-renowned counterparts. While Basin would have been well-known to the French audience from his appearance in the Chanson de Roland wherein his death at the hands of Marsile leads Roland to demand vengeance from Charles, Richard would unquestionably have possessed greater name recognition with the Irish audience. More significantly, the likelihood that Stair Fortibrais derives this detail from Gesta Karoli Magni far outweighs the possibility that both independently chanced to choose this particular peer. Taken as a complete unit, the episode

201 GKM, pp. 366-67, ¶ 142.
202 SF, pp. 156-59, ¶ 142.
therefore implies that the both texts have the same source (due to the replacement of Basin with Richard) and that the Irish version derives from the Latin text (since the latter has details not contained in its counterpart).

The final example relates to the episode at the gate in that both reveal a simplification of the Irish adaptation as compared to the Latin text, but it differs as regards its cause. In the previous case, the adaptor edited out details in the Irish version because previous omissions had rendered them largely irrelevant. In contrast, the modifications in death of the thief sent to steal Floripas’ girdle appear to derive from the Latin translator misapprehending his French source resulting in the inclusion of a couple of largely nonsensical sentences, which the Irish adaptor—who would have little hope of understanding them without recourse to the original source—then omitted. The crux lies in the lines ‘La candoille au larron fu tantost avuglee / Ainz puis l’enchantement n’out la dedenz duree’ 204 (The candle of the robber was immediately put out / Afterwards the enchantment does not endure therein any further). The attempt to render these lines in Latin apparently results in the sentences ‘Unde de cetero nescivit carmina proferre. Unde vero lux lucebat, ita magis apparuit quod multi videntes eum prae timore fugerunt’ (From then on, he did not know how to manufacture charms. The light was shining very brightly indeed, so that it appeared that many more people, on seeing him, had fled out of fear). 205 While the French and Latin renderings are very different, the placement—which in both texts occurs directly after Guy tosses the bifurcated thief into the water but before Floripas’ lament at losing the girdle—combined with the references to his charms ceasing to work and light/darkness imagery makes the identification reasonably sound even if the meaning of the Latin sentences themselves is not. Naturally, such perplexing statements containing only details which could be termed superfluous in regards

204 Fierabras, ll. 3213-14.
205 GKM, p. 364, ¶ 137.
to the narrative are removed entirely by the Irish adaptor, whose account flows seamlessly from the thief’s defenestration to Floripas’ sorrow.\textsuperscript{206} In doing so, he provides yet another example of an Irish text which has omitted French detail found in its Latin source.

**Methodology**

Despite its importance, however, establishing the direction of influence provides only the most rudimentary basis for analysis. A more in-depth comparison proves necessary to determine how the translators approached their craft—a question of great significance for the interpretation of these specific texts, but also potentially for the understanding of Irish translation practices more generally. Unfortunately, in some ways these two goals prove contradictory. Examples of general practice are demonstrated most convincingly by a systematic approach which ensures both that the analyst does not privilege certain portions of the text and therefore develop a skewed picture of the work as a whole, and allows someone who has not read all (or any) of the texts in their entirety to begin to form their own opinions on the translators’ treatment of their material. However, since none of the texts are particularly brief, any sample must be selective to some degree; moreover, rigid adherence to a structured method would almost inevitably lead to the neglect of at least some of the most enlightening passages of the texts. As a result of this difficulty, the analysis of the translation techniques will be divided into two chapters. The first will address the adaptors’ general practice as regards narrative alterations while the second chapter will examine characters and themes which the translators seemed to consider of prime importance to the tale of *Fierabras* as they wished to relate it.

Admittedly, this approach is not devoid of its own complications. This method means that any comprehensive presentation of alterations would also prove excessively repetitive. One example should be sufficient to illustrate the nature of the difficulty. In the Hiberno-

\textsuperscript{206} *SF*, pp. 154-55, ¶ 137.
Latin and Irish texts the list of relics includes a fragment of the Cross while this particular sacred object is conspicuously absent in *Fierabras* due to its promotion of the Abbey of St Denis which—unlike its rival Notre Dame—at one time lacked this particular relic. This single modification could be discussed legitimately in any one of three contexts: during the investigation of how the Irish texts addressed the French cultural and epic tradition in which its source text was steeped, under the subdivision listing additions made by the adaptors or as a part of the presentation of religion and faith in the Irish texts. In order to avoid the potential recurrence, each alteration shall be discussed in only one section unless a compelling reason to do otherwise arises. Given that this thesis first and foremost explores *Stair Fortibrais*, amendments which appear to possess particular thematic significance for the text will be discussed in the following chapter and omitted from the discussion of the translators’ general trends. Fortunately, in most cases, sufficient examples still exist to offer an understanding of the translators’ basic approaches. The subsequent analysis section will attempt to offer a comparison which will prove beneficial for understanding the methods of the adaptors and to begin illustrating how *Stair Fortibrais* is functioning as a translation.

**The Battle of Kings: A Case Study**

While the purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the translation techniques utilised by the Latin and Irish adaptors by considering specific examples drawn from the text, it is important to acknowledge the fact that modifications often appear and function in tandem. That is to say, simply because a particular passage may be discussed primarily in regards to, for example, the substitutions found therein it may well be the subject of additional and perhaps even interconnecting alterations which cannot be explored fully in the space allotted. Therefore, it may prove beneficial to analyse a case study considering each modification chronologically regardless of its category and exploring their often complex interrelations.
The chosen episode comprises a portion of the final battle between the Christian and pagan forces during which Charles ultimately leads his army to victory over Balan/Admirandus, who is captured on the field. Given its placement near the conclusion of the work, only the French and Irish texts survive to be examined. In the former: 1) Ganelon kills a nameless Saracen 2) Ganelon slays the counsellor Sortinbrans’ brother Tenebre 3) Charles kills Brulans 4) Richard kills Balan’s brother Tenebré 5) Balan sallies forth to avenge him 6) Reignier kills Sortinbrans. Alternatively, in the latter: 1) Gentilion kills Brulant 2) Gentilion kills Sortibrand’s brother Tenebre 3) Charles kills Sortibrand 4) Richard kills an unnamed pagan 5) Admirandus sallies forth to avenge Sortibrand.


The first noteworthy matter is that of the name of the first Christian knight. While ‘Gentilion’ apparently derives from the object case of the French name ‘Guenes/Guenelon’ (Ganelon) and the characters serve the same narrative function as Charles’ emissary to Balan/Admirandus forced to fight his way back to the French army after delivering his message, Stair Fortibrais’ adaptor, probably due to some linguistic confusion, divides the single character from the French poem into two or possibly three different knights in his own work of which ‘Gentilion’ is one. Thus, the identity of the warrior whose actions open the conflict proves rather different in the adaptation than its source. Secondly, while both texts attribute the slaying of Sortinbrans de ConniBre/Sortibrand’s brother Tenebre to Ganelon/Gentilion, it occurs at varying times depending upon the text. In Fierabras, a nameless pagan is the first Saracen killed, followed by Tenebre and finally Brulans de Monmirés’ death at the hands of Charles. However, Stair Fortibrais credits Gentilion with slaying both pagans, first Admirandus’ counsellor Brulant, who replaces the nameless Saracen from the French text and then Tenebre.

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207 Fierabras, ll. 5708-5896.
209 This interpretive difficulty and its effect on the presentation of Ganelon will be explored in greater detail in pp. 176-182.
While any hypotheses on the motivations behind such alterations must remain tentative, it is interesting to note that all of these modifications appear to support trends in the translations which will be discussed in greater detail as the chapter progresses. First, by replacing an unidentified Saracen with Brulant and detailing his death before Tenebre’s, the Irish adaptor prioritises a known character who has featured at multiple points throughout the text over two pagans who make their first and only appearances here at the conclusion of the story and do little save die. This tendency to emphasise more famous or active characters at the expense of their lesser-known counterparts occurs on a notable number of occasions over the course of *Stair Fortibrais.*

Second, having Gentilion rather than Charles slay Brulant allows the narrator to limit the number of shifts in perspective which occur. At the opening of the episode, the Irish text focuses upon 1) Gentilion during the death of Brulant, 2) briefly transfers to the peers in the tower remarking upon their desire to assist him, 3) returns to Gentilion for Tenebre’s death, 4) shifts back to the peers preparing for battle and 5) finally turns to Charles hearing Gentilion’s report and readying his army. *Fierabras* features nearly double the number of alterations in perspective, shifting the audience’s attention from 1) Ganelon killing an unspecified Saracen to 2) the peers recognizing their fellow knight and 3) back to Ganelon as he slays Tenebre. The narrative then directs its attention back to 4) the peers’ continuing conversation about Ganelon before 5) returning again to Ganelon attempting to reach Charles. The poet then relates how 6) Balan hears of Brulans arriving with a large force—a detailed omitted in the Irish text—before focusing again on 7) Ganelon reporting the result of his mission to his king, then back to 8) the peers preparing for battle and finally 9) Charles readying his forces for the coming conflict and riding to battle during which he kills Brulans.

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211 For a more detailed analysis of this tendency, see pp. 74-82.
Clearly, substituting Gentilion for Charles as the agent of Tenebre’s death allowed for fewer shifts in perspective, but additional alterations were also required such as the conflation of Brulans and the unnamed pagan into the same character, the two conversations between the peers in the tower being reduced to one and the omission of Brulans arriving with a large force. Naturally this final modification must occur since Brulant has already been slain in the Irish text but it also serves to reduce the number of alterations in the audience’s focus. Regardless of the adaptor’s precise reasons for reshaping the episode, it seems clear that a significant number of complex and interdependent modifications occur.

At this point in both works Charles rides to battle and kills a Saracen, Brulans in *Fierabras* and Sortibrand in *Stair Fortibrais* since Brulant has previously died at Gentilion’s hands. Although the Irish text does not make the connection particularly explicit, it is intriguing to speculate that perhaps Admirandus chooses Sortibrand to lead the charge against Charles because one of the emperor’s knights has just slain his brother. Richard then kills a Saracen named Tenebré in the French text and identified only as a pagan in the Irish adaptation. It seems reasonable to speculate that this generalisation may have resulted from either the adaptor struggling to distinguish Tenebré from the deceased Tenebre or the expectation that the two names would confuse his audience. This alteration necessitates another. Both works feature Balan/Admirandus riding to avenge one of those close to him, his brother Tenebré or his advisor Sortibrand in the French and Irish texts respectively. While it may be presumed in both versions that Charles, as the leader of the Christian forces, is the ultimate target of his ire, the modifications in *Stair Fortibrais* provide an additional and more personal motivation for Admirandus to seek out combat with the emperor. In the French poem, he rides to avenge Tenebré who was slain by Richard but in the Irish text he takes to the field because of the death of Sortibrand for which Charles is personally responsible.
Finally, the episode in *Fierabras* concludes with the death of Sortinbrans at Reignier’s hands. Obviously, Sortibrand has already died in the Irish adaptation rendering this event unnecessary and indeed the text preserves no equivalent. However, it is also worth noting briefly that as a result of another translation error, Reignier de Genne—Oliver’s father riding with Charles’ forces—has been conflated with Nainmon de Baviere—one of the peers besieged in Aigremore/Egrimor into a single knight called Nemer.212 As a result, the adaptor may have elected to omit any mention of this occurrence to avoid the inevitable difficulties which any mention of Nemer in this context would cause.

In conclusion, it should be readily apparent that while some modifications prove fairly straightforward and may without difficulty be considered singularly, many of the alterations made by the adaptor are complex, multi-layered and often interdependent. The analysis of general scribal practice below is in no way intended to imply otherwise but rather to distil certain general principles from the elaborate tapestry of *Stair Fortibras*.

**General Scribal Practice**

In dealing with their French source, the Latin and Irish adaptations make use of four primary techniques: reduction/omission, substitution, reordering and addition. While these methods would naturally be utilised by translators both within and outwith Ireland, examining specific examples of each can provide valuable insight into the translators’ handling of their material.

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212 For a more detailed discussion of this error, see pp. 124-32.
Additions

Of the four categories of content alteration, additions are the least numerous by a considerable margin. However such a statement is not meant to imply that these innovations are insignificant. Arguably, their very rarity affords substantial weight to the few examples which do occur. Indeed, in the preponderance of instances, the translators’ additions appear to relate to issues of stylistic or thematic import. Accordingly, the subsequent discussion includes only a single example but hopefully when considered in conjunction with the succeeding thematic analysis it will allow the reader to develop a more comprehensive understanding of this class of modification.

This particular passage occurs when Richard kills the pagan Clarion/Clarion and commandeers his late foe’s warhorse leaving his own mount to return alone to Egrimoir. In both texts, his mount encounters skirmishes along the way. In Fierabras, the poet relates that the charger, called Bauchent, kills twenty of the pagans’ horses and tramples upon an additional fourteen.\(^{213}\) As is characteristic of the Irish adaptor, he utilises a variety of tools at his disposal in rendering this passage. Certainly omission occurs since the horse is left unnamed and substitution in the form of generalisation arises when the specific number of equine foes vanquished by Bauchent in the French poem is simply described as imdha (many) in the Irish. However, this brief episode also includes an addition of a sort. While the French poet states that the Saracens attempted and failed to capture the steed, he lists only other animals amongst the dead and wounded. As a logical extension of these facts, the translator naturally concludes that men must have been harmed during the encounter as well and specifies this detail in his account: ‘do marb daine 7 eich imdha’ (he killed many men and horses).\(^ {214}\)

\(^{213}\) Fierabras, 1. 4328.

\(^{214}\) SF, pp. 260-61, ¶ 174.
Admittedly, all the alterations listed here are quite minor and the episode itself possesses rather limited significance in relation to the narrative as a whole. However, these very facts arguably make the passage more significant for understanding the text since the complete tale is itself composed of many discrete episodes and while substantial and dramatic alterations can offer a great deal of insight into the translator’s view of his source and his audience, the minor deviations allow for a deeper understanding of his techniques when he did not deem significant reinterpretation necessary. First and foremost, the translation remains near to its source in a factual sense but arguably stays even closer in its essence. Furthermore, while names and numbers may be omitted the translator also clarifies his source and arguably even increases or at the very least maintains its sense of drama and urgency.

**Reordering**

Reorderings prove similar to additions at least in respect to their scarcity—less than twenty examples occur over the breadth of the entire adaptation. Also of note is the fact that no variations in ordering arise between the Latin fragment and the Irish translation. Furthermore, these alterations are not only uncommon in comparison to omissions/reductions or substitutions but it should also be noted that such revisions generally occur on a limited scale. In contrast to certain classical adaptations discussed previously,215 the adaptors apparently make no comprehensive effort to restructure the narrative to reflect a more linear chronology. Granted, while significant stylistic differences do occur between the texts, *Fierabras* generally conforms to the natural order so ingrained in the Irish style of the period. As a result, dramatic and extensive reorderings of the type apparently deemed essential for tales beginning *in medias res*, for example, prove unnecessary.

However, it should be noted that the French text does provide its audience with a notable variety of perspectives from which to consider the events related. In a broad sense,

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215 See pp. 56-58.
this stylistic feature results in an alteration between proceedings occurring more or less simultaneously, thereby occasioning if not a scuttling of the natural order at least a delay in its presentation. Both these tendencies emerge from the beginning of the poem during the single combat between Oliver and Fierabras when the French poet divides his audience’s attention between the two opponents and the reaction of Charles and his knights to these events. This trend continues throughout the text. After the combat, the focus is divided between the captured knights imprisoned at Aigremore and Charles’ camp located in Mor(r)imonde. Finally, once the peers drive the Saracens from their own stronghold the perspective periodically shifts to this group as well.

In each instance, the translators scrupulously adhere to their source with the possible exception of the single combat. During this episode the French poem draws the audience’s attention to Charles and the peers seven times in order to relate their reactions to the conflict. Through a combination of translation techniques, particularly reordering and omission/reduction, the Latin and Irish translators distil the number to four. Nonetheless, this fact should not simply be presumed to reflect any particular objection to Fierabras’ narration technique of shifting perspectives, especially in the absence of supporting evidence of such tendencies from elsewhere within the text. Thus, it would appear likely that Fierabras’ adaptors considered the technique of shifting the narrative’s focus between contemporaneous events to be sufficiently consistent with their audience’s expectations or at least not so far removed from them as to justify the considerable effort reorganisation would have required.

216 The location is stated to be Mor(r)imonde in the French text. The Latin and Irish versions are somewhat less specific mentioning only that it is twelve days away from Egrimor (GKM, p. 305, ¶ 3; SF, pp. 18-19, ¶ 3). For a discussion of the differences in geography between the texts see pp. 228-39.
217 Fierabras, ll. 788-797, 844-858, 921-931, 1073-75, 1150-58, 1201-98, 1359-1363. The boldface indicates that the lines were not rendered the Latin and Irish translations.
Naturally, this discussion is not meant to imply that the translators do not on occasion make slight modifications regarding the sequence of particular events which might seem to align with the potential expectations of their audiences. While examples are not especially numerous, on at least three occasions the reordering of an episode serves to allow the narrative to focus more closely on the actions of a single character before redirecting the audience’s attention in accordance with narrative necessity. One such occurrence arises when Balan/Admirandus commissions a thief named Taupim de Grimolee/Malpin to steal Floripas’ magical girdle which theretofore prevented those under siege from starving.

*Fierabras* begins by relating how after sneaking into the tower the thief casts a spell to ensure that all those nearby would be unable to awake and thereby prevent his crime. In this context, it is indeed logical that the poet explains that Guy is on the ramparts and therefore outside of the magic’s range and able to rescue his fiancée from the thief-turned-rapist, before refocusing on how, after acquiring the belt, Taupim was overcome by his lust and attempted to ravish the princess: ‘*Nos barons voit dormant par la sale pavee; / Si a nos gens li lerres souduite et enchantee / Qu’il ne se remuassent por la tor d’or rasee. / Li quens Guis de Borgoigne a la ciere menbree / Est a une fenestre devers la mer betee / Por veoir la grant ost qui est la assemblee. / Et li lerres ne fist plus longue demoree; / Vient au lit Floripês quil plus bele iert que fee.*’ (Our barons were sleeping in the flag-floored room / so the thief deceived and cast a spell on our men / so that they would not have moved if offered the tower. / The count Guy of Burgundy his face renowned / is at a window facing the icy sea / so that he may look at the great host which has assembled. / And the thief did not delay any longer; / he comes to the bed of Floripas who is more beautiful than a fairy.)

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219 The summary provided relates events occurring from *Fierabras*, ll. 3180-90. The quotation itself includes only ll. 3184-3188.
In contrast, the Irish adaptation maintains the focus on Malpin for as long as possible, recounting his entrance, use of a magical charm, theft and attempted rape before directing the attention toward Guy: ‘Do eigh in ingen co hard 7 adubaír: ‘Uch, a ingina, is trom codultaídhi, 7 a ridirída inmuíne is fada uainn atáithi.’ Ocus dobi ser Gido ar barr [uachtarach] in tuir intansin ac fechuin sluáigh na paganach, 7 do cualaídh se eigim Floripes, 7 do innsaigh i’ (The damsel screamed loudly and said ‘Alas, you girls! You are sleeping heavily, and oh dear knights, you are far from us!’ Sir Guy was then on the top of the tower, watching the army of the pagans, and he heard the scream of Floripas, and came to her). When comparing the series of events related in these excerpts it is particularly worth noting—both in this instance and in the other examples listed under this rubric—that, with the exception of the reordering, 1) the content remains fairly consistent and 2) each account features a clear, logical and flowing description of the events.

These two points prove fairly unambiguous, as such matters go, but it may be relevant to emphasise the fact that the reordering discussed occurs during an episode in which the adaptor made additional and apparently unrelated alterations, in this particular case between the Latin and Irish versions. As has been previously addressed, the translator of Gesta Karoli Magni appears to have struggled either in his attempt to comprehend or properly render a somewhat challenging couplet from Fierabras regarding Taupim/Malpin’s defenestration. The Irish adaptor, when faced with the resulting and rather perplexing Latin, simply excised this particular portion of the episode. Of course, it would be precipitous to postulate solely on this basis that the presence of such alteration within the same passage

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220 SF, pp. 154-55, ¶¶ 136-37. Stokes consistently prefixes the title ser onto the name of knights. This thesis will divide the two words.
221 Some additional alterations between the French source and the adaptations also occur, such as the differing locations in which Guy is standing and the omission in GKM and SF of the briefly-mentioned fact that upon hearing her scream, Floripas’ ladies ran to assist her but ultimately fled the scene of the attempted rape in Fierabras, ll. 3200-02.
222 See pp. 65-66.
increased the likelihood of additional modifications like reordering which might not have otherwise appeared. Still, while *Gesta Karoli Magni* may not exhibit any exceptional variance from the French poem, the translator’s puzzlement over the apparent crux in his source could well have caused him to focus his attention more closely on the passage, thereby resulting in alterations which may have rendered his adaptation slightly more pleasing to his audience but were not strictly essential for meeting their stylistic and aesthetic principles. Certainly, from a strictly narrative point of view, the alteration does not appear to be necessary given that it does not serve to clarify, simplify, or increase the logic of the original. Potentially, then, the adaptor modified his source in this fashion to align his translation more closely with his audience’s sensibilities but, perhaps, he did not always feel the need to do so in this particular fashion.

Of course, given the minor nature of the revision in question it is conceivable that the particular manuscript used by the adaptor ordered the events in the same manner as the Hiberno-Latin and Irish translations. Since such a supposition remains impossible to confirm at this time, it proves fortunate that the same technique arises again as the text progresses. Another example of this method occurs at the conclusion of the story when Charles and his peers convene to determine the fate of the captive pagan leader Balan/Admirandus. His children, Fierabras/Fortibras and Floripas, attend this convocation and both make arguments regarding his fate after his rather spectacular rejection of his attempted baptism. In the French poem, Fierabras entreats Charles not to execute his father, but Floripas interrupts him to advance her own argument. After her interjection, Fierabras continues to plead for a peaceful resolution, this time addressing his implorations toward his father.\(^{223}\) Conversely, in *Stair Fortibrais* Fortibras begs Charles to allow him to beseech his father to convert; the permission is granted and Fortibras pleads with Admirandus. Only after both events have

\(^{223}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 6136-62.
occurred does the narrative focus on Floripas as she presents her arguments to the emperor.\textsuperscript{224} Interestingly, as in the previous case, this example features additional modifications occurring simultaneously. However, it proves rather less straightforward since the alterations do not result from a problematic reading but rather from the translator utilising a number of his techniques in rendering the episode. First, he vastly reduces his source by converting twenty-six lines of French verse, primarily direct speech, into two admittedly rather lengthy sentences in the Irish version with only Floripas quoted directly. Secondly, it should be noted that a slight variance in meaning arises between the two texts. In the French version, Fierabras pleads with Charles \textbf{regarding} his father whereas in the translation he seeks permission from the king \textbf{to address} Admirandus. More problematically, Floripas’ opinion on her father’s fate in the translation stands in direct opposition to her stance in \textit{Fierabras}.\textsuperscript{225}

However, these complications do not alter the fact that a reordering of events has occurred and Floripas agreeing with her brother’s assessment in the Irish text would hardly prohibit her inclusion in Fortibras’ plea to Charles before her brother beseeched Admirandus. In fact, depending on one’s aesthetic principles, such an approach could even be considered an improvement since it would reduce repetition. Both paragraphs begin with the formula: ‘\textit{mar do cualaidh X sin}’ (when X heard this) and the statement ‘\textit{dochuaidh docum Admiranduis}’ (he [Fortibras] went to Admirandus) is closely echoed only twenty-six words later by the phrase ‘\textit{dochuaidh mara roibhe in t-imper}’ (she [Floripes] went to where the emperor was biding). One might reasonably conclude, then, that the adaptor reordered these events because he deemed such reiteration inherently desirable, he wished to maintain focus on Fortibras for as long as possible or both factors contributed to his decision.

\textsuperscript{224} \textit{SF}, pp. 372-73, ¶¶ 240-41.
\textsuperscript{225} The episode clearly serves as part of a campaign in the Irish text to alter Floripas’ characterisation. See pp. 189-90 and pp. 267-68 for an analysis of this phenomenon.
The third example of this technique is both significantly longer and somewhat more problematic. As in the previous instances, other modifications occur in the passage. In this particular case, the most noteworthy alteration by far is the death of the knight Basin which has been excised from the translation, presumably in error. This fact makes any discussion of reordering more complex since it means that *Fierabras* describes the occurrence of one more event than the Irish adaptation. Still, in comparison to the aforementioned cases, the reordering of the passage proves substantial and therefore worthy of particular note. It arises during the knights’ sortie to secure food by raiding the besieging army when the pagan king Clarion/Clarion gathers reinforcements to charge the Christians. The series of events which ensues in the French text may be summarised as follows: 1) Roland and Berart encourage the peers 2) They secure provisions 3) Basin dies 4) Guy’s horse dies leading to his capture 5) The knights realise the Saracens have seized Guy 6) The Frenchmen flee abandoning the supplies 7) Oliver safeguards a fraction of their original rations 8) They return to the city 9) Floripas hears of Guy’s imprisonment 10) She threatens to betray the Christians if Guy is not returned to her 11) They promise to attempt a rescue 12) Guy is brought before Balan 13) The emir takes counsel regarding his prisoner’s fate.

Though the series of events even in this considerably distilled form proves both lengthy and complex, the narrative at each step either focuses upon the peers—in general or occasionally on specific members of the group—or upon Guy personally. Given that Guy obviously belongs to the larger body, the distinction is not always perfectly delineated and at times the narrator’s attention centres on Floripas as well when recounting her conversation with the knights. However, provided some latitude in interpretation is permitted, items one through three focus on the peers and four directs the audience’s attention to Guy specifically.

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226 For a more comprehensive discussion of this facet, see pp. 136-41.
227 *Fierabras*, ll. 3384-3588.
Beginning at number five and continuing until eleven the attention returns to the larger group before concluding with Guy’s fate in twelve and thirteen. Essentially then three shifts in perspective occur over the course of this excerpt.

In contrast, Stair Fortibrais commences with: 1) Guy’s horse dying leading to his capture 2) Bernard encouraging the peers 3) Guy being brought before Admirandus 4) Admirandus taking counsel regarding his prisoner’s fate 5) The peers securing provisions 6) The knights realizing the pagans have seized Guy 7) The Frenchmen fleeing abandoning the supplies 8) Roland safeguarding a fraction of their original rations 9) The knights returning to the city 10) Floripas hearing of Guy’s imprisonment 11) Her threatening to betray the Christians if Guy is not returned to her 12) The peers promising to attempt a rescue.228

Utilising the aforementioned formula, the same number of shifts occur with the perspective shifting from Guy in item one to the peers in two, back to Guy in three and four, and then transitioning back to his fellow knights for the remainder of the episode.

However, the fact that an identical number of alterations in perspective occur in the French and Irish texts should not imply that the two works treat the episode in the same manner. Firstly, Fierabras maintains each perspective for a considerable amount of time before shifting its focus. Fifty-seven lines occur before the poem first transitions from the peers in general to Guy.229 The author then concentrates on this hero for the following thirteen lines.230 Next he relates the deeds of the peers for an additional ninety-one lines before finally returning to the captured knight in line 3548.231 Based upon these facts, it seems that the poet carefully designed the conversions between perspectives so that they would be lengthy enough to allow the audience to become invested in each portion before he

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228 SF, pp. 158-63, ¶¶ 145-51. The boldfaced type indicates additional alterations.
229 Fierabras, ll. 3384-3441.
230 Fierabras, ll. 3442-3455.
231 Fierabras, ll. 3456-3547.
unveiled a different focal point. It is also worth noting that the transitions between the sections demonstrate a smooth and natural flow.

The Irish adaptation departs from its French source in both the placement and length of its shifts in perspective. Interestingly, were Bernard’s encouragement of his fellow knights positioned later in the narrative, only one transition would occur. That is to say, the text would detail Guy’s adventures in their entirety before shifting the focus to his fellow Christians. Such a method would appear consistent with the preceding examples from other portions of the work. Certainly, Bernard’s interjection is not particularly lengthy:

*7 do gabadh ser Gido am 7 do cengladh è 7 do benadh a arm 7 a èididh dhe, 7 ní roibh a fis ag Bernardus le mét na sluagh ina timcell, 7 adubairt rena muintir 7 rena companachaibh: ‘tògbaidh bur n-inntinn co hard, oir is maith is etir lìbh na hingina do réidhiugud isna leapthachaibh, 7 cuimnighid marsin nemcaruid Crist do clodh!’ Ocus arna rada sind dò do mètaigh menma na companach co mor. Ocus is annsin rucadh ser Gido aturru sin dochum Admiranduis.*

And then Sir Guy was captured and bound, and his weapons and armour were taken from him. And such was the greatness of the hosts around him that Bernard knew not this, and he said to his people and his comrades: ‘Lift up your hearts! You are well able to tame the girls in the beds. Remember to vanquish Christ’s foes in like manner!’ When he had spoken thus the spirit of the comrades increased greatly. Then Sir Guy was taken among them to Admirandus.232

Not only is the transition back to the peers rather laconic even by the standards of the Irish text—including an omission of Roland’s speech233—but arguably it also exhibits a rather less smooth narrative flow than the adaptor generally displays throughout the work. This is in no way meant to imply that its placement represents an error *per se* since the interlude exhibits internal logic, displays sufficient connection to its surrounding lines and maintains adequate consistency with other transitions in *Stair Fortibrais* as a whole. However, it is possible that

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233 His heroic actions remain, although two instances of martial prowess (one occurring before Clarion’s arrival and one afterwards) have been conflated into one event occurring in *SF*, pp. 158-59, ¶ 144.
the passage, both as regards this particular portion and more comprehensively, displays the adaptor’s attempts to align his source more closely with his audience’s expectation despite the complications caused by such a marked departure from his source.

In addition to changing the audience’s perspective, the translator on occasion reorders his text in such a way as to alter the logical connections between events and thereby direct his audience to interpret them in a manner at variance with his source. Admittedly, such examples are rare but the novel interpretation they imply makes them worthy of examination. Both occur during Floripas’ conversations with the Christian knights. In the first instance, she has just rescued them from her father’s dungeon and brought them to the relative safety of her chambers. In the French poem, Floripas demands their assistance before confiding that she seeks Guy as a husband. Conversely, in the Latin and Irish translations she still reminds the knights of her power over them but ultimately reveals her secret before they agree to serve her. Certainly, this alteration affects the characterisation of Floripas, which is unquestionably part of a wider strategy in regards to the adaptors’ presentation of the princess. Of course, it is impossible to establish with any certainly whether this rehabilitation of Floripas was a primary or secondary motivating factor or merely the fortuitous result of a modification made for alternate reasons.

Regardless, this reordering would likely have impacted the audience’s interpretation of the events related. Fierabras seems to imply that despite the generally congenial atmosphere, the Saracen princess and the knights have yet to formalise their relationship and therefore proceed with exceptional care. Furthermore, the balance of power favours Floripas—a situation of which she is well aware and seeks to maintain. By reversing the order of the two events, the translations present a rather altered set of circumstances.

234 Fierabras, ll. 2328-559.
235 GKM, pp. 344-45, ¶¶ 96-97; SF, pp. 130-31, ¶¶ 96-97.
236 See pp. 189-90 and pp. 267-68 for a discussion of her character in the Irish text.
Confessing her love before the knights accept her terms places the peers in a stronger position but it also provides additional motivation for them to accept her offer. Arguably, it additionally implies a greater degree of trust, or perhaps naïveté, on the part of Floripas and a burgeoning sense of camaraderie preceding the establishment of a formal bond.  

Similarly, the Latin and Irish translators reorder the scene in which Guy agrees to marry Floripas. In their source, the princess again confesses her love, this time to the full complement of knights including Guy himself, *Nainmon* persuades Guy to consent and then his joyous fiancée offers to convert to Christianity. Admittedly, she had previously expressed her willingness in this regard but not to the entire group and only after she was assured of their assistance. In contrast, *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* have Floripas offer to be baptised before *Roland* persuades Guy to accept her proposal. As in the previous case, she seeks more to persuade the knights by presenting them with an agreeable offer than to use her position of strength to set the terms.

However, this instance proves worthy of note because its supporting evidence implies that the reordering may have occurred because of discomfort on the part of the translator(s) at the notion of a marriage between a Christian and a pagan. Perhaps because the prevalence of the archetype in the *chanson de geste* of the blonde Saracen princess who converts to Christianity—she is but one example of the seventeen fulfilling a virtually identical narrative function—the *Fierabras* poet could assume that his audience would recognize her character type and therefore that she would consent to baptism. Thus, arguably the broader

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237 This may also relate to the theme of unity in the Irish text. See pp. 260–64.
238 *Fierabras*, ll. 2902-30. As previously stated, the boldface indicates additional alterations made in the translations.
239 *Fierabras*, ll. 2349.
240 *GKM*, pp. 358–59, ¶ 123; *SF*, pp. 146–47, ¶ 123.
French epic tradition allowed him the latitude to delay her offer of conversion until after
Guy’s formal agreement to the union.

Perhaps the adaptor felt less confident that his audience would make the same
assumption. The extent to which this particular stock character would have been familiar to
an Irish audience proves challenging to ascertain particularly since much of the (near-)
contemporary nobility in Ireland appears to have been bi- or multi-lingual. For example, a
catalogue recorded in 1581 of the library complied by the Hiberno-Norman FitzGeralds of
Kildare included one hundred and twelve manuscripts of which the greatest number—eighty-
six—were composed in French but also containing thirty-four written in Latin, twenty-two in
English and twenty in Irish.242 Of course, this particular evidence postdates the last surviving
manuscript of Stair Fortibrais by nearly a century and the accumulation of texts of a
particular language in a library does not necessarily indicate literacy or even interest on the
part of all of its owners. Still it seems fairly reasonable to postulate that amongst Irish elites
of the period such archetypes were rather better known than would be suggested by the
relatively modest number of French epics translated into Irish,243 but that they remained
significantly less familiar to a fifteenth-century Irish audience than they would have been to
their twelfth-century Norman counterparts.

Secular and ecclesiastical law regarding marriage between a Christian and a member
of a different religion had become significantly more codified during the twelfth century
when the jurist Gratian of Bologna produced the Decretum in 1140 in which he compiled and
reconciled centuries of rulings on the subject from ecclesiastical courts and the nearly-

242 Edmund Curtis, ‘The Spoken Languages of Medieval Ireland’, Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review, 8 (1919),
pp. 234-54 (p. 239).
243 Technically, Fierabras serves as the sole chanson de geste translated into Irish but the adaptations of Beuves
de Hamptone, Gui de Warewic and Historia Caroli Magni also feature epic elements. All three of these texts
appear in conjunction with Stair Fortibrais in the manuscripts. The first two works occur only in TCD H.2.7 but
the Irish Pseudo-Turpin chronicle features in Egerton 1781, TCD H.2.12 and King’s Inns 10 in addition to the
Latin copy found in TCD F.5.3.
contemporaneous Sententiae by Peter Lombard of Paris which explored marriage as a sacrament of the Church. The influential scholars ‘both agreed that a marriage with an infidel, someone who had not been baptised was considered null and void. Not only were Christians discouraged from marrying pagans, when such marriages did take place, they were not considered legitimate. Conversion became absolutely essential to legitimate marriage’.244

Yet in all three texts Guy’s objection is not based on religious principles but rather on secular fealty: he refuses to enter an agreement to wed without Charles’ consent.245 While the king’s permission may not have been legally required to render a marriage binding, Lynn Tarte Ramey points out that ‘when the question of legitimacy of marriage became wrapped up in questions of succession, the secular courts reasserted themselves and won out over the ecclesiastical courts . . . because of the land and power . . . the blessing of the king is essential for the marriage to take place’.246 Fierabras and its translations all concern themselves with both the religious and secular aspects of marriage, but it appears that the Hiberno-Latin and Irish texts exhibit somewhat more interest in the former than their source. Whether this focus results primarily from a relative unfamiliarity with the conventions of chansons de geste, the more settled nature of canon law in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries or serves as a facet of the texts’ particular presentation of issues of religion and faith will require a more detailed examination.247

However, the reinterpretations implied by reordering are not limited merely to such dramatic examples. In fact, even the alterations in the narrative’s perspective discussed previously arguably result in a de facto revision in the internal and often implicit logical

245 The distinction between the religious and the secular proves somewhat ambiguous particularly in relation to Charles, a secular figure portrayed as possessing an exceptional relationship with God. See pp. 148-152.
246 Ramey, pp. 57-58.
247 See pp. 198-218 for a discussion of the presentation of Christianity in Gesta Karoli Magni and Stair Fortibrails.
connections between events. To reiterate and expand upon a prior point, the links between, for example, the events in *Fierabras*’ Taupim episode seem to be that Taupim casts his spell with the intention that all the knights would be ensnared but Guy did not fall victim to it either by virtue of being too far away or remaining awake so he was able, upon hearing her exclamation, to rescue Floripas. In contrast, the Latin and Irish texts, while no less flowing or coherent, imply a somewhat altered series of relations: Floripas called for assistance and Guy was able to rescue her because he was standing on the ramparts. Admittedly, the texts are in essence making the same point in slightly varying manners. Still, the audiences would perhaps subconsciously in many cases parse the relationships between elements within the episode differently. The same argument could additionally apply to the other examples provided.

A reason that drawing such distinctions proves relevant is because the same principle seems to occur on a broader level as well and on at least one occasion may well be a determining factor behind a reordering. As in the aforementioned cases, it occurs in conjunction with additional alterations. In fact, the effect is particularly pronounced in this instance. Over the course of the relevant seven paragraphs in the Irish adaptation, one addition, four substitutions and ten reductions or omissions occur; one of the latter directly affects the narrative order. And that list includes only those changes beginning in the same paragraph as the reordering. Expanding the range by an additional two paragraphs to include opening of the episode increases the count by two more substitutions and the same number of additional reductions/omissions. Unsurprisingly given the length of the passage and the many modifications associated with it, the connections between its various events prove quite complex and while some aspects will be addressed in detail below, others may simply be noted to have occurred.

248 See pp. 75-77.
The episode itself concerns Richard’s attempt to win free of the enemy in a bid to reach Charles and secure his aid for the besieged peers. The first example of reordering relates to Richard’s fears that the Saracens have realised or will do so that he has escaped their blockade. The variation between the texts begins subtly with little more than the slight alterations of logical connections mentioned above. In the French poem, Richard prays that he may successfully reach Charles but he is spotted by the pagans. Stair Fortibrais reverses the order of these two events and thereby their implied relationship: the enemy notes his escape so he prays for the success of his venture. Admittedly, the adaptor does write ‘do shail Roisderd nach facaidh aen duine é’ (Richard supposed that no one saw him)249 which arguably challenges this interpretation but two additional factors should be noted in regards to this line. First, while the knight may be unaware that his life and the success of his venture will soon come under threat, the audience is in possession of this knowledge. From their perspective then, the connection postulated above would indeed be logical. In addition, the quotation may well have been included as a result of another modification previously made by the translator. In his source, Richard’s horse falters which serves to both increase his concerns about being spotted and force him to a temporary halt during which he offers his prayers for success.250 Since this particular detail does not appear in the Irish, the text lacks a justification for Richard pausing during his escape and it would not seem unreasonable to postulate that the adaptor elected to supply his own explanation, namely that he was unaware of the imminent pursuit.

The order of both narratives then converges briefly as Clarïon/Clarion pursues Richard, the two warriors fight and Richard slays his foe. He then commandeers the pagan’s steed which is an exceptionally fleet-footed mount. At this point, the texts structure their

249 SF, pp. 260-61, ¶ 173.
250 Fierabras, ll. 4225-27.
accounts rather differently. In *Fierabras* 1) The Saracens find Clarïon’s body 2) Richard’s original horse returns to Aigremore 3) The pagans notice its presence 4) The Christians notice its presence 5) Clarïon’s men return with his corpse 6) The Saracens lament and the peers rejoice 7) Balan sends a messenger to order that the bridge at Maltrible be closed 8) Richard reaches the riverside.\(^{251}\)

For the poet, then, Clarïon himself appears to be the link between the first item in the list and prior events. Richard takes Clarïon’s horse leaving his body behind for the pagans to discover (1). In their rage they attempt to capture their enemy’s charger (2). The Saracens, as the besieging army, are presumably in better position to spot the mount first (3) followed by their Christian counterparts as the horse nears the city (4). The denizens of both encampments seek to interpret this sign until Clarïon’s corpse arrives (5). As before, due to their position, the pagans are first to identify the body, followed by the peers (6). Having realised that his first attempt to prevent Richard from reaching Charles has failed, Balan attempts to block him at the bridge (7). In this effort, he is greeted with greater success since the knight arrives to find his passage blocked (8).

In contrast, the Irish adaptor follows Richard seizing Clarïon’s horse with 1) His original horse returning to Egrimor 2) The pagans finding their leader’s body 3) The peers seeing Richard’s mount 4) The pagans noting its presence 5) Richard reaching the river 6) The pagans returning with Clarion’s corpse 7) The pagans lamenting and the peers rejoicing. Obviously, the first issue of note is the removal of the messenger episode from *Fierabras*.\(^{252}\)

Unsurprisingly, this alteration substantially influences the logical connections between narrative events, but it is hardly alone in this distinction. In contrast to its source, the relationship in *Stair Fortibrais* between the first event and Richard acquiring Clarïon’s horse

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\(^{251}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 4225-4504.

\(^{252}\) This omission is perhaps related to a compression of the geography of the Saracen lands as portrayed in *Stair Fortibrais*. For an analysis of this feature of the text see pp. 228-39.
seems to be the mounts themselves. After all, having been informed that Richard was no longer riding his own steed, the audience may logically wish to know what became of it (1). The Saracens who, lacking their leader’s marvellous horse, arrive on the scene after Richard has already departed then find Clarion’s body (2). Interestingly, the pagans arrive tardily in the French version as well but only in the Irish text does this fact appear to be used as an ordering principle.

The perspective then returns to the siege and the reappearance of Richard’s mount. In the French, the connection was fairly clear: the narrator was merely following the horse. *Stair Fortibrails*, in contrast, appears to simply redirect the audience’s attention: ‘*Imtus na ridire cristaidi*’ (As for the Christian knights).253 On initial inspection, this opening may seem a rather abrupt departure, but a closer examination might suggest an implied contrast between the peers and the pagans discussed in the previous sentence. The grammatical construction could certainly support such a reading and the case is strengthened by the emotional states of the two groups: the pagans are lamenting the death of their comrade but so are the peers who presume Richard is dead upon seeing his horse. Perhaps then, the paragraph’s structure contrasts the rightful mourning of the pagans with the sorrow of the Christians, which is soon to be turned to joy. Such a thoughtful construction would be consistent with the care the adaptor takes to explain why in his telling the Christians spot the horse first despite the greater distance (3): ‘*dobhatar ac fechuin amach, 7 do conncodur each Roisderd*’ (they were looking out when they saw Richard’s horse).254 The pagans then make note of its return (4). Interestingly, the scribe not only translates the praise Balan/Admirandus expresses for the presumed-victorious Clarion, but once again utilises a detail found in his source to structure his own text. Namely, Admirandus’ commendation of Clarion allows for a flowing transition

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253 *SF*, pp. 260-61, ¶ 175.

254 *SF*, pp. 260-61, ¶ 175.
to the deceased pagan’s men, who pursue Richard to the river (5). Unsurprisingly given the
techniques discussed above, having shifted the narrative’s focus to the knight, the text
proceeds to recount his adventures at the river including slaying Clarion’s brother in combat
and the divine intervention which allowed him to cross the dangerous waters.255 The
transition back to the battlefield is accomplished in a familiar fashion: the pagans realise that
their quarry has escaped them and return to their encampment with Clarion’s body (6). As
occurs in the French text, the pagans are the first to become aware of his death and they
lament as the Christians rejoice in Richard’s success (7).

Taken as a whole, the reorderings seem to illustrate that although the translator’s
motive for altering his text may not always, or even usually, be readily apparent to modern
readers, he crafted his episodes carefully to ensure that he presented his tale in a logical and
flowing manner—even using his source to justify his new structure. At least in
certain instances, the modifications appear to be quite deliberately designed to bring out a
different meaning or encourage a particular interpretation of the narrative. Regardless of their
functions, however, the reorderings found in *Gesta Karoli Magni/Stair Fortibrais* appear to
generally represent at least an equally valid portrayal of the events related in *Fierabras*.

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255 Both of these events occur in the source at the conclusion of the episode following Richard’s arrival at the
Ma(n)tribil.
Reduction/Omission

Removal of French Concerns

The intention of the Irish and Latin adaptors to supplant their source material for the Irish audience is not only suggested by the standard practice of the literary translations of the period, but also supported by myriad evidence yielded through a thorough examination of the texts themselves. While support for this assertion may be found in association with all categories of translation techniques, it is perhaps most evident in regards to the omissions, a notable number of which seem to arise from a systematic expunging of French concerns from the narrative. One of the less significant but most obvious examples of this phenomenon occurs during the encounter between the Saracen Lucafer de Baudas and the peers. Prior to his untimely demise, the pagan mockingly inquires: ‘Kel gent sont il en Franche, di par ta lëauté, / Et comment joient il en cel vostre regné?’ (What sort of people are those in France, tell me on your oath, and how do you amuse yourselves in your kingdom?). However disingenuous, this query allows Nainmon to praise his king and countrymen for their physical prowess as represented by their fencing, in addition to their staunch opposition against their Saracen foes, their mental acuity demonstrated by their skill in chess and their piety shown through daily attendance at Mass and almsgiving. As often occurs, the passage operates on multiple levels. In one sense, Fierabras and its adaptations tell the tale of the battle of the decisive albeit temporary triumph of the Christians over the pagan horde. Symbolically, then, Charles and the peers represent all coreligionists. Yet despite this important fact, the question very clearly seeks information solely about those en Franche and the apparently limited scope of the query may well have been deemed at best to make it of limited interest to a

256 Fierabras, ll. 3004-05.
257 Fierabras, ll. 3006-14.
fifteenth-century Irish audience and at worst to run counter to the symbolism of Charles as ruling God’s kingdom on earth.

In the majority of cases, however, the omissions involve matter associated with the French tradition rather less directly. In one instance, the relationship derives from historical fact, namely a rivalry between the Abbey of Saint Denis and Cathedral of Notre Dame. In this instance, the particular point of contention was the Lendit festivals centred upon veneration of the relics possessed by the respective churches. When Saint Denis acquired the Crown of Thorns and one of the Nails of the Crucifixion in 1047, the monastery began to host its Lendit fair, probably during the subsequent year.258 But in 1109, a second Lendit celebration developed following Louis VI’s presentation of a fragment of the True Cross to the Cathedral at Notre Dame the year previous.259 Inevitably, this donation sparked a competition between the two religious centres. The prestige of hosting the original festival and the possession of a greater number of relics ensured Saint Denis’ pre-eminence in this regard to the extent that within fifteen years they had been granted the profit from—though not the management of—both fairs. This advantage was further reinforced in 1205 by Philip Augustus who presented the abbey with additional relics of the passion, including a fragment of the True Cross.260

While in purely historical terms Charles significantly antedates the acquisition of any of these relics, *Fierabras* nonetheless credits the legendary ruler with the procurement of these holy objects and, therefore indirectly with the Lendit fair itself.261 Such a claim was consistent not only with the period’s crusading ethos, but also with the prevalent notion that the festival boasted origins significantly older than the mid-eleventh century.262 However, the

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259 *ibid.*, p. 249.
260 *ibid.*, p. 255.
261 The poem hardly stands alone in its assertions. The association between Charles and the acquisition of relics dates at least as far back as the late tenth century. More specifically, *Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus* and *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* also credit Charlemagne with donating relics, including the Crown of Thorns, to Saint Denis.
poet does not seem to be concerned with the festivals themselves so much as *Saint Denis’* Lendit. He refers to the fair three times—once at the opening of the poem and twice at its conclusion. However, *Saint Denis* appears on twenty-two occasions, ten referencing the saint himself with the remainder referring to his eponymous abbey. *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* preserve the occasional oath sworn by *Saint Denis* but eliminate any mention of the Lendit.

More interesting, if admittedly significantly more tentative, is the potential relationship between the lists of relics found in the texts and the collection boasted by *Saint Denis*. In *Fierabras*, Charles acquires the Crown, the Nails and the Shroud. Notably absent from the list is a fragment of the True Cross, a relic included in both translations. In fact, the translators of *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* opened their texts by a recounting of Saint Helena’s recovery of the True Cross, apparently adapted from *De Inventione Sanctae Crucis*. Naturally, then, this holy artefact occupies the prime position in both their lists of the relics. Even discounting this fact, however, the addition serves as a natural extension of the source. Indeed, it is arguably more remarkable that *Fierabras* does not list the Cross amongst the Relics of the Passion than that the translations do. Despite the inclusion by *Descriptio Qualiter Karolus Magnus* of this relic amongst those Charles gifted to *Saint Denis*, it does not appear to have comprised a portion of the abbey’s original collection. Rather, *Saint Denis* with its Crown of Thorns and Nails competed with Notre Dame’s fragment of the True Cross. Given this context, the omission of this crucial relic could have resulted from the fact that *Saint Denis* lacked it at the time of the work’s composition or poet’s judgement that any prestige attained from trumpeting the new acquisition would be offset by its established

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263 *Fierabras*, ll. 14, 6385, 6394.
264 *Fierabras*, ll. 127, 1801, 1880, 4778, 5092, 5562, 5263, 5565, 5803-4, 6384 and 4, 12, 78, 2716, 2739, 2743, 2752, 2817, 5062, 5748, 6378, 6387 respectively.
265 *Fierabras*, ll. 8-11.
266 *GKM*, p. 304, ¶ 1; *SF*, pp. 16-17, ¶ 1.
association with the abbey’s rival. Regardless, it appears that in this particular instance, the translations’ disassociation from French concerns resulted not in an excision, but an addition.

Most commonly, however, the omissions and reductions in this category concern the connections of *Fierabras* to the wider corpus of *chansons de geste*. One of the minor themes explored throughout the genre concerns competition between the older and younger warriors for supremacy and leadership positions. Indeed, Charles’ boasts about the superiority of his fellow greybeards drives the impetuous young Roland to such a fury that he refuses to fight Fierabras, ultimately leading to the necessity of the wounded Oliver accepting the challenge. In more personal terms, this phenomenon is reflected by the occasionally contentious relationship between Roland and Nainmon. As Marianne Ailes explains: ‘It appears that when a cool head is required Nainmon takes the lead, but in action the peers, and Floripas, look to Roland; inevitably the two sometimes clash’.267 However, the Latin and Irish translations have a tendency to minimise or even eliminate this rivalry. In addition to the example discussed previously involving their quarrel resulting from Roland instructing Nainmon to guard the gate rather than participate directly in the battle,268 both texts omit the five-line argument between the two men regarding who shall be the first to relay their message to Balan.269

Another instance of altered portrayal occurs during the single combat between Fierabras and Oliver when the poet discusses the Saracen’s swords. The French poet dedicates an entire twenty-two line *laisse* to the process during which he relates that three famous sword-smiths each crafted three of the most famous nine swords in the world. The third of these craftsmen made Fierabras’ blades while his fellows made the weapons wielded

268 See pp. 63-65.
269 *Fierabras*, ll. 2667-71. If not omitted, the debate would have occurred between *SF*, pp. 140-41, ¶ 113 and ¶ 114. These omissions also lead to increased unity amongst the knights. See pp. 260-64.
by Roland, Ogier, Oliver and even Charles himself. Such an association hardly proves unexpected; Fierabras’ characterisation undoubtedly reveals him to belong to the ‘noble pagan’ character type: ‘the physical description—fair hair, proud countenance, broad shoulders—is the one usually reserved for the worthiest of epic warriors . . . [He] is basically a villain for the sole reason that he is not a Christian’. This interlude, therefore, reinforces the audience’s understanding of the Saracen and serves as further foreshadowing of his upcoming conversion. As Alfred Adler remarks, ‘via his swords . . . Fierabras is becoming a brother-in-arms’.

The Latin poet preserves the basic facts of the passage, but in so doing perhaps obfuscates its spirit:


Then Fortibras, showing three swords to him, said ‘Look at these three swords, all ready for use. One is called Plorans. The second is called Bapteym. The third Graban. Better ones are rarely to be found in these lands. Now there were three brothers who were all blacksmiths, called Goliants, Munificas and Agrifax. There were none more skilled in these lands. Goliants forged Hauteclere, Joyus and Fortbrige. Munificans forged Durendal, Sanguine and Curtem. Arifaxat forged Bapteym, Plorans and Graban.’

Ultimately, this excerpt provides little more than a list of names, a few of which—Hauteclere, Joyus, Durendal and Curtem—would almost certainly have been familiar to the audience but these are buried amongst an equal or greater number that may have yielded limited recognition. Arguably, in this instance, the brevity has obscured rather than distilled the

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270 Fierabras, ll. 665-86.
273 GKM, pp. 317-18; ¶ 39.
source’s meaning. Working directly from this passage, the Irish adaptor preserves only the most minute remnant: ‘ris nach roibe a talamh tri cloidme dob ferr na iat .i. Plorannti 7 Babten 7 Garban a n-anmanna, 7 tri derbraithrecha dorinne iat’ (there were not on earth three swords better than they, namely, Plorance, and Bapteme, and Garvan; and three brothers made them). 274 Apparently he was either unable to comprehend the original significance of the episode, he deemed this form of foreshadowing unnecessary or he believed that his audience would have been unfamiliar with or uninterested in the names of the blades. Regardless, the passage has clearly evolved substantially from its original literary context and meaning.

However, in the majority of cases of literary analogy, the poet explores the relationship between Fierabras and the Chanson de Roland. This tendency proves particularly pronounced during the scene in which Charles appoints emissaries to travel to Balan. The entire episode functions as an inversion of the motif found in the Chanson de Roland wherein Roland and Oliver both volunteer to serve as messengers to Marsile but Charles refuses to permit any of the twelve peers to serve in this capacity. Conversely, in Fierabras rather than volunteering the peers plead with their king not to send their associates. The scene is comprised of seven laisses totalling eighty-six lines and adheres to a formula whereby each knight who arises to object to the selection of his fellow peer(s) for the seeming suicide mission is then himself appointed as a member of the party. 275 The chain begins with Charles’ decision to dispatch Roland to which Nainmon objects. Then Basin, Richard, Tierri, Ogier and Guy each voice their opposition in turn during individual laisses in which they speak briefly but directly with their ruler. Both of the translations abridge this episode by combining the interjections of Guy, Ogier and Richard. 276 As the preeminent of

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275 Fierabras, ll. 2360-2444 (laisses LVIII-LXIV).
276 GKM, pp. 346-47, ¶ 102; SF, pp.132-33, ¶ 102.
the three knights, at least for the purposes of this work, Guy naturally appears first on the list. Otherwise, the reordering proves rather perplexing. Basin’s individual presence and position in the speaking order can be explained by reference to Fierabras but there would seem to be little reason to have Richard—a relatively famous peer—speak in conjunction with others and at the end of the passage, particularly in contrast with the rather more obscure Tirri whose role remains unaltered. Stylistically, the adaptations retain a limited degree of their source’s repetition by having Charles articulate the message he wishes delivered when he speaks to Roland at the beginning of the passage and concluding the episode with a reiteration of his demands. In fact, in the Latin version he actually expands his previous terms, which required releasing his knights and the return of the relics, to also require conversion and tribute. Stair Fortibrais adheres closely to its source regarding the first portion of the message but reduces the second to merely an instruction to his messengers to take and deliver his letters.277

The trend of increasing simplification continues when the envoys speak to Balan/Admirandus. In Fierabras, each speaker once again possesses his own laisse—or two, in the case of Tierri—with Nainmon beginning followed by Richard, Basin, Tierri, Ogier, Roland and Guy.278 Both adaptations omit Basin’s message. In the Latin text, it is merely excised from the between Richard’s speech and Tirri’s. The Irish version further simplifies the narrative by combining the words of these two peers.279 Likewise, Gesta Karoli Magni notes that Ogier and Guy offered the same message as their companions but, consistent with its source’s order, places Roland—whom he quotes directly—between them. Stair Fortibrais instead claims that Ogier and Roland delivered Charles’ demands and neglects entirely to mention Guy.280 However, regardless of the precise nature of the alterations, it seems

278 Fierabras, ll. 2675-2802.
280 GKM, pp. 355-56, ¶ 117; SF, pp. 142-43, ¶ 117.
probable that the decision to implement them derived both from stylistic concerns and from some degree of distance from the French epic tradition.

Finally, the French poet utilises the characterisation of Ganelon in the *chanson de geste* to alternately confirm and subvert his audience’s expectations. Ailes remarks that his treatment is ‘complex and the attitude of the narrator ambivalent. It is known Ganelon will betray the peers at Roncevaux, but in *Fierabras* itself many of his deeds are good’. In particular, he opposes his kinsman Aloris who wishes to abandon Charles to a grisly fate. He also, in stark contrast to his later betrayal in a similar context, serves bravely and honourably as Charles’ final messenger to Balan preceding the final battle. Unfortunately, significant difficulties arise upon attempting to examine the translations’ treatment of this character. First, determining any evolution between the Latin and Irish texts, or indeed the Latin and the French versions, proves virtually impossible since the fragmentary nature of the former means that Ganelon appears on only a single occasion, rendering any development of his character untraceable. This is especially problematic given the fact that, as mentioned previously, due to a translation error, the Irish adaptor divides Ganelon into two, or possibly even three, different characters.282

As a result, only the most tentative conclusions may be drawn. It seems reasonable to assert that while at least a substantial portion of the audience would have been familiar with the *Chanson de Roland*—the lack of any Irish translation implies that its events, and therefore any parallels made in *Fierabras*, would likely have possessed rather less significance for them than for the French. This theorised reduction of Ganelon’s importance may also account for two more minor omissions. First, during the battle on the bridge at Maltrible, the poet twice praises the bravery of Ganelon but none of his remarks appear in the Irish.283

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282 For a more detailed analysis, see pp. 176-82.
283 *Fierabras*, ll. 5011-19, ll. 5024.
Furthermore, *Stair Fortibrais* also alters the context of a brief episode during the final battle by having the knight Milon/Milis survive an attack from Balan/Admirandus as a result of the sword turning in the pagan’s hand, rather than because Ganelon and his clan ride to his rescue as occurs in the French poem. While these episodes possess little narrative significance and despite the difficulties associated with any analysis of Ganelon in *Stair Fortibrais*, the possibility that these omissions derived at least in part from the evolution of the story away from its original cultural milieu proves plausible particularly in light of the similar tendencies throughout the text discussed above.

**The Neglected Knights**

The excision of French concerns appears to be so integral to the translation strategy of the Hiberno-Latin and, even more particularly, the Irish adaptor that at least one important subset arises from it: the omission of characters in particular episodes, especially those Christian knights who are unessential as regards the narrative’s progression and would be unlikely to enjoy particular name-recognition in Ireland. Before addressing specific examples of this phenomenon, however, a brief examination of the general treatment of proper names in the Irish and Latin adaptations will prove beneficial. As part of his abbreviation strategy, the Latin translator reduces the number of proper names considerably from two hundred and eighty-two in the French poem to ninety-two. The Irish adaptor further decreases this total to seventy-six. However, it should be noted that his omissions display a reasonably clear distribution: he excises two Christian knights (Anguirés and Milo) and the name of Oliver’s horse (Ferrant) and four Saracens (Matusale, Floire, Milon and Garsiliuns). The nine

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285 The number of French proper names is taken from the *Index Des Noms Propres* in Le Person, *Fierabras: Chanson de Geste du XIIe Siècle*, pp. 543-87. Le Person claims exhaustive coverage for his index. The count for the Latin and Irish names comes from Davies, pp. 441-68. The totals include geographical locations and personal names of individuals as well as those of horses and objects such as swords. They also comprise the names of the pagan gods but not the Christian God or other saints’ names used in the construction of oaths. Finally, alternative forms of names are not counted separately nor are groups such as the Saracens, Christians or Normans included in the sum. The exclusions are due to limitations in the raw data provided by Davies.
remaining exclusions are all either the names of famous swords or their smiths. As mentioned in the previous section, of the twelve names from this category found in the Latin text, he preserves only those of Fortibras’ three blades Baptesme, Florenche and Gerben. These weapons perhaps attain particular significance since they serve as a subject of discussion between Oliver and Fortibras as well as being the first named swords appearing in *Gesta Karoli Magni*. Otherwise, the Irish adaptor’s enthusiasm for this sort of editing even extends to removing the name of one of the most famous swords in French literature: Roland’s blade Durendal. Interestingly, of the nine adaptations analysed in Davies’ comparison of French, Irish, Latin and English texts,286 *Stair Fortibrais* remains the only version to omit this particular detail. While admittedly limited in scope, the weight of the evidence appears to suggest an intentional and systematic removal of virtually this entire category of information on the part of the Irish translator.

Barring this particular editorial choice, however, it should be stated that *Stair Fortibrais* and to an even greater extent *Gesta Karoli Magni* do appear to display a remarkable degree of fidelity to their source as regards proper names. First, the disparity in numbers suggested by the raw data proves rather less pronounced upon closer inspection. The sum provided for *Fierabras* includes, for example, place names, many of which are mentioned three times or less over the course of the 6,408 lines of the poem. Examining only the first letter of the alphabet yields eight such instances: the poet references Aufrique on three occasions,287 and Ais la Capele, Arabe and Aragon twice288 while Angevin, Apre, Ardane and Aumarie each make a single appearance.289 This example is in no way intended

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286 He compares *Gesta Karoli Magni*, *Stair Fortibrais*, the Anglo-Norman text, the French prose adaptation, the work of David Aubert, *Sir Ferumbras*, the Fillinghan *Firumbras*, *Sowdon of Babylon* and *Charles the Great*. See Davies, p. 440.

287 *Fierabras*, ll. 5781, 6228, 6061.

288 *Fierabras*, ll. 5793, 6327; 3279, 4237; 5923, 4921.

289 *Fierabras*, ll. 6401; 4874; 3831; 3348.
to serve as representative of the distribution of such names throughout the alphabet but merely to provide a flavour of the poet’s general practice in this regard.

Secondly, in comparison to the other translations examined by Davies, *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* seem to be particularly comprehensive in their catalogue of names. Admittedly, the evidence he provides proves somewhat problematic for this application since he bases his study on names appearing within the Latin text and therefore any name from the French tradition transmitted to, for example, only the English translations would not have been included within the parameters of his discussion. Still, it is well worth noting that names often appear in the Hiberno-Latin and Irish translations which have not been included in most of the remaining seven adaptations. This trend occurs only once in regards to a geographical location: the fact that Floripas imported her girdle from Colchis appears in none of the other translations.\(^{290}\) Similarly, the only additional text in which the Christian knight Ysorés appears is Girart d’Amiens’ *Charlemagne*.\(^{291}\) However, this tendency becomes more pronounced amongst the Saracens: Margaris, Matusale and Milon appear in only one additional translation;\(^{292}\) Glacis, Floire, Claremonde, Flourete, Amangis and Barbadas occur twice more;\(^{293}\) and most interestingly, Aymer, Galiene, Garsiliuns and Tempie seem to be unique to *Fierabras* and the Hiberno-Latin/Irish translations.\(^{294}\) The names of famous swords and their smiths appear to be subject to editing in a number of adaptations in addition to *Stair Fortibrais*, and *Gesta Karoli Magni*’s translator is often in a distinct minority due to his inclusion of such details. Floberge, Musangune, Galans, Munificas and Aurisas only occur in *Fierabras*, *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Charlemagne*.\(^{295}\)

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\(^{290}\) Davies, p. 468.

\(^{291}\) Davies, pp. 444-45.

\(^{292}\) Davies, pp. 450-61. The first two appear in *Charlemagne* while Milon occurs in *Sir Ferumbras*.

\(^{293}\) Davies, pp. 450-61. The first four listed appear in *Charlemagne* and *Sir Ferumbras* while final two occur in *Charlemagne* and the work of David Aubert.

\(^{294}\) Davies, pp. 450-61. Of all the names listed above, Matusale, Floire, Milon and Garsiliuns appear in *Gesta Karoli Magni* but not *Stair Fortibrais*.

\(^{295}\) Davies, pp. 463-66.
Three additional swords appear in a fourth text as well: Garbain and Courtain are also mentioned in the work of David Aubert and the Anglo-Norman poem includes Joieuse. At this point, it should be readily apparent that whatever the translators’ strategies in regards to limiting or removing characters from particular episodes may have been, they seem to have been scrupulous in their inclusion of even unfamiliar or unimportant proper names.

Of course, some exceptions do invariably arise. For example, the members of the company of knights that Richard leads in his assault on the bridge at Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil are specifically identified in the French poem as Hoiax de Nantes, Gui de la Valee, Raal du Mans and Reignier de Gennes. In contrast, at the outset the Irish adaptor simply notes that a total of five knights participated in the assault and Richard served as their leader. It is perhaps worth noting that the list of names proves to be the primary, and arguably the only, substantive information conveyed by the laisse. Given the translator’s occasional predilection for removing entire laisses particularly if they prove repetitive or otherwise fail to contribute to the advancement of the narrative, this omission would seem consistent with his translation strategy.

Moreover, he does refer to the majority of these peers by name as they exhibit agency. He introduces Helol when the Christian speaks of his horror at seeing the bridge’s monstrous porter. He identifies Riol and Remer as they take an active role in the narrative, the former by being injured and the latter in his reaction to his companion’s suffering. On the aggregate, then, the only knight excised entirely from the Irish text is Gui de la Valee. Given that the translation only rarely suffixes geographical identifiers to the peers, the removal of

296 Davies, pp. 463-66.
297 *Fierabras*, ll. 4852-54.
298 *SF*, pp. 270-71, ¶ 191.
299 *SF*, pp. 270-73, ¶ 191. *Fierabras* presents the reaction to observing the giant as a dialogue between Raal, Richard, Reignier and Hoiax. Typically, the Irish text identifies only a single knight (Helol) and notes that the others agree with his assessment. In this instance, the selection of Helol specifically seems rather obscure.
300 *SF*, pp. 274-75, ¶ 195.
this particular name may have occurred as part of an effort to ensure that the audience did not
confuse this individual—so obscure that he appears nowhere else in the poem—with
Floripas’ bridegroom Guy of Burgundy. Such a desire to prevent misunderstanding would be
consistent with his decision, mentioned previously, to replace the second Saracen named
Tenebre, killed by Richard in the final battle between the Christian and barbarian forces, with
an unnamed pagan.\(^{301}\) An additional, or perhaps contributing, factor may have been the fact
that Gui de la Valee participates in the events related only by implication; the poet does not
specifically mention him taking any action or even speaking over the course of the episode.
Ultimately, while it must be acknowledged that in this instance the translator does not
preserve the name of every knight presented in \textit{Fierabras}, he still maintains a remarkable
degree of fidelity with his source in this regard.

As the episode progresses, the Irish adaptor continues to pursue this strategy as he
details how Charles and a small group of peers found themselves trapped within the city of
Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil. In his source, the poet twice states that his party consists of Richard
and the other knights responsible for capturing the bridge, with the exception of Gui de la
Valee whom he does not mention.\(^{302}\) The Irish text refers to the group solely as being
composed of ‘becan da muinntir ē’ (only a few of his people).\(^{303}\) He does not identify any
specific member of the assembly until Richard addresses Charles at the beginning of the
following paragraph. As in the previous example, Richard is both the only knight named and
the singular possessor of agency. Furthermore, additional factors may have influenced the
translator’s treatment of the episode. First, the repetition of the names in \textit{Fierabras} occurs
due to the poet’s use of \textit{laisses similaires} which the adaptor systematically eliminates. As the
reiteration corresponds to a stylistic feature, it is perhaps unsurprising that the adaptor did not

\(^{301}\) See pp. 67-71.
\(^{302}\) \textit{Fierabras}, l. 5093-96, 5119-20.
\(^{303}\) \textit{SF}, pp. 276-77, ¶ 198.
accord the list any particular weight. Secondly, by the very nature of the narrative—namely the fact that as the advance party on the bridge these particular peers would be likely to remain at the front of Charles’ forces when he arrived—potentially implies that they would be amongst those captured alongside him. Arguably, the compression of the text typical in the Irish version reinforces the connection between the two events and renders the explicit identification of the peers rather less necessary.

This tendency of the Irish text to refer to the knights as a group when *Fierabras* identifies individuals arises on other occasions as well. For example, in the French poem Roland, Guilemer, Berart and Guy all volunteer to seek reinforcements from Charles before Richard assumes the responsibility. 

*Stair Fortibrais* not only omits Ogier’s agreement with Tierri that someone must undertake this mission, but also distils the peers’ argument to the remark ‘*tairged gach nech fo leith dibh ê*’ (Then each of them separately offered to go). Similarly, the fact that Nainmon, Roland and Oliver are explicitly identified out of the assembly of Christians mourning Richard’s presumed death is not specified in the Irish text which merely remarks: ‘*7 do sailidur gur marbad Roisderd*’ (And they thought that Richard was killed).

More commonly, a sort of synecdoche occurs whereby the adaptor identifies a single knight engaging in speech or action which represents a series of related individuals participating in the same behaviour in *Fierabras*. Examples include Tierri’s opinion also indicating Ogier’s as discussed in the previous paragraph, Bernard’s encouragement to the peers during the sortie to secure food expressing his thoughts as well as Roland’s, and the account Guy gives to Balan/Admirandus of the besieged peers which replaces the names of

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304 *Fierabras*, ll. 4081-90.
305 *SF*, pp. 258-59, ¶ 171.
306 *SF*, pp. 262-63, ¶ 175.
307 *Fierabras*, ll. 3384-3402; *SF*, pp. 158-59, ¶ 145. Admittedly, this particular choice is perhaps a bit surprising since Roland speaks first in the source and possesses far greater name recognition.
all twelve peers with Roland’s—and the narrator’s assurance that he also listed the others.308 Likewise, of the knights pursuing the peers captured after Oliver’s combat with Fortibras both Roland and Ogier are named in the French poem while the Irish translation only includes the former.309 In this particular instance, however, the distinction may be based once again on agency although the case proves rather less straightforward. While the poet merely mentions that Ogier rides in pursuit, he twice—over the course of laisses similaires—details oaths Roland made regarding his intention to rescue his comrades. Still, while the Irish translator does expressly identify Roland, he also excludes any mention of his vows.

In addition to a single knight acting on behalf of his associates, on occasion the adaptor preserves the majority of characters in his source but removes a single name from those provided. In Fierabras, when the knights are first introducing themselves to Floripas she greets Nainmon first, then Richard and finally Roland.310 Stair Fortibrais omits the middle knight.311 In this instance, the extenuating circumstances likely prompted the excision. First, in both texts Nainmon and Roland just concluded a discussion regarding Floripas’ beauty which would likely increase the probability that the Irish translator would preserve their presence as the scene unfolded. Perhaps more significantly, Richard’s introduction occupies its own seven-line laisse.312 This element combined with the fact that despite, his later importance, he plays no role in immediate events almost certainly accounts for this editorial decision.

However, the translator’s logic does not always prove so readily apparent. When Fierabras requests that Oliver tell him of the Christians he enquires about Charles, Ogier, Roland, Oliver and Berart de Mondidier.313 The Latin and Irish variants both excise Berart

308 Fierabras, ll. 3539-47; SF, pp. 160-61, ¶ 146.
309 Fierabras, ll. 1849-51; SF, pp. 52-53, ¶ 70.
310 Fierabras, ll. 2881-2898a.
311 SF, pp. 146-47, ¶ 122.
312 Fierabras, ll. 2888-94.
313 Fierabras, ll. 464-75.
and the latter omits Ogier as well. Interestingly, while Fortibras does not enquire about him, Oliver still describes Ogier in his response which strongly suggests that the Irish translator chose to deliberately, if imperfectly, excise the Danish knight. Certainly, the removal of Berart hardly proves surprising. He does not rank amongst the most famous of the peers and plays a comparatively small role in the events of the narrative. Arguably, the Irish translator follows a similar logic in his (partial) removal of Ogier. Certainly, the Dane enjoyed greater name-recognition but his role in *Fierabras* does not prove especially significant particularly in comparison to Charles, Roland and Oliver. If Ogier in the French epic tradition plays a consistent but generally secondary role—with the notable exceptions of *Les Enfances Ogier de Danemarche* and *La Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarche*—the Latin and to an even greater extent the Irish adaptor further develops this treatment by referring to the knight often enough to keep him in the audience’s mind but only rarely and briefly focusing upon him.

Indeed, as an examination of some substitutions will show, the adaptor exhibits an interest in not only preserving the most famed peers in the narrative but he sometimes increases their role even at the expense of their fellows. Still, the analysis of this particular class of omissions has illustrated they often, though admittedly not always, demonstrate patterns such as the inclusion of active characters and excision of brief or repetitive passages even if that means the removal of a specific individual. Moreover, the Hiberno-Latin and Irish adaptors demonstrate both a dedication to preserving the names found in *Fierabras* and considerable care and logic regarding their decisions to omit material.

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A Most Succinct Battle

Of all the categories of translation techniques, omission/reduction often proves the most nebulous. While detecting their presence may be a simple enough matter, determining whether a particular modification should be included amongst those considered in this analysis frequently remains a matter of personal judgment. After all, failing to attach to the sobriquet ‘the brave’ to Roland’s name or not identifying Richard as hailing from Normandy technically constitute omissions. Moreover, lacking the knowledge of the precise manuscript used by the adaptor, it can be impossible to determine at which stage excisions, particularly those of a minor nature, occurred. Finally, even in instances clearly warranting discussion, or at least mention, the alterations often remain primarily matters of style. Examples of this phenomenon include the distillation of long passages of description—such as the reduction of Floripas’ thirty-eight line blason\textsuperscript{315} to the remark that she was ‘\textit{niamad do dheisi 7 do inoslachus innus nach roibhe a hinnamail etir na huile ban}’ (shining with beauty and valour, so that among all women there were none like her)\textsuperscript{316}—or of a speech, including Ganelon’s highly rhetorical twenty-line soliloquy\textsuperscript{317} becoming a single sentence: ‘\textit{a tiagerna, is cumachtach Amirandus 7 is decair dul i Mantribil, 7 is i comairle is ferr again, impodh annsa Fraingc, óir is iat bar leinim digheolus bar mbaruin}’ (My lord, Admirandus is mighty, and it is hard to enter Mantribil, and this is our best plan, for your children will avenge your barons).\textsuperscript{318} The former simply replaces a French formulaic description, the \textit{blason} of romance and to a lesser extent epic, with its equally standard Irish counterpart.\textsuperscript{319} In the case of

\textsuperscript{315} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 2105-2143.
\textsuperscript{316} \textit{SF}, pp. 122-23, ¶ 87. The narrator also includes the detail from his source that she possesses a mantle from Colchis.
\textsuperscript{317} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4568-88.
\textsuperscript{318} \textit{SF}, pp. 264-65, ¶ 181. The reference to Charles’ children represents a departure from the representation of the emperor’s family in the French epic tradition. See pp. 256-57.
Ganelon’s speech, stylistic concerns almost certainly contributed significantly to the adaptor’s decision but he may have also been motivated by his previously-discussed interest in reducing his source’s references to the wider *geste du roi* or even influenced by the translation error which divided Ganelon’s role amongst two or three characters and thus mitigates his narrative participation and potentially his importance. However, in both instances it must be noted that the alteration to the narrative itself proves rather insignificant. Therefore, while the technique must be thoughtfully applied, a useful method of examining omission is to consider whether changes in content occur. Naturally, the omission of names discussed above may be catalogued under this rubric but also it applies to another category: the streamlining of battle scenes.

On occasion, the two classifications coincide such as when the Irish adaptor omits the names of the four knights whom Admirandus slew after killing Huon de Saint Lis/Himus. In two other instances, the exclusion of names seems related to a broader simplification of events. The more straightforward example involves the skirmish in which the captive peers launch a stealth offensive to seize Aigremore/Egrimor from the pagans. The French text relates how Roland slays Corsuble and Oliver kills Cordroés before Roland nearly manages to execute Balan himself. *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* by contrast both omit the first of these deaths but preserve the second as well as Admirandus’ near destruction. This instance proves rather unusual since Roland, as perhaps the most famous of Charles’ peers, virtually never suffers a reduction of his role in the translations. Furthermore, the decision does not appear to be based on a shift in perspective since the episode focuses upon

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320 See pp. 91-99 and pp. 176-82 respectively for a more detailed analysis of these factors.
321 *SF*, pp. 368-69, ¶ 234; *Fierabras*, ll. 5983-84. The French poet identifies these knights as Gierart, Joffroi, Garin d’Aubefort and Flairart de Saint Denis. As would be expected based upon the evidence presented in Chapter 2: The Neglected Knights and The Neglected Knights Continued (pp. 99-106, pp. 116-22) these two lines constitute the knights’ only appearance in *Fierabras*.
322 *Fierabras*, ll. 3083-3104.
323 *GKM*, pp. 362-63, ¶ 133; *SF*, pp. 152-53, ¶ 133.
the French knights’ charge which the adaptor has expressly stated is led by Roland.\footnote{324} In this particular instance, then, it would appear that the translators elected to conflate two instances of Roland’s prowess into a single example, eliminating the death of an otherwise insignificant warrior and focusing on his dramatic near-victory over the leader of the pagan horde. The omission is certainly a simplification of the source, but hardly a reduction in the stature of its heroes.

The second case arises out of Roland’s efforts to provide a mount and arms for Guy. In \textit{Fierabras} the former, riding to save the latter from the gallows, strikes down a Saracen named Tornefier and commandeers his horse. He then rescues Guy before slaying another pagan Acherez to provide Guy with weapons.\footnote{325} Conversely, the Irish text relates the rescue of Guy, followed by Roland defeating Toinnefer and offering his armour and steed to the former hostage.\footnote{326} Upon initial inspection the alterations may appear rather straightforward; however a few matters warrant further discussion. First, the adaptor once again utilises a variety of his translation techniques in a single passage. The episode includes not only omissions, but also reordering since in his redaction Tornifer’s death occurs subsequent to rather than prior to Guy’s rescue. Secondly, the incident provides additional support for the theory that omitted names often occur when 1) the episode includes multiple characters 2) individuals are either inactive or engaged in similar actions, leading to 3) the omission of the names of those who do not occupy the prime position in the text.

In most instances, however, the reduction of battle scenes does not involve the omission of proper names. The precise form of the conciseness varies, as will become apparent, but perhaps of equal or greater importance to these alterations is the fact that substantively the adaptors continue to display a high degree of fidelity toward their source.

\footnote{324} \textit{SF}, pp. 152-53, ¶ 131. 
\footnote{325} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 3680-3710. 
\footnote{326} \textit{SF}, pp. 164-65, ¶ 153.
As discussed previously, while Irish translations often proved briefer than the original work, *abbreviatio* itself did not seem to serve as a motivating factor. This guideline appears accurate in the cases of *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais*. While the Irish and—to all indications—the Latin adaptations are considerably briefer than their source, they do not allow the condensation to reduce the importance of what is arguably the most significant battle of the text: the single combat of Fierabras/Fortibras and Oliver.

Naturally, some modifications particularly regarding their dialogue prior to and during combat do arise. In many instances, the considerable degree of repetition in the source and the lack of any clear indication of which particular manuscript(s) the adaptors may have used renders it difficult to determine the precise nature of the alterations which have occurred. However, it may be said with relative confidence that the basic components of the scene remain unaltered. All texts include elements such as exchanges of threats, Fierabras/Fortibras’ willingness to allow Oliver to depart unharmed, the offer of the balm and the Saracen stating that he will permit himself to be unhorsed. Of equal importance, the length of the battle proportional to the narrative as a whole is not reduced. In both the Irish and French versions, the battle between the two warriors—as calculated from the beginning of the texts to Oliver’s defeat of his opponent—comprises about a quarter of the work.

When battle scenes experience significant reduction, descriptive passages often prove one of the primary targets. This is not to suggest that the translations lack all such rhetorical flourishes; metaphors in particular still occur within the Irish text on occasion such as ‘*dobhí Rolandus ina tsesam amail torc allaid etir conaibh*’ (Roland was standing like a wild boar among hounds) and ‘*do lethnaighedur na pagánaigh rompu mar dorachdís mic tire fo uanaibh*’ (they scattered the pagans before them, as wolves would go through

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327 See pp. 56-58.
328 *Fierabras*, ll. 1-1592 of 6408; *SF*, pp. 16-49, ¶¶ 1-63 of 258.
Both metaphors derive from *Gesta Karoli Magni*: ‘*Rolandus stans tanquam aper atratus*’ (Roland who was standing like a wild, grizzled boar) and ‘*dilaviverunt paganos velut luppi agnos*’ (they cut up the pagans just as wolves devour lambs). The former appears to be an original formulation on the part of the Hiberno-Latin translator. While the latter does not correlate to the French poem directly, the source does call the knights ‘*hardi conme lion*’ (bold as lions) as they prepare to launch their attack. Despite such occasional exceptions, however, the Irish translator in particular seems to have an interest in curtailing descriptions, even those preserved by his immediate predecessor. The extent of the editing ranges from omission of the fact that the bridge at Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil is adorned with a golden eagle—a perennial ornament atop the tents of kings in *chansons de geste*—to substantially lengthier passages such as Floripas’ thirty-eight line blason. Of the latter category, one example, the excision of any discussion of Fierabras/Fortibras’ three swords beyond their names has already been addressed.

The other omission relates more directly to battle: the Irish adaptor excises the description of the wounded Oliver arming for combat with Fierabras/Fortibras. The French poet allots the passage its own twenty-line *laisse* and despite the translators’ tendencies to excise entire *laisse*, the Latin adaptor appears to have deemed the passage worthy of preservation. While the Irish version merely states: ‘*do deísigh Oliuerus é fen docum in catha*

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331 *Fierabras*, ll. 3073.
332 *SF*, pp. 136-39, ¶ 109; *GKM*, pp. 350-51, ¶ 109. The description is otherwise fairly substantial by the standards of the translations and with the exception of the noted omission and a few minor alterations (the bridge being thirty cubits tall, wide enough for twenty soldiers to walk abreast, and garrisoned with fifteen men on the lower bridge in *GKM* versus twenty ells tall, wide as ten men and with twenty warriors stationed there in *SF*; virtually identical).
333 See pp. 94-96.
334 *Fierabras*, ll. 232-48. The description continues until l. 259 of the following *laisse*. However, based on the Latin text’s specific mention of him mounting, the passage appears to have been based on *laisse* VII.
7 do-cuaidh mar a roibe an t-imper’ (Oliver arrayed himself for the battle and went to where the emperor was)\(^3\), *Gesta Karoli Magni* offers considerably more detail:

\[\text{Accinxit se gladio vocabulo Hauteclere, ascendens dextrarium Ferrant de Hyspania et prae agilitate non tangens . . . >ona selle dehinc pendebat ad collum clipeum decenter decoratum. Cingens se zona aurea signo crucis se muniendo ut miles inclitus absque pavore astringens lanceam pugno, dextrario subivit calcaria ad praesentiamque Karoli festinans.}\]

He girded himself with the sword called Hauteclere, and then, mounting his war-horse Ferrant of Spain and not touching the [. . .] of the saddle because of his agility, he hung a suitably decorated shield from his neck. Surrounding himself with a golden belt, protecting himself with the sign of the cross as a famous knight, and drawing his lance for the fight, he spurred his war-horse, hurrying to the presence of Charles.\(^3\)

The notion that the Irish translator may have excised this passage based upon its brief hiatus cannot be entirely neglected. However, in this instance—even presuming the defect existed in the precise copy of the text from which he worked—the lacuna appears to comprise only a single word which any adaptor could have supplied with ease. Therefore, it seems more logical to conclude that the omission represented a desire to expunge this particular descriptive piece from *Stair Fortibrais*.

Unfortunately, many of the battle scenes in *Fierabras* occur subsequent to the conclusion of the Latin fragment. As a result, the remaining examples in this discussion must focus only on the Irish text. On occasion, the translator excises short passages entirely such as a nine-line description of the peers preparing for combat before rescuing Guy from Balan/Admirandus’ scaffold.\(^3\) Reductions often involve only the alteration or removal of relatively minor details. Later in the episode when Roland encounters the pagan Espallart/Espulard, the French text describes how the Christian knight attempts unsuccessfully to pierce his foe’s armour and so instead elects to kill his opponent’s horse

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\(^3\) *SF*, pp. 24-25, ¶ 16.
\(^3\) *GKM*, p. 310, ¶ 15-16.
\(^3\) *Fierabras*, ll. 3631-39. If the translator had elected to include the description in his narrative, it would have occurred in *SF*, pp. 164-65, ¶ 152.
thereby knocking Espallart to the ground and allowing Roland to lift the unfortunate warrior onto his own horse and transporting his captive back to the city.\textsuperscript{338} In contrast, the Irish dispenses with the first portion of the narrative, outlining instead that Roland seizes his foe directly from the back of the pagan’s own horse.\textsuperscript{339} Such an alteration may have resulted from a general desire to render the episode more concise or perhaps in this instance merely have derived from the fact that the Irish variant of the tale would presumably be substantially simpler to accomplish in combat. Another possibility may be that the adaptor altered to scene in order to reduce its comedic aspects or improve Roland’s characterisation. The notion that a hero of Roland’s stature wielding the legendary sword Durandal could not pierce the Saracen’s armour is comically absurd as is his rather unconventional solution. However, the Irish translator may have viewed the amusing scene as contrary to the tone he wished to evoke or decided that—given his consistent effort to mitigate Roland’s occasional displays of impulsiveness and temper\textsuperscript{340}—he did not wish to portray his hero unchivalrously attacking his opponent’s horse.

In other instances, however, the reduction proves significantly more substantial. The Irish adaptor describes the single combat between Clarion and Richard thus:

\begin{quote}
Mar rainic Clarion cuige adubairt ris: ‘is gar bas duid’, 7 adubairt Roisderd ris: ‘a chara, ni dernusa drochni ort, 7 na bi dam ni sa mò’, 7 adubairt Clarion co fuighedh se bas, 7 tuc buille dó, 7 do sgoilt a sgíath, 7 tuc Roisderd buille dosan, 7 do ben a cend d’enbuille de.
\end{quote}

And Clarion, when he came up to him, said: ‘Death is near to you.’ And Richard answered him: ‘My friend, I have never done evil to you, so trouble me no more.’ Then Clarion declared that Richard should die, and he dealt him a blow and split his shield; but Richard gave him a blow and cut off his head with one stroke.\textsuperscript{341}

\textsuperscript{338} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 3992-4019.
\textsuperscript{339} \textit{SF}, pp. 258-59, ¶ 170.
\textsuperscript{340} For a discussion of Roland’s characterisation, see pp. 166-75.
\textsuperscript{341} \textit{SF}, pp. 260-61, ¶ 174.
In contrast, this encounter encompasses thirty-four lines in the French poem—which is
discounting the twenty-four line description of the Saracen’s horse preceding it—which is
related in a single brief sentence in the translation. In substance, the episodes are virtually
identical with two exceptions. First, in Fierabras Richard’s speech includes an offer to avoid
destroying Clarïon should they meet in combat in the future. Secondly, after Clarïon strikes
Richard, the Christian knight delivers two blows the first of which is turned aside by the
Saracen’s armour but the second decapitates him. Thus, in this particular episode, the
translator appears to be engaging in two distinct types of reduction; the first is merely making
the incident more concise, while the second serves to simplify the narrative by the omission
of information deemed non-essential.

The battle between Balan/Admirandus and Charles follows much the same pattern. As
is fitting for a climactic confrontation between the supreme leaders of the Christians and
Saracens, both sources allot the combat rather more time than the conflict between Richard
and Clarion/Clarion. In the Irish text, although both episodes occur within a single paragraph,
Charles’ battle is approximately twice the length of his knight’s. In Fierabras, the contrast is
slightly less dramatic but the former still occupies fifteen lines more than its predecessor.
As regards content, both versions begin with Charles attacking Balan/Admirandus to avenge
the deaths of his knights. The two rulers then slay each other’s steeds. At this point, the order
of combat differs somewhat between the texts. The French poem relates that once both rulers
are on foot Balan delivers the first blow, followed by Charles who then attacks his opponent
but offers to spare him for Fierabras’ sake provided he consents to baptism. Balan renews his

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342 *Fierabras*, ll. 4268-4300.
343 *Fierabras*, ll. 4244-66. The lengthy description of this pseudo-magical creature and its abilities provides a
powerful motivation for Richard to commandeer the horse, abandoning his own mount in the process. While the
adaptor does remark on the steed’s incredible swiftness, the removal of detail does perhaps render Richard’s
decision rather less strongly motivated than in *Fierabras*.
344 This alteration may be related to a decrease in the audience’s expected comprehension of French epic
convention.
345 *Fierabras*, ll. 5985-6032.
assault but breaks his blade in the process and is forced to draw his knife. He advances on his opponent, but Richard, Oliver, Roland and Ogier subdue and bind him. In contrast, the Irish text opens in much the same fashion as its source with Charles attacking Admirandus and the death of both combatants’ horses but it soon departs from Fierabras by having Charles initiating the un-mounted combat with a blow that cleaves Admirandus’ sword in two. The Saracen seizes another weapon and attacks Charles but Roland and the other knights ride to the king’s aid, restraining and tying Admirandus.346

Beyond descriptions, then, the omissions in content include Charles’ speech and Balan’s first blow. Assuming the adaptor was already familiar with the tale, he could well have deemed the former unnecessary to include on this occasion since the speech consists of an offer to spare Balan should he convert, a theme which features rather prominently at the conclusion of the text. He may also have wished to avoid the risk of interrupting the tension of the battle with dialogue, a standard feature of single combat in chansons de geste. As to the second alteration, it proves consistent with the prior episode in that both appear to be concerned with eliminating phases of combat which do not directly contribute to its resolution. In the Irish text, not only is Admirandus’ first blow during the combat on foot entirely omitted, but by having Charles’ sole strike break his sword rather than having it result from the force of the Saracen’s own assault, the adaptor renders the battle increasingly concise. Rather than making two attacks and one unsuccessful lunge, Admirandus merely makes one strike which occurs after Charles has broken his sword. This modification regarding how Balan/Admirandus’ sword broke may also reflect a desire to transform a rather comedic moment—the supreme leader of the Saracens getting his sword stuck in the ground and being unable to extricate the weapon without breaking it—to a dramatic example of

346 The only two peers expressly named in SF are Roland, presumably appearing due to having the greatest fame, and Ogier whom both texts credit with seizing the Saracen so that his associates could bind him. These facts are at least broadly consistent with the previously-discussed guidelines for the naming of characters within a particular episode. See pp. 99-106.
Charles’ strength and prowess in battle as indicated by the fact that the force of his blow destroyed his enemy’s blade.

It would appear, then, that the combat scenes served as a matter of particular interest to the Latin and, more especially, the Irish translator. Their adaptation of the text featured not only a systematic and increasingly comprehensive reduction or elimination of description but also a careful revision of the action of battle with the apparent aim of rendering the conflicts presented in *Fierabras* not only with fidelity but also in their most concise form, and perhaps of rendering the scenes with rather more seriousness than their source.

**Substitution**

The Neglected Knights Continued

The tendency of *Fierabras*’ adaptors to excise characters from particular scenes has been discussed at some length,347 but this method hardly serves as their sole means of altering the cast in a given episode. Indeed, an equally prominent method involves the substitution of one character for another. While the general technique proves both uncomplicated and consistent, it can affect the narrative in numerous ways. For example, on occasion the modification results in a reduction of specificity as a general identifier replaces a proper name. As would be expected given their proportionally larger number of names excised, the pagans almost exclusively occupy this category. Examples include Balan’s brother and counsellor Brulans being replaced by an unnamed chamberlain348 or Faussabré, the Saracen who strikes the captive Guy becoming an equally generic pagan.349

More unexpectedly, in one instance the Latin but not the Irish translator engages in generalisation. In all versions, Floripas orchestrates the defenestration of her governess but

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348 *Fierabras*, ll. 2052-63; *SF*, pp. 120-21, ¶ 82. In *GKM*, he is called Barbecas, the Latin reflex of Barbadas the chamberlain whom Balan orders to prepare for the public torturing of the Christian captives prior to Brulans’ interruption.
349 *Fierabras*, ll. 3549-52; *SF*, pp.160-61, ¶ 147. Unfortunately, *GKM* breaks off shortly prior to this episode.
enlists assistance for the murder itself. The French poem identifies her aide as Malmuchet de Goré while *Gesta Karoli Magni* refers to him merely as *Camerarius* (a chamberlain). The Irish text departs from its source by naming this individual but the appellation provided does not appear to derive from *Fierabras* either. Instead, the translator terms him an *oglach* (lad, young warrior or attendant) named Garrin. Quite beyond the departure from the expected adherence to *Gesta Karoli Magni*, this name raises questions. Despite the fact that the text clearly identifies him as Floripas’ servant and therefore a pagan, Gar(r)in is unquestionably a name belonging to a Christian. In *Fierabras* four individuals—two of whom appear in the translations—bear this name and all of them serve Charles. While it must remain speculation, one intriguing possibility may be that the text is actually making reference here to Gerarin, the last of the knights captured with Oliver. Of course, as the thirteenth peer, he does not appear in *Stair Fortibrais* and he is not mentioned in the Latin text subsequent to the list of prisoners. Still, assuming this particular oddity was a feature of the specific manuscript utilised by the Irish adaptor, Gerarin would have been present during this interlude and in possession of a motive at least as significant as one of Floripas’ servants to eliminate her governess. As to why he is identified as an attendant, this could result from the fact that no Christian knight would—or at least should—accept Floripas’ commands in anything but a chivalric sense, or merely be a consequence of an attempt to blend potentially conflicting accounts. Regardless, one would hesitate to insist upon this interpretation in any sense; it is and must remain nothing more than an interesting prospect.

More frequently than generalisation, however, the translator merely replaces one named actor with an associate—often, though not always, preferring famous knights over their more obscure fellows. This phenomenon occurs almost exclusively in relation to the

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350 *Fierabras*, ll. 2299-2305; *GKM*, p. 343, ¶ 94.

351 See pp. 135-36 for a discussion of Gerarin.
Christians, with the exception of the episode wherein the Saracens realise that Richard has escaped their siege. In the French source, Balan’s advisors Brulans and Sortinbrans detect their foe’s flight and report it to Clarión who elects to remedy the situation personally.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 4199-4224.}

Conversely, in Stair Fortibrais Admirandus himself detects Richard’s departure and then orders Brulant and Clarion to pursue him.\footnote{SF, pp. 260-61, ¶¶ 173-74.} The fact that the text does not mention the former again in connection to this incident rather suggests that either in the Irish text or at some point previous, an alteration occurred which was not completely integrated into the new narrative. Whether as an instigating factor or a simple result, the primary actor has transitioned from the lesser-known advisors to the overlord of the pagans himself.

Likewise, when a company of knights battles the giant guarding Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil, Fierabras credits Reignier with defeating their foe whereas in the Irish translation Richard does so.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 4992-5002a; SF, pp. 274-75, ¶¶ 196.} The structure of the episodes is nearly identical. Both feature the giant attacking Raal/Ríol and Reignier/Remer exclaiming about their opponent’s might before a hero launches a successful strike using an enormous improvised club. The only difference of significant note is the fact that Richard rather than Reignier/Remer wins the day. Naturally, both of these characters play a notable role in the French tradition. However, in Fierabras and more especially in its translations, Richard undoubtedly features far more prominently, particularly given that this episode occurs in quick succession after his most notable actions in the narrative when he rides to Charles in hopes of breaking the siege. Given these facts, Richard’s improvement in standing, even at Reignier’s expense, proves eminently logical. Moreover, because of a translation error which will be discussed below,\footnote{See pp. 124-32.} there is reason to suppose that the character Remer in Stair Fortibrais does not correlate to Reignier. If this
theory is correct, then this episode constitutes Remer’s only appearance in the narrative, and consequently makes his replacement by Richard even more logical.

Regardless, most such modifications favour the most famous amongst the knights. Given his prominence, the translator emphasises Roland’s prestige on multiple occasions. While instances of this technique prove too limited to establish a true pattern, it is interesting to note that on two occasions, Roland replaces the older, more experienced knights Nainmon and Richard respectively. The resulting alterations of this conflation of the brave but often impetuous Roland with his wiser and more strategically-oriented associates will be addressed at some length in the succeeding chapter. At this time, it is sufficient to note that these two instances—convincing Guy to marry Floripas and planning Richard’s escape—serve alongside the adaptor’s previously-mentioned omissions to reduce generational discord and ensure Roland’s pre-eminence. Similarly, Oliver also replaces Nainmon as the peer who recognises Ganelon/Gentilion’s presence in the pagan camp. These facts would seem to argue for, if not a systematic then certainly a strategic, replacement of more minor peers with those who would have enjoyed greater name recognition in fifteenth-century Ireland.

Despite this general trend, however, some of the evidence suggests that in matters of minor narrative concern, knights—even the most important amongst them—were to a certain degree interchangeable. On one occasion Roland replaces Oliver, whose role the adaptor generally proves zealous in preserving. However, during the sortie to secure supplies, Oliver’s foresight and skill in acquiring provisions is credited to his friend. This alteration could result from the adaptor’s desire to re-characterise Roland or merely from variation within the specific manuscript which the translator utilised but it is interesting to note in this

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356 See pp. 166-175.
357 *Fierabras*, ll. 2902-30; *SF*, pp. 146-47, ¶ 123.
358 *Fierabras*, ll. 4125-32; *SF*, pp. 260-61, ¶ 172.
359 The tension between the old and young knights was mentioned in p. 94 and will also be in pp. 260-62.
361 *Fierabras*, ll. 3459-61; *SF*, pp. 162-63, ¶ 149.
context, that in the Irish translation the knight who first hears the horn signalling Charles’
march to battle and conveys the joyous news to his peers is Oliver rather than Roland. Nor
are these heroes substituted solely for each other. While in Fierabras Roland first notices
Saracens mourning Clarion’s death, the Irish text credits this realisation to Floripas instead.
In both texts, Floripas given her knowledge of the pagan forces offers a full explanation, but
Stair Fortibrrais’ account still constitutes a minor reduction in Roland’s role. Perhaps more
unexpectedly, an example also arises in which the translator substitutes Nainmon/Nemer for
Oliver. When Floripas grieves for and rages against the capture of her fiancé two knights
speak to her, one offering comfort and the other asserting the practical wisdom that they
should eat. In the French poem, Roland occupies the former role and Oliver the latter.
Conversely, the Irish version casts Roland as the second interlocutor and Nemer as the
first.

Oliver experiences a similar modification when the Irish text departs from its French
and Latin predecessors by dividing his first speech to Floripas when she visits the knights in
prison into two portions, only one of which is credited to him. In his sources, Oliver both
pledges his service to the princess and requests equipment for himself and the other prisoners
so that they may fight the pagans. Conversely, the Irish identifies the latter speaker merely
with the indefinite pronoun nech. In this instance, the variation may well derive from what
is arguably a rather abrupt change in tone within the speech, particularly given the
compressed nature of the Latin:

Cui Oliverus ‘Domina pro certo quia nunquam fuimus proditores, firmiter
stabimus usque ad mortem ad benevolentiam vestram complendam. Si placet,
domina exhibeatis nobis aliqua arma et equos et spero quod non paucos de
barbaris prosternemus et dirigeremus ad inferna’.

362 Fierabras, ll. 5759-60; SF, pp. 290-91, ¶ 227.
363 Fierabras, ll. 4381-94; SF, pp. 264-65, ¶ 180.
364 Fierabras, ll. 3504-11; SF, pp. 162-63, ¶ 151.
365 Fierabras, ll. 2207-14; GKM, p. 341, ¶ 91.
366 SF, pp. 126-27, ¶ 91.
Oliver said to her ‘Certainly, madam, because we have never been traitors, we shall stand steadfast to the death in order to repay your kindness. If you please, madam, show us some armour and horses and I hope that we shall knock down more than just a few barbarians, and send them in the direction of Hell’.367

Regardless, the modification simultaneously contributes to the text’s characterisation of Oliver,368 and diminishes his role in the episode.

Strangely, given his relatively minor role and the fragmentation of his character, in some ways, Ganelon represents a fusion of both the narrative’s attention towards famed knights and the interchangeability of the peers. Fortunately, both of the examples of substitution occur during the span in which the narrative unambiguously identifies his character as Guinies. During Charles’ counsel regarding whether he should return to France, Ganelon’s clan becomes embroiled in a violent dispute with another peer—Reignier in the French poem and Gilleber in the Irish text369—in Fierabras Ganelon’s brother Hardré marshals the family’s forces in retaliation for an injury to their sibling Aloris.370 Conversely, the Irish translation places Guinies, not Erdre in the leadership position.371 Similarly, rather than Grifons d’Autefoelle, the father of Ganelon and head of the family, serving as the final voice in persuading Charles to abandon the peers at Aigremore as occurs in the French poem, Stair Fortibrais replaces the patriarch’s words with Guinies’.372 These examples clearly demonstrate a transition away from characters famous within the French tradition to ones recognised more universally. Furthermore, the alterations while possibly inconsistent are certainly not arbitrary. Guinies may replace two different individuals but they are both members of his traitorous lineage and therefore, the modifications serve to clarify his

367 GKM, p. 341, ¶ 91.
368 For a discussion of the adaptation’s treatment of the peer, see pp. 155-66.
369 The identity of both these characters becomes muddled in the Irish. See pp. 124-32 for an analysis.
370 Fierabras, ll. 4635-44a.
371 SF, pp. 266-67, ¶ 183.
372 Fierabras, ll. 4685-97; SF, pp. 266-67, ¶ 185.
characterisation. While not all cases prove so direct, the general principles apply across the spectrum of character substitutions.

Miscellaneous

As a category, substitutions along with reductions/omissions rank amongst the most numerous of all the alterations. However, barring those examples already discussed, the majority of substitutions prove to be either related to the broader themes which will be analysed in the coming chapter or of a particularly minor nature such as diverging on the precise placement of a blow or slight numerical variations. Even so, a few exceptions to this rule do arise. Arguably, both of these episodes relate in some manner to the adaptors’ attempts to craft a realistic narrative.

For example, in the French and Latin texts when Floripas inquires as to the source of the lamentations in Aigremore/Egrimor, she is informed that her brother has been slain.373 It remains unclear whether she has merely been misled by court gossip or the statement represented a deliberate attempt to prevent her from discovering the truth for an unspecified reason, but the assertion certainly proves inconsistent with the accurate report given to her father by Brulans/Brulant that Fierabras/Fortibras suffered grievous wounds but survived to convert to Christianity.374 The Irish translator alters this interlude so that Floripas receives accurate information: ‘Fortibras do braithair do loitedh 7 do gabadh le cristaidhibh’ (Fortibras, your brother, has been wounded and captured by Christians).375 Certainly, this modification serves as another example of the simplification and clarification which characterises the Irish narrative, but it could also be considered to improve the realism of the episode. While Floripas later betrays her countrymen, she remains above suspicion at this

373 Fierabras, ll. 2148-54; GKM, pp. 338-39, ¶ 87.
374 Fierabras, ll. 1980-85; GKM, pp. 334-35, ¶ 76.
375 SF, pp. 123, ¶ 87.
point in the tale and therefore it would seem natural that she would be told truly of the fate of her brother.

In a second case, the translators apparently attempt to improve upon their source but achieve only imperfect success. In *Fierabras*, when Floripas confesses her love of a peer to the knights she expressly identifies him as Guy of Burgundy.\(^{376}\) The Latin and Irish texts refer to him instead as merely a knight of France.\(^{377}\) Such a lack of specificity correlates well with her account that she fell in love with him from afar when she saw him defeat Lucafer de Baudas. Two difficulties mar this increased realism, however. First, she also specifies her unidentified beloved’s familial relationship to Charles, a fact which would be challenging to discover if she truly lacked knowledge of his identity. Secondly, both adaptations fail to engage in the additional alterations seemingly required by their original modification such as having Floripas enquire about, or the knights offer, Guy’s name. Furthermore, when the second contingent of Christian knights arrives at the tower, she does identify her beloved by name.\(^{378}\) Although it is of course possible that she acquired this information in the interim, the episode as a whole rather suggests an alteration consistent with the works’ approach to translation albeit imperfectly applied.

\(^{376}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 2340-49.

\(^{377}\) *GKM*, pp. 334-35, ¶ 96; *SF*, pp. 130-31, ¶ 96.

\(^{378}\) *GKM*, pp. 358-59, ¶ 123; *SF*, pp. 146-47, ¶ 123.
Errors

This section will consider almost exclusively modifications which cause difficulties internal to Stair Fortibrais itself. The rigorous nature of this standard means that relatively few passages will receive this classification but this approach seems preferable to making a value judgement regarding alterations in which the reading is arguably inferior to the French source, such as Gesta Karoli Magni’s somewhat perplexing translation of the passage in Fierabras describing the thief Taupim de Grimolee/Malpin’s death, or the decreased efficacy between the French and Irish texts of Floripas’ suggestion for extinguishing Greek fire. Of the five episodes which do warrant inclusion, two are apparently errors in translation while narrative incongruities account for the remainder.

Translation Errors

Intriguingly, both of the translation errors result from confusion surrounding a character’s name. In one instance, the Irish adaptor appears to have mistakenly rendered subject and object form of the French name Ganelon—Guenes and Guenelon respectively—as two or possibly even three different characters Guinies and a knight whose name is alternately spelled Gentelion, Gentilion, Geinntilion, Ginntilion or Genntilion. However, while this misinterpretation clearly falls within the parameters of the category, it will be discussed during the analysis of presentation of Ganelon in Stair Fortibrais and thus does not warrant further consideration here.380

Conversely, the other case involves the conflation of two characters: Oliver’s father Reignier de Gennes and Nainmon de Baviere. Naturally, Fierabras, arising from the French epic tradition, contains no ambiguity on the identities of these knights. The former

379 For a consideration of these episodes, see pp. 65-66 and p. 220-21.
380 See pp. 176-82. Also note that it is possible, though by no means verifiable, that Gentelion should be considered an entirely separate character from Gentilion/Geinntilion/Ginntilion/Genntilion and thus the role of the French Ganelon is actually divided amongst three rather than two knights in Stair Fortibrais.
participates at a few significant points in the narrative: he begs Charles not to allow his son to fight Fierabras and then once the Saracens have captured Oliver pleads with the emperor for his permission to seek his son thus providing the impetus for Charles to send the remaining peers as emissaries to the emir. At this point, he vanishes from the narrative for more than two thousand lines before reappearing to advise Charles not to abandon his knights and return to France.\(^3\) He then participates in the assault on Maltrible led by Richard and finally kills Balan’s advisor Sortinbrans de Conniobre during the final battle at Aigremore. In contrast, Nainmon does not play an especially significant role in the narrative until his objection to Charles’ intention to send Roland as a messenger to Balan causes him to be ordered to join the same mission. From this point onwards, he actively participates in the peers’ adventures at Aigremore in his traditional, if occasionally contested, role as the peers’ de facto leader, especially when in situations where wisdom is required.

While this summary does little to explain the conflation present in the adaptations, it is worth noting that with the exception of the scene in which the emperor selects his messengers the characters scarcely appear together at all much less in any meaningful context, a fact which likely facilitates their merger.\(^2\) Indeed, despite this error the narrative in regards to these characters flows with little impediment until the point at which Reignier advises Charles in *Fierabras* and even then, an audience not especially familiar with the source may well have failed to notice the alteration.

However, before addressing the conflation directly, a brief discussion of another inconsistency in the presentation of Reyner/Nemer is perhaps warranted. While the adaptations frequently dispense with the geographical identifiers often attached to knights’

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\(^3\) His speech to Charles concludes on *Fierabras*, l. 2366 and the poet informs his audience that the emperor summons Reignier for his council on *Fierabras*, l. 4558.

\(^2\) Another contributing factor may have been the fact that, despite his express request to the contrary, Reignier is not amongst the knights sent to demand the release of the prisoners. Particularly given that the Irish translation places particular emphasis on the importance of family—see pp. 255-60—it may have seemed natural to the adaptor to include Oliver’s father amongst the emissaries.
names in the French poem, *Gesta Karoli Magni* twice includes such information in relation to Reyner. However, it either refers to two characters with quite similar names or provides conflicting accounts of one individual’s holdings as the translator first identifies Reyner as the ‘*dux de Geniove*’ but later calls Reimer the ‘*dux de Velner*’.383 The former occurs only once while the latter first appears nearly a hundred paragraphs later and is used twice in rapid succession. While he does not provide evidence, Davies states in his commentary that they should be considered different characters entirely, although he admits that some confusion on the topic remains.384 Supporting this theory is the fact that on each of the four occasions when the adaptor is clearly referring to Oliver’s father, he expressly identifies him as such.385 Furthermore, he is fairly consistent in differentiating his spelling from Reyner for Oliver’s father to Reimer or significantly less frequently Reymer for the duke of Velner.386

Admittedly, this interpretation is not without its complications. First, because the text concludes before Oliver’s father reappears at Charles’ council it is impossible to determine whether the scribe would have written the name as Reymer, or otherwise sought to clarify his identity. Secondly, while the name of Oliver’s father generally appears as Reyner, in one passage which specifically states that he is Oliver’s father, his name is spelt Reymer.387

Two final pieces of evidence could be used to support either argument. A single paragraph contains the potential transition from Reyner to Reimer. At the opening, Oliver’s father requests Charles’ leave to seek out his son and at its conclusion either the same character or one with a very similar name and no other identifier objects that Roland should

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384 Davies, p. 382.
386 Reymer appears on only two occasions *GKM*, pp. 345-46, ¶ 99 and pp. 353-54, ¶ 114. Otherwise, the scribes consistently write the name as Reimer.
387 *GKM*, pp. 342-43, ¶ 93. In this episode, he is also identified as a count rather than a duke. This fact could result from the reference occurring during a speech made by Floripas’ pagan governess who could simply possess inaccurate information or wish to diminish the importance of a Christian. It should be noted that some inconsistency with regards to titles is not uncommon, particularly in *Gesta Karoli Magni*. For a discussion of this final topic, see pp. 244-52.
not be sent, thus ensuring his own place amongst the messengers. While the first name is written with an n and the second an m, this paragraph represents one of only two occasions on which the name Reimer is spelt Reymer, and he is not identified as the duke of Velner until four paragraphs later.

Perhaps most intriguingly, while the clear conflation Reignier and Nainmon in the Irish text and Davies’ note that R and N sometimes prove indistinguishable in the Latin manuscript would seem to imply that if Reimer should, in fact, be considered a separate character, he serves as Gesta Karoli Magni’s reflex of Nainmon. However, neither of the fiefs provided for Reyner/Reimer have any association with Nainmon de Baviere. Rather, they appear to derive from conflicting traditions within French epic regarding the lineage and holdings of Reignier. Although Fierabras’ identification of Reignier as de Gennes is unambiguous and well-represented within the chanson de geste corpus, another branch of the epic tradition associates him with the Monglane-Orange clan and provides him with rather different fief(s). The Oxford manuscript of the Chanson de Roland refers to ‘duc Reiner / ki tint la marche de Val de Runers’ (Duke Reiner who holds the march of Val de Runers), while a fifteenth-century rhymed version brought from France to England after 1415 calls him ‘conte Renier / qui tint la marche et le Val Vernir’ (Count Renier who holds the march and the Val Vernir). The latter proves especially intriguing in its reference to him as a count since it may also provide insight into the origin of some confusion regarding Reyner’s title. Thus, it would appear that the adaptor of Gesta Karoli Magni was familiar with two different French epic traditions, one of which identified Reignier as de Gennes and the other as de Val de Runers/Val Vernir which he preserves as de Geniove and de Velner respectively.

However, it remains unclear whether he includes the conflicting accounts of Reignier’s fiefs

388 Davies, p. 382.
intentionally or accidentally, much less if he intended Reyner and Reimer to be separate and distinct characters.

To some degree, Stair Fortibrais’ translator avoids this confusion—either intentionally or as an incidental result of his practice of further reducing proper names including geographical ones—by referring to his lands only once, identifying him as the ‘diuice na Egne . . . darub ainm Nemerus .i. athair Oliueruis’ (duke of Egne, whose name was Nemer and who was Oliver’s father).\(^{390}\) However, it seems rather likely that the lack of clarity in the Latin source served as the impetus for the conflation of the French characters Nainmon and Reignier in the Irish text. While the confusion of Gesta Karoli Magni’s presentation may have contributed to the error in Stair Fortibrais, it should be noted that the Irish scribe preserves none of the contradictions found there. Not only is Nemer associated with only a single fief, but the spelling of his name proves remarkably consistent. Taken together, these facts rather strongly suggest that either the Irish adaptor personally considered, or wished his audience to regard, Nemer as a single character despite his original derivation from two separate individuals in the French poem and perhaps in Latin text.

In some ways, this approach whether intentional or not, proves an elegant solution to ameliorating the difficulties found in Gesta Karoli Magni. Even discounting the considerable name-based confusion, it arguably seems more natural that Oliver’s father would serve as one of the emissaries than remain behind with Charles, particularly given that the scene in which the emperor selects his messengers opens with Reignier/Reyner/Nemer requesting his king’s permission to attempt to seek his son. Indeed, given the fact that the two characters remain in different locations for the majority of the narrative, the complications inherent to the adaptor’s method do not develop until the final third of the text.\(^{391}\) Much more importantly,


\(^{391}\) The first difficulty appears at SF, pp. 264-65, ¶ 182 of a text with only 258 total paragraphs. This fact does have the unfortunate consequence of rendering any recourse to the Latin source impossible.
an audience unfamiliar with the specifics of the French and possibly Latin texts would have been rather unlikely to have noticed any resulting confusion. Indeed, instead of considering Stair Fortibrais to be in error, it may be more accurate to assert that the adaptor’s interpretation of his rather perplexing direct source necessitated further innovations as the text progressed.

The first of these departures from Fierabras occurs during the council in which Ganelon’s clan advises Charles to abandon his knights and return to France. In Fierabras, Reignier speaks against them, reminding Charles that doing so would both damage his credibility and make his lands more vulnerable to future attacks. While any true Christian would do likewise, this choice makes particular sense given that Oliver would be amongst those abandoned. However, at this point in Stair Fortibrais, the composite character Nemer remains with the peers in Egrimor and is therefore unable to fill this role. As a result, the adaptor introduces an apparently new character in his place: ‘do cualaidh ridire maith do muinntir Serluis Moir sin darub ainm Gilleberus’ (A good knight named Gilleber, of the household of Charles the Great, heard them).

The origin of the name itself proves rather opaque. There is one character, Guilemer l’Escot in the French poem, who becomes Gymer in Gesta Karoli Magni and finally Gilleber in the Irish translation. He is one of the peers captured in the skirmish following Oliver’s victory over Fierabras/Fortibras. In Fierabras, he remains the sole character with this appellation. The extant Latin fragment apparently also features only one individual of this name, although some confusion regarding fiefs emerges here as well. During his capture, the translator refers to him as the ‘nobilem comitem de Ambrois’ (noble count of Ambrois). In

392 Fierabras, ll. 4620-24a.
393 SF, pp. 264-65, ¶ 182.
394 GKM, pp. 331-32, ¶ 68. This title represents a departure from the French tradition. See pp. 244-52 for an analysis of the adaptors’ treatment of this topic.
all subsequent references, he identifies the character only as Gymer.\textsuperscript{395} As to his role in
the narrative, Guilemer does not rank amongst the most active of the peers in \textit{Fierabras}, a
tendency accentuated by the adaptations. In \textit{Stair Fortibrais} and, insofar as it is possible to
determine, \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni}, while he continues to participate in the exploits of the peers
at Egrimor, his speech to Floripas in the dungeon at the beginning of their time in the pagan
stronghold remains the last time he receives any personal mention.

Regardless of his relative obscurity in the Irish text, it seems unlikely that the peer
Gilleber and Charles’ household knight of the same name refer to a single character,
particularly given that the need to introduce the latter at all arose from precisely this sort of
confusion regarding which Christians remained with Charles and which were present at
Egrimor. In terms of the narrative, the Gilleber who speaks against the army’s return to
France serves precisely the same function as Reignier does in \textit{Fierabras}; the adaptor
preserves the content of his speech as well as the conflict which erupts between him and
Ganelon’s clan and ultimately, Charles forcing the latter to beg the faithful knight’s
forgiveness.\textsuperscript{396} However, this episode serves as the final mention of any character named
Gilleber in \textit{Stair Fortibrais}.

Conversely, Reignier continues to appear in the French poem, serving as part of the
five-knight contingent charged with securing the bridge at Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil. Although
the French and Irish texts identify the knights at different points in the episode,\textsuperscript{397} the war
party composition remains fairly consistent: Richard of Normandy, Hoiax de Nantes/Heol,
and Raal du Mans/Riol appear in both works.\textsuperscript{398} Another knight, Gui de la Valee, is named in
\textit{Fierabras} but remains anonymous in the Irish adaptation.\textsuperscript{399} However, the French poem’s

\textsuperscript{395} \textit{SF}, pp. 122-23, ¶ 84; p. 126-27, ¶ 91.
\textsuperscript{396} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4620-83; \textit{SF}, pp. 264-67, ¶¶ 182-84.
\textsuperscript{397} See pp. 102-104.
\textsuperscript{398} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4852-54; \textit{SF}, pp. 270-73, ¶ 191; pp. 274-75, ¶ 195.
\textsuperscript{399} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4852-54.
inclusion of Reignier de Gennes in this group again causes complications for the translator. Thus, in the duke’s place, he introduces a knight not mentioned at any other point in *Stair Fortibrais*: ‘*do connaic ridire dibh darub ainm Remerus sin*’ (another of them, a knight named Remer beheld this).\(^{400}\) The name is spelt *Remer* in Egerton 1781 and TCD H.2.7 but *Reber* in Laud 610.\(^{401}\) In his translation, Stokes glosses this name as *Reyner* and indeed the form *Remer* in particular strongly implies that the translator preserved a form of the name *Reyner/Reimer* from his Latin source. If so, this fact only renders *Gesta Karoli Magni* more puzzling since, assuming they should be considered separate characters, one might expect a form of *Reyner*, Oliver’s father who stayed behind with Charles, rather than *Reimer*, whom the king sent to Egrimor. Regardless, because the Irish adaptor solely uses the name *Nemer* to refer to both Reignier and Nainmon as well as *Reyner/Reimer*, within the context of *Stair Fortibrais* itself, Remer is probably best interpreted as an entirely new and different character. While a name spelt *Remer* does not appear again, Richard includes amongst the number of those knights wounded at the bridge whom he advises Charles to leave behind at Ma(n)tribil a knight named *Reimes*.\(^{402}\) Although by no means certain, the substantial similarity in the names makes it tempting to speculate that the adaptor intended *Remer* and *Reimes* to be the same knight and thus sought to remove the character and any potential ensuing confusion from the narrative.

The final appearance of Reignier in *Fierabras* occurs during the final battle when he slays Balan’s councillor Sortinbrans de Connibre.\(^{403}\) This episode received an extended discussion at the opening of the chapter and merits only a brief mention here.\(^{404}\) However, it is worth noting that, whatever his reasons, the adaptor arranged the episode in such a manner

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\(^{400}\) *SF*, pp. 274-75, ¶ 195.
\(^{401}\) *SF*, pp. 274-75, ¶ 195, n. 2. These names would be pronounced identically in Irish.
\(^{402}\) *SF*, pp. 280-81, ¶ 205.
\(^{403}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 5880-91.
\(^{404}\) See pp. 67-71.
that Reignier does not kill Sortinbrans or indeed appear at all during the battle in *Stair Fortibrais*.

In conclusion, then, it appears that for reasons which remain unclear, *Gesta Karoli Magni*’s adaptor either presented Reignier de Gennes and Nainmon de Baviere as two separate characters with remarkably and perplexingly similar names *Reyner de Geniove* and *Reimer de Velner* or he combined the two characters into a single knight with two orthographical variants of his appellation. Regardless, the Irish translator fully integrated the French characters Reignier and Nainmon into *Nemer na Egne*. When this conflation caused difficulties later in the narrative, he utilised all four basic translation techniques at his disposal to produce a subtly unique and largely internally consistent interpretation of the events found in his sources.

**Narrative Errors**

In addition to grammatical errors, narrative inconsistencies also inevitably occur on occasion. However, a few points relating to this issue prove particularly noteworthy. First, the adaptor of the Irish and—insofar as it is possible to determine—the Latin texts both appear to achieve a high degree of external and internal consistency. Despite their length, *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* contain only two narrative errors each: the repeated destruction of Oliver’s shield and the presence of thirteen peers, and Oliver being twice unhorsed and the death of Basin respectively. In addition, the accuracy of the Irish text increases as the project progresses. Although its modern edition is composed of 258 paragraphs, the last narrative inconsistency—the death of Basin—occurs only slightly more than halfway through the text at paragraph 145 (the translator resolves the error twelve paragraphs later). Finally, as

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405 Depending on how one wishes to calculate the matter, it is possible that three occur in the Latin adaptation. In *GKM*, p. 367, ¶ 145, the final passage before the end of the fragment, the translator makes an omission that is later transmitted to the Irish text. It is clear by his later treatment of the issue that either the adaptor of *Stair Fortibrais* considered this exclusion to be a mistake but given its incomplete nature it is impossible to know for certain how the Latin text functioned in this regard.
will be seen, the texts at least in their present form suggest that the Irish adaptor may have noted the two errors in his source and made his own corrections. In both cases, this results in the French and Irish readings aligning against the Latin. However, postulating direct contact between the two texts is not necessary given that the solutions chosen are axiomatic.

Furthermore, it must be noted that one example arises in which the French and Latin versions concur while the Irish reading makes a problematic alteration. The difficulty arises during the battle of Fierabras/Fortibras and Oliver. In the Latin account the former ‘\textit{abscidit partem magnam armatorum de crure Oliveri inflicto vulnere. Unde sanguis violenter emanavit}’ (after inflicting a wound, cut off a large portion of the armour from the leg of Oliver. Blood poured swiftly out from there).\textsuperscript{406} While this description hardly seems remarkable, it does demonstrate consistency with \textit{Fierabras}’ much more elaborate account of events, at least to the extent that the Saracen wounds Oliver and damages the armour covering his lower body: ‘\textit{La cauche li trencha et l’esperson du pié}’ (he cut off his leggings and the spur from his foot).\textsuperscript{407} Furthermore, such an account does not contradict any succeeding portion of the narrative. Neither statement holds true for the Irish version of events: ‘\textit{Ocus tainic Fortibras da eisi sin 7 tuc búille claidhem cum Oliueruis, co tarrla ar lar don each è, 7 gur brisidh a éitedh 7 gur loitedh è [fén], 7 gur shil moran da fhuil}’ (And after that Fortibras came and gave a sword-blow to Oliver, so that he fell to the ground from his horse, and his armour was broken, and he himself was wounded and much of his blood dripped down).\textsuperscript{408} What proves remarkable is the account of Fortibras unhorsing Oliver at this point in the battle since this innovation is contradicted a mere six paragraphs later when Fortibras slays Oliver’s horse thereby forcing the knight to battle on foot. The Saracen excuses his unchivalrous action by protesting that a blow aimed for Oliver accidentally struck

\textsuperscript{406} GKM, p. 320-21, ¶ 45.
\textsuperscript{407} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 875.
\textsuperscript{408} \textit{SF}, pp. 38-39, ¶ 45.
his mount instead—hardly a valid explanation if Oliver had previously been unseated. The second account of how Oliver lost his horse is obviously the original one as it appears in all three languages, takes paragraphs to relate (as opposed to a single sentence), and plays a thematically significant role by allowing both combatants to demonstrate their chivalry and virtue—Fierabras/Fortibras sorrows over killing the horse and offers to give Oliver his own steed and fight on the ground, while Oliver’s virtue shines forth when his opponent’s horse, against its custom, refuses to trample him. In this instance then, it must be concluded that the Latin reading proves superior to its Irish counterpart.

On other occasions, the Irish translator corrects his source—indeed only slightly later in the same combat, Gesta Karoli Magni describes Fortibras destroying Oliver’s shield which he had earlier in the same paragraph knocked from his opponent’s hand: ‘et Fortibras ictu impetuose fecit clipeum Oliveri in aera evolare . . . Quo saltu fferte, absulit totum clipeum Oliveri praeter modicum’ (and Fortibras with an impetuous blow made Oliver’s shield fly into the air . . . With a mighty leap, he took away Oliver’s whole shield except a remnant).409 The Irish text follows its source closely at the beginning of the account but then credits Oliver with the second shield-splitting attack: ‘7 do buail Fortibras sgíath Oliueruis co dasachtach gur ling uadh annsa n-aer . . . 7 rue Olíuerus sgíath Fortibrais leis acht becan don toisc sin’ (and Fortibras smote the shield of Oliver so furiously that it sprang from him into the air . . . and in that bout Oliver carried off almost the whole of Fortibras’ shield).410 This account concurs with the description found in the French text411 but there is no particular reason to suppose that the agreement results from direct contact. In the first place, the Latin and Irish accounts of this particular incident prove in all other respects closer to each other than either of them is to their original source. Secondly, even assuming that the precise Latin manuscript
Stair Fortibrais’ adaptor used contained this error, which is by no means certain, such a mistake would be very simple to note and correct to a more standard exchange of blows. Taken together these two examples may imply the difficulties a translator faced when transferring largely formulaic descriptions from one idiom to another while still maintaining internal consistency throughout a combat of significant length.

In the second example of a Latin reading proving inferior to its French and Irish counterparts, the adaptor has rather inexplicably managed to credit Charles with thirteen peers instead of the traditional twelve. While some inconsistency in regards to the number and identity of the paladins is not unknown amongst the chansons de geste, the modification does not appear to derive from Fierabras. In the French poem, the Saracens capture Oliver initially and during the following skirmish also secure Berart, Guilemer, Auberi and Giefroi. The seizure of these four knights (and presumably Oliver’s earlier detention) causes Charles to exhort his men to victory and the Saracens flee with their prisoners. When the emperor later sends Roland, Nainmon, Basin, Tierri, Guy, Ogier and Richard as messengers to the emir the final tally of the peers at Aigremore totals twelve in accordance with tradition. The Latin and Irish texts both demonstrate a slight modification in the ordering of the knights’ capture. Instead of all the peers being apprehended together, the abduction of Bernard and Gymer alone prompts Charles’ appeal and the remaining knights are taken during the Christians’ pursuit of their adversaries. Stair Fortibrais in this instance agrees with the French at least to the extent that only two additional peers, Sefre and Amber, are named. The Latin text however adds another name to the second group of knights: ‘Item capti sunt: Galfridus comes per nobilis de Antegania et Auberus <et> Gerarinus et cum

412 Fierabras, ll. 1822-24.
413 SF, pp. 52-53, ¶ 70.
Such are the captives: Galfrid a count of the nobles of Antegania and Auber and Gerarin and were abducted with the rest).414

The name of the odd knight out, Gerarin does not appear at all in Fierabras but a similar name Garin belongs to four men: Oliver’s squire who is given no further identification, a French baron Garin d’Aubefort slain by Balan, Garin de Monglane the paternal grandfather of Oliver and Garin de Pierrecort the pseudonym used by Oliver prior to his battle with Fierabras. In three out of four cases, then, the appellation exhibits close associations with Oliver if indeed, as seems likely but by no means certain, Gerarin should be considered a form of Garin. Furthermore, even assuming this to be the case, its appearance in a list which has previously included Oliver is perplexing. As to the reason for its absence in the Irish translation two theories emerge. The first is purposeful omission on the part of an adaptor who knew that Charles traditionally had twelve peers and upon realising that his source listed thirteen, solved the problem by removing the name of the final knight captured, who likely had little or no name-recognition in any event. Both the attention to detail and the omission or downplaying of lesser-known peers is typical of the Irish text and would render such editing unsurprising. Another option would be that the precise Latin manuscript from which he worked simply did not contain the additional name.

These two cases perhaps imply that the Irish adaptor revised his text where he deemed it necessary as he wrote. The final narrative error provides further insight into his method. As discussed above, one particularly common textual alteration involves the omission of less well-known knights or their replacement by a more famed counterpart. In this instance, the death of Basin—one of Charles’ twelve peers—has been excised from the text. Initially, the exclusion of this presumptively significant event may appear remarkable but a closer

414 GKM, p. 332, ¶ 70. According to Davies, the ‘et’ here is unclear in the manuscript, but it is difficult to imagine another similar word making much sense in this context.
examination of *Fierabras* reveals that the French poet also does not infuse the episode with particular gravitas: ‘Li dus Basin de Lengres fu illuec mort getez, / Et Auberi ses fiz s’est sor lui arestez’ (the duke Basin of Lengres died there / And Auberi his son stood close by him). Arguably, the primary significance of his demise from a purely narrative perspective is to serve as the impetus for causing Oliver, Roland, Guy and Ogier to halt their triumphant return to the city and ride to Auberi’s side where a mere eight lines later Guy’s horse is killed thereby facilitating the Saracens in capturing him. Stylistically, the poet arguably uses the episode to alter the pacing of a tense battle scene and increase its dramatic weight by narrowing his audience’s focus to a small vignette of relative stillness. The delay in the peers’ return to Aigremore allows the Saracens to surround them and Guy—unwilling to endure the taunts of his foes—charges the enemy thereby providing the pagans with the opportunity to apprehend him.

In contrast, the translators of the Hiberno-Latin and Irish versions of the episode present a more evenly-paced narrative electing to build tension through a specific and intense focus on the actions of particular combatants:

* Tainic annsin Clarion cuigi .i. mac mic do Adhmiranndus .u. mili dèc d’Iubhalaithe, 7 is e dob ferr d’Iubhalaibh acht Adhmirdus, 7 tarrla Rolandus doibh, 7 tuc bùille do claidem docum righ acu durub ainm Gibër, 7 do sgoil conuige a cris é, 7 do connuic è Clarion 7 dasacht mór air, 7 do cengladh é 7 do benadh a arm 7 a éididh dhe, 7 ní roibe a fis ag Bernardus le mét na sluagh ina timcell, 7 adubairt rena muintir 7 rena conpanachaibh: ‘togbaidh bur n-inntinn co hard, oir is maith is etir libh na hingina do réidhiugud isna leapthachaibh, 7 cuimnighid marsin nemcaruid Crist do clodh!’ Ocus arna rada sind dó do métaigh menma na conpanach co mor.

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415 *Fierabras*, ll. 3435-36.
Then to him [Roland] came Clarion, a grandson of Admirandus, with fifteen thousand Jews—and save Admirandus he was the best of the Jews—and Roland met them and gave a swordblow to a king they had named Giber, and clove him down to his girdle. And much enraged, he beheld Clarion and leapt to him, but the pagan shot an arrow at him and hit Sir Guy’s horse and killed it. And then Sir Guy was captured and bound, and his weapons and armour were taken from him. And such was the greatness of the hosts around him that Bernard did not know this, and he said to his people and his comrades: ‘Lift up your hearts! You are well able to tame the girls in the beds. Remember to vanquish Christ’s foes in like manner!’ When he had spoken thus the spirit of the comrades increased greatly.416

The passage has been excerpted at length not only to demonstrate its intense pacing and reveal how—given the concise and compact nature of the narrative—the inclusion of Basin’s death could well have reduced the impact of the scene, but also because while the omission clearly occurred during this paragraph, due to rather significant reordering its precise placement cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy. As has previously been discussed in greater detail,417 the entire episode was subject to an extensive degree of alteration and this fact combined with the immediate overshadowing of the knight’s demise by Guy’s capture in the French source could readily account for its exclusion.

Indeed, none of the evidence provided in the passage quoted above even suggests that the removal resulted from an error rather than merely an editorial judgment. And, if the adaptor engaged in the process of translation as he read rather than intensely studying the text as a whole or at least significant sections thereof prior to beginning his own work,418 he may

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416 SF, pp. 158-59, ¶ 145. The Latin fragment presents a virtually identical account but unfortunately concludes midway through this paragraph with the death of Guy’s horse. Also note that Stokes’ translation begins ‘And then to her came Clarion’. However, this reading does not make sense in context; as noted above, the natural referent is Roland.

417 See pp. 79-82.

418 Additional support for this theory arises throughout the text. See pp. 162, 222 and 238-39. Depending on one’s interpretation of the motivation behind the conflation of Reigner and Nainmon (see pp. 124-32), this error could also serve as evidence of the adaptor’s approach. Instead of misunderstanding GKM, he may have made a conscious decision to combine the two characters and—because he translated as he read his source—he remained unaware that this would cause difficulties once he reached the scene in which Charles asks his knights for counsel. Thus, when he arrived at this point, he was forced to innovate by inventing the character Gilleber. The fact that the adaptor probably began his translation before reading his source in its entirety provides a substantive, if unsurprising, contribution to the broader field of medieval translation literature. Even so, this method was not universal even within the Fierabras tradition. For a discussion of a scribe who appears to have
well have failed to realise the inherent difficulty caused by this decision until his source later related how the peers retrieved the body of their fallen comrade.\footnote{Because the Latin fragment concludes prior to these events, his treatment of this event and its relation to the Irish cannot be discussed. Indeed, it seems probable but is by no means even certain that the omission of Basin’s death occurs in \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni}.}

In \textit{Fierabras} Guy, upon being rescued, advises the Christians to secure additional provisions. For this bravery and foresight, Floripas who is watching from the ramparts offers—or perhaps demands—a kiss from her fiancé. The remainder of this \textit{laisse} relates the knights’ encouraging one another and their bravery in battle. The next section opens with Floripas requesting that they acquire food, then features the peers’ banter, followed by additional fighting and finally the Christians securing supplies. The poet relates that during their return to the city: ‘\textit{Le dus Basyn de Langres ont illuec mort trouvé; / Entre lor bras le lievent laienz l’enn ont porté’}. (The duke Basin of Langres was found dead there; / they lifted him in their arms and he was carried inside).\footnote{The summary provided relates events occurring in \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 3732-96. The quotation itself includes only ll. 3795-96.} Once again, these two lines constitute the only reference to Basin. Indeed, the narrative quickly transitions from Roland raising the drawbridge to Balan plotting a more direct assault on Aigremore.

However, despite this rather distinct lack of emphasis on the part of his source and his own neglect to mention Basin’s death previously, the Irish translator apparently deemed the retrieval of this peer’s body worthy of preservation in his own text. Even so, it must be acknowledged that not only does his belated mention of the knight’s former and unrecorded demise present a jarring departure from his usual practice of natural order within the narrative, but the episode also integrates exceptionally poorly with the paragraph immediately preceding it, to the degree that the adaptor makes the unprecedented error of twice relating the Christians’ return to the city. Its usual concision aside, the episode initially follows its

\footnote{\textit{An Edition and Study of Fierabras} in Royal 15 E VI’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Bristol, 2014).}
source relatively closely. Guy and Floripas both encourage the knights to acquire provisions, advice which the Christians proceed to follow: ‘do marbatar na pagánaigh 7 rucatar in biadh leó docum in tuir, 7 tarrla Floripes doibh inanaigid, 7 dobídh gairdechus mór uirrthi rompo, 7 do guidh ser Gido um poig do thobairt di, 7 tec sin sin di’. (And they slew the pagans and carried off the food to the tower. And Floripas met them, and she was in great delight before them, and she asked Sir Guy to give a kiss to her and he gave it).\textsuperscript{421} Naturally, alterations do occur: two battle sequences have been reduced to a single instance of combat, the conversations of the peers on the field have been omitted and discussion of the kiss occurs in a slightly different order but these modifications demonstrate consistency with the translator’s general techniques as discussed in this chapter and functionally the episode’s narrative maintains a high degree of fidelity to its source.

As a result, the departure from the text’s natural order at the opening of the following paragraph appears all the more incongruous: ‘Ocus ar ndul docum in tuir doibh fuaratar ridire da muintir darub aínn Basíinus arna marbad dona pagánachaib, 7 rucatar leó é laim risin tor, 7 do adhuiciter i n-inadh sochruidh é, 7 dochuadur fein isin tor 7 do toccadur an droichet, 7 do dunatar a ndoirrsi co hinill’. (Now when they were going towards the tower, they found a knight of their people, named Basin, killed by the pagans: so they brought him beside the tower and buried him in a seemly place; and they themselves went into the tower and raised the bridge and closed their gates securely).\textsuperscript{422} The profound departure from his standard practice represented by this paragraph strongly implies that the adaptor regarded his earlier failure to include Basin’s death as an error.

However, his solution proves at least equally problematic. Most notably, it scuttles the natural order in three different manners. First, it refers to Basin’s death, an event which

\textsuperscript{421} \textit{SF}, pp. 166-67, ¶ 156.
\textsuperscript{422} \textit{SF}, pp. 166-67, ¶ 157.
happened previously but was not noted at the time. Secondly, the paragraph provides information which the usual narrative practice would dictate should be included in the previous section before the knights’ return to the tower. And finally, difficulties even arise within the paragraph itself, namely the brief mention of Basin’s burial—apparently an Irish innovation—would presumably have occurred after they closed the gates. Furthermore, the manuscripts themselves also seem to imply that the scribes may have regarded the episode as problematic. While slight alternate readings hardly prove uncommon in Stokes’ edition, the occurrence of two within such a small section may indicate either difficulties in transmission or a desire on the part of the scribe(s) to mitigate some of the complications created by the episode. In both cases, TCD H.2.7 and Laud 610 agree in their inclusion of phrases not appearing in Egerton 1781. In the first case, the variation is minor with the latter not specifying that the knights rode *docum in tuir* (to the tower). The second instance proves rather more substantial but thematically related: Egerton 1781 does not contain the information that they went into the tower and raised the bridge. While the alterations occurring in Egerton 1781 hardly address the underlying difficulties created by the passage, it arguably does reduce a measure of its surface discordance. If this were indeed the scribe’s intent, it would perhaps imply that later copyist(s) treated their manuscript(s) of the Irish text in much the same manner as the adaptors of *Stair Fortibrais* and *Gesta Karoli Magni* handled their own sources: with respect and intent to preserve the narrative but also with a critical eye toward its coherence and even improvement.
Conclusion

While this chapter examined only general translation practice and thus provides an incomplete picture of *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais*, a few conclusions may be drawn from it. First, the texts appear well-aligned with the broader trends in contemporary practice in European and especially Irish translation literature. The adaptors attempt to convey the sense of *Fierabras* rather than render it literally, convert the poem into the prose medium which served as the dominant narrative mode in Irish literature and demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the natural order.

Beyond their general adherence to the norms of medieval translation, a number of conclusions may be drawn about the texts more specifically. First, alterations of varying sorts commonly appear and function together in particular episodes and their interactions can prove rather complex. Regarding the use of specific translation techniques, addition proves quite rare nor are reorderings particularly common. Some of the latter appear to display tendencies toward preserving the natural order by limiting the shifts in perspective between concurrent events. Substitutions, omissions and reductions appear comparatively frequently and display more readily identifiable trends: the minimisation of French concerns, the reduction of descriptive passages and battle scenes and an increased focus on famous or narratively-important characters. Arguably, the desire for clarity connects many seemingly disparate alterations found in the texts. In presenting the story to an audience which may not have been fully familiar with its original context, the adaptors sought to convey the narrative as transparently as possible whether by attempting to render the sequence of events easier to follow, by removing unfamiliar references or limiting the cast of characters in a given episode.

But even in instances when the motivation for modifications remains opaque, given the texts’ generally high degree of fidelity toward *Fierabras*, their small number of
demonstrable errors, their impressive attention to detail and the overall careful construction of the adaptations, it seems reasonable to assert that their departures from the source material were intentional and well-considered.
Chapter 3: Characters and Important Themes

Introduction and Methodology

Having established the general translation techniques operating in *Stair Fortibrais* and its forbear *Gesta Karoli Magni*, it is now possible to consider the adaptors’ treatment of the characters and themes. Given that former is beneficial for a solid analysis of the latter, they will be discussed first. While the original French poem and to a lesser extent its adaptations feature a sizable cast, the necessarily limited scope of this project allows for the examination of only some of those who prove most important both in terms of the narrative and the broader epic tradition. The Christian characters will be considered first. This group includes Charles—whose role as the leader of the Christian forces in the story combined with his significance in Europe’s literary tradition and history necessitates a discussion of him—as well as Oliver and Roland. These two knights merit analysis not only as perhaps the most famous of the peers both within and outwith France but also given their important roles in the narrative: Oliver serves as the hero during the lengthy combat with Fierabras/Fortibras and Roland often functions as the knights’ unofficial leader.

These Christians are followed by characters who prove transitional in some manner such as Ganelon—a knight who, while he ultimately remains loyal to his king in this tale, belongs to a family of traitors and displays conflicted allegiance in *Fierabras* which leads to outright treason in the *Chanson de Roland*—and also Fierabras/Fortibras and Floripas, both of whom convert to Christianity during the course of the tale. All these characters also influence the narrative in important ways. Fierabras/Fortibras’ challenge combined with the theft of the relics provides the impetus for all the events which follow. Likewise, the aid which Floripas offers the captive knights allows them to drive the pagans from Aigremore/Egrimor and continue to hold the tower against their foe’s siege. Ganelon’s influence on the plot proves less significant, although he does manipulate Charles into giving
Oliver permission to stand as the emperor’s champion against Fierabras/Fortibras and his failed parley with Balan/Admirandus at the conclusion of the tale confirms that a peaceful resolution to the conflict is not possible. Admittedly, his narrative significance is no greater than that of, for example, Richard of Normandy who is not discussed here but there are two additional reasons for his inclusion. First, as mentioned briefly on a number of occasions, the Irish adaptation divides Ganelon into two or possibly three different characters. Thus, any discussion of his presentation proves particularly complex and interesting. Secondly, while his betrayals remain limited in this story, he is still the most well-known of the traitorous characters, a type important to explore particularly given the adaptors’ focus upon unity amongst the knights. The final character considered here is Balan/Admirandus due to his position as Charles’ barbarian counterpart but also because he functions as the most significant and active pagan in the tale.

The second portion of the chapter will consider the adaptations’ treatment of important themes found in Fierabras. Naturally, this proves a particularly fertile topic for analysis and thus will extend over the course of two chapters. While Chapter 4 will consider subjects which appear to have interested the adaptors and presumably their audiences but were either not explored at all or mentioned only briefly in their French source, Chapter 3 considers themes developed in both Fierabras and its translations. More specifically, the sections in this chapter discuss the adaptors’ treatment of the important topic of religion in two different contexts. Given the centrality of this subject to the narrative and the persistent association between the translations and religious texts within the manuscripts, such an extended analysis proves warranted. The first section, Religion and the Supernatural, seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic by analysing its various aspects: Relics, Prayers and Expressions of Piety. It concludes with a brief discussion of supernatural

423 See pp. 260-64.
elements which are either expressly pagan or at least not directly associated with the Christian faith. Having established the texts’ general treatment of the topic, the final section considers the balance between Historiography and Religion with a particular emphasis on the information conveyed by the variation in the treatment of geography between *Fierabras* and *Stair Fortibrais*. Taken as a whole, the chapter conveys how the adaptors utilised the tools at their disposal to present their own subtly unique version of *Fierabras*.

**Character Studies**

*Charles*

Although Charles serves as the supreme leader of the Christian forces, it should be noted here that despite—or perhaps as a result of—his exalted rank, he is generally not amongst the most active individuals in any narrative. While he does occasionally engage in battle, he is at least as frequently depicted as an observer of events, a commander ordering his knights or a ruler taking counsel. With the brief exception of the opening skirmish, he does not participate in combat until the assaults on Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil and Aigremore/Egrimor near the conclusion of the texts. Despite his relative inaction, however, his presentation proves at least as significant in the Irish context as in the French if not more so. In the case of the latter, the contemporary as well as the modern title of the poem is *Fierabras*—despite the fact that, to an even greater degree than Charles, the converted giant disappears for much of the narrative.\(^{424}\) By implication, then, Fierabras as the eponymous hero possessed particular significance or at the least was of considerable interest to the original audience. Conversely, *Stair Fortibrais* is, as mentioned previously,\(^{425}\) an editorial title applied by Stokes. Four of the seven manuscripts include a colophon providing a rather different title: *Sdair Serluis moir ag lenmain coroine Crist 7 taissi na naemh* (The History of Charles the Great Pursuing the

\(^{424}\) For an analysis of the French manuscripts, see Le Person, *Fierabras: Chanson de Geste du XIIe Siècle*, pp. 22-56.

\(^{425}\) See p. 44.
Crown of Christ and the Saints’ Relics). Likewise, the name of the Latin text, *Gesta Karoli Magni* (The Deeds of Charles the Great) also appears in a colophon. Together, these titles emphasise Charles’ importance and perhaps renders his presentation of particular

significance.

Despite his role as the supreme leader of the forces of Christendom, however, his depiction in *Fierabras* is perhaps rather less complimentary than casual inspection might imply. Overall, the poet seems to delight in manipulating his audience’s expectations of characters but he remains vigilant not to blur the distinction between hero and villain. Charles unquestionably belongs to the former category; he not only enjoys the reflected glory of the heroic peers but ultimately defeats Balan in single combat and claims his lands for Christendom. In addition to bravery, the poem celebrates his devotion to the relics and, through a personal angelic visitation, maintains the exceptional nature of his relationship with God established in the broader corpus of *chansons de geste*.

However, he is not without numerous and significant flaws. Even Dominique Boutet, who argues strongly for a positive characterisation of Charles in *Fierabras* acknowledges three significant failings of the emperor: excessive anger, the abuse of his feudal authority and a weakness or blindness which allows traitors to influence him. To examine these faults in more depth, his vaunting of the older knights so angered one of his staunchest defenders that he nearly found himself without a champion to battle Fierabras. Indeed exerting proper regulation over his emotions remains problematic as the narrative progresses. During Oliver and Fierabras’ battle, he becomes so emotionally overinvested that he makes a *clamor* extreme enough to cause Nainmon concern. Furthermore, his anger at his peers’

\[426\] Some slight variation occurs in the colophons. Egerton 1781, TCD H. 2. 7 and TCD H. 2. 17 exhibit orthographic variants only. TCD H. 2. 12 displays some alternate word usage, but remains virtually identical in terms of semantics: *Conid in sdair tserlais ac leinnain coroine Crist 7 taisi na naem comuici sin*. A shortened title version of the title, *Sdair Serluis Moir*, appears in RIA 23 O 48.

legitimate apprehensions regarding his intention to send them as emissaries to Balan results in his unnecessarily risking the lives of not one but seven of his greatest vassals. Finally, he displays a disturbing susceptibility to accepting poor counsel. Arguably, his consenting to the wounded Oliver serving as his champion results more from being outmaneuvered than demonstrating poor judgment; Ganelon and Hardré entrap him with his own, perhaps injudicious, previous proclamation the consequences of which he could not have foreseen but is nonetheless duty-bound to honour. However, this episode only makes his later decision to adopt their malevolent counsel to return to France all the more grievous.

The presentation of Charles in *Stair Fortibrais* generally adheres to its source’s template: he remains a noble king and staunch Christian albeit one inevitably subject to the foibles of humanity. However, it must be noted that in *Fierabras* the majority of his faults serve to shape the direction of the narrative. His boasting and acquiescence to Ganelon leads to Oliver serving as his champion and the frustration he displays when gainsaid results in the presence of the full complement of twelve peers in Aigremore. Accordingly, as one would expect, such narratively-significant elements seem to demonstrate particular resistance to alteration.

Charles’ sole potential remaining flaw—making a *clamor* which at least borders on apostasy—is the only one which could have been omitted with any degree of facility and indeed, the Irish adaptor assiduously excised it. Since this passage will be discussed in the following chapter, it suffices here to note that within the context of *Fierabras* it remains rather unclear whether any transgression has in fact occurred. A *clamor*, a prayer intended to pressure God into providing a favourable outcome, is hardly atypical nor generally considered blameworthy within the *chanson de geste* corpus. Still, given the intemperate

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428 See pp. 265-66.
nature of Charles’ words, the removal of his speech in *Stair Foribrais* serves to enhance, or at least render rather less ambiguous, his position as a Christian leader.

His status in this regard is further reinforced by the fact that praying features prominently amongst the emperor’s more common activities in all three texts. In the French poem, he engages in four prayers, all in direct speech, during the course of Oliver’s single combat, the first three of which are comprised of two lines each while the last occupies sixty-six lines. The prayers function as interjections to reinforce the danger Oliver experiences and to emphasise the importance of divine will in his victory. Charles’ lengthy prayer is also his last because at its conclusion a seraph appears to him providing assurance of his champion’s ultimate triumph.

The Irish text provides a differing perspective on these events by omitting three of Charles’ prayers and having the emperor offer only a single, brief supplication which is not even presented as direct speech: ‘*Imtus Serluis mhoir, dochúaid d’edurguidhe in Coimdedh, 7 do leic a gluine faé, 7 do tócaib in croch eter a dha laim, 7 do guidh Día im Oliuerus do techt slan, 7 tainic in t-aignil cuige 7 adubairt ris: beraidh Oliuerus buáidh catha maille saethar 7 re guasacht mor*’ (As to Charles the Great, he went to entreat the Lord, and fell on his knees and raised the cross between his hands, and prayed God that Oliver might come back safe. And the angel came to him and said, ‘Oliver will gain victory in battle, [but] with great labour and danger’). On the one hand, because the account the prayer in *Stair Fortibrais* is minimised to such a degree, the angel’s appearance immediately following it suggests a particularly profound connection between the emperor and the Lord. Conversely, this alteration could be considered to represent a diminishment of the character’s importance as a symbol of Christendom. The omission of the additional prayers found in the source during

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429 *Fierabras*, ll. 790-92, 1074-75, 1157-58, 1221-87.
430 *SF*, pp. 36-37, ¶ 42.
this episode—particularly in conjunction with the adaptor’s omission of his prayer of thanksgiving for the successful conquest of Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil later in the text—may imply that prayer is perhaps less of a reflexive recourse for Charles in the Irish version than in its source.

Even so, the abridgement combined with the translators’ preservation of two brief but potentially significant occurrences as the narrative progresses serve to further reinforce the strength of Charles’ faith. The passages concern his efforts to restrain his knights from interfering in the single combat. Both texts demonstrate identical placement of the events within the context of the broader narrative and require him to twice prevent the Christians from charging to their champion’s rescue: once as a result of Fierabras/Fortibras slaying the champion’s horse and a second time when Oliver is disarmed. In the French poem the first of these instances occurs prior to the appearance of the seraph, causing Charles to insist that they cannot interfere without dishonourably breaking the terms of the single combat. After the angel’s appearance, the king once again commands his knights to stand their ground citing the heavenly assurance of their champion’s ultimate victory. Because of the conflation of events in the Irish, both of Charles’ commands occur after the angel’s appearance thereby allowing the king to twice cite the divine intervention. This decision perhaps proves more remarkable than it initially appears. In the first place, the adaptor demonstrates a distinct tendency to excise the vast majority of the repetition appearing in his source and furthermore, the effect actually appears more pronounced in the Irish because of the concise nature of its account. Moreover, the inclusion of the events requires the preservation of two shifts in perspective which some evidence suggests the translator had a

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431 *Fierabras*, ll. 5299-5302. If the episode had been preserved in the Irish, it would have occurred on *SF*, pp. 278-81, ¶ 205.
432 *Fierabras*, ll. 1150-55.
433 *Fierabras*, ll. 1359-63.
434 *SF*, pp. 42-45, ¶¶ 52, 55.
degree of interest in avoiding. These facts indicate a purposeful reinforcement of the
to the divine, however, Charles’ enthusiasm for
conversion of others. Despite Oliver’s capture resulting directly from Fierabras/Fortibras’
actions, the king, at the wounded pagan’s request, not only spares him but arranges for his
baptism and offers his former foe a position amongst his knights. In this episode, the
adaptations demonstrate a high degree of fidelity to their source. Rather more variation
occurs in relation to the numerous attempts to convert Balan/Admirandus, however. In the
French and Irish translations the initial endeavor occurs as a consequence of
Fierabras/Fortibras’ appeal to Charles which results in the emperor sending
Ganelon/Gentilion as a messenger to the pagans’ leader.

After this point the accounts branch. Fierabras features Charles personally making
three separate efforts at redeeming his counterpart. The first occurs during their combat and
the remaining two during the ill-fated baptism itself. Although none of his arguments prove
particularly lengthy by the poem’s standards, they occur frequently and in the majority of
cases feature direct speech. By contrast, in the Irish translation Charles never personally
involves himself in Admirandus’ failed conversion. During their combat, he refrains entirely
from speaking to his opponent although Fortibras’ plea to his father at the conclusion of the
conflict—‘déna comairle in impir’ (do follow the emperor’s advice)—rather implies
otherwise. But even after Charles’ victory the adaptor presents his contribution as a single
sentence: ‘do guidh in t-imper Fortibras um dul docum a athar 7 baistedh do rada ris do

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435 See pp. 73-82.
436 For a more detailed consideration of this aspect of Charles’ presentation in Fierabras, see Boutet, pp. 432-33.
437 Fierabras, ll. 5609-55; SF, pp. 286-87, ¶¶ 220-222.
438 Fierabras, ll. 6008-12, 6087-95, 6108-6112.
439 SF, pp. 368-69, ¶ 235. For an analysis of the presentation of Fortibras during this episode, see pp. 77-78.
gabail cuige’ (the emperor asked Fortibras to go to his father and to tell him to accept baptism).\textsuperscript{440} Admittedly, this does allow Charles to participate in the process to some degree and the notion that Admirandus’ son would have the greatest concern for the fate of his soul is a logical supposition, particularly given the translator’s emphasis on filial piety\textsuperscript{441} but these facts cannot entirely mitigate the conclusion that the Irish text rather downplays this particular aspect of Charles’ religiosity.

Finally, one of \textit{Stair Fortibrais’} rare additions to its source material also impacts this aspect of his presentation: the adaptor credits him with the construction of a church in honour of the relics in ‘Persibus’ or ‘Perndado’ at the conclusion of the tale.\textsuperscript{442} While this aspect of the text will be addressed in more detail as the chapter progresses,\textsuperscript{443} it remains worth noting at this time that this innovation in the Irish adaptation supplements the relics returned to the established churches of France as a lasting contribution to Europe’s spiritual landscape.

Although Charles undoubtedly serves as a figure of religious significance in the texts, he is also the emperor and his behaviour in this context warrants examination. Unsurprisingly, two of the alterations found in the Irish adaptation involve the omission of entire, but brief, \textit{laisse}s. The episodes in question—Charles’ lament at abandoning his men and his distribution of the treasures of Maltrible amongst his men\textsuperscript{444} —function primarily to further characterise Charles as possessing the kingly qualities of loyalty and generosity respectively but contribute little to the progression of the narrative.

Similarly, the translator removes the king’s consultation with Reignier/Nemer and Richard regarding whom he should send as an envoy to Balan.\textsuperscript{445} In this instance he merely omits the conclusion of the \textit{laisse}, but the basic principle remains operative. The passage’s

\textsuperscript{440} SF, pp. 370-71, ¶ 238.
\textsuperscript{441} See pp. 257-59.
\textsuperscript{442} SF, pp. 380-81, ¶ 257. Some variation appears within the manuscripts. Laud 610 exhibits the latter reading.
\textsuperscript{443} See pp. 212-13.
\textsuperscript{444} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4704-17, 5244-53.
\textsuperscript{445} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 5620-30.
removal could be utilised to support any number of arguments such as the notion that, as a result of the bad advice he has twice previously received, he has become more cautious about soliciting it. Or conversely, since he recently accepted poisonous guidance from Ganelon and his treacherous family but here refrains from seeking the perspectives of his loyal knights, he still favours nefarious counselors above honest ones. Finally, since Admirandus behaves in a slightly more autonomous fashion,\textsuperscript{446} it could even be viewed as evidence of a trend of increasing personal sovereignty amongst rulers. However, given that the passage possesses a number of features similar to others excised for rather less significant reasons and the presence of Regnier/Nemer, a rather problematic character in \textit{Stair Fortibrais},\textsuperscript{447} one would hesitate to insist too strongly on any single interpretation.

Finally, at the conclusion of the text, two episodes occur which have the potential to fairly dramatically influence the presentation of Charles. Both will be addressed in rather more detail in this and the following chapter,\textsuperscript{448} but require at least a brief mention at this time. The first concerns the pagans’ reaction to Charles’ victory at Aigremore/Egrimor. In both texts, one of the surviving pagan leaders Corsable de Valnuble/Gabras de Vaille Nubile flees deeper into the heathen lands of Cappadocia or Spain in the French and Irish texts respectively and returns with an army. \textit{Fierabras} states that this event occurs at some unspecified point in the future, lasts longer than seven months and perhaps most importantly, that Charles’ return to Spain allows the Christian forces to triumph.\textsuperscript{449} In contrast, the adaptor rather implies that the invasion happened before the emperor returned to France but that Charles played no role in the conflict: ‘\textit{do cualaidh ser Gido sin, 7 dochuaidh 7 a sluagh ina choinne, 7 tuc cath doibh, 7 do marbad ri na Spaine ann, 7 do madmaigh se a muinntir, 7 do inntogh Ser Gido aris docum in impir}’ (Sir Guy heard this, and marched with his army to

\textsuperscript{446} See pp. 195-96.
\textsuperscript{447} See pp. 124-32.
\textsuperscript{448} See pp. 215-16 and pp. 258-59.
\textsuperscript{449} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 6060-71.
meet them, and gave them battle; and the king of Spain was killed therein and his forces were routed, and Sir Guy returned to the emperor).\textsuperscript{450} This variation substantially reduces Charles’ importance as a defender of Christendom and indeed potentially even as a liege-lord.

While the second passage’s reading proves somewhat problematic, it clearly represents a significant departure from its source. In the French poem, Charles is, rather unsurprisingly, the sole and ultimate arbiter of Balan’s fate. The Irish text proves rather more ambiguous. Strangely, the actual judgment occurs only by implication, a fact mentioned in relation to another topic altogether: ‘Ocus do daingnigh Rolandus fona luighe co ndingnadh mar do breithneochad Amiranndus’ (And Roland assured her [Floripas] on oath that it [her marriage] should be performed, as Admirandus had been sentenced).\textsuperscript{451} Furthermore, Charles makes a statement to Floripas that perhaps implies that he grants her some responsibility regarding her father’s final fate although whether this power endows her with the right to judge him or merely attempt to convert him proves rather ambiguous: ‘a ingen, cuirimsi ar bar mbreith fen nar sechain se in creidim cathoilca’ (Damsel, I put him into your own jurisdiction, that he may not shun the Catholic faith).\textsuperscript{452} However, regardless of the precise interpretation of this episode, the fact that the Irish translator refrained from recounting the emperor passing sentence on his vanquished counterpart rather weakens his perceived strength as a ruler.

While drawing any firm conclusions regarding the presentation of Charles in \textit{Stair Fortibrais} proves both difficult and subjective, it would appear that on the whole the adaptor presents him as simultaneously a slightly greater religious icon and lesser secular power than the character in \textit{Fierabras}.

\textsuperscript{450} \textit{SF}, pp. 370-71, ¶ 237. Intriguingly, this series of events bears some resemblance to the French poem \textit{Gui de Bourgogne} in its reference to Guy’s successful campaign against the Saracens in Spain prior to the Battle of Roncevaux.

\textsuperscript{451} \textit{SF}, pp. 372-73, ¶ 242.

\textsuperscript{452} \textit{SF}, pp. 372-73, ¶ 241.
**Oliver**

Perhaps of all the Christian knights in *Stair Fortibrais*, Oliver’s presentation proves most similar to that found in its source. In all versions, he appears as a brave, pious and even wise young peer. Although he battles courageously on a number of occasions, the former quality is obviously best shown by his willingness to stand as Charles’ champion in single combat despite the considerable risk to his own life, a choice rendered all the more perilous because has yet to recover from a serious wound. As regards this trait, the adaptations neither reduce nor augment his character. The sole exception serves to subtly enhance Oliver’s reputation and interestingly results from the Irish translator’s modification of his direct source. The episode happens during the combat between Oliver and Fierabras/Fortibras when the giant has managed to temporarily disarm Oliver. In *Gesta Karoli Magni*, the narrator recounts the Christian’s reaction in a manner consistent with the original poem: ‘*Oliverus volens gladium suum resumere, mox Fortibras saltans se interposuit extendens brachium suum ad percutiendum. Oliverus nimio terrore correptus quam melius potuit clipeo suo se protexit. Illo saltu Fortibras a clipeo partem magnam abscidit cum quandam partem lorice, sic quod vix evasit quia plagatus fuerat vulnere letali*’ (Oliver wanted to pick up his sword, but with a leap Fortibras quickly placed himself between Oliver and his sword and stretched out his arm to strike him. Oliver, seized by tremendous terror, protected himself with his shield as best he could. From that jump, Fortibras cut away a large part of his shield along with a part of his breast-plate, so that he was lucky to escape because he could have been wounded with a fatal wound).453

The Irish version of this event demonstrates its traditional degree of fidelity to the source but omits one very important detail: ‘*Ocus mur dob ail le hOluerus a claidem do*

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453 *GKM*, p. 324, ¶ 54. This brief episode correlates to *Fierabras*, 1344-59. The poet specifically mentions Oliver’s fright in l. 1348.
And, as Oliver sought to pick up his sword, Fortibras sprang between them and raised his hand to smite Oliver. Then Oliver lifted the shield to protect himself as best he could, and Fortibras dealt him a blow which broke his corslet and part of his shield and wounded him perilously. The manifest similarity between the two accounts almost undoubtedly renders the omission of Oliver’s fear intentional. Admittedly, this alteration does perhaps result in an implied lessening of Fortibras’ menace and the dramatic tension. Nevertheless, it primarily serves to enhance the notion of Oliver as a brave and dauntless warrior.

However, courage is but one facet of the heroic ideal and the translators make additional alterations affecting this aspect of Oliver. In at least one instance, the modification which apparently lessens the knight’s cortoisie may be culturally determined. In the French text, Oliver holds Fierabras’ stirrup when the Saracen mounts his destrier. The poet clearly includes this detail as a credit to the Christian’s chivalry. The adaptor omits this occurrence. While it would fall well within the scope of his typical technique to excise this fact merely because it was so minor, he may additionally have been concerned that his audience would regard such an act as servile and therefore beneath Oliver’s rank and dignity which he assiduously preserves.

454 SF, pp. 44-45, ¶ 54.
455 Another potential example of this phenomenon occurs in SF, pp. 30-31, 120-21, ¶ 30, 80 wherein Oliver identifies himself the son of a ‘modhaidh boicht’ (poor slave) rather than a vavasour (a vassal holding sub-fiefs) as in Fierabras, ll. 460, 2038. In both texts, the second instance clearly serves as an attempt to convince the emir that his prisoners are not especially valuable. The first example could result from Oliver’s attempt to increase either the insult to his opponent or—perhaps more likely given the unfailingly flattering portrait of the Christian—his modesty. For a more detailed discussion of this particular rendering of the French, see pp. 250-51.
456 Fierabras, ll. 687-89.
457 From SF, pp. 34-35, ¶ 39.
In fact, one of the translator’s alterations allows him to supplement the praise for Oliver found in his source in an especially effective manner: placing it in the mouth of his opponent. The French poem presents the episode as an attempt on the part of Fierabras to dampen Oliver’s desire to fight by letting him see the pagan arm himself. The Christian, understandably wary of deceit, inquires: ‘Osserrai ge m’i fier? / Oïl, dist Fierrabras, ne vos estuet douter, / Ja n’iere ja traïstre tant com puisse durrer’ (‘Will I be able to do so with confidence?’ / ‘Yes’, says Fierabras, ‘you have no need to fear, / I will never be treacherous as long as I live’). Oliver’s acceptance of this statement and consequently his implied praise of the pagan is not stated outright but rather inferred from his subsequent assistance in tying the thirty laces which held on the Saracen’s helmet. This act also reflects well upon Oliver since he is not intimidated by the size of his foe, of which the poet reminds his audience via the number of laces required to secure his helm, and moreover the Christian demonstrates his honour by performing the task properly and thereby forfeiting a potentially substantial advantage in the coming combat.

The adaptor of *Stair Fortibrasions* slightly alters the context. Once Fortibras has consented to the combat, Oliver asks: ‘in taebh dob ãil let do tobairt rimsa dochur do deíssi umad? Ocus adubairt Fortibras: Aithnighim ar do briathra nachar’ fallsa tú conuice aníu. 7 adubairt Oliverus co firiinzech, nir fallsa mé 7 dob fuath lium lucht na fallsachta’ (‘Do you trust me to put your armour around you?’ And Fortibras replied ‘I know by your words that you have never been false’. And Oliver answered truthfully: I have never been false, and hateful to me are traitors’). Thus, the translator neatly transfers the majority of the lauds from the pagan to the Frenchman but more significantly he also departs from his source in

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458 *Fierabras*, ll. 634-36.
rendering explicit the confirmation of the claim to trustworthiness. This fact lends particular
credence to the notion of a conscious yet subtle attempt to further improve Oliver’s stature.

Intriguingly, immediately following the arming of Fierabras/Fortibras another
instance of reinterpretation occurs in which all three texts present unique readings. In the
French poem, Fierabras confesses to the great distress their imminent battle causes him and
again requests that Oliver return to his camp.\textsuperscript{460} \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni} records a rather different
remark: ‘\textit{Garine multa tibi negotior quia sentio et scio me non per multa tempora me ligasse armatum}’ (Garin, I am engaging [in] many things for you, because I am aware and I know
that I have not had my arms put on for me in a long time).\textsuperscript{461} Finally, the Irish departs from
both texts: ‘\textit{ruc [Fortibras] buidhechus le hOliuerus a feabhus do chur a dheisi catha uime, 7
adubairt ris: is fada o nach dechus am deisi a commaith so}’ (Fortibras rendered thanks to
Oliver for his goodness in giving him his battle gear, and he said to him: ‘It is long since I
have donned my armour so well’).\textsuperscript{462}

This series would appear to indicate a progression from implied to direct praise of
Oliver. While each text clearly reveals the pagan’s respect for his opponent, in \textit{Fierabras} his
statement is the repetition of an offer made on a number of previous occasions. This is in no
way intended to imply any disingenuousness, but its recurrent nature arguably lessens the
weight of the inferred compliment. The Latin text, although it still reveals Oliver’s worth on
the basis of Fortibras’ behaviour toward him, does create a new scenario. The translator also
expressly reiterates that the pagan accords Oliver an uncharacteristic degree of honour.
Finally, in \textit{Stair Fortibrais}, he offers express and direct praise of the Christian. Once again,
both adaptors appear to display particular interest in the enhancement of Oliver’s chivalric
credentials but this tendency is perhaps more developed in the Irish text.

\textsuperscript{460} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 647-50.
\textsuperscript{461} \textit{GKM}, p. 317, ¶ 38.
\textsuperscript{462} \textit{SF}, pp. 34-35, ¶ 38.
As to Oliver’s sagacity, *Stair Fortibrais* presents it in terms almost identical to *Fierabras*. Only two minor alterations occur, one to the knight’s detriment and the other to his credit. During the sortie to secure provisions Roland rather than Oliver is credited with the foresight and skill to acquire supplies in the midst of a chaotic skirmish in which the pagans capture Guy.\(^{463}\) Counterbalancing this transference, however, is the fact that Oliver rather than Roland hears Charles’ horn. Moreover, while the latter merely rejoices in the imminent rescue, Oliver exhibits the wisdom to suggest that the besieged knights engage themselves in battle preparations.\(^{464}\) This perhaps represents the most minor of positive modifications of Oliver’s characterisation but on the whole the translator preserves rather than alters this aspect of his presentation.

His characterisation as a pious knight proves somewhat more problematic with one exception. When Fierabras/Fortibras permits Oliver to retrieve his lost sword, the peer refuses but gives a slightly different reason in each text. In *Fierabras* he replies ‘*Que se riens me faisoiez quil venist d’amistez, / Et ge puis t’ochioie, che seroit crueltez*’ (If you should do anything for me which befits friendship, / and I killed you after that, that would be an ignoble act).\(^{465}\) He voices a slightly different concern in *Gesta Karoli Magni*: ‘*Nam si te interficerem enso illo quod fiet in brevi ut spero, redargui possem tanquam ingratus*’ (For if I were to kill you with that sword, which will, I hope, happen quickly, I could be found guilty of being an ungrateful man).\(^{466}\) In contrast to these two justifications, Oliver’s reply in *Stair Fortibrais* is a notably religious one: ‘*Gidhedh da marbhuinnsi thusa risin claidhem ud mur shailim a denamh co luath do fétfaidh mo brethnugud mur micristaidhi*’ (Howbeit, if with that sword I were to slay you, as I hope to do at once, you would be able to adjudge me to be a bad

\(^{463}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 3459-61; *SF*, pp. 162-63, ¶ 149.

\(^{464}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 5759-60; *SF*, pp. 290-91, ¶ 227.

\(^{465}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 1395-96.

\(^{466}\) *GKM*, p. 326, ¶ 58.
Admittedly, his qualification that Fortibras might find his faith lacking as opposed to a more personal conviction places his statement firmly within the context of a shame rather than guilt culture. On the other hand, given that Oliver has already expressed a desire for Fortibras to convert his concern with suitting his actions to the ideals of his faith is perhaps of particular relevance. Regardless, it appears clear the Irish adaptor has made a conscious decision to emphasise Oliver’s spiritual credentials in this passage.

Unfortunately, difficulties arise when attempting to analyse most other episodes relating to this topic. The complications are not due to some impediment with his presentation per se, but rather inherent in the fact that the only portion of the narrative in which his religious sensibilities appear at the forefront is during the combat with Fierabras/Fortibras. The episode features amongst the most complex examples of adaptation in the entirety of the translations. The vast majority of the modifications actually occur between Fierabras and Gesta Karoli Magni with only limited innovation on the part of the Irish adaptor. Regardless, in both texts, the essence of events remains essentially unaltered but the details can depart rather markedly and unpredictably from the French poem. More specifically, all versions employ the same basic building blocks in the dialogue between the two combatants such as exchanges of threats, entreaties for conversion, demands for the relics, offers of the healing balm, permission for Oliver to depart unharmed and requests for a more suitable opponent. However, either due to the particular and unidentified French manuscript utilised by the Latin adaptor or because of a certain tendency toward substitution in a manner virtually unprecedented elsewhere in the text, the adaptor appears to employ the specific topics of conversation with a certain degree of interchangeability. In fact, the combination of the translator’s typical concision and the occasional more substantial

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467 SF, pp. 46-47, ¶ 58.
alteration renders it exceptionally difficult to determine with any confidence precisely which translation technique he utilises in a particular instance.

Interpretation presents an additional complication. This difficulty also encompasses the entirety of the single combat to some degree but it proves particularly pronounced in relation to two activities. The first, threats, suffers from both organisational and interpretive challenges while the second, prayers, generally remains unaffected by the tendency toward interchangeability but is still subject to a certain amount of ambiguity. For example, in *Stair Fortibrais*, Oliver’s statement ‘aithferidh Día ort do balamhacht, oir in aithnit duit fen co fetfuirnnsi co minic h’each do marbad?’ (God will repay your vanity upon you, for do you not know that I shall be able often to slay your horse?) could be considered an implied prayer, a statement of his personal conviction or even a threat. Given the context, a criticism appears most likely since Fortibras has just unchivalrously if accidentally killed Oliver’s mount, for which he proceeds to apologise. Even so, the classification of his words must remain tentative.

With the exception of the possible supplication discussed above, the French and the Irish texts recount seven and three prayers respectively. However, the discrepancy between numbers of examples in the texts proves rather less dramatic than it initially appears. Of the seven found in *Fierabras*, two have a length of only two lines each and are recounted by the narrator rather than quoted directly. Naturally, given their brevity and lack of centrality to the narrative, the omission of these prayers proves neither surprising nor even particularly remarkable.

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468 Not only do the threats face these difficulties but they also prove too numerous to analyse in depth. Nor would such an exercise be particularly profitable. The Irish text, not possessing laisse similares and being more laconic in general exhibits rather fewer instances of vaunting than *Fierabras*. However, the translator preserves examples sufficient to reveal a usage and relative frequency broadly similar to the French poem.

469 *SF*, pp. 42-43, ¶ 52.

470 *Fierabras*, ll. 1037-38, 1130-31.
His treatment of other instances of prayer, however, merits a more in-depth analysis. In two cases, the Irish translator preserves their placement within the combat although the brevity of his work results in their occurring far closer together in Stair Fortibrais. Oliver first prays shortly after the combat has begun. Not only has he been subjected to a number of fierce blows, but he has also presumably been fighting long enough to fully realise how difficult his task will prove. The substance of his speech is altered, if only slightly. In Fierabras, he sees the effectiveness of the Saracen’s blades and requests Mary’s aid in acquiring them, as indeed he later does. The Irish text does indeed specifically mention the weapon but the plea itself proves rather less precise: ‘a Isa Crist is gér in t-arm cloidme ud agan phaghanach, 7 a tiagerna nemdha, tabair fortacht dam!’ (O Jesus Christ, sharp is that sword which the pagan has and O heavenly Lord, give help to me!). The brevity and lack of foreshadowing perhaps reduce the power of Oliver’s supplication slightly but cannot be said to have any particular impact on the presentation of his piety overall.

The second instance occurs shortly before Oliver obtains the balm. In Fierabras, the prayer is exceptionally lengthy spanning slightly over fifty lines. Substantively, it concerns itself primarily with recounting a history of salvation from Adam to Jesus’ resurrection presumably for the dual purposes of praising the Lord’s great works and informing his opponent of the basic tenets of Christianity. In the last four lines of the passage, he concludes by praying for the conversion of his foe. Another briefer prayer also appears in the French poem directly before Oliver manages to heal himself with the balm. Seeing Fierabras restore

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471 Fierabras, ll. 884-89.
472 SF, pp. 38-39, ¶ 46. It is possible that this reduction of foreshadowing could serve as additional support for the theory (discussed on pp. 136-41) that the adaptor translated either as he read or in brief units and as a result perhaps he was unaware of the coming efficacy of this particular prayer. For additional support of this theory, see pp. 222 and 238-39.
473 Fierabras, ll. 959-1010.
474 This conclusion represents a departure by the poet from the standard form of the prière du plus grand péril which generally ends with a plea for assistance. Thus, it is particularly intriguing that while the Irish adaptor does not preserve the prière du plus grand péril as such, Oliver’s request does align with the expected conclusion of the prayer found in his source.
his own health with the sacred object, Oliver exclaims: ‘Dame seinte Marie, / Roïne corronnee, soiez hui en m’aïe!’ (Lady Saint Mary, crowned Queen, aid me now!).\textsuperscript{475} Thus, \textit{Fierabras} provides two prayers in fairly close succession, the first designed to inform his opponent and request that God move his heart to convert and the second a plea for help inspired by immediate danger.

Despite the fact that the immediate peril which inspired the latter prayer in the French source, namely Fierabras healing himself, does not occur in the Irish text, it would appear to be the second brief prayer rather than its lengthier precursor that \textit{Stair Fortibrais} preserves: ‘\textit{a Isa Crist neoch do aentaigh a chesadh tar ar cendne, tabuir furtacht orum inaigedh in págánaig ut!’} (O Jesus Christ, who consented to suffer for our sakes, give help to me against this pagan!).\textsuperscript{476} While this omission of Oliver’s hope for the noble Fierabras to convert undoubtedly impacts his characterisation as will be discussed below,\textsuperscript{477} a few observations are worth mentioning at this time. First, it perhaps causes a slight reduction in Oliver’s spiritual stature that he still requests assistance for himself but does not pray for Fortibras’ salvation. Secondly, the adaptor prefaces the prayer with the statement ‘\textit{ocus adubaert Oliuerus ar ngabail reda ecin d’amarus dò ara Dhai’} (Then said Oliver, after being somewhat in doubt of his God).\textsuperscript{478} This detail is not found in his source, or at least is not directly stated nor even particularly strongly implied at this point. Perhaps these alterations serve to add verisimilitude or make Oliver more relatable but it also would seem to somewhat mitigate his status as a spiritual paragon. On the other hand, the fact that despite not praying for his foe and beginning to doubt God, his prayer is still answered favourably and

\textsuperscript{475} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 1069-70.
\textsuperscript{476} \textit{SF}, pp. 40-41, ¶ 48.
\textsuperscript{477} Naturally, it also influences the presentation of religion more generally. For a discussion of this topic in a wider context see pp. 213-15.
\textsuperscript{478} \textit{SF}, pp. 40-41, ¶ 48.
immediately arguably implies either a particularly powerful personal connection between the Lord and Oliver, a remarkably potent and active God or both.479

The final unambiguous example of prayer may be both brief and indirect speech but its placement in *Stair Fortibrais* reinforces Oliver’s spiritual credentials. Immediately following the death of his mount, the knight ‘*do guidh máthair Dé um a fortacht*’ (entreated God’s mother to help him).480 This passage occurs in the same paragraph and immediately prior to Oliver’s speech chiding Fortibras’ unchivalrous behaviour and which concludes with his remark about God repaying his opponent’s vanity. When placed within the greater context, the episode implies a reaffirmation of Oliver’s belief. Furthermore, while a prayer does occur in the French poem at this point, Charles rather than Oliver is the supplicant.481 This alteration, as discussed above, arguably enhances the emperor’s spiritual stature and perhaps it does the same for Oliver.

In the Irish text, this paragraph constitutes Oliver’s last prayer but in *Fierabras* he offers two final supplications after the knight has captured his opponent’s sword and shortly before the conclusion of their combat. Indeed, one occurs at the opening of the very *laisse* in which Oliver finally attains victory. After a taunt by Fierabras, Oliver informs his opponent that their combat will conclude when God intends. He concludes his statement by saying: ‘*Dex enn otroit briement chen qu’en a empensé!*’ (God grant it be soon if he plans it).482 The Irish translator preserves the episode, but not the prayer: ‘*Ocus adubairt re hOliuerus: cred uma cathaighi festa, 7 acso crich do chathaighthi*. *Nir fregair Oliuerus é acht do buail é*’ (And he [Fortibras] said to Oliver: ‘For what are you fighting now? And behold the end of your fighting.’ Oliver answered him not but he struck him).483 Although this case in the

479 For a more detailed discussion of the latter subject, see pp. 206-212.
480 *SF*, pp. 42-43, ¶ 52.
481 *Fierabras*, ll. 1156-58.
482 *Fierabras*, ll. 1535-37.
483 *SF*, pp. 46-49, ¶ 62.
French text blurs the distinction between the category of threat and prayer, *Stair Fortibrais*’ alteration arguably serves to amplify the dramatic effect of the circumstances. Oliver only emerges victorious because Fierabras/Fortibras let down his guard in his presumed moment of triumph. The Christian very nearly dies in this passage and the modification in the Irish version perhaps emphasises the desperate nature of his situation although Oliver’s assertion in *Fierabras* could well be one of resignation to his fate as well. Regardless, the removal of this prayer does rather make Oliver appear somewhat less pious in the Irish translation.

Preceding this episode is another of Oliver’s prayers in which he petitions Mary for the Saracen to be baptised.484 *Stair Fortibrais*’ adaptor simply excises this detail moving seamlessly from Fortibras’ refusal to take back his sword to the resuming of the conflict.485 Nor does this constitute the only omission of the motif. As noted above, the content of an earlier prayer has been altered so as to eliminate the reference to conversion. Intriguingly, however, of the five instances when the topic of conversion arises during the combat, the translator only omits or modifies the prayers.486 Indeed, in all other instances—including when Fierabras/Fortibras attempts to persuade Oliver to adopt his own faith—he preserves the placement and renders the content accurately if briefly. Unfortunately, since only two of the prayers in *Fierabras* address conversion, identifying any further patterns proves difficult. However, it does appear that Oliver displays marginally less direct involvement in the conversion of his foe in *Stair Fortibrais* than he does in its source.

Taken as a whole, the character of Oliver undergoes a slight alteration between the source and its translations. While his character remains consistent in essence, he is arguably somewhat more inclined toward prayer and certainly far more interested in the conversion of Fierabras in the French text. On the other hand, he is perhaps a slightly more praiseworthy—

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484 *Fierabras*, ll. 1464-75.
or at least more praised—knight in the adaptations. More intriguingly, the Irish translator appears to have a particular interest in improving the presentation of this knight, even when he must depart from *Gesta Karoli Magni* in order to do so. Regardless of the version, however, Oliver remains a paragon of Christian knighthood.

**Roland**

Similarly, Oliver’s comrade Roland enjoys a notably favourable presentation in *Stair Fortibrais*. However, the adaptors are obliged to make more alterations to this peer’s behaviour to attain such a characterisation. This statement in no way is intended to suggest that Roland may be considered anything less than a heroic figure in *Fierabras*; however, the poem does place his signature temper, impetuousness, competitiveness and even poor judgment on display.\(^{487}\)

Of course, the Irish adaptor cannot entirely mitigate these faults given that, like Charles, at least one fulfills an important narrative function—namely, Roland must take offence at his king’s vaunting of the older knights and refuse to stand as Charles’ champion. However, even on this occasion the translator makes a series of slight modifications seemingly designed to mitigate the hero’s error. While both texts remark on Roland’s anger with Charles the specifics vary. In *Fierabras*, the poet addresses the issue rather indirectly at the outset: ‘Quant les secourut Karles o les viellars barbez, / Et paiens s’en tornerent les frains abandonnez. / Rollant s’en retorna as loges et as trez; / Chele nuit fu Rollant laidement rampornez. (When Charles with the old beards rescued them, / the pagans left the field at full rein. / And thence Roland returned to the tents and to the pavilions; / that night Roland was badly insulted).\(^{488}\) Certainly, the lines provide sufficient motivation and insight for his later eruption at Charles but the Irish text not only renders the episode more explicitly but also


\(^{488}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 36-39.
exhibits two intriguing innovations which rather alter Roland’s characterisation: ‘adubairt Serlus do briathraib imcainte ‘dob ferr na sennridirigha annsa cath aniu naid na ridirigha oga’, 7 ro gab ferg mór Rolandus arna cloistecht sin dó, 7 na ridirigha oga uile in la sin’ (Charles said with snarling words, ‘In the battle today the old knights were better than the young knights’. And when Roland heard that, great anger seized him and all the young knights on that day).\(^{489}\)

First, the French recounts the episode not only circuitously but also utilises a passive construction. Although Roland later blames the king specifically for his shame—‘Puis le soir vos vantastes, quant fustes enyvré, / Qui li viel chevaliers qu’avïês amené / L’avoient mout miex fait que li geune d’asè. / Assez en fui le soir laïsdis et ramporné; / Mais, par l’ame mom pere, mar en estes vanté!’ (Then that night you boasted, when you were drunk, / that the old knights whom you brought here / had much better exploits than the young ones had. / I was greatly abused and insulted that night; / but, on the soul of my father, alas for your boasting!)\(^{490}\)—the narrator himself does not expressly identify Charles as amongst those taunting him much less provide a direct quotation to that effect or describe his words as snarling. The alteration in the Irish version has the effect of offering additional justification for Roland’s rage: his king and close relative subjects him to an unambiguous and public insult. Granted, the slight lacks the personal nature of those in the source, but this modification allows the adaptor to implement another change by providing the explanation for his assertion that the other young knights shared Roland’s wrath. This detail perhaps proves rather more significant than it initially appears since in broadly comparable Irish translations social consensus often serves as the indicator for identifying which behaviours should be considered proper.\(^{491}\) Clearly even in Stair Fortibrais, Roland was, as he

\(^{489}\) SF, pp. 18-21, ¶ 6.  
\(^{490}\) Fierabras, ll. 159-63.  
acknowledges during the single combat, wrong to allow insult to impel him to such extreme action. However, the modifications made by the adaptor allow him simultaneously to imply that Roland’s anger was understandable and to dilute the blame for overreaction to some degree by spreading the sentiment amongst all the young knights.

Additional alterations occurring solely within the Irish manuscripts TCD H.2.7 and Laud 610 possibly reinforce, albeit in slightly differing manners, the notion that the responsibility for Roland’s most egregious behaviour rests not only with the knight but also the king.\footnote{See pp. 275 to place this episode within its broader context.} When conflict erupts between Charles and Roland regarding the latter’s refusal to fight Fierabras/Fortibras, the peers attempt to calm tempers on both sides. In \textit{Fierabras} when Ogier rebukes the young knight, Charles remarks: ‘\textit{ja serai forsené}’ (I shall surely lose my senses).\footnote{\textit{Fierabras}, l. 190.} The implication appears to be that Roland served as the cause of the king’s madness but this fact is not expressly stated and the young knight himself offers no reply to Ogier.\footnote{The fact that Charles responds to Ogier’s statement despite the fact that it was addressed to Roland is somewhat unusual. While no particular interpretive difficulties arise at this precise point in the manuscript it does perhaps bear mentioning that the early portion of the manuscript sometimes displays continuity errors such as ll. 40-45 which appear to state that Roland’s chaplain performed the Mass while ll. 46-47 identify the cleric as in Charles’ service.} \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni} alters the episode by having Roland respond to the reprimand by saying: ‘\textit{Mirum non est si insanio}’ (It is no wonder if I am mad).\footnote{\textit{GKM}, p. 309, ¶ 12.} Given that Ogier spoke to Roland, it perhaps seemed more natural to the Latin translator that the young knight rather than the king should respond. However in so doing, the adaptor reverses the implication of the episode from Roland’s egregious behaviour having an adverse effect on Charles to the king’s actions causing the knight’s madness.

While the Irish text agrees with its Latin source to the extent that Roland remains the speaker, the three manuscripts included in Stokes’ edition each alter the quotation’s content in some manner. The copies all include the words ‘\textit{is ingnadh sin}’ (that is strange) and indeed
this comprises the entire quotation in Egerton 1781. It would appear that scribes of the TCD H.2.7 and Laud 610 seek, each in their own way, to clarify this rather ambiguous statement. The former specifies that it is ‘mire bar rig’ (the madness of your king) which is strange while the latter reads ‘is ingnad gan mo beith ar cuthach’. Unfortunately, this statement also proves slightly unclear. One could either interpret it to mean ‘It is a wonder that I am not mad’ or ‘It is a wonder although I am not mad’. Either reading seems slightly odd given that Roland has just attempted to strike Charles and then threatened to kill anyone who would endeavour to restrain him. However, despite the apparent interpretive difficulties associated with Roland’s speech, it is intriguing that the Irish scribes either leave the issue open to the audience’s interpretation or actively present the knight in a more positive manner whether by identifying Charles’ actions as stranger than his peer’s or by having Roland come to his senses before the emperor.

Finally, all three texts revisit this episode. Naturally, being an honourable knight, Roland eventually laments that he does not battle in Oliver’s place, thereby implicitly acknowledging that he should not have defied his king. Indeed, when Charles offers him a rebuke, this time he humbly submits himself to the king’s judgment. The adaptors preserve Roland’s lament as regards both its placement toward the beginning of Oliver’s single combat with Fierabras/Fortibras and its content, albeit in somewhat abbreviated form.

Moreover, Roland actually regrets his decision twice, once before his companion even departs for battle. The position within the narrative varies slightly between the Fierabras and its adaptations. In the French poem, the narrator lists the peers who are with Charles when Oliver seeks his permission to fight Fierabras, and then informs his audience that Roland is amongst them feeling shame and remorse for his earlier actions. Since Gesta Karoli Magni

496 SF, pp. 22-23, ¶ 12 and n. 7.
497 SF, pp. 22-23, ¶ 11.
498 Fierabras, ll. 846-58; GKM, p. 320, ¶ 44; SF, pp. 38-39, ¶ 44.
499 Fierabras, ll. 265-69.
and *Stair Fortibrais* do not specifically identify the peers present with the emperor, the passage instead appears immediately after Oliver has requested Charles’ leave to fight and the king has refused him. Even before Gendelion and Erdre manipulate Charles into acceding, the narrator informs his audience that ‘*arna cloistecht sin do Rolanndus do gabh dobron mór è arson na hesanora tuc da senathair*. i. don imper, 7 mana thigidh Oliuerus dobo mián leis dal comruc’ (When Roland heard this, great sorrow seized him for the dishonour he had done to his grandfather the emperor; and had not Oliver gone, Roland would have desired to have gone to the combat). This passage is closely based on the Latin text, to which it proves virtually identical: ‘*Rolandus hoc videns graviter contristatur eo quod minus reverenter in avunculum suum irruerat et libenter bellum commisisset, nisi Oliverus praevenisset*’ (On seeing this Roland was very saddened by the fact that he had rudely assailed his uncle, and he would have gladly joined the battle, had Oliver not preceded him).

While neither the minor reordering nor the fidelity to the French text would normally merit particular discussion, these passages deviate from an important trend in Irish adaptations more generally—namely, their omission of the personal insights into a character’s thoughts and motives. As Poppe remarks, ‘Irish narrators were never very interested in subtle psychological explanation, and often motivation is externalised’. Although he was discussing *Stair Bibuis* in particular, his observations apply to the vast majority of Irish translation literature in the period and indeed to *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* specifically. Thus, it would seem that the adaptors considered it especially important to emphasise that Roland possessed enough foresight to realise prior to the first

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500 *SF*, pp. 26-27, ¶ 19. The identification of Charles as Roland’s ‘*senathair*’ (grandfather) instead of uncle represents a significant departure from a well-established epic tradition. For a more detailed discussion see pp. 256-57.
501 *GKM*, p. 311, ¶ 19.
502 Erich Poppe, ‘*Beves of Hamtoun*’, p. 94. See also his articles: ‘*Stair Ercuil*’, pp. 57-58 and ‘Rewriting Bevis’, p. 48.
blow how dangerous the combat will be for his wounded comrade and exhibited enough
compassion and humility to be prepared to offer himself as a champion despite his initial
refusal. Finally, by also including the earlier passage from the French text wherein Roland
laments aloud, the translators also reinforce by repetition the depth of Roland’s regret and
willingness to serve Charles.

Moreover, this incident hardly constitutes the only occasion on which the adaptors,
particularly the translator of Stair Fortibrays, make alterations designed to improve Roland’s
characterisation. For example, in the French and Latin adaptations when the peers serve as
emissaries to Balan/Admirandus, Nainmon/Reyner/Nemer manages to deceive the porter of
Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil into allowing them passage but Roland jeopardises the safety of the
entire mission by taking advantage of the opportunity to throw a pagan into the water:
‘Rolandus vero pro ultimo se habens, vidit unum Saracenum nobilem solum, irruit in eum, et
apprehendens eum per crura proiecit eum in aquam’ (Then Roland, who kept himself at the
rear, spied a single Saracen noble and charged at him, and, after grabbing him by the legs,
threw him into the water). As this quotation indicates, Gesta Karoli Magni does not
identify nor even strongly imply any particular motivation for his behaviour. Lacking
additional context, one might theorise that Roland saw the occasion to destroy an enemy and
acted upon it without proper consideration of the potential consequences.

Interestingly, the French poem does provide a clearer reason which the Latin
translation fails to preserve. In the poem, after praising the cleverness of his occasional
erstwhile rival Nainmon, he notices a likely Saracen and says: ‘Lai moi faire tel chose dont
en bien soit parlé’ (Let me do something that will be spoken well of). The context here

503 GKM, p. 353, ¶ 112.
504 Fierabras, l. 2648. The episode occurs on ll. 2634-56. While not strictly relevant for the characterisation of
Roland it is interesting to note that the Latin and Irish adaptors make additional changes in this passage. The
French text specifies that he dismounts before grabbing the pagan and that he throws the Saracen into the water
by his arms. In contrast, the translations make no mention of the former case and in the latter specify that he
seizes his enemy’s legs/ankles.
seems to indicate that this episode serves as another example of the rivalry between Nainmon and Roland for leadership of the peers. As discussed previously, the adaptors appear to have possessed little interest in this aspect of their source and omit most instances found in the poem. In this case, the excision from the Latin text prompted an additional alteration in its Irish descendant which further impacts the characterisation of Roland. The translator, apparently seeking a more defined motive, includes in his account an explanation for the knight’s behaviour: ‘Ocus do conncadar Eiristinigh ac techtina coinne do denum urchoide doibh, 7 ruc Rolandus ar cael a dha chos air, 7 do teilc isin sruth e’ (And they espied a Saracen coming against them, to do them harm; but Roland caught him by the ankles and flung him into the river). Admittedly, this modification likely resulted more from a desire to clarify the narrative than to alter the characterisation of Roland, but the explanation chosen by the adaptor still credits the peer with keen observation and quick-thinking.

Nor does the episode at the bridge represent the only occasion in which the excision of the conflict between Nainmon and Roland alters the interpretation of these characters. Admittedly, not all examples create a particularly notable impact. The removal of their quarrel over whether Nainmon should be the first to deliver Charles’ message to Balan would appear to have little effect. Indeed, even in the French it amounts to little. Ultimately, Nainmon speaks first and Roland is the penultimate knight to deliver his message. Despite its excision of their argument, Roland actually boasts a somewhat improved position in the speaking order in the Latin translation, albeit only due to the omission of Basin from the list. In the Irish text Roland speaks fourth out of the five knights mentioned but is not quoted directly. One would hesitate to base any firm conclusions regarding the episode on

505 See p. 94, pp. 260-63.
506 SF, pp. 140-41, ¶ 112.
507 See p. 278 to place this episode within its broader context.
508 Fierabras, ll. 2667-2791.
509 GKM, pp. 353-56, ¶¶ 114-117.
510 SF, pp. 140-143, ¶¶ 114-117.
this excision. The most that might be said is that it renders Roland comparatively a bit less concerned with his own honour and status.

Certainly, additional cases support this theory and indeed augment it. For example, omission of the disagreement regarding who should stay behind to guard the gate while the other knights engaged in the sortie for supplies enhances the respect and possibly even authority accorded the young knight. Instead of accepting Nainmon’s refusal and modifying his strategy accordingly, in Gesta Karoli Magni Roland listens to the objections of his fellow knights but manages to convince them of the necessity of their task. Additional innovations in Stair Fortibrais prevent the protestations from occurring at all, resulting in the peers accepting their assignment from Roland without comment thereby reinforcing his pre-eminence amongst the peers.

The final example, occurring only in Stair Fortbrais, causes Roland to appear more temperate and perhaps even wiser than the source texts indicate. This omission happens prior to Nainmon/Reyner/Nemer convincing the porter to allow the peers passage over Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil. In the French and Latin texts when the knights wonder how they will manage to cross the bridge, Roland volunteers to fell the porter causing Nainmon to chide the young peer that violence would be a poor plan and to insist that he will persuade the Saracen to allow them to cross. By omitting Roland’s proposed solution in its entirety, the Irish translator arguably portrays the hero as rather more level-headed than he appears in the other works.

Indeed, a number of additional examples support the theory that the adaptations sought to present Roland in this manner. Although each alteration seems quite minor

511 For a detailed analysis of the specifics of this episode as it occurs in all three texts, see pp. 63-65.  
513 SF, pp. 156-59, ¶ 142.  
514 Fierabras, ll. 2594-2602; GKM, pp. 351-52, ¶ 110.  
515 From SF, pp. 138-39, ¶ 110.
independently, enough instances accumulate to suggest that the characterisation may well have been deliberate. One episode which considerably reduces Roland’s impetuousness occurs when the emissaries meet their Saracen counterparts. In *Fierabras* the pagans’ leader Mor(r)adas exchanges threats with Nainmon and the two warriors prepare to fight. However, before they can begin Roland loses his temper, taunts the barbarian and then launches an attack.\(^5\) In contrast, the Latin and Irish texts preserve the preface to the battle and even Roland’s interruption but then subtle differences arise. In the Latin adaptation, Roland issues threats ending with the exclamation: ‘*Resiste mihi quia te viliter diffindo*’ (Defend yourself because I am going to cut you up horribly!). Immediately after this cry, the narrator states ‘*Mox subdunt equis calcaria*’ (Then they spurred their horses).\(^5\) This subtle change represents a notable departure from its source. Certainly, Roland’s words instigated the conflict, but rather than him charging the Saracen both combatants attack each other simultaneously. The Irish builds upon this foundation and modifies narrative further so that instead of the young Christian charging his opponent, Mor(r)adas becomes enraged and attacks Roland thereby causing a single combat between the two men.\(^5\) This evolution has the effect of altering the situation from an impulsive youth inserting himself into his comrade’s battle to a pair of knights issuing taunts, one of which pushes the pagan past endurance. The ultimate result of the translator’s changes is to make Roland appear somewhat more restrained.

Finally, the Irish version of Roland is characterised by a degree of practicality, foresight and even strategy not found in his French portrayal. Unfortunately, the examples of this behaviour all occur after the Latin fragment ends thereby prohibiting any discussion of development in an intermediary phase. First, *Stair Fortibrais* credits Roland rather than

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\(^5\) *Fierabras*, ll. 2494-2522a. Roland’s interruption occurs on ll. 2514-17.
\(^5\) *GKM*, p. 349, ¶ 106.
Oliver with securing the provisions after the chaotic skirmish in which Guy was captured.\textsuperscript{519} Given the numerous distractions and dangers, it is to Roland’s credit that he realises they have lost their previously-acquired supplies and assures they do not return to the tower without food. Another potential example of these qualities occurs when Roland defeats pagans to provide equipment for the defenseless Guy.\textsuperscript{520} Admittedly, the fact that he kills one Saracen and takes from him both the horse and armaments rather than slaying two men and taking only a portion of what he required from each as occurs in the French poem probably resulted more from a desire to simplify the text than to alter Roland’s presentation. However, it arguably also had the incidental effect of making him appear rather more practical. He continues to display this characteristic when rather than attempting to comfort Floripas as she grieves over Guy’s capture as he does in \textit{Fierabras}, he instead suggests that they eat to ensure their strength.\textsuperscript{521} Lastly and perhaps most significantly, the Irish adaptor replaces Richard with Roland as the mastermind behind the strategy for escaping to warn Charles.\textsuperscript{522} While this may well have resulted in part from the tendency to replace less-renowned knights with their more famous counterparts,\textsuperscript{523} it also unquestionably credits Roland with increased wisdom.

The combination of these examples suggests a minor but also likely intentional attempt to make Roland a more balanced hero. When these modifications are united with the efforts to justify his errors, it seems reasonable to assert that the adaptors of \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni} and to an even greater extent \textit{Stair Fortibrais} desired to present Roland less as a nuanced character and more as an idealised warrior.

\textsuperscript{519} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 3459-61; \textit{SF}, pp. 162-63, ¶ 149.
\textsuperscript{520} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 3680-3710; \textit{SF}, pp. 164-65, ¶ 153.
\textsuperscript{521} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 3474-3517; \textit{SF}, pp. 162-63, ¶ 151.
\textsuperscript{522} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4125-32; \textit{SF}, pp. 260-61, ¶ 172.
**Ganelon**

As previously mentioned, the character of Ganelon proves a figure of some linguistic confusion in the Irish. Unfortunately, given the fragmentary nature of *Gesta Karoli Magni* it is not possible to determine whence this difficulty originates because it includes only a single episode relating to Ganelon—when he persuades Charles to allow Oliver to engage in single combat Fierabras/Fortibras—and breaks off well prior to his reappearance at the king’s war council. Both adaptations appear to agree on the character’s name at his initial introduction. When he manipulates Charles into permitting Oliver to serve as the Christians’ champion, the Latin and Irish refer to him as ‘Gindeleon’ and ‘Genttelion’ respectively.\(^{524}\) The crux occurs subsequent to the abrupt ending of the Latin fragment when Ganelon reappears in the French poem. This time, however, *Stair Fortibrais* refers to him as ‘Guinies’.\(^{525}\) The inconsistency likely results from the fact that the French name varies between the subject form ‘Guenes’ and the object form ‘Guenelon’. The adaptor continues to use the name ‘Guinies’ until just after the capture of Ma(n)tribil when he lists the knight amongst the wounded whom Charles leaves behind there before marching on Egrimor.\(^{526}\) As a result, ‘Guinies’—unlike Ganelon—does not serve as the emperor’s emissary but rather another knight functions in this capacity. His name is variously written as ‘Gentilion’, ‘Geinntilion’, ‘Ginntilion’ and ‘Genntilion’.\(^{527}\) Although possibly coincidental, it should be noted that despite the orthographical variation the translator never writes the name as ‘Genttelion’ as it appears at the beginning of the text. Furthermore, the formula which introduces him ‘*do gair barun da muinntir cuige darub ainm Gentilion*’ (he [Charles] summoned a baron of his household, whose name was Gentilion) may imply that this knight is a new character.\(^{528}\)

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\(^{524}\) *GKM*, p. 311, ¶ 19-20; *SF*, pp. 26-27, ¶ 19.

\(^{525}\) *SF*, pp. 264-65, ¶ 181.

\(^{526}\) *SF*, pp. 280-81, ¶ 205. His wounding occurs at *SF*, pp. 278-79, ¶ 202.


\(^{528}\) *SF*, pp. 286-87, ¶ 222.
Still, hesitation in considering him an entirely new knight remains warranted. Not only is it unwise to allow orthographical variants to serve as a substantial pillar of an argument, particularly given the relative paucity of examples in this instance, but similar formulae seem to serve at other points in the text to reintroduce characters who have not appeared for some time, though admittedly such instances prove fairly rare. For the sake of comparison, it is perhaps worth briefly considering here the case of the peer Tierri d’Ardane which proves illustrative in this regard. *Stair Fortibrais* alternately refers to this character as ‘Terre’, ‘Ternna’ ‘Tirri’, ‘Tirre’ and ‘Terria’.

For example, the adaptor first introduces the character by his relationship with another knight: ‘*do legadar Bernardus mac diúice uasail darub ainm Terre*’ (they [the barbarians] cast down Bernard, the son of a noble duke whose name was Terre). At his next appearance when he objects to Charles’ plan to send the peers as emissaries to Admirandus, the adaptor apparently presumes audience familiarity with the character transitioning immediately from Charles’ quotation to ‘*7 adubairt Ternna*’ (then said Ternna). From this point forward, he appears periodically without any additional preface. However, when the knights plan their attempt to break through the enemy siege to secure Charles’ aid, the adaptor potentially seems to reintroduce the character: ‘*Ocus tareisi sin adubairt nech dibh darub ainm Tirri*’ (After that one of them whose name was Tirri said). The character appears once more after this point again without any preamble.

Admittedly, the apparent reintroduction of an established character may simply function to provide some stylistic variation but if so, it certainly does not appear to be a technique commonly utilised by the adaptor. However, if this knight who features in *Stair Fortibrais* rather more consistently than Ganelon can have his name expressly provided by the narrator

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530 *SF*, pp. 52-53, ¶ 68.
531 *SF*, pp. 132-33, ¶ 101.
532 *SF*, pp. 258-59, ¶ 171.
twice, then one could conclude that ‘Genttelion’ may also merit reintroduction after over two hundred paragraphs. Ultimately, then, whether the Irish adaptation divides Ganelon into two or three characters must remain a matter of the reader’s personal interpretation.

The characterisation of Ganelon as belonging to a traitorous clan is preserved in the Irish tradition to a degree, at least in the case of Guinies. However, the adaptor(s) either misunderstood the precise nature of the familial relationships in *Fierabras* or elected to simplify matters for the benefit of his audience. In the French tradition the head of the family is Grifons d’Autefoelle, father of Ganelon, Hardré, Berenguier, Aloris, Gui d’Autefoelle and Florie. Conversely, during the scene in which Charles requests advice regarding whether he should return to France, the Irish adaptor assigns a rather different familial relationship to his characters: ‘*Do eirigidar annsin Maccairi 7 Gaibfreas 7 Airdir 7 Alloire 7 clann clainni do Guinies iat, 7 dobídís do gnath ag denum mailisi don Frainge*’ (Maccairi and Gaibreas and Airdir and Alloire who were Guinies’ children and were always acting maliciously to France). It would appear then that either based upon confusion or a desire for simplification, Guinies had been conflated with Grifons d’Autefoelle, his father in the French tradition.

The adaptor also makes explicit in this scene the characterisation of Guinies himself as treacherous, prefacing the dishonourable advice he offers with the words ‘*adubairt nech acu darub ainm Guinies i n. nech dobíí ag denum mailisi do gnath don Fraingc*’ (Then said one of them, whose name was Guinies, and who was always acting maliciously towards France). Genttelion and Erdre at the beginning of the text experience similar treatment: ‘*Ocus do eírigh días mailisecha do muintir an rig darub ainm Genttelion 7 Erdre, agarb’ inntinn na sluaiigh do claechcloid marus ferr co fetfaitis*’ (And there arose two malicious ones

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533 *SF*, pp. 264-65, ¶ 182. The addition of the words *don Frainge* (to France) appear only in the Laud 610 manuscript.
534 *SF*, pp. 264-65, ¶ 181.
of the king’s household named Genttelion and Erdre, who had the intention of overwhelming
the hosts as best they could). In contrast, the emissary Gentilion is not subject to this sort
of editorial commentary. The audience’s judgment of him must instead depend upon his
actions, which prove uniformly honourable, and the reaction of his associates. The adaptor
provides two of the latter: Oliver’s comment ‘is truagh gan a beith aga furtacht’ (‘tis sad that
there is no one helping him) and the statement that ‘dobi in t-imper ag moladh a ghnimartha
san co mor’ (the emperor was praising his deeds exceedingly).

All of these characterisations prove closely aligned to the source text. When Ganelon
serves as Charles’ messenger, Roland and Oliver articulate their hope that he remains safe
and desire to assist him respectively. Likewise upon his return, Charles praises the knight
saying ‘preus estes et gentis’ (you are valiant and worthy). The remarks regarding his baser
nature and associations also derive from Fierabras. The poet refers to the entire lineage as
traitors and remarks that upon hearing Charles express his despair ‘Guenelon enn a joie,
qu’em soit dolosez’ (Ganelon has joy in it, whoever is grieved). His initial comment on
Ganelon and Hardré when the pair manipulate Charles into allowing Oliver to fight despite
his wounds foreshadows the coming betrayal at Roncevaux, making it more specific than the
Irish text but similar in tone and general content.

Naturally the adaptors do make some modifications. The first concerns Genttelion and
occurs only in the Irish text. Fierabras and Gesta Karoli Magni both feature the character
confessing under his breath that he wishes Oliver ill. In the former, he speaks to himself and

535 SF, pp. 26-27, ¶ 19. The addition of the words do muintir an rig (of the king’s household) appear only in the
TCD H.2.7 manuscript.
537 Fierabras, ll. 5696-5704, 5720-25. In the French poem, their remarks span two laisses with one character
speaking in each. As often occurs, the Irish reduces the episode providing a brief paraphrase of Oliver’s
remarks.
538 Fierabras, ll. 5756.
539 Fierabras, ll. 4606-09, 4566.
540 Fierabras, ll. 296-300.
in the latter to his co-conspirator Herdre.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 321-22; GKM, p. 312, ¶ 20.} The Irish translation omits this aside entirely. The alteration perhaps moderates the character slightly but given the circumstances it would likely be overstating matters to conclude that it renders him more sympathetic. Two additional modifications have already been mentioned, namely Guinies being wounded and left behind at Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil and as a result the fact that he no longer serves as Charles’ emissary to Balan/Admirandus. Another consequence of his injury may be the alteration in how the Christian knight Milon d’Anglez/Milis managed to survive Balan/Admirandus’ onslaught in the final battle. In the French poem, Ganelon and his family ride to his aid while the Irish credits his survival to Admirandus’ sword turning in his hand at the last moment.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 5916-27; SF, pp. 366-67, ¶ 232.} Regardless of the reason, however, the removal of this episode does represent a slight diminishment of the character under any name.

Fortunately, the majority of modifications occur during Charles’ council regarding his potential and shameful return to France and thus clearly affect solely the character of Guinies. When conflict breaks out between Aloris/Alloire and Reignier/Gilleber,\footnote{The reason that Reignier of the French has been replaced by a knight named Gilleberus in the Irish proves rather complex and results from the conflation of two peers Reignier and Nainmon into the same knight Nemer. For a more detailed discussion of this error and its results see pp. 124-32.} the former gains support from his kin who come to his aid with a sizable contingent of retainers. In Fierabras, they are led by Hardré and in the Irish text by Guinies.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 4640-44a; SF, pp. 266-67, ¶ 183.} Similarly, Guinies rather than Giefroi d’Autefoelle serves as the final voice convincing Charles to return to France.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 4686-97; SF, pp. 266-67, ¶ 185.} Despite the emphasis on familial solidarity in the Irish adaptation,\footnote{See pp. 255-60.} neither of these alterations do any credit to Guinies. This trend continues as Stair Fortibrails elects not to preserve the poet’s mention of Ganelon and his clan fighting bravely at Maltrible/Ma(n)tribal.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 5011-25; Omitted from SF, pp. 274-75, ¶ 197.} However, this alteration likely resulted from the fact that the fairly
brief passage possesses no particular significance for advancing the narrative. Indeed, the poet does not relay any specific actions undertaken by Ganelon or his family. Therefore, while this change does diminish Guinies’ stature slightly, this fact was likely a secondary concern at best. The final case involves Guinies’ attempt to persuade his traitorous family to come to their emperor’s aid when Charles has been trapped in the city of Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil with only a small contingent of knights. In both cases, he argues with Aloris/Alloire that they should not abandon their liege. Fierabras and Stair Fortibrais each credit him with being unwilling to break his oath but the latter adds an additional reason ‘da marbthai Serlus do gebdis na pagánaigh nert oruinn, 7 ni bedh nech le bud etir a bacail dibh’ (If Charles were slain, the pagans would gain power over us, and there would be no one able to hinder them).548 Again, it is possible that the alteration to Guinies is at least partially incidental,549 but the quotation does perhaps make Guinies appear slightly more careful and thoughtful than his kin. On the whole, it proves rather difficult to distill broad trends from the alterations made to Guinies except that he, like a number of the other peers experiences slightly greater prominence in the Irish text than the French though often at the expense of his less-known kin.

In conclusion then, with a few fairly minor modifications aside, Stair Fortibrais faithfully renders the French portrayal of Ganelon but due to the translation error, truncates the character creating a far more polarised view. In Fierabras, Ganelon is a ‘noble baron whose hatred of the peers leads him into treachery’,550 a knight with traitorous relations who has begun to surrender to his worse nature by sabotaging his fellow knights but remains a brave warrior and loyal to his king despite receiving an assignment that could well have and nearly did result in his death. His unquestioning obedience upon receiving Charles’ orders

548 Fierabras, ll. 5145-61; SF, pp. 276-77, ¶ 201.
549 For a discussion this quotation see p. 254.
proves all the more striking for the contrast it presents with his fellow knights who objected strenuously to the same assignment earlier in the text. The result of the separation of Genttelion, Guinies and Gentilion is perhaps a clarification but certainly a simplification of the narrative: Genttelion is treacherous and Guinies struggles with conflicting loyalties while Gentilion is a faithful knight. If one considers Gentilion and Genttelion the same character the situation becomes more complex. In this instance, the Irish adaptation functions in a similar manner to the French version albeit less clearly, consistently and explicitly: despite his malicious attempt to compromise Oliver, he served with distinction as Charles’ emissary. Although this interpretation is certainly a possibility based upon the evidence of the text in its current form, it must be acknowledged that the adaptor does not lend any particular weight to the dichotomy. The same may be said of Guinies; *Stair Fortibrais* preserves both his traitorous behaviour and his unwillingness to break his oath to Charles but does not emphasise this conflict. Perhaps these complexities function as a subtle nod to those familiar with *Fierabras* or the broader French epic tradition but is not intended to serve as a point of particular significance to the wider audience.

**Fierabras/Fortibras**

Although he is the eponymous hero of the French poem, Fierabras/Fortibras does not serve as the title character in the Irish tradition. Rather than utilise the title found in his source, the Latin adaptor elected to dub his work *Gesta Karoli Magni*. His Irish counterpart directly translated this appellation, resulting in colophons identifying his text as *Sdair Serluis Moir*.

This fact implies a notable reduction in the character’s perceived importance despite the generally faithful rendering of his presentation as found in *Fierabras*.

It should also be stated that Fierabras/Fortibras is a member of a well-established character type, the noble Saracen. As Ailes notes, in the French tradition by the twelfth

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551 As mentioned on p. 44.
century ‘the noble Saracen was developing as a literary topos . . . From around the time of the Third Crusade, chansons de geste depict noble Saracens, their nobility often indicating that conversion will follow’.552 Perhaps due to the lack of additional chansons de geste translated into the Irish tradition, this precise stock character proves rare but a broader class—that of the Saracen giant who battles the hero in single combat—would presumably have been somewhat familiar to Stair Fortibrais’ audience. Guy of Warwick and Roland fight the pagan giants Colobron and Feracutus in Beathadh Sir Gui o Bharbhuic and Gabháltais Shéarluis Móir respectively. However, both of these cases result in the death of the pagan rather than his conversion. The notion that barbarians could and should be induced to convert certainly features in Gabháltais Shéarluis Móir wherein Roland engages in a lengthy, if ultimately vain, theological discussion with his opponent and Charles himself nearly manages to convince the Saracen’s leader Agiolandus to accept baptism.553

In a narrative sense, while Fierabras/Fortibras serves as the impetus for the plot, after his single combat and subsequent baptism he remains with Charles, resulting in his essential disappearance from the story until the emperor’s forces march on Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil. Although he does participate in the battles near the conclusion of the text, he does not regain any particular degree of prominence until the attempted conversion of Balan/Admirandus. As a result, the vast majority of episodes in which he figures prominently occur during his battle with Oliver and correspondingly any discussion proves subject to the same difficulties and limitations; these may be broadly classified into two groups, the interpretative and the structural.554 In the case of the former, the challenge lies in determining whether a particular

554 For a discussion of these challenges as they relate to Oliver, see pp. 160-61.
utterance should be categorised as a certain type of speech, such as a threat or a chivalric offer. The latter difficulty results from the fact that the laisses similaires structure of the French text renders the precise number of each of these sorts of speech rather difficult to quantify. Moreover, although the translators preserve all the basic elements of the episode, the degree of alteration in narratively-insignificant details of passages proves uncharacteristically high and often the precise nature of these modifications—for example, whether a particular alteration results from a reordering or a substitution—remains opaque. Finally, both the offers and threats occur too numerously to allow for a comprehensive discussion even making the questionable assumption that so doing would result in any conclusion other than that, allowing for the expected differences in length and style, their usage in the French, Latin and Irish texts is broadly similar. Furthermore, the alterations have little effect on the characterisation of Fierabras/Fortibras. In both texts he, like Oliver, engages in frequent and spirited vaunting. Likewise, while it is important to note that the adaptors faithfully reproduce at least one example of every chivalric offer Fierabras makes, his courtesies are frequent and functionally very similar. They all intend to demonstrate that he is a noble man who respects Oliver and wishes to ensure a fair combat. Whether he offers most often to allow his opponent to drink the healing balm, unhorse him, return to Charles’ camp unharmed or some similar suggestion is arguably not of particular relevance to his characterisation. Therefore, despite its length, the single combat does not provide notable insight into the presentation of Fierabras/Fortibras in the Irish tradition.

Fortunately, the adaptors do make modifications later in the text which prove rather more conducive to analysis. While the majority of these alterations function to the character’s benefit, two omissions do occur which somewhat reduce his stature. First, during Fierabras’

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555 The category of chivalric offers denotes a number of proposals made by Fierabras/Fortibras with the intention of making the combat fairer or showing the Christian particular honour. These include expressing his willingness to allow his opponent to drink the healing balm, unhorse him or return to Charles’ camp unharmed.
baptism the French poet states that, although everyone still called him Fierabras, he adopted a new Christian name Florens and that he later became St Florent of Roie.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 1943-49.} The translations preserve the new name as Florenntin but make no mention of him attaining sainthood.\footnote{SF, pp. 54-55, ¶ 74.} Given the lack of additional evidence, any theory on this subject must remain tentative but this omission may suggest that Fierabras/Fortibras was not of particular interest to the Irish as a religious figure.\footnote{For a more detailed analysis of the treatment of religion in the Irish text, see pp. 198-218.}

Second, when conflict breaks out in Charles’ camp between Regnier/Reyner/Nemer and Ganelon’s family, the French text includes the detail that Fierabras rebukes their intention to battle amongst themselves. However, this incident is quite brief consisting of only a single line and moreover his interference has no narrative effect since Charles immediately threatens to execute anyone who launches an attack.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 4649-54. Fierabras appears on l. 4650.} This detail serves to illustrate Fierabras’ successful integration into the Christian forces and his good judgment. It also favourably contrasts him with the fractious knights and, to a lesser extent perhaps, even with Charles himself due to the speed of his reaction. Even so, it is not difficult to see why this minor incident was not deemed significant enough to be included in the adaptations and therefore drawing any conclusions based upon that choice would seem precipitous.\footnote{The incident is omitted from SF, pp. 266-67, ¶¶ 183-84.}

The majority of modifications result in a positive characterisation of Fierabras/Fortibras, even prior to his baptism. In Fierabras, after being defeated by Oliver the gravely-wounded giant makes a twenty-one line speech over the course of two \textit{laisse}s in which he entrusts his fate to Charles’ mercy, requests baptism and offers to return the stolen relics. He also remarks that Oliver will be blamed if he allows the Saracen to die unbaptised.\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 1574-99.} The Irish treatment of this quotation proves rather more expansive than that

\begin{thebibliography}{560}
\item Fierabras, ll. 1943-49.
\item SF, pp. 54-55, ¶ 74.
\item For a more detailed analysis of the treatment of religion in the Irish text, see pp. 198-218.
\item Fierabras, ll. 4649-54. Fierabras appears on l. 4650.
\item The incident is omitted from SF, pp. 266-67, ¶¶ 183-84.
\item Fierabras, ll. 1574-99.
\end{thebibliography}
seen in comparable situations.\(^{562}\) It would appear, then, that the adaptor considered the pagan’s words to be particularly significant.

In terms of content, *Stair Fortibrais* preserves all aspects of the speech from his source, but also displays several innovations.\(^{563}\) First, he reminds Oliver that the God for whose glory the Christian fought would wish Fortibras to convert: ‘*iarraim ar gradh Crist ort nech dar cuiris tú fen isin guasacht so, 7 furail mo baistedh ina ainm*’ (I entreat you for the sake of Christ for whom you have put yourself into this peril, direct me to be baptised in His name). Likewise, he identifies his death as not only disgraceful to Oliver but also hateful to the Lord: *ar do ridirecht fen na himir bas orum, óir dobadh aduathmur le Día, 7 dobo mimaisech duit fen págnach do marbad 7 se aga tabairt fen co humal do Día* (For your own knighthood’s sake, do not inflict death upon me, for it would be hateful to God, and it would be disgraceful, for you yourself to slay a pagan when he is delivering himself humbly to God). Moreover, he asserts his willingness to fight for his adopted faith and even for Charles: *Ocus da n-ergersa cathachud co laidir a hucht creidme Crist 7 hucht Serluis impir in tigerna saegulta* (And if I recover I will fight strongly on behalf of Christ’s faith, and on behalf of the emperor Charles, the earthly lord). This speech produces a solid argument which incorporates rhetorical appeals to pathos (by evoking sympathy for his plight), ethos (by demonstrating an understanding for and willingness to conform to the values of Charles and his peers) and logos (by reminding them of the benefits he could provide). The fact that none of these arguments appear in *Fierabras* arguably makes his case in *Stair Fortibrais* stronger than its French counterpart. Admittedly, this alteration does not represent any particular departure

\(^{562}\) For example, Ganelon’s speech arguing for Charles to abandon his knights and return to France comprises twenty-three lines in the French text (*Fierabras*, ll. 4568-4588) but the Irish adaptor renders this quotation in its entirety using only twenty-nine words (*SF*, pp. 264-64, ¶ 181). This sort of dramatic abbreviation occurs commonly throughout *Stair Fortibrais*.

\(^{563}\) *SF*, pp. 48-49, ¶ 63.
from his characterisation in the French version but it certainly reflects well on Fortibras by presenting him as thoughtful, persuasive and a willing servant of God and king.

Moreover, the adaptor further reinforces this interpretation of Fierabras/Fortibras when Oliver and the Saracen attempt to return to Charles’ camp after their fight and encounter a sizable contingent of pagans forcing Oliver to hide Fierabras/Fortibras before he attempts to win through to the Christians. In the French text, Oliver comes to the conclusion that they cannot continue on together. Fierabras objects strenuously but accepts Oliver’s assurances that the knight will not willingly abandon him. In contrast, the Irish translation has Fortibras realise the impossibility of their original plan and propose the solution. Consequently, both men appear to better effect, Oliver because he does not behave in a manner which could however fleetingly be considered dishonourable and Fortibras since he exhibits the insight to perceive the situation accurately and the courage to sacrifice himself if necessary for his new comrade.

As these examples indicate even prior to his baptism, the Irish adaptor presents Fortibras in a manner consistent with that of Charles’ other knights and indeed amongst the best of them. His worthiness is nowhere more apparent than in a modification at the conclusion of the text. In both versions, Fierabras/Fortibras and Guy both remain in Spain to rule Charles’ new lands. While they hold the territory jointly, the French poem is unambiguous that Fierabras serves as Guy’s subordinate holding his lands from the peer:

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\text{La couronne Balant a Charles demandé / Fierabras d’Alixandre lui a tost apporté. / L’emperiere de France a Guyon couronné; / Floripas racouronne de fin or esmerez. / Puis les a l’arcevesques beneïs et sacrés. / A Guïon de Borgoigne rent Karles le rengré; / A Fierabras en a l’une moitié donné; / De Guïon le tenra par droite loiauté.}
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564 Fierabras, ll. 1665-86.
565 SF, pp. 50-51, ¶ 66.
Charles sent for the crown of Balan / Fierabras of Alexandria soon brought it to him. / The emperor of France crowned Guy; / he crowned Floripas in her turn with pure, refined gold. / Then the archbishop blessed and consecrated them. / Charles provided the kingdom to Guy of Burgundy, / he gave one half of it to Fierabras; / holding it with true loyalty from Guy.566

The Irish utterly inverts this scenario:

Ocus do furail in t-imper coroin Admiranduis do tobairt cuige, 7 mar fuair do chuir um cend Fortibráis i, 7 dorinne rígh dé a fláithemnus a athar, 7 do gabh da chorion ordha ele, 7 do chuir um cend ser Gido7 Floripes iat aræn, 7 do chuir se ser Gido 'na tiagerna ar .iii. ríghthibh eíc 7 Fortibras ana airdtiagerna air, 7 tuc sè [an] tor 7 palas Admiranduis do ser Gido.

Then the emperor ordered the crown of Admirandus to be brought to him, and when he got it he placed it on Fortibras’ head and made him king in his father’s principedom. And he took two other golden crowns, and put them together on the heads of Sir Guy and Floripas, and set Sir Guy as lord over four other kings, and made Fortibras his overlord, and gave Sir Guy the tower and palace of Admirandus.567

The variation here is striking: Charles does not send Fortibras to fetch his father’s crown for Guy, the native-born prince rather than the foreign lord receives his coronation first and most significantly rather than ruling half of the realm as a fief from Guy, Fortibras serves as the over-king not only of Guy but also four other monarchs and is subject only to Emperor Charles. Stair Fortibras’ characterisation makes clear the wisdom of this choice by consistently presenting him as noble, wise and courageous. While the Irish text does not significantly alter Fierabras/Fortibras’ presentation, it certainly augments and reinforces it.

566 Fierabras, ll. 6205-6211.
567 SF, pp. 374-75, ¶ 246.
Floripas

Perhaps of all the characters in Stair Fortibras, Floripas undergoes the most consistent, systematic and intentional transformation. Certainly, like her brother, Floripas converts to Christianity but while his presentation seems to reinforce the notion that Fierabras/Fortibras belongs amongst the Christians, the French poet paints a rather different portrait of Floripas. Her sole goal is to marry Guy and for this aim she willingly consents to baptism. However, she is also prepared to countenance threats against her allies, betrayal and even murder. As has often proved the case for other characters, narrative necessity preserves a number of these characteristics: for example, she still murders the knights’ gaoler and betrays her father and people but in passages that permit alteration, the adaptors almost uniformly moderate her actions. As always, exceptions do arise. In Stair Fortibras, the omission of the kiss between Floripas and Guy during Admirandus’ final siege of the tower probably does not indicate an attempt to censure potentially morally objectionable behaviour given that he preserves an identical public display of affection earlier in the text.\textsuperscript{568} Likewise, the removal of Floripas’ instruction to the knights to keep Guy safe is far less likely to derive from any attempt at characterising her than the fact that the episode in its entirety comprises only two lines and moreover occurs in a laisse which the adaptation excises completely.\textsuperscript{569} In both cases, the changes in all probability arise primarily or entirely from external factors some of which—such as the abbreviation of the text by removing brief laisses that do not particularly advance the narrative—appear rather straightforward while the motive for others remains obscure. It seems reasonably clear, however, that the re-characterisation of Floripas does not serve as the main motivation in these instances.

\textsuperscript{568} SF, pp. 282-85, ¶ 215; SF, pp. 166-67, ¶ 156; Fierabras ll. 5449-53; Fierabras, ll. 3876-3880.
\textsuperscript{569} Fierabras, ll. 5956-57. Omitted from between SF, pp. 366-69, ¶¶ 233-34.
Positioned between these modifications and the majority of alterations moderating her behaviour is one minor example which reflects favourably on Floripas by portraying her as a more sympathetic character. It occurs during the same episode when Balan/Admirandus, hearing that Charles has taken Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil, on the advice of his councillors launches a new offensive on the tower in hopes of capturing it before reinforcements arrive. In the French text when the peers have been nearly defeated, Roland and Oliver speak words of encouragement to each other and Floripas offers to show them the relics if they repulse the Saracens.\textsuperscript{570} Conversely, the adaptor relates that Floripas encouraged the knights and then went to fetch the relics without stipulating that the knights must first attain a degree of success.\textsuperscript{571} Her behaviour in this instance demonstrated no particular need for correction; in \textit{Fierabras} her actions fall well within the boundaries of propriety. Nonetheless, \textit{Stair Fortibrais} presents Floripas as a bit more compassionate and perhaps slightly more companionable with the Christians.

However, two of the most dramatic alterations to Floripas’ character—her more moderate speech and actions and her increased respect for her father—will be analysed in the following chapter.\textsuperscript{572} When considered as a whole, the evidence suggests that while narrative considerations dictate that Floripas still chooses her beloved Guy and adopted religion over her loyalty to her family and people and thus inevitably engages in extreme behaviour, she appears more composed, logical and on rare occasions even compassionate in \textit{Stair Fortibrais} than in its source.

\textsuperscript{570} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 5382-5401.
\textsuperscript{571} \textit{SF}, pp. 282-83, ¶¶ 212-13.
\textsuperscript{572} See pp. 267-68 and pp. 257-59.
Although the narrative of the text clearly centres upon Christians, their opponents also merit analysis if only because Charles’ knights on occasion contrast themselves against, and are sometimes defined in relation to, their foes. However, although all the texts name a considerable number of pagans, the vast majority serve solely as participants in battle. Even characters such as Lucafer de Baudas and Clarion/Clarion who speak with the peers do not survive long enough to allow for a consideration of their characterisation. With the exception of Fierabras and Floripas who convert, even the French poet only develops three Saracens to any degree: Balan and his two primary advisors Brulans de Monmirés and Sortinbrans de Connibre. In the case of the latter two, they are defined primarily by the advice they provide their emir. While neither portrayal could properly be considered positive, in general Sortinbrans suggests more moderate behaviour while Brulans advises intemperate actions. However, beyond this comparison, the two provide a scant foundation for analysis particularly since the adaptations do not noticeably preserve this aspect of their presentation. Consequently, Balan/Admirandus is the only pagan featured in this section.

Before commencing with any discussion of the narrative alterations, however, the issue of the character’s name must be addressed. As mentioned previously, the French poet refers to him as l’émir Balans or on occasion merely l’amiré, li amirans or l’amirant. While this appellation does appear in Gesta Karoli Magni, it does not serve as the primary manner for identifying him. The Latin adaptor calls him Balant on six occasions but throughout the majority of the text, including when he first introduces the character, refers to him as Admirandus. The Irish translator dispenses with a proper name altogether and utilises Admirandus as his sole identifier. The only exception to this rule occurs when the peers are

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573 See p. 61-62.
trapped in the dungeon and Bernard encourages Oliver not to abandon hope. In all texts the
gist of his argument is that God controls their situation and they may yet escape to defeat
their foes, but the phraseology varies. In the French poem, he does not use any names575 but
in the Irish translation he avers ‘oir is ferr cumachta De dar mbreith asso ina cumachta
Balangc dar connmhail ann’ (the power of God to bring us out of this is better than the power
of Balangc to keep us here).576 This is a nearly direct rendering of the Latin, although
recourse to that text clarifies the referent. The spelling Balant is not only identical to the other
instances of the name but the adaptor expressly identifies him as rex (king).577 However, it is
illustrative of how atypical this use of Admirandus’ proper name is in the Irish adaptation that
Stokes, mistakenly glosses the name Balangc as ‘the gaoler’ in his edition.578

In light of the fact that both adaptations most commonly refer to the character as
Admirandus, the meaning of his name gains particular import. It is perhaps a bit surprising
that the appellation translates as ‘admirable’ rather than ‘admiral’. According to the Oxford
English Dictionary, the latter word arises from the medieval rather than classical Latin
tradition apparently making its first appearance during the ninth century. As is typical of
medieval manuscripts, the orthography varied with the earliest forms generally written as
amiratus or admiratus. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries the more common variants
included admirallus, admiralis, admiralius and admiraldus. In the thirteenth and fourteenth
centuries an alternate spellings arose: admirarius and almirallus respectively. Oxford English
Dictionary derives the word from a combination of the Arabic noun amīr (commander) with
–ātus, the classical Latin past participle ending ‘after admīrātus, past participle of

575 Fierabras, ll. 2089-96.
576 SF, pp. 122-23, ¶ 86.
577 GKM, p. 338, ¶ 86.
578 Apparently he presumes that Balangc is a variant of Brutamont/Brutamunt which is the name of the gaoler in
all three texts.
admīrārī . . . compare also post-classical Latin admirandus’. It appears, then, that some form of associative connection links admiral and admirable.

Further exploration of the narrative is required to determine to what degree Admirandus achieves the honour implied by his name. In the French text, although Balan demonstrates skill as a warrior, the poet primarily presents him as a simultaneously cruel and comical figure. He cheerfully orders torturing and executing prisoners but is also easily swayed from his given course by his advisors, his chamberlain and even his daughter. Moreover, although he does ultimately refuse to convert to Christianity, he sometimes rails against Mahonmet and his other gods in moments of crisis. Finally, he engages in dishonourable actions including commissioning a thief to steal his daughter’s girdle to ensure the starvation of his besieged opponents. The adaptors retain some of these features in their texts, including the episode with the thief, which serve a clear narrative function.

A similar argument might be made of an addition occurring in Stair Fortibras. During his second rejection of baptism, the French text records that Balan attacked the bishop and was halted only by Ogier striking him.580 The series of events proves very similar in the Irish version with one exception: Admirandus wounds Ogier as well.581 Certainly, this behaviour reflects poorly on the character but it does provide a clear motivation for why Ogier in particular volunteers to execute the emir. He does so in both texts and while he does explain his willingness in Fierabras by asserting ‘Volentiers l’ociroie, car forment m’a pené’ (I would happily kill him, because he has greatly troubled me),582 his case for personal affront and the accompanying desire to carry out the sentence has a stronger basis in the Irish adaptation.

580 Fierabras, ll. 6125-31.
581 SF, pp. 372-73, ¶ 239.
582 Fierabras, ll. 6176.
However, the vast majority of alterations prove more cosmetic in nature. Of these, two minor modifications perhaps present a slightly more negative view of Balan/Admirandus. The first occurs when Brulans/Bruland first informs him of the fate of Fierabras/Fortibras and that the knight responsible for his defeat is amongst their captives. In *Fierabras*, Balan laments his son’s fate and proceeds to declare that he will have the knight responsible dismembered. The Irish translation alters the quotation: ‘*do luigh fona dia fen co fúighbedh bas anuasal maille na companachaibh*’ (he swore by his god that Oliver should die a shameful death along with his companions). On the one hand, the mention of his associates does not occur in the French poem and perhaps implies that Admirandus is willing to punish all the Christians for an act committed by only one. However, the Irish adaptor is arguably only anticipating his source since in all texts Balan/Admirandus, after a brief conversation with Oliver, orders the execution of all five prisoners. Moreover, while the reference to a shameful death still does not flatter Admirandus, it is at least rather more euphemistic than dismemberment.

The second instance of a modification that could either serve as a benefit or detriment to him occurs after Roland, Ogier and Oliver throw the pagans’ idols from the tower. The French poet recounts the response of Balan and his men at seeing their gods so abused: *Kant Balant voit ses dex, touz li sanc li mua, / Tel duel out et tel ire, de honte se pasma; / Sortimbrans de Conninbres amont le releva. / Li assaus est remez et li estor chessa. / Li amirant Balant mout grant duel demena; / Por l’amour de lors dex, maint paiens em plora*’ (When Balan saw his gods, it stirred all his blood, it gave him such grief and such anger, he fainted from shame; Sortinbrans of Conninbres raised him up. The assault was suspended and battle abandoned. / The emir Balan felt very great grief; / because of the love of their

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583 *Fierabras*, ll. 2016-17.
584 *SF*, pp. 118-19, ¶ 78.
585 *Fierabras*, ll. 2045-51; *GKM*, p. 336, ¶ 81; *SF*, pp. 120-21, ¶ 81.
gods, many pagans wept about it). As is often the case, this episode could be interpreted in two rather differing manners. Taken at face value, it could perhaps evoke some empathy for the Saracens who, although misguided, are genuine in their belief. Conversely, it could be argued that Balan’s response is not merely melodramatic but also counterproductive. Upon hearing insults to his earthly and heavenly lords, a seriously-wounded Oliver rode into battle to defend them while Balan faints and causes the skirmish to be lost. This view gains support from the fact that in the very next laisse Balan laments the powerlessness of his god in such terms that he draws censure from Sortinbrans. The Irish text preserves this exchange but omits the episode excerpted above. Ultimately, depending on one’s interpretation this excision serves to benefit Balan/Admirandus or works to his detriment.

However most alterations to Balan/Admirandus’ presentation fall into two categories, both of which portray his character more positively. First, he serves as a stronger leader in the Irish text. In fact, the episode in which Balan/Admirandus orders some of his men to go as emissaries to Charles includes an innovation occurring only in the Irish version which supports this argument. The French and Latin texts feature a Saracen named Mor(r)adas opening the conversation by questioning Balan/Admirandus about his anger and the summons respectively to which their leader responds by ordering them to deliver his message to his foe. In contrast, the Irish adaptor makes Admirandus the first to speak. For good measure, both translations alter Mor(r)adas’ objection that they’ll be killed to acceptance and the hope of killing many Christians along the way. Admittedly, the alterations are relatively minor, but additional supporting evidence occurs throughout the texts. For example, the adaptors of *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* both have Admirandus realize without requiring the advice of his counsellors that despite his anger at being expelled

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586 *Fierabras*, ll. 5478-83.
587 *Fierabras*, ll. 2451-69; *GKM*, p. 347, ¶ 104.
588 *SF*, pp. 132-33, ¶ 104.
from his own tower attempting to recapture it in the dark would be an act of folly and therefore he plans to begin his siege the following day.\textsuperscript{590} In contrast, \textit{Fierabras} features a dialogue in which Sortinbrans persuades Balan not to behave precipitously with night coming.\textsuperscript{591} Likewise, in the Irish translation Admirandus himself, rather than Brulans and Sortinbrans as in the French poem, spots Richard riding to secure Charles’ aid and sends Clarïon/Clarion after the Christian.\textsuperscript{592} Furthermore, he even takes a more direct role in combat on one occasion. Instead of spurring his men to action with threats when the peers capture his kinsman Espallart/Espulard as occurs in the French version, the adaptor has Admirandus attempt the rescue himself.\textsuperscript{593} Admittedly, the pursuit fails so perhaps it reflects poorly on the character’s martial prowess, but it certainly provides additional support for the trend of presenting Balan/Admirandus as a more active ruler.

Finally, in \textit{Stair Fortibrais} Admirandus appears to be rather more sensible and moderate than his French counterpart. The former quality is demonstrated by him realising that he should not launch an attack in the dark, as discussed in the previous paragraph, but the adaptor best reinforces it by the rather significant alteration of the scene in which Balan/Admirandus worships an idol. In the French text, the scene is a comical one: Balan laments that his god has lost all potency and Sortinbrans rebukes him. To restore his faith a pagan named Crustans crawls inside the idol and speaks to Balan assuring him of victory. Falling for this ruse, the emir redoubles his efforts.\textsuperscript{594} Given that \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni} breaks off long before this point, it is impossible to determine whether its adaptor preserved the French account, pioneered the innovations found in the Irish translation or combined both approaches to some degree, but \textit{Stair Fortibrais} presents the episode in a very different and—

\textsuperscript{590} \textit{GKM}, p. 363, ¶ 134; \textit{SF}, pp. 152-53, ¶ 134.
\textsuperscript{591} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 3115-3149.
\textsuperscript{592} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4199-4214; \textit{SF}, pp. 260-61, ¶ 174.
\textsuperscript{593} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 4020-24; \textit{SF}, pp. 258-59, ¶ 170.
\textsuperscript{594} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 5487-5516.
compared to the thirty-line passage in *Fierabras*—much-abridged manner: ‘*mar rucudh Macametus ann do guidh Admirandus e, 7 do leig a gluinne fai dò*’ (when Macamet was brought, Admirandus prayed to him and fell on his knees before him).\(^{595}\) Whether this episode is indicative of a more sincere as well as a less-credulous faith is debatable but the alteration certainly renders him more reasonable.

As is the case with examples of his increased rationality, most of the behaviours demonstrating his moderation also relate in some manner to religion whether pagan or Christian. One exception to this rule is in the Irish text when Charles’ knights are binding Balan/Admirandus, he does not thrash so violently that he breaks Hardrê’s teeth as occurs in *Fierabras*.\(^{596}\) However, most passages do indeed relate to religion. The presentation of this topic more broadly will be discussed in the following section,\(^{597}\) but Balan/Admirandus’ religious sentiments remain open to a degree of interpretation. In an example discussed above, the removal of Balan’s dramatic reaction to the defenestration of his gods could either indicate his piety or his failure at trials of faith. Similarly, the fact that the Irish text removes one of his more colourful rants against Mahonmet/Macamet could derive from his strong belief or result from the fact that he was not particularly depending upon divine assistance in the first place.\(^{598}\) Regardless of one’s interpretation of these passages, however, they clearly demonstrate an increased moderation in his behaviour. Perhaps the strongest example of this tendency occurs at the end of the text. In the French poem, Balan refuses his baptism by spitting in the blessed font.\(^{599}\) The Irish text omits this event entirely.\(^{600}\) However much the adaptor may otherwise present Balan/Admirandus’ character more positively there is as little indication in *Stair Fortibrais* as in its source that he has any respect for Christians or their

\(^{595}\) *SF*, pp. 284-85, ¶ 217.
\(^{596}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 6033-37. Omitted from *SF*, pp. 368-69, ¶ 235.
\(^{597}\) See pp. 198-218.
\(^{598}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 5969-76; *SF*, pp. 366-69, ¶ 233.
\(^{599}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 6125-27.
\(^{600}\) *SF*, pp. 370-71, ¶ 238.
God. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assert that the goal of this modification was likely an unwillingness on the part of the translator to offend his audience’s sensibilities in such a manner, a desire to show all characters even pagans behaving as much within the bounds of propriety as possible or some combination thereof.

In conclusion, then, while Balan/Admirandus certainly possesses significant flaws in all texts, the alterations made in the adaptations generally reflect well upon him by emphasising his leadership qualities and moderating his extreme behaviour.

Religion and the Supernatural

Relics

Fierabras, Gesta Karoli Magni and Stair Fortibrais each frame their narratives around the relics. In fact, the holy objects prove so central to tale that Joseph Bédier considers them the true protagonist.\(^{601}\) However, the precise nature of this focus and indeed even the composition of the list of relics itself varies between the French source and the adaptations. In his opening laisse, the French poet emphasises the connections between Charles, the relics and the Monastery of St Denis:

\begin{quote}
Or en orrez le voir, s’entendre le woulez, / Si con Karles de Franche, qui tant fu redoutez / Recomquist la corronne, dont Dex fu corronnez, / Et les seintismes cloz, et le signe honorez, / Et les autres reliques dont ill i out assez. / A Seint Denis en Franche fu le tresor portez; / Au perron a l’Endit fu partis et donnez; / Por les saintes eglises dont vous après orrez: / Por chen est il encore li Lendis apelez.
\end{quote}

Now you will hear the truth of it, if you wish to understand it, / how Charles of France, who was so feared / won back the crown, with which God was crowned, / and the most holy nails, and the honoured shroud, / and the other relics of which there were very many. / To Saint Denis in France he brought the treasure; / at the stone stair on the Lendit the holy relics were distributed and given out / throughout the holy churches of which you will hear later: / because of this it is still called the Lendit.\(^{602}\)


\(^{602}\) Fierabras, ll. 7-14. In the penultimate line should read ‘par les saintes’ rather than ‘por les saintes’, as appears in Le Person’s edition. The error probably arises from his manuscript and was caused by the presence of the word ‘por’ in the following line.
Gesta Karoli Magni, while still placing the work within a broader historiographical context, excises any mention of the Lendit and refers to Saint Denis only as the repository of the manuscript and thus as a witness to the tale’s validity:

Hic Incipiunt gesta Karoli Magni et cetera. Sicut apud Sanctum Dyonisium inter cetera gesta in scriptis reperitur. Post obdormitionem in domino bone memorie venerabilis Helene matris Constantini imperatoris quae crucem dominii nostri Ihesu Christi cum corona ceterisque reliquis sanctorum tanquam pia sancta ecclesie filia Ierosolimis deportavit a Iudeis cruce divisa per partes et ad diversa loca sancta per piam devotionem beate ecclesie oblatus, tandem corona cum clavis ceterisque reliquis pontifici Romano Rome errant oblate. Regnante vero Karolo nobili imperatore in Francia pro rege venit unus Admirandus qui super omnes paganos principatum optinuit.

Here begins the History of the Deeds of Charlemagne, etc., just as it is told in the manuscripts of Saint Denis, alongside all other such histories. After the death of the venerable Helen of blessed memory, the mother of the emperor Constantine, who, as a pious daughter of the Holy Church of Jerusalem, took the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ away from the Jews along with his Crown and the rest of the relics of the saints, the cross was divided into fragments; these were presented, through pious devotion to the Holy Church, to different holy places. At length, the Crown, along with the Nails and the rest of the relics were presented to the Roman Pope in Rome. At the time when the noble Emperor Charles was reigning as king in France, an admiral, who had power over all the pagans, arrived.603

The Irish adaptor develops his introduction along similar lines, including the preservation of the list of relics as it occurs in his direct source. Additionally, he renders more explicit the connection between Helen and Charles resulting from their shared association with these particular holy objects:

Apud sanctum Dionisium i. dogabtar ac sinDinis 'ar testail na mna diadha so .i. Elena máthair Constantín impir neoch tuc in croch naom o Iubalaibh a cathraigh Elena 7 ar lecin na croiche naime uatha doibh tangadur fan Roim, 7 rugadur leo in coroin spine maille tairrngaithaibh na croiche 7 re taissibh na naem on papa Romanach. Ocus dobi uair 7 airmir sin .i. re linn Serluís Moir .i. righ na Fraingece. Ocus as ann sin tainic Adhmidarndus nèch do chonnaim tigernus arna hlubalaibh paghanachaibh.

603 GKM, p. 304, ¶¶ 1-2.
It was gotten at Saint Denis after the death of this godly woman, even Helena, the emperor Constantine’s mother, who brought the holy Cross from the Jews out of the city of Helena; and after they had let her take the holy Cross, they came to Rome and carried off from the Roman pope the crown of thorns, together with the nails of the Cross and the relics of the saints. And this was the time and season, the period of Charles the Great, the king of France. And then came Admirandus, who held dominion over the heathen Jews.604

These excerpts demonstrate that the lists of the relics found in the French source and its adaptations heavily depend upon the broader historical context selected. In the case of Fierabras, the emphasis on the Lendit of Saint Denis means that only holy objects associated with that particular institution appear in the poem. Thus, the relics expressly mentioned in the French text include the Crown, the Nails and the Shroud. Of these, the Crown’s pre-eminent position is attested by its placement at the head of the list and perhaps by the additional words dedicated to it. Were the poet merely listing relics of the crucifixion, one might also expect the Lance and even more so the Cross to merit mention. Both this lack and the Crown’s prominence likely derive from the rivalry between the Abbey of Saint Denis, whose primary relic was the Crown of Thorns, and Cathedral of Notre Dame, which possessed a fragment of the True Cross.605 Furthermore, as Le Person argues, the crown is also important due to its symbolic associations; it serves as a reminder that the king is under divine protection and serves as God’s representative on earth.606

In contrast, rather than referencing the Crown, the Nails and the Shroud, the list in Gesta Karoli Magni and Stair Fortibrais features the Cross, the Crown and the Nails.607

604 SF, pp. 16-17, ¶ 1-2.
605 See pp. 92-94 for a more detailed discussion of the history of rivalry between Saint Denis and Notre Dame.
607 This alteration to the list of relics aligns GKM and SF with other translations of Fierabras. For example, most of the Middle English adaptations examined by Ailes exhibit similar modifications. See Ailes, ‘Comparative Study’, p.722. Some of these texts also include the Cross amongst their relics. It features in the Destruction de Rome, the Anglo-Norman prologue of Fierabras found in Hannover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, MS IV (578) and also appears in the illuminations of Fierabras in this manuscript. Moreover, the cross is donated to Notre Dame in the Sowdon of Babylone. See Traduction, p. 51 and Ailes, ‘Comparative Study’, pp. 331-32, 722.
While the Crown still appears, the fusion of the *Fierabras* legend with *De Inventione Sanctae Crucis* results in the Cross occupying the prime position in both texts’ list of the relics. Thus, the adaptations reinterpret their source in a manner which maintains a degree of fidelity with *Fierabras* by centering the narrative firmly on the relics and framing the work within a wider historical context while simultaneously replacing elements unlikely to possess any particular significance to the Irish audience with a more broadly applicable episode from salvation history. This approach proves consistent with the evidence arising from the study of the compilatory context of *Stair Fortibrais*’ manuscripts, which indicated a strong association between the text, the relics of the passion and the Crucifixion more generally.608

This transition from specific relics in the French text, most notably the Crown, to a more general emphasis on the holy objects as a whole is reinforced by a minor but nonetheless intriguing substitution in *Stair Fortibrais*. In *Fierabras*, Floripas attempts to aid the knights in their rescue of Guy by fetching the Crown and touching it to each of their helmets thus filling the Christians with particular strength and courage.609 The Latin fragment ends prior to this point in the narrative, but the Irish text slightly alters the context: ‘tucsi coroin Crist maille taisibh na naem cucu, 7 arna nguidhe doibh dociutar docum na barburach mar dorachdis spréga a teinidh’ (She brought them the crown of Christ, together with the relics of the saints, and after they had prayed to them, they went at the barbarians as sparks would spring out of a fire).610 Although the Crown remains the only relic to merit specific mention, *Stair Fortibrais*, unlike its French source, includes the other holy objects in the scene and, while some degree of divine intervention or at least a strengthening of faith still occurs, the nature of the interaction changes from tactile to verbal. Thus, the alteration

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608 See pp. 36-37.
609 *Fierabras*, ll. 3656-60.
610 *SF*, pp. 164-65, ¶ 152.
preserves the importance of the relics within the episode while reducing, if not entirely eliminating, the particular emphasis placed upon the Crown in *Fierabras*.

Despite the fact that most variations from the French source consist of omissions, the preservations of the episode discussed above as well as the adaptor’s decision to open the narrative with the story of the finding of the Cross, confirm the crucial importance of the relics within the Irish, as well as the French, tale. In *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais*, this status is further buttressed by one mention of the relics appearing in these texts but not in *Fierabras* itself. During the single combat between Oliver and Fierabras/Fortibras, all three texts feature the Christian demanding that his foe consent to baptism, but the Latin and Irish adaptations stipulate an additional requirement: ‘mo tigerna imper do cuir dodd innsaigisi me do rad riut do recht fen do sechna 7 baistedh do gabail cugat, 7 creidim Crist do innsaighi, 7 coroin Crist do aissig maille taissibh na naem’ (My lord the emperor has sent me to you to exhort you to quit your own law and to receive baptism, and to come to the faith of Christ, and to return Christ’s cross together with the relics of the saints). While this alteration may not stand amongst the most significant, it does serve to reinforce the importance of the relics both as an impetus for the narrative’s action and more personally to the Christians within the text.

Finally, three omissions relating to the relics occur. However, it is crucial to note at the outset that each of these episodes shares one important characteristic: in every case a miracle regarding the relic(s) occurs in the near vicinity. The first instance transpires during the battle between Oliver and Fierabras/Fortibras. In all texts two separate miracles are associated with the balm: 1) it heals wounds and 2) despite the weight of the barrels they float on the river every Saint John’s Day. In *Fierabras*, the former marvel occurs twice in rapid

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611 *Fierabras*, ll. 417-19.
succession. The Saracen giant drinks of the balm to restore himself to full health and then in the following laisse Oliver secures the barrels for himself and likewise tends his injuries before throwing the flasks in the river to prevent their further use.\textsuperscript{613} The Latin and Irish adaptations preserve Oliver’s healing and the miracle of the floating barrels but omit Fortibras’ use of the balm.\textsuperscript{614} The omission of the pagan’s healing rather than Oliver’s seems natural given that not only is the latter a Christian but he also entered the combat wounded. The excision itself proves consistent with the adaptors’ approach of reducing repetition within the text while being careful to preserve events of narrative significance. Moreover, removing Fortibras’ use of the balm allowed the adaptor to present a scenario in which the relic provided aid only to the Christian knight and not his pagan counterpart. However, despite the modification made to the scene, \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni} and \textit{Stair Fortibrais} present both miracles associated with the balm and thus are in agreement with their source in essence if not precise detail.

The adaptor utilises a similar technique when the besieged Christians in Aigremore/Egrimor drive back the barbarians using the power of the relics. \textit{Stair Fortibrais} adheres closely to its French source for nearly the entire episode. In both texts, the Christians struggle to repel the pagan hordes, causing Floripas to fetch the relics. Nainmon/Nemer then takes the sacred objects and reveals them to the knights’ foes who are forced back by their holiness. Finally, Nainmon/Nemer asserts that the relics are indeed holy and that they need have no fear since the Trinity will protect them.\textsuperscript{615} Until this point, no narrative variation has occurred. Rather, \textit{Stair Fortibrais’} omission during this episode consists only of the French text’s account of Nainmon returning the relics to the Saracen princess:

\textsuperscript{613} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 1064-1101.
\textsuperscript{615} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 5396-5444; \textit{SF}, pp. 282-83, ¶¶ 213-14.
'Dus Nainmes de Baviere Floripès apela, / Les reliques li rent, ele les reporta; / La puciele les prent, puis les renvolepa’ (Duke Nainmon of Baviere called Floripas, / he returned the relics to her, she carried them away; / having taken them away the maiden then rewrapped them).\textsuperscript{616} This detail perhaps slightly increases the relics’ perceived importance by treating their removal as well as their retrieval with a degree of ceremony and it does smooth the transition to the succeeding episode in which seeing Floripas enrages Admirandus, but in omitting these lines the adaptor certainly does not excise any miraculous event from the text nor appreciably reduce the stature or importance of the relics.

While the final example fits into the broad pattern, it proves rather more complex and indeed constitutes the only time that \textit{Stair Fortibrais} fails to preserve a miracle associated with the holy objects. The scene occurs at the conclusion of the story when Charles reveres the newly-reacquired relics. Both texts feature the same basic scenario: Floripas brings the sacred items to Charles and he and his knights reverence them. Then the emperor places relics into a gauntlet—pieces of the Crown of Thorns in \textit{Fierabras}; the Irish text does not specify—and then a miracle of some nature occurs. Finally, when Charles retires for the evening he takes the relics into his chamber and experiences a prophetic dream.\textsuperscript{617} The Irish adaptor follows the French poem closely with two exceptions. The first and more readily explicable is the omission of the fact that the Crown miraculously hovers in the air. In the French text, the narrator expressly states that this fact serves to attest to its authenticity:

\begin{quote}
L’arcevesques fu sages, si l’a bien esprouvee: / En haut desus le paille l’a contremont levee, / Puis a retrait son brac, s’en a sa main ostee, / Et la sainte couronne s’est en l’air arestee’
\end{quote}

(The archbishop was wise, so that it would be well proven / he raised it up high above the silken cloth, / then he withdrew his arm, removing his hand from it, / and the holy crown

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{616} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 5447-48a.
\item \textsuperscript{617} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 6235-6345; SF, pp. 376-79, ¶ 248-52.
\end{footnotes}
remained in the air). Conversely, *Stair Fortibrais*’ adaptor apparently presumes the legitimacy of the relics since he makes no mention of the matter.

The second alteration proves both more complex and perplexing. *Fierabras* relates how when Charles places relics inside the glove, he attempts to hand it to a knight standing behind him. The warrior fails to notice this gesture, however, which results in the relic-filled glove miraculously hanging in mid-air. Some hours later, Charles wonders what happened to it and finds the glove still suspended. The Irish text presents a rather altered account:

> Ocus taréisi sin tainic in t-imper 7 do chuir ní dona taissibh ina lamhuinn, 7 dobi aga tobairt do ridiri do beth ‘na fochair aga comed, 7 nir’ cuimnigh a tobaire do, 7 ar caithem a codach doibh uile is ann do cuimnigh in lamhann 7 a roibhe innte, 7 dobbi aga hiarraidh ar cach, 7 ni fuair ag aenduine a fí, 7 dobi co hacaintech toirssech trit sin. Ocus do fech in t-imper fa chosaibh cáich, 7 fuair radharc ar in lamhainn mara roibhi tuigh na ndaine ina sesam, 7 do thog í go luathghairech, 7 dorimnedur uile annsin ulma dona taissibh le mirbulibh a faghala. Ocus tugad don airdesboc in lamann, 7 ar nosgailt na sgrine don airdesbuc do eirigh dethach 7 bolltamugud mar do beth a parthus aiste.

Thereafter the emperor came and put some of the small relics into his gauntlet, and gave them to a knight who was near him to keep them; and he remembered not that he had given them to the knight. And when they had all eaten their meal, the emperor called to mind the gauntlet and its contents, and he was asking every one, and found that none of them knew of it; wherefore he was sad and lamenting. Then the emperor looked under the feet of everyone, and got sight of the gauntlet where the men were standing thickest, and he lifted it up joyfully. Then all did reverence to the relics owing to the marvels of finding them; and the gauntlet was given to the archbishop, and when he opened the shrine there came forth from it a smoke and an odour as if out of Paradise.

First, the account’s series of events lacks some of the clarity of *Fierabras*. While the latter expressly states that the knight did not see Charles handing him the glove and thus made no attempt to take it, the former says that the emperor was the unaware individual.

Without recourse to the French source, it seems odd that the Christian did not care for the

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618 *Fierabras*, ll. 6249-52.  
619 *Fierabras*, ll. 6301-12.  
620 *SF*, pp. 376-77, ¶ 251.
relics. More significant, however, is the fact that the miracle—if it should be considered such—is considerably less dramatic. Instead of the glove hanging suspended in the air, it falls to the ground and the ‘marvels’ involve the rather mundane recovery of lost property. The heavenly scent of the relics, a feature also occurring in the French text, does serve to substantiate the holy nature of the objects but it is still peculiar to say the least that the adaptor of Stair Fortibrails departs from his source in a way that allows the relics of the crucifixion to be carelessly dropped to the ground and remain unnoticed near the feet of a throng of knights. The effect of this alteration could hardly be considered complimentary to either Charles and his knights or the relics themselves.

Still, on the whole, despite a slight variance in the list of relics, the presentation of these holy objects in Stair Fortibrails proves broadly consistent with that of Fierabras. In both texts, the relics provide the impetus for the narrative and continue to play an important role as the tale progresses including performing a number of miracles. Despite the occasional and sometimes puzzling alterations occurring at various points in the relics’ presentation, the Irish adaptor maintains and at times even emphasises the importance of these sacred objects throughout his text.

**Prayers**

Prayer features prominently in all three texts. In fact, brief prayers offered by the Christians for safety or success are so numerous that it would prove prohibitive to discuss or even list every example. Nor is such an approach necessary since the adaptors consistently preserve these expressions of faith and generally with very little alteration. For example, in all three texts, during his combat with Fierabras/Fortibras Oliver offers a brief prayer immediately prior to securing the flasks containing the balm. Fierabras records his words as ‘Dame seinte Marie, / Roïne corronnee, soiez hui en m’aïël!’ (Lady Saint Mary, / crowned
Queen, aid me now!). In *Gesta Karoli Magni*, he exclaims ‘*Domine Jhesu Christe qui pro salute nostra voluisti crucifiqi, salva me nunc contra adversarium*’ (Lord Jesus Christ, you who wanted to be crucified for our salvation, save me now against my opponent). Finally, *Stair Fortibrais*’ translator writes, ‘*a Ísa Crist neoch do aentaigh a chesadh tar ar cendne, tabuir furtacht orum inaigedh in págínaig ut*’ (O Jesus Christ, who consented to suffer for our sakes, give help to me against this pagan!).

The only difference of any substance between these prayers is the adaptations’ replacement of Mary with Jesus Christ. This tendency proves typical of the Latin and Irish texts which reference former considerably less than the latter. While the name Mary and its variants—such as the Virgin, the Mother of God—appear twenty-six times in the French text according to Le Person’s edition, the adaptations each mention her on only two occasions. Conversely, Jesus and/or Christ appears thirty-two times in *Stair Fortibrais* compared to its forty-three occurrences in the substantially longer *Fierabras*. Even the fragmentary *Gesta Karoli Magni* references him on twenty-three occasions. These facts would seem to suggest a diminished importance of the Cult of the Virgin in fifteenth-century Ireland compared to twelfth-century France.

However, with the exception of this single substitution, the similarities between the adaptations and *Fierabras* remain striking. The length of these corresponding passages proves remarkably similar with the French, Latin and Irish consisting of ten, fourteen and

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621 *Fierabras*, ll. 1069-70.
eighteen words respectively. The content also exhibits a high degree of consistency: the prayers all begin with a plea to a particular holy figure, followed by a further detail about the individual identified and conclude with a direct but unspecific plea for assistance. Therefore, such examples will be excluded from the discussion which will be limited to instances wherein significant alteration does occur, with a specific emphasis placed upon the more prayer-intensive episodes, namely during Oliver’s fight with Fierabras/Fortibras and Richard’s escape from the besieging pagan forces. The adaptors’ treatment of the remaining expressions of faith may generally be categorised into three different groups: 1) prayer rendered with notable alteration 2) brief prayers excised from the texts and 3) prayers appearing only in the translations.

The first classification and much of the second consist of pleas for aid offered by Oliver or Charles during the fight with Fierabras/Fortibras and were excerpted and discussed in the section on the presentation of these characters.628 Therefore, their analysis here will remain limited to summarising the previous conclusion and applying them to a broader discussion of prayer. Only two of Oliver’s prayers undergo any notable alteration. In one case, the only modification of substance proves to be a generalisation of his request from expressing a desire to acquire his opponent’s swords in *Fierabras* to an unspecific plea for assistance in the translations.629 The other example proves slightly more complex as the adaptor renders a lengthy *credo épique*—uncharacteristically concluding with a plea for Fierabras’ conversion rather than aid for Oliver—into a single-sentence direct request for personal assistance.630 Despite the significant nature of these modifications, however, given the substantial number of prayers occurring throughout the course of the texts it proves

629 *Fierabras*, ll. 884-89; *SF*, pp. 38-39, ¶ 46.
630 *Fierabras*, ll. 959-1010; *SF*, pp. 40-41, ¶ 48. For a discussion of the treatment of conversion, see pp. 213-16.
perhaps equally remarkable that these two examples constitute the only content changes of note.

Regarding the omission of prayers, the adaptors excised three supplications made by Oliver during his combat with Fierabras/Fortibras. Two are comprised of a couplet of indirect speech and the third a single-line direct quotation serving as the conclusion of a brief statement. Charles experiences an even more dramatic reduction of his prayers, at least in purely numerical terms. The translators omit three out of the four of the emperor’s supplications. While the French poet does directly quote all three prayers removed from the adaptations, it is worth noting that, like Oliver’s excised prayers, the length of each is only two lines.

Similarly, the number of times Richard prays as he attempts to break through the pagan forces to contact Charles undergoes significant reduction in Stair Fortibras from five instances in the French text to one in its Irish counterpart. While the number of the French prayers is significantly more substantial, three facts prove worthy of note. First, the prayers may be numerous but they are also brief, with the longest comprised of only four lines. Secondly, the episode in the French text proves both more verbose, as one would expect, thus allowing for more numerous prayerful interjections without disrupting the flow of the narrative, but it also includes an episode completely excised from the Irish during which Balan sends a runner who can outpace a camel to convey his command that the porter close the bridge at Maltrible. Quite simply, then, the odds against Richard’s success prove even

631 Fierabras, ll. 1037-38, 1130-31, 1537.
632 Fierabras, ll. 790-92, 1074-75, 1157-58. The adaptor also excises one additional prayer of Charles much later in the poem. After successfully capturing the city of Maltrible, the emperor offers a prayer of thanksgiving before departing for Aigremore at Fierabras, ll. 5299-5302. However, not only is the passage brief but it occurs in the last of three laisses detailing Charles’ actions upon taking the city, such as distributing treasure, and his plans to hold it. While some of this information does appear in the Irish text, a notable portion is excised—this prayer included—likely due to its lack of narrative significance and a desire not to slow the story’s pacing. It seems probable that its location rather than its content was a primary factor in its omission.
greater and thus he has more cause for prayer. Lastly, in terms of content, he prays in every case for protection and/or success in his venture. Granted, these are the most natural requests to make of God given his situation, but while the repetition may increase the dramatic tension, it does not augment narrative content. This fact allows the Irish adaptor to render the substance of Richard’s prayers in a single quotation: ‘dobi ac cur signum na croiche naime uime 7 ag edarguidhi Dhé im rochtain slan co Serlus dó fen’ (He [Richard] was making the sign of the holy cross, and praying to God that he himself might escape safely to Charles).635

Clearly, the trend developed in the adaptations results in a decrease of the number of prayers. However, this fact does not necessarily correlate to a reduction in their importance. Not only does such removal of repetition align with the broader translation techniques occurring throughout Gesta Karoli Magni and Stair Fortibrais, but arguably if the substantial number of their prayers reflects positively upon the perceived piety of the Christians in Fierabras then the fact that the efficacy of their supplications remains consistent despite the reduction in the number of prayers in the adaptations also emphasises the power of the knights’ faith. In some cases, such as Richard’s prayer and two out of three made by Oliver during his single combat,636 the Christian utters his supplication at a moment of particular danger and it is ultimately granted. However, in two instances, a single prayer proves not only successful but elicits an immediate divine response. The most dramatic example is, of course, an angel appearing to Charles immediately upon the conclusion of his first and only supplication for Oliver’s safety to assure him that his prayer will be answered.637 In contrast, the French poem features one clamor and four prayers prior to the seraph’s appearance.638 Likewise, Oliver enjoys a similarly swift response when praying for aid: Ocus mar adubairt

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635 SF, pp. 260-61, ¶ 173.
637 SF, pp. 36-37, ¶ 42. This passage is excerpted and discussed in the section detailing the presentation of Charles. See pp. 149-51.
638 Fierabras, ll. 921-26; 790-92, 1074-75, 1157-58, 1221-87.
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sin d’erigh a menma mar leoman ar dasacht ac dul fo eallach, 7 tuc buille adhuathmur do, 7
do gerr cengal na mbuidel ina roi be in tslanicidh, 7 do tuitidur ar talmain’ (And when he
said this [prayer], his spirit arose like a furious lion going through cattle, and he gave
Fortibras an awful blow and cut the band of the flasks in which was the salve, and they fell to
the ground).639 It would appear, then, that in this regard Fierabras and its adaptations all
emphasise the importance of prayer albeit in slightly differing manners.

Indeed, although they prove uncommon, the fact that the adaptors on two occasions
actually augment their source by adding prayers serves to further reinforce the perceived value
of such expressions of faith. First, although the Christians in Fierabras offer commentary on
Oliver’s battle with the giant and sometimes even must be restrained from offering aid, unlike
Charles and Oliver, the knights themselves offer no prayers in the French poem. However,
the adaptations expressly state that they entreat God on the hero’s behalf: ‘Ocus dobadur
baruin uaisle na Fraingce ac fechain in comraic, 7 dobadur ag guidhe Dé im fortacht do
thobairt do Oliuerus’ (And the noble barons of France were beholding the combat, and they
were entreating God to give help to Oliver).640 Another minor but significant innovation
occurs after Richard has successfully broken through the Saracen lines and by divine
intervention safely crossed the perilous river. While Fierabras transitions directly from the
knight fording the river to the events at Charles’ camp, Stair Fortibrais’ adaptor recounts that
Richard prayed in thanksgiving: ‘do smuaintigh gurub da furtacht do chuir Día é. 7 dobi ag
admoladh De co mor’ (He [Richard] thought that God had sent him [a snow-white youth] to
help him, and he was praising God greatly).641 While the additions are admittedly minor in

639 SF, pp. 40-41, ¶ 48. This prayer enjoys a timely response in the French text as well, but the effect is rendered
rather less dramatic by the fourteen lines between the conclusion of Oliver’s prayer on l. 1070 and when he cuts
the balm free on l. 1084.
640 SF, pp. 36-37, ¶ 43; GKM, p. 319, ¶ 43.
641 SF, pp. 262-63, ¶ 178.
terms of both length and narrative impact, their very presence testifies to the importance of prayer in *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais*.

In conclusion, then, prayer maintains a prominent position in all three texts. While *Fierabras* demonstrates its centrality through frequency and repetition, the translators prefer to do so by emphasising the potency of the prayers and often the timeliness of the divine response. Finally, two minor additions demonstrate that the adaptors actively engaged with their source on this important subject.

**Expressions of Piety**

The French poem and its adaptations differ less in their level of piety than in their methods of expressing faith. For example, while *Stair Fortibrais* neglects to inform its audience that Fierabras later became known as Saint Florent of Roie or that Charles celebrated Mass before his victorious return to France,\(^\text{642}\) one of the Irish adaptor’s innovations credits Charles with constructing a new church: ‘*Ocus do ordaigh in t-imper da eisi sin eclusi do denum a n-onoir na taissi sin isin inadh darub ainm Persibus .i. leo idir Pairis 7 sin-Denis, 7 do ordaigh sè altora 7 othrola 7 aifrinn do beith a n-onoir na taisi sin, 7 ata in gloir sin ag connmail doibh gach lae*’ (After that the emperor directed a church to be built in honour of these relics in the place named Persibus—a league between Paris and Saint Denis—and he ordered altars and prayers and masses to be in honour of these relics: and that glory is maintained to them every day).\(^\text{643}\)

Admittedly, some interperative difficulties occur in this passage. Five textual variants appear in the excerpted passage ranging from alternate orthography to added phrases, some of which obscure rather than clarify the paragraph’s meaning. For example, the scribe of Laud

\(^{642}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 1944-49, 6346-52.

\(^{643}\) *SF*, pp. 378-81, ¶ 257. *Gesta Karoli Magni* preserves the mention of Fortibras’ sainthood (*GKM*, p. 334, ¶ 74). While the fragment ends before the Mass occurs, given the fact that the entire *laisse* in which it appears is composed of only seven lines and nothing else of note occurs therein, the removal would be consistent with his general approach of excising such material.
610 includes the following boldfaced words not found in the other manuscripts considered in the edition: ‘leo a nuimir mitledh ata idir Pairis 7 sin-Denis’ thereby altering the meaning from informing the reader of the new church’s location (a league between Paris and Saint Denis) to a geographical non sequitur (a league is the number of miles between Paris and Saint Denis). Furthermore, even one of the words itself proves unclear. The word othrola or fothrola in Laud 610 which Stokes translates ‘prayers’ is an atypical form. In his glossary, he suggests that it results from a metathesis of *orthola, itself derived from ortha, the term for a prayer or charm borrowed from the Latin oratio. His gloss, while grammatically problematic, certainly seems logical given the context but the lack of clarity highlights the textual problems associated with the passage. These facts seem to suggest some difficulty occurring in a lost manuscript earlier in the stemma. However, the fact that the founding of the church appears in all three of Stokes’ manuscripts despite apparent textual corruption itself speaks to the importance allotted to its content since it would have been at least as simple, if not more so, to elimate the passage rather than attempt to clarify and correct it.

Despite the clear importance of piety, however, there appears to be a rather systematic diminishing of one aspect of its expression: the adaptations seem significantly less concerned with the conversion of the pagans. At the outset of this discussion, it is important to note that all three texts share the same narrative outcome in respect to baptism—Fierabras/Fortibras and Floripas become Christians but Balan/Admirandus ultimately does not. And, naturally, the knights proselytise to each of these characters. In all three versions, when Oliver delivers Charles’ commands to Fortibras, he begins his speech by insisting that the barbarian consent to baptism. Likewise, Floripas addresses the matter before the peers

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644 Although this measurement may be broadly accurate, Laud 610’s reading proves contextually inferior.
645 Stokes, p. 388.
646 This fact is perhaps a bit surprising in light of the appearance of texts in the manuscripts of SF and GKM such as In Tenga Bithmu (in RIA 23 O 48) and Scél in dá Lenam/De miraculis sancte Marie hystoria (in RIA 24 P 25 and TCD F.5.3) which feature of conversion of Jews. See pp. 42-43.
need do so by concluding her initial speech regarding her love for Guy by informing them of her willingness to become a Christian and she later reiterates it to the newly-arrived knights.648

The issue of Admirandus’ potential baptism does not arise in *Stair Fortibrasis* until near its conclusion when, after capturing the pagan leader, Charles instructs Fortibras to convince his father to accept baptism.649 This late presentation contrasts rather dramatically with that of *Fierabras*, although this is perhaps due at least in part to stylistic concerns. In the French text, the issue first arises when Charles prepares to send seven of the peers as his emissaries to Balan. His initial list of demands includes only that the emir return the relics and release his captives.650 It is not until he chooses Guy as the seventh envoy that he reiterates his message, this time adding a demand for conversion.651 Likewise, when the Christians reach Balan, Nainmon, who speaks first, does not mention baptism although Richard, Roland and Guy include it in their recitations.652 Thus, the removal of the insistence on conversion in the adaptations could well have resulted primarily from the desire to eliminate repetition by recording Charles’ speech only once and having only Nemer fully relate his king’s words.653 However, another omission of the topic occurs during Charles’ single combat with Admirandus. Unlike in the fight between Oliver and Fortibras, the emperor’s statement not only constitutes a mere five lines but also represents the only instance of dialogue during the combat.654 As a result, an argument could certainly be made that the adaptor may well have been more concerned with narrative pacing and tension than content in omitting the quotation. Yet the two potential motivations are hardly mutually exclusive and

649 *SF*, pp. 370-71, ¶ 238.
650 *Fierabras*, ll. 2368-81.
651 *Fierabras*, ll. 2415-26.
652 *Fierabras*, ll. 2692-2702, 2710-16, 2778-84, 2794-2802.
654 *Fierabras*, ll. 6008-12.
the elimination of five references to the conversion of Balan/Admirandus proves consistent with the broader trend of de-emphasising baptism.

As discussed during the analysis of Oliver’s character, the adaptations preserve only three of the five mentions of the topic occurring during the knight’s single combat with Fierabras/Fortibras. Stair Fortibrais continues to adhere to this precedent in its treatment of Admirandus’ failed baptism. In Fierabras, Charles addresses the issue during his combat with the Saracen and then twice more during the doomed ceremony itself. Fierabras also attempts to persuade his father to convert on three occasions. Finally, the bishop performing the sacrament also speaks to Balan on the subject. Out of these seven references, the Irish text preserves four, omitting all three of Charles’ speeches to Admirandus. That the translator(s) included such repetition at all speaks highly of the importance they placed upon the topic. However, their numerous omissions occurring over the full breadth of the text also appear to indicate a diminished degree of focus upon baptism compared to that found in Fierabras.

Finally, Fierabras and Stair Fortibrais provide rather differing reasons for Charles’ lengthy stay at Aigremore/Egrimor following his victory. The former states: ‘Karles i a .I. mois et .I. jour sejourné, / Tant qu’il ot le païs auques asseüiré. / Quant Karles ot la tere auques asseüiree / Le païs ont cerkié et toute la contree. / La gent paiene en ont tant qu’il pueent menee; / Qui ne veut croire en Dieu s’ot la teste caupee’ (Charles stayed there one month and one day, / until he had more or less pacified the country. / When Charles had secured the land somewhat, / the Franks scoured the whole land and countryside. / They

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657 Fierabras, ll. 6008-12, 6087-95, 6108-12.
658 Fierabras, ll. 6039-41, 6113-15, 6155-62.
659 Fierabras, ll. 6123-24.
pressed the pagan people as hard as they could; / anyone who did not want to believe in God had his head cut off).\textsuperscript{661} Conversely, the latter states ‘Ocus dobhi in t-imper na comnaidhi ann sin mi 7 ráithe nogur’ comlin gach flaithius dar’ghabh arna Háubhalaibh’ (The emperor remained there for a month and a quarter, until he had filled up every princedom which he had taken from the Jews).\textsuperscript{662} While both passages mention that Charles arranged the new territories to his satisfaction, the element of forcible conversion is utterly and conspicuously absent from the Irish text. Given the inclusion of this brief passage and its attention to detail including with only slight variation the duration of time, it seems likely that this excision was a conscious and considered choice. Possibly, the notion of forced conversion of this sort would have appeared alien to an Irish audience, particularly given that much of their native literary tradition was composed of stories set in the pre-Christian period and thus did not allow for consideration of the topic. Regardless, taken with the other examples discussed, it would appear that while conversion still serves as an important theme in \textit{Stair Fortibrais}, it no longer serves as a primary expression of Christian piety.

Instead, the adaptations appear to express religious devotion by presenting the practitioners as particularly firm and sincere in their beliefs. As mentioned in the section detailing the presentation of Charles,\textsuperscript{663} the emperor issues two \textit{clamores} during Oliver’s battle with Fierabras in the French poem. To summarise the discussion here, the latter serves as the opening to the lengthy prayer, at the conclusion of which a seraph arrives.\textsuperscript{664} As an angel would hardly appear to the emperor were he unworthy, this episode reinforces the notion that, from the perspective of the \textit{chanson de geste} tradition, Charles remains within the boundaries of proper behaviour and piety on this occasion. However, if the reaction of Nainmon and Charles’ meek acceptance of his rebuke proves any measure, in the former case

\begin{footnotes}
\item[661] \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 6216-21.
\item[662] \textit{SF}, pp. 374-75, ¶ 247.
\item[663] See also pp. 265-66.
\item[664] \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 1221-87.
\end{footnotes}
the king takes the traditional prayer rather too far by threatening, amongst other things, to strike down all altars and crucifixes. Conversely, whether resulting from a lack of understanding of French epic convention on his own part or perceived difficulty in comprehension on behalf of his audience, a desire to excise instances of extreme behaviour from his text or, perhaps, an attempt to portray his characters as more pious, the Latin adaptor, and consequently his Irish counterpart, eliminate these clamores in their entirety. Accordingly, Charles arguably appears rather more unwavering in his faith in the adaptations.

Perhaps surprisingly, Admirandus also behaves in a more pious manner, although given the nature of the character, the measure must remain relative. Still, unlike his French counterpart, he does not express his rejection of Christianity by spitting in the baptismal font. And indeed, he treats his own gods and idols with somewhat greater respect as well. As mentioned in his character analysis, the Irish adaptor excises his rant against Mahonnet/Macamet during the final battle between the Christian and pagan forces. Rather more dramatically, he converts the episode in which the Saracens deceive their emir by having a man climb inside the idol and speak to their leader, assuring him of victory to having Admirandus bring Macamet to the tower and praying—apparently earnestly if unavailingly—for success.

Admittedly, being composed primarily of omissions, none of these alterations would likely be noted by an audience familiar only with Gesta Karoli Magni and/or Stair Fortibrais. Still, in comparison with the French text, it seems that the adaptors treat the practice of religion, particularly Christianity, with an increased degree of respect and sincerity. While the difference is perhaps not easily quantifiable, being as much a result of tone as content, the

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665 Fierabras, ll. 921-31.
666 Fierabras, l. 6127.
667 See p. 194-98.
668 Fierabras, ll. 5969-76; SF, pp. 366-69, ¶ 233.
669 Fierabras, ll. 5487-5516; SF, pp. 284-85, ¶ 217.
translations appear to develop their source in a manner that subtly emphasises the devoutness of its characters. Accordingly, the expression of piety while important in all texts transitions from a particular focus upon conversion in *Fierabras* to one stressing appropriate behaviour toward and reverence for the divine in *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais*.

**Magic**

While the vast majority of supernatural occurrences in all three texts derive from the Christian tradition, a small but notable minority are associated with the pagans. With one exception, the adaptors preserve all of these episodes but also make alterations to each. Despite these modifications, however, it should be remarked at the outset that *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* like their French source do not present such magic as inherently deleterious to the Christians. On the contrary, Floripas in particular seems to be associated with the mystical and accordingly, her magical possessions and esoteric knowledge generally serve to benefit her Christian allies. For example, even prior to her formal association with the knights, she offers Oliver a plant from her garden possessed of mystical healing properties. In *Fierabras*, she provides a mandrake, a root well-established in herblore as being efficacious for healing.\(^670\) The translations substitute an apple for the mandrake. The transition occurs in the Latin text, which apparently interprets the French word *mandagloire* (mandrake) as a proper noun: ‘*Ex una parte camere erat quoddam praetorium nullo tempore carens fructu delicate vel floribus. In illo vero praetorio crescit Magdeglore .i. pomum omni morbo salutiferum*’ (Outside one side of the room was a particular inner courtyard, which never lacked soft fruit or flowers at any time. And in that quadrangle grew Magdeglore, that is the apple which cured every disease).\(^671\) It remains unclear whether this alteration resulted from selective modification on the part of an adaptor, possibly seeking to localise his


\(^{671}\) *GKM*, pp. 341-42, ¶ 92.
narrative by replacing a Mediterranean plant with one which could be grown locally or potentially seeking some, admittedly ambiguous, Biblical allusion. Perhaps it even derives from a folkloric association which exists between the two plants: the mandrake is sometimes called ‘love-apple’ or ‘devil’s-apple’.\(^{672}\) Conversely, some textual or translation difficulty could have inspired the transition. Arguably, the case for this interpretation is strengthened by the second reference to the plant, when Floripas uses it to heal Oliver, and the narrator states that ‘Ille sumens de Magdeglore portavit ei’ (She picked some fruit from Magdeglore and brought it to him).\(^{673}\) Either the translator previously utilised a synecdoche in applying the name to a single apple rather than its tree or this inconsistency may provide evidence of some confusion regarding his interpretation of the mandagloire. Both theories would seem valid since other forms of metaphor do indeed appear in *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* but, as will be discussed later in the section, at least one clear example occurs in which the adaptor replaces a supernatural element from the broader European context with one rooted more firmly in the Irish literary tradition. The transition from the mandrake to apple arguably aligns *Stair Fortibrais* more closely with the native Irish literature, particularly ‘Echtrae Chonnlai’, which also features a magical apple.\(^{674}\) Regardless, the Irish text characteristically eliminates this potential, albeit minor, confusion occurring in his direct source by referring on both occasions to a single unnamed apple.\(^{675}\)

Perhaps more significant than the precise nature of the plant, however, is the attitude evinced toward its use. In this respect, the adaptations prove consistent with *Fierabras*. All three texts remark briefly on the restorative power of the plant and Oliver’s miraculous recovery before transitioning to discuss the meal also provided by the princess. In the French

\(^{672}\) Simoons, p. 103.
\(^{673}\) *GKM*, pp. 343-44, ¶ 95.
\(^{674}\) Kim McCone, *Echtrae Chonnlai and the beginnings of vernacular narrative writing in Ireland* (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, National University of Ireland, 2000), ll. 46-53.
\(^{675}\) *SF*, pp. 126-27, ¶ 92; pp. 128-29, ¶ 95.
poem, the narrator states, ‘Olivier l’aporta; tantost con l’ont usé, / Li sannierent ses plaiez, tantost vint en santé (She [Floripas] brought it to Oliver; he had used it at once, / his wounds healed, he immediately regained his health). Gesta Karoli Magni renders this line ‘Quae cum Oliverus gustasset sanus effectus est sine ulteriori gravamine’ (When Oliver had tasted it [the apple], he became fit and well, with no more wounds). Similarly, in Stair Fortibrais, the sentence reads ‘mur dofrum Oliuerus è do slánaigedh e’ (As soon as Oliver tasted it [the apple] he was healed). Despite the cosmetic alteration, the treatment and tone exhibit remarkable similarity. Each text addresses the magic only briefly but credits the treatment with being fully efficacious before transitioning to the other benefits Floripas provides. The episode is apparently not coloured by the barbarian rather than Christian nature of the magic, indeed if anything tacit approval appears to be implied.

This trend of surface alterations combined with a similar treatment of the essential subject recurs later in the narrative when Floripas provides the Christians with advice for extinguishing Greek fire. Admittedly, this information does not constitute magic in a proper sense, but the esoteric knowledge emphasises her exotic Saracen heritage and furthers her association with the mystical. In Fierabras she instructs the knights to pour a mixture of camels’ milk and vinegar upon the flames. This advice proves at least partially correct since one of the few ways to extinguish Greek fire aside from smothering its oxygen with sand was to use vinegar or urine. It is particularly unfortunate that the Latin fragment concludes prior to this point, since Floripas’ suggestions in Stair Fortibrais seem at best ineffective and at worst designed to intensify rather than quench the fire. Instead of milk and

676 Fierabras, ll. 2317-18. The literal translation of l’ont usé (they have used it) does not make sense in context since only Oliver is wounded. The more natural reading l’out usé (he had used it) has been applied in the translation.
677 GKM, pp. 343-44, ¶ 95.
678 SF, pp. 128-29, ¶ 95.
679 Fierabras, ll. 3908-14.
vinegar, she suggests that they use camels’ grease and wine—both of which are unlikely to prove effective and under some circumstances are themselves flammable.\footnote{SF, pp. 254-55, ¶ 164.}

However, \textit{Stair Fortibrais} otherwise follows the French poem rather closely. The basic elements each appear: the knights’ distress, Floripas’ reassurance followed by her quick and effective solution concluding with Balan/Admirandus’ reaction, Sortinbrans/Sortibrand’s identification of Floripas as responsible for their foes’ success and finally the pagans redoubling their efforts to seize Aigremore/Egrimor. Even the brief passages describing extinguishing of the flames is related in comparable terms with the adaptor rendering his source’s line ‘\textit{Maintenant fu estains, quer nel put plus durer}’ (Immediately it was extinguished, for it [the Greek fire] could not endure it [the milk and vinegar solution] any longer) as ‘\textit{dorinedh sin innus nachar’ fag spreigh di gan bathadh}’ (That was done, so that there was not a spark that was not quenched).\footnote{Fierabras, l. 3913; SF, pp. 254-55, ¶ 164.} Once again, both texts address the arcane element only briefly but also without particular judgment as to its pagan source.

Floripas’ magic belt, which prevents the starvation of those besieged within Aigremore/Egrimor, receives much the same laconic but tolerant treatment. The French text describes its mundane as well as its magical features in slightly greater length; the latter include, in addition to nourishing the wearer, an immunity to poison and the prevention of grey hairs. Moreover, the poet states that ‘\textit{deu fruit de paradis i avoit tregeté}’ (Some of the fruit of paradise was incorporated in it).\footnote{Fierabras, ll. 2120-27.} Le Person’s note on this line suggests that the fruit of paradise equates to the apple from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis; given the nature of the belt’s properties perhaps a better interpretation would be the Tree of Life described in Revelation 22. 2: ‘On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for...
Regardless of the precise nature of the fruit of paradise, it would appear that despite the belt’s possession by a pagan princess, its magic may in fact derive from a Christian source. If so, like Fierabras’ swords Baptesme, Gerben and Florenche, the belt may foreshadow her coming conversion.

Conversely, the Latin and Irish texts confine themselves to more general remarks such as ‘in cris do gabsi tairsí dobo doairmide a luach dobi d’ imat a cloch uasal co mбуаdха́bх móра orro’ (The girdle that she wore was priceless, such was the abundance of its precious stones with great virtues in them). While a desire to limit the presence of magic may have served as the motivation for this reduction, given that the description occurs in the middle of a lengthy blason considerably abridged by the adaptors, such omission proves consistent with their approach toward their source material in general and descriptions in particular. Neither translation mentions the magical nature of the belt until it becomes relevant to the narrative when Admirandus sends the thief Malpin to steal it. Even then, only the point essential to motivate this subplot—that the belt prevents starvation—receives mention. The fruit of paradise receives no reference and accordingly the belt may perhaps be considered a rather more pagan magic in Gesta Karoli Magni and Stair Fortibrais than in Fierabras. In all other respects, however, the treatment in the adaptations otherwise remains consistent with the French poem by presenting the belt as beneficial magic which assists the heroes and all three texts include a lament uttered by Floripas at its loss.

The episode of Floripas’ stolen belt also includes the use of magic by a pagan against the Christians. Taupim de Grimolee/Malpin, the thief sent by Balan/Admirandus to purloin

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684 Le Person, Fierabras: Chanson de Geste du XIIe Siècle, p. 443; Genesis 2. 9-3. 24; Revelations 22. 2.
685 See pp. 94-95.
687 SF, pp. 152-53, ¶ 135. The fact that the adaptor does not transmit the knowledge of this particularly relevant quality of the belt during its initial description would appear to reinforce the theory that he adapted the text either as he read or in small sections and thus remained unaware of its impending importance. For additional support of this theory, see pp. 136-41, 162 and 238-39.
688 Fierabras, ll. 3221-24; SF, pp. 154-55, ¶ 137.
the girdle makes use of magic twice during his assignment: first to access the chamber and second to ensure that the occupants remain asleep. The adaptations preserve both incidents and, like their source, make no special effort to depict the magic itself in any particular fashion, although its practitioner as a thief and attempted rapist obviously experiences a negative characterisation.

However, one example departs from this trend in the presentation of the supernatural. During Richard’s escape from the pagan siege, the Irish adaptor entirely excises one event which, although not directly magical in nature still bears consideration here. In Fierabras, Balan attempts to notify Maltrible’s porter of Richard’s approach and thereby prevent the knight from leaving Saracen territory by sending a messenger named Orage who possesses the capacity to outrun a camel and indeed does manage to relay his message to the giant porter before Richard, on horseback, reaches the bridge. As discussed at some length previously, this passage features a substantial degree of reordering possibly designed to reduce shifts in perspective and thereby improve the narrative flow. Consequently, a distinct possibility exists that such stylistic concerns may have at least partially have dictated this omission, particularly given the fact that the episode is contained within two easily-excised laisses which relate no additional events. Furthermore, despite Orage’s success in delivering the message, the barbarians’ efforts to check Richard’s progress ultimately prove futile and thereby render the episode rather insignificant from the perspective of the broader narrative. The combination of these factors renders the passage a prime candidate for removal based upon the general trends of translation discussed in the previous chapter. Even so, it is significant that the adaptor apparently did not consider the presence of magic on its own as sufficient grounds for inclusion. Perhaps he deemed the supernatural as unobjectionable and

689 Fierabras, ll. 3175-86; SF, pp. 154-55, ¶ 136.
690 Fierabras, ll. 4411-4440. Le Person mistakenly states in his note on p. 577 that Orage boasts about the speed of his dromedary, rather than about his own ability to outrun a camel.
691 See pp. 87-90.
intriguing enough to his audience to merit mention when the external circumstances aligned favourably but did not consider it of sufficient import to counter his general inclination toward a brisk narrative flow.

Finally, one rather more ambiguous magical occurrence requires a brief discussion. The miracle which allows Richard to cross the river and successfully reach Charles proves somewhat problematic in terms of characterisation. It represents a departure from the more traditional religious elements such as prayer and veneration of the relics but contains echoes of the miracle of Moses parting the Red Sea. At the same time, it borrows from encounters with the supernatural in the texts’ broader literary traditions. Richard successfully traverses the river with aid from a white stag in Fierabras and a snow-white youth in Stair Fortibrais.

The former features fairly commonly in French epic and romance and the latter is reminiscent of the appearances of the otherworldly in native Irish literature. However, both texts expressly state that this encounter with the supernatural directly resulted from divine intervention. In the French poem, not only does the deer appear immediately after the Christian prays for aid, but the poet expressly states that the creature was sent by God: ‘Atant es vos un cherf, que Dex i fist aler’ (At that instant you could see a stag, which was sent there by God). Of the Irish manuscripts, only TCD H.2.7 proves so explicit at the outset: ‘tanic cobair o Dia air’ (then help came to him from God) but all three copies include the fact that after Richard’s miraculous crossing ‘do smuaintigh gurub da furtacht do chuir Dia é’ (he thought that God had sent him to help him).

In fact, the Irish adaptor adds three minor but intriguing details to his French source. First, even prior to the youth’s appearance Richard ‘sruth arna isliugud innus cor’leig móran d’ferand ris dobhi fai roime’ (beheld the river lowered so that it left much land that it had

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692 Fierabras, l. 4521.
693 SF, pp. 262-63, ¶ 178.
covered before). Secondly, while the French text makes no mention of the stag after it leads Richard across the river, *Stair Fortibrais* expressly states that after his crossing the knight did not see the youth which he considers further evidence that the Lord was responsible for his appearance. Lastly, the adaptor informs his audience that ‘*dobi ag admoladh De co mor*’ (he was praising God greatly). Thus, it would appear that the Irish adaptor further develops the episode as it occurs in *Fierabras* by altering the nature of the guide to one deriving from his own cultural milieu but also by further emphasising God as the ultimate source of this supernatural occurrence.

In conclusion, then, *Stair Fortibrais*’ approach toward magic seems fairly consistent with *Fierabras* not necessarily in all details but rather in its treatment of the subject. As Ailes notes, the French poem ‘tolerates pagan magic, partly for its narrative usefulness (the mandragora) and partly for the aura of evil attached when this magic is used against the Christians (the recapture of the magic belt). However, when this magic is used for good purposes (the mandragora and the magic belt) the evil is forgotten’. While the Irish text does eliminate one instance of a barbarian’s supernatural ability and emphasises the divine intervention in another, the adaptor generally appears to embrace the approach toward magic found in his source.

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694 *SF*, pp. 262-63, ¶ 178.
695 *SF*, pp. 262-63, ¶ 178.
Historiography and Religion: A Geographical Case Study

As one of the poems of the *geste du roi, Fierabras* and, consequently, its adaptations occupy a peculiar hinterland between history and legend at least from the perspective of a modern audience. While the medieval perception of these concepts proved rather more fluid, the placement of *Stair Fortibrais*, particularly in the manuscripts TCD H.2.17 and Laud 610 provides some contemporary evidence for the perceived historicity of the work.697 Thus, the texts’ presentations of matters such as geography can provide important clues as to their treatment of these elements and thus the interpretation of the works as a whole. Although the effect remains subtle, the adaptations demonstrate a tendency toward compressing geography in the narrative.698

One manner in which the adaptors reduce the geographical scope of *Fierabras* is to simply limit references to specific locations. While the French poem contains ninety-two separate geographical locations, the Irish references twenty-four.699 In both cases, the totals include cities, countries, regions/provinces and important institutions such as monasteries or churches as well as rivers, forests and similar natural features. While the vast majority of these occurrences reference actual locations, a few appear to be purely fictional such as Valnuble/Valle Nubile or Hernonnie, the imaginary province from which Oliver, using his pseudonym Garin de Pierrecort, supposedly hails. To prevent repetition, this discussion will exclude the names of people groups derived from geographical locations; thus, the total includes for example *Franc(h)e* but not *Franchois/François, Francor or Frans/Franc*

To explore the data more fully, adopting five categories proves useful: Christian, Pagan, Other, Setting and Religious. The first two classifications indicate places within Christendom and under the sway of the barbarians respectively. While these locations on

697 See pp. 44-45.
698 This section will not consider *Gesta Karoli Magni*. Due to its fragmentary nature, totaling its geographical references proves impossible.
699 See pp. 284-87 for the complete list of geographical locations referenced in this section.
occasion occur independently, particularly in the French text, they more often appear suffixed to the name of a warrior. In *Fierabras*, the number of Christian and Pagan geographical references prove identical, with each category containing thirty-four entries. The Irish text substantially reduces the number in both categories including only seven Christian locations and five associated with the pagans. Thus, the ratios of locations in the French to Irish texts are approximately five to one and seven to one respectively. Such a dramatic decrease supports the notion that geographical matters possessed notably less perceived importance in *Stair Fortibrais* than in *Fierabras*.

The third classification, Other, contains only two entries in the French poem and one in the Irish text. On one occasion, both mention Colchos—where Jason acquired the Golden Fleece—as the place where Floripas’ mantle was made.700 *Fierabras* also mentions the Orient but the use is non-specific and arguably even directional: ‘*Karles s’est regardez par devers Orient*’ (Charles turned his gaze toward the Orient).701

The Setting classification of this organisation scheme is technically comprised entirely of places under pagan control. However, this analysis separates them from the larger grouping for two reasons. First, possession of these lands is a contested issue; at the opening of the text they are firmly under Balan/Admirandus’ authority but by its conclusion they have become a part of Christendom. Secondly, this classification includes only locations in which the narrative unfolds not those within Spain referenced in any other context. As one would expect, the adaptor proves significantly more scrupulous in his preservation of these locations than in the broader Pagan and Christian categories. In purely mathematical terms, he includes exactly half of the locations found in *Fierabras*. Both texts mention Aigremore/Egrimor, Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil, Flagos/Fladol, Spain, and the Val Josué/Vale of Josue. Locations

700 *Fierabras*, l. 2133; *SF*, pp. 122-23, ¶ 87.
701 *Fierabras*, l. 4737.
appearing in the French poem but not its adaptation are Far de Rome, Guimer, Mor(r)imo, Vaus d’Orquenie and Val Raheir.

*Fierabras* proves not only more expansive but also rather more consistent than its Irish adaptation. Thus, the geography of the setting may be described with relative ease.

When Charles marches into the Saracen lands with his army, he pitches his camp in the vales of Mor(r)imo. Oliver, accompanied by some of the other young knights, rides ahead to the Valley of Raheir where the Saracens attack them. Fierabras enters Mor(r)imo and issues his challenge. There he and Oliver fight near the Far de Rome, a branch of the Tiber River. These locations together comprise the first major setting, the region surrounding Charles’ camp. However, most of the action of the narrative occurs in deeper within the Saracen lands where the peers are either taken as captives or are sent as emissaries to Balan.

The emissaries first encounter Maltrible, an appellation referring to both the heavily fortified bridge over the river Flagos and its associated walled city. Although he never articulates the point directly, the evidence unambiguously indicates that the poet envisions Maltrible as one of Balan’s fiefs rather than lands on the outskirts the city of Aigremore where the emir holds court. While distances in epic should perhaps not be interpreted literally, the porter Agalafre claims that Balan made him ‘garde del pon et de chimquante liuez entor nos environ’ (guardian of the bridge and of fifty leagues around on all sides). Moreover, when roused by Balan’s messenger, Maltrible fields twenty hundred thousand Saracen warriors suggesting a sizable garrison. Between Maltrible and Aigremore stands another landmark, the rock Guimer at which Balan’s messenger Orage overtakes Richard.

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702 *Fierabras*, ll. 26-27.
703 *Fierabras*, ll. 28-30.
704 He enters the valley and issues his challenge in laisse III (*Fierabras*, ll. 70-96) but the poet does not expressly indicate whether the dale in question is Mor(r)imo or Raheir until *Fierabras*, l. 1032.
705 *Fierabras*, l. 1098.
706 *Fierabras*, ll. 2562-93.
707 *Fierabras*, ll. 4932-33.
708 *Fierabras*, l. 4461.
709 *Fierabras*, ll. 4430-33.
The vales of Orquenie must also lie along the path to Aigremore since a messenger reports to Balan that Charles and his army have crossed them prior to their arrival at the city.\(^{710}\)

Aigremore itself is located within the Val Josué and it is here where the final battle between the Christian and Saracen forces occurs. In summary, Charles pitches camp in the valleys Mor(r)imonde and Raheir. The former contains a branch of the Tiber River. Between the Christian and Saracen armies is Maltrible built on the river Flagos. Both the rock Guimer and the Vaus de Orquenie lie deeper in the Saracen lands. Finally, the Val Josué contains the city of Aigremore where the Christian forces finally overcome their foe.

Despite the reduction in the number of locations, the geography articulated in *Stair Fortibrais* proves rather more complex. The adaptor appears to have possessed a fairly internally consistent conception of his setting but fails to fully integrate it within the narrative. He departs from his French source from the opening of the text when he states that Charles when he first seeks to recover the relics marches his army to an unspecified location, presumably within Spain. After sacking Rome, Admirandus ‘do furail in coroin 7 taissi na naem do breith docum tuir Egrimoir. Intus Serluis Moir .i. in imper na Roma, dob ail leis in coroin taisi na naem do breith asa lamaibh na mbarburach. Ocus do tinoil a shluaig fen maille pardéc, 7 do siubuil on Frainge co ferrdha, 7 is e fad rainic, uidhe da la dec on tor sin’ (ordered the crown and saints’ relics to be brought to the tower of Egrimor. As to Charles the Great, that is, the emperor of Rome, he was fain to fetch the crown and the relics of the saints out of the hands of the barbarians. So he mustered his own army, together with the ten peers, and he marched manfully from France, and he came the length of twelve days’ journey from that tower).\(^{711}\)

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\(^{710}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 5587-89.

\(^{711}\) *SF*, pp. 16-19, ¶¶ 2-3. The reference to ten peers rather than twelve occurs in all three manuscripts of Stokes’ edition. It appears particularly strange in the light of the fact that the text otherwise features the traditional number of peers.
With the exception of the Vale of Josue which as in the French poem is where
Egrimor was built, the adaptor does not provide a name for any of the valleys in his new
setting nor for the river beside which Oliver and Fortibras fight. Rivers occur in three
contexts over the course of Stair Fortibrails: 1) the unnamed river at the site of Oliver and
Fortibras’ combat, 2) the river Fladol spanned by the bridge at Ma(n)tribil and 3) the yellow
river at Egrimor.\footnote{1) SF, pp. 40-41, ¶ 49; 2) SF, pp. 138-39, 270-71, ¶¶ 109, 189 (Fladol) and pp. 138-39, 140-41, 262-63, 270-
71, 274-75, ¶¶ 109, 112, 178, 189, 197 (the river without its proper name) and 3) SF, pp. 152-53, 158-59, 270-
71, 278-79, ¶¶ 132, 142, 189, 205.}

However, there are two indications that the Fladol and yellow river
should be considered a single waterway. One occurs only in Laud 610 where the scribe adds
three words—boldfaced in the quotation—to the description of Ma(n)tribil: ‘\textit{ata sruth fan
droichit sin \textit{i. in sruth buidi re n-abur Fladol}}’ (under that bridge, there is a river, to wit, the
yellow river, which is called Fladol).\footnote{SF, pp. 270-71, ¶ 189.}
The other—occurring after Charles has taken
Ma(n)tribil but before he marches on Egrimor—contains a somewhat increased degree of
ambiguity but appears in all three manuscripts: ‘\textit{Ocus anuair tainic sluagh Serluis fa tighibh
na barburach do inntaigner aris docum in srotha buidhi, 7 do fiarfaigh Serlus: cia do
curfidhis don coméit in droichit air teithigh na mbarburach da ghabail taraneisi?’} (When
Charles’ army had gone through the houses of the barbarians, they returned to the yellow
river, and Charles asked: whom would they put to keep the bridge lest the barbarians should
seize it after them?).\footnote{SF, pp. 278-79, ¶ 205.}
The significant point in this passage is that although the scene clearly
occurs at Ma(n)tribil leading one to expect a reference to the Fladol, the adaptor instead
mentions the yellow river which on all three previous occasions refers to a waterway so near
Egrimor that pagans diving from the tower windows fall into it.\footnote{SF, pp. 152-53, ¶ 132. See also SF, pp. 158-59, 270-71, ¶¶ 142, 189.}

If, as this evidence seems to imply, Fladol and the yellow river are in fact the same entity it is tempting to speculate that
the unnamed river referenced during Oliver and Fortibras’ single combat may likewise be the
Fladol particularly given the site’s stated closeness to Egrimor. Unfortunately, the internal evidence of the text neither supports nor disproves this theory.

More crucially, the implicit and in one instance explicit merger of Fladol and the yellow river suggests that Ma(n)tribil and Egrimor may be rather closer geographically in the adaptation than in its French source. In fact, there is considerable evidence that the adaptor conceives of Ma(n)tribil not as its own city but rather as the bridge at Egrimor’s entrance. Not only does he make minor changes to some particular episodes from the French text discussed above such as removing Agalafre/Galafer’s claim of lordship or omitting the messenger episode which leads to Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil fielding its own warriors, but also six of his descriptions either strongly imply or state outright that the two cities envisioned by the French poet effectively function as a single location in the Irish text.

First and perhaps least compellingly, the adaptor states that ‘mar rangadur uidhe láe on cathraig’ (when they had gone a day’s journey from the city) Charles’ emissaries to Admirandus encounter their pagan counterparts. Stokes’ translation here is perhaps a bit misleading as it implies that the knights had traveled a day from their point of origin. However, no evidence indicates that Charles’ army pitched camp at or near any city other than Egrimor from which he is a twelve days’ journey. Moreover, the emperor expressly sent the messengers to Admirandus who resides at Egrimor. Accordingly, the quotation must mean that the knights are a day’s journey from their destination when they encounter the Saracens. This fact is significant because the confrontation occurs prior to their arrival at Ma(n)trible. Thus, if the knights are no more than a day’s journey from Egrimor before they have reached the bridge, the two locations must be significantly closer to each other in the Irish text than in Fierabras.

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717 Further supporting this interpretation, the French poem offers no such temporal indicator in its corresponding episode at Fierabras, ll. 2486-93.
Rather more explicitly, on all three occasions when warriors cross the bridge on their journey to Egrimor, the two locations appear to effectively function as a single unit. When the pagans transport Oliver and their other captives to the city the narrator states: ‘Imtus na págánach, rucadur Oliuerus, maille na barunaibh ele lèo, 7 do gabadur droichet Muntribil, 7 tangadur don cathraigh darub ainm Egrimor mara roibhe Admirandus i. rígh na nIubal’ (As for the pagans, they carried off Oliver together with the other barons, and they reached the bridge of Ma(n)tribil and came to the city named Egrimor, where Admirandus, the king of the Jews, was biding).\footnote{SF, pp. 56-57, ¶ 76.} Similarly, omitting only the confrontation between Nemer and Roland over the latter throwing a barbarian from the bridge into the river, the emissaries appear to cross the bridge and then immediately enter Egrimor: ‘gabusdur san in droicid. Ocus mur do rangadur in droichid 7 dul tairis . . . Ocus docuadar istech isin cathraig’ (he [the porter] lowered the bridge; and they came to the bridge and were crossing it . . . So they entered the city).\footnote{SF, pp. 140-41, ¶¶ 112-13.} Finally, when Charles’ army marches on Egrimor, Ma(n)trible’s porter Galafer tells a disguised Richard that ‘tainic moirsheiser do muinntir Serluis annso, 7 dochuadar le celgaibh isin cathraigh gan cís in droichit d’ic’ (seven of Charles’ people came here, and went by guile into the city without paying the bridge-toll).\footnote{SF, pp. 272-73, ¶ 194.}

More significantly, albeit slightly more problematically, after the peers slay Admirandus’ messengers and elect to continue on with their mission, the adaptor writes:

‘Ocus do thoghadur na cinn leo, 7 do gluaisidur \textit{rompu} noco rangadur i Montribil, 7 adubairt Nemerus ri: ‘ac so in cathair inab écín daibh dul’. \textit{Adubairt Ogerus ris}: ‘is ecen duinn dal i Montribil ar tus’ (So they took up the heads and moved forward until they reached Ma(n)trible; and Nemer said to them: ‘Here is the town which you must enter.’

\textit{Ogier said to him: ‘We must needs go first into Ma(n)trible’}').\footnote{SF, pp. 136-37, ¶ 109.} Unfortunately, some
disagreement arises between the manuscripts. The bold-faced text occurs only in TCD H.2.7. Thus, the other two scribes continue Nemer’s speech, having him clarify that the town is Ma(n)tribil before proceeding with his description. The conception of Ma(n)tribil as an independent entity implied by this reading certainly more closely resembles the geographical conception of the French text; however, four pieces of evidence suggest that the lone scribe may have more closely preserved the original adaptor’s conception. First, *Fierabras* features not a monologue by Nainmon but rather an exchange between Nainmon and Ogier such as that which occurs in TCD H.2.7: ‘Seignors, ce dist dus Nainmes, envers moi entendez: / Or voi gen Aigremore ou nos devons esrer’. / Dist Ogier le Danois: ‘Plus vos convient aler; / Par foi, ains est Maltrible, le fort pont a douter’ (‘Lords,’ said the duke Nainmon, / ‘attend to me: behold fair Aigremore toward which we travel.’ / Ogier the Dane said: ‘It is necessary for you to travel more; / by my faith, before us is Maltrible, the strong bridge which is feared’).722

Secondly, *Gesta Karoli Magni* also supports TCD H.2.7’s interpretation: ‘Cum autem venerant ad Mantribil, dixit dux Reimerus: ‘Ecce hic civitas Egrimor, quo ire nobis est recte’. Respondens vero Ogerus ait ‘Oportet nos prius pontem de Mantribil pertransire’ (And when they had reached Mantribil, Duke Reyner said ‘Look, here is the city of Egrimor where we must go’. Ogier said in reply ‘First we must cross the bridge of Mantribil’).723 Granted, if the theory of geographical compression is correct, the context has undergone a significant transition from the French text—which implies that the bridge and its accompanying territory possess such size and grandeur that even a peer mistakes it for Balan’s seat of power—to the adaptations wherein Reyner/Nemer’s correct assertion that they have reached Egrimor meets with Ogier’s reminder that they must cross the formidable

722 *Fierabras*, ll. 2561-64.
bridge Ma(n)tribil before they may enter. Regardless, it seems reasonable to postulate that the
manuscript closest to the French and Latin sources contains the original interpretation.

Third, the use of the word cathair in all three manuscripts supports TCD H.2.7’s
reading. Regrettably, Stokes’ edition displays a degree of inconsistency in rendering cathair
as ‘town’ when on all other occasions he translates it as ‘city’. This fact is important because
at this point in the narrative cathair has previously referred solely to Egrimor. Thus, Nemer’s
use of that particular term implies that they have, in fact, reached their final destination as
would be consistent with TCD H.2.7 rather than that they have reached a free-standing city
which he then proceeds to describe as occurs in Egerton 1781 and Laud 610. Lastly, while
not perhaps compelling evidence in its own right, it is interesting to note that each of the two
unique manuscript variants which appear to support the notion of geographical compression
come from a different source; the explicit conflation of the Fladol and yellow river derives
from Laud 610 while the implication that Ma(n)tribil serves as Egrimor’s drawbridge and
gateway come from TCD H.2.7. The diffusion of evidence suggests that the conception of the
setting as more compact than that of Fierabras was held not merely by individual scribes but
by the adaptor himself.

The final and perhaps most compelling passage supporting the theory of geographical
compression occurs when Richard brings word of the peers’ peril to the emperor. Charles
enquires:
‘In laidir in tor a fuilidh mo ridiri?’ 7 adubairt Roisterd: ‘a tigherna, is glic Amirandus, 7 ataí da mile a timchell in tuir d’ferann fana sluaghaibh, 7 is laidir in cathair ina fuil se fen, 7 ni fuil slighi cuice acht endorus na cathrach, 7 ata droichit air, 7 do togatar e, 7 ni hetir dul tairis, 7 atait tuir imdha ar in droichit sin, 7 ata eathach romor osa chinn ag a coimét, nech is cosmaila re Diabul na re duine, 7 ata x. mili ridire armtha foi fein docum a coimeta in tsrotha, 7 ata sruath fan droichit sin i. in sruith buidi re n-abur Fladol, 7 ata do dasacht aige nach snaighinn longa naid ainminniti air . . . in uair rachmuidne tarin droichit sinfinfsa in adharc so, 7 mar do cluinfidhis in adharc freagraidh chugainn, 7 gebmaidne na coimetaidhi 7 claidfídhmaidne in t-athech, 7 doberaid na ridiri ata annsa tor furtacht orunn do ghabail Amiranduis’.

‘Is the tower in which my knights are strong?’ And Richard said: ‘My lord, Admirandus is cunning, and two miles of the land around the tower are covered with his armies, and strong is the city in which he himself is, and there is no way to him save by one gate of the city, before which there is a drawbridge. They have raised the bridge so that it is not possible to pass over it, and there are many towers on that bridge, and a huge giant stands over it guarding it, who is liker the Devil than a man, and under him are ten thousand armed knights to keep the river, and under that bridge, there is a river, to wit, the yellow river, which is called Fladol, and such is its fury that neither ships nor animals can swim on it . . . When we shall cross the bridge I will sound this horn, and when you hear the horn answer us and we will seize the wardens and overcome the giant. The knights who are in the tower will help us to capture Admirandus’.

Neither of the manuscript variants, both from Laud 610, is of particular interest here. The first functions as a clarification of information that could be inferred from context and the second has already been discussed at some length above. The lacuna in the quotation omits only the details of Richard’s plan for dealing with the giant. These matters aside, the above excerpt functions as the most explicit statement of Ma(n)tribil and Egrimor’s relative geography in the entirety of Stair Fortibrais. Charles’ opening question clearly references the city of Egrimor where his knights are besieged within a tower. Richard further clarifies that while the peers hold the tower, Admirandus controls the city which contains it. Initially, his description of Egrimor’s gate and drawbridge could belong to any number of cities but as he

724 SF, pp. 268-71, ¶ 189.
continues to speak, the details—especially the giant porter and the un-crossable river—almost unquestionably indicate that he refers to Ma(n)tribil. Moreover, the final sentence indicates that Admirandus and the besieged peers will be close enough to Charles’ army that, upon hearing Richard’s horn, all of the Christians will be able to stage a coordinated assault upon the pagans’ leader. Unlike some of the other passages discussed above, it would be difficult to interpret this excerpt to mean anything except that Ma(n)tribil functions as the gate and bridge allowing direct access to Egrimor.

However, despite this apparent clarity, the adaptor soon seems to depart from his established geography. In Stair Fortibrais as in Fierabras Charles and his knights defeat the porter and capture the bridge before the emperor enters the city with only a few men. The pagans close the gate entrapping the Christians inside but Fierabras/Fortibras organises the main body of Charles’ army which succeeds in breaking down the gate and capturing the city. In the French poem, the city in which this action occurs is unambiguously the city of Maltribile but the Irish text never provides a proper name to clarify the location. However, internal evidence suggests that at this point in the narrative the adaptor now conceives of Ma(n)tribil as an entity independent from Egrimor. First, despite Richard’s statement that the knights in Egrimor’s tower will hear the horn and assist them in defeating Admirandus—an entirely logical assertion if Ma(n)tribil is Egrimor’s bridge—neither the pagan leader nor the besieged peers appear in this episode. Rather more direct evidence also occurs. For example, describing how Charles’ forces captured the city, the narrator states: ‘docuaidh págánach acu ar each luath da innsin d’Amiraudus gur gabad in cathair, 7 gach gnim dorinnedh ann conuige sin’ (And one of the pagans went on a swift horse to tell Admirandus that the city was taken, and every deed that had been done there till then). These apparent departures from the adaptor’s former geographical conception are perhaps explicable if one considers

\[\text{\textsuperscript{SF}, pp. 278-79, ¶ 203.}\]
Egrimor to be a city of sufficient size that Admirandus and the besieged peers could be far enough from the gate to remain unaware of the battle occurring there. However, such an assumption contradicts Richard’s statement quoted above.

Moreover, Admirandus’ conversation with his counsellor Sortibrand after hearing of Ma(n)tribil’s capture also seems to imply a geography more consistent with the French text’s conception. The narrator informs his audience that ‘mar do chualaidh Admirandus gur’gabad in cathair 7 ná gníma sin uile’ (when Admirandus heard of the capture of the city and of all those deeds), he laments that Macamet ‘do fulaing se Serlus do ghabail um Mantribil 7 a droichit do trasgairt’ (has suffered Charles to capture Ma(n)tribil and to cast down its bridge).727 His statement expressly treats the bridge and the city as different entities both under Charles’ possession. Given that Admirandus occupies Egrimor while expressing this sentiment, he must be referencing a different city entirely. Sortibrand’s advice proves similarly revealing: ‘cuiridh fer braith uaibh nech doberadh deimin duin an fuil sluaigh Serluis ar gar duin’ (send a spy who will bring us certainty as to whether Charles’ armies are near us).728 Were Charles already in Egrimor presumably such action would be unnecessary.

Thus, the Irish text displays notable ambiguity regarding the geography of Ma(n)tribil and Egrimor. On one occasion, evidence tending towards both an expansive and a compact interpretation occurs in the same paragraph. The former is implied by the fact that when Charles’ army advances after capturing Ma(n)tribil he orders not only the wounded to be left behind but also five thousand soldiers under the command of two knights.729 This directive would seem more consistent with fortifying a captured city before advancing to the enemy’s stronghold than securing a single area before facing the majority of Admirandus’ forces. However, at the opening of this same paragraph the narrator states that ‘ocus anuair tainic

727 SF, pp. 280-81, ¶ 206, 208.
728 SF, pp. 280-81, ¶ 209.
729 SF, pp. 278-81, ¶ 205.
sluagh Serluis fa tighibh na barburach do inntaigh aris docum in srotha buidhi’ (when Charles’ army had gone through the houses of the barbarians, they returned to the yellow river).730 The mention of the yellow river, which in all three previous references is associated with Egrimor suggests the latter. Similarly although no direct contradictions occur in the episode during which Richard escapes the tower to attain Charles’ aid, the description of the pagans’ pursuit of their foe would be more consistent with the French poem’s geography.731 On the other hand, the adaptor omits the episode wherein Admirandus sends a messenger to alert Ma(n)tribil of the Christian’s approach causing the city to muster twenty hundred thousand warriors to prevent him from crossing the bridge, instead having Richard’s only foes pursue him from Egrimor.732 Such an alteration would be consistent with the conception of Ma(n)tribil as a bridge dependent upon Egrimor to supply the majority of its forces.

When confronting such copious and contradictory evidence, any interpretation must remain tentative. However, a few facts prove worthy of note. First, from the opening of the text, the adaptor appears to demonstrate consistency in his geographical conception: Ma(n)tribil serves as the bridge and allows access to the city of Egrimor directly. This understanding is perhaps undermined by the account of Richard’s escape although only implicitly and thoughtful individuals could well disagree on the topic. The text explicitly departs from the established geography—by for the first time terming Ma(n)tribil a city—only when Charles becomes temporarily trapped behind its gates. Even presuming that the transition occurs at the earliest possible point, the fact remains that the adaptor conceives of the two locations as a single entity for the first two-thirds of the text.733 Secondly, the transition occurs only when decreed by narrative necessity and even then he expends some effort to minimise the extent of the alterations. Given that he appears to have written Stair

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730 SF, pp. 278-79, ¶205.
731 SF, pp. 260-63, ¶¶173-78.
732 Fierabras, ll. 4411-62.
Fortibrais either as he translated or read small passages before penning his own text, it seems reasonable to suggest that the adaptor originally conceived of Ma(n)tribil as part of Egrimor and, upon reaching episodes in his source which apparently contradicted this interpretation, sought to transition from a compressed to more expansive geography as subtly as possible.

If the adaptor’s general approach involves the reduction of geographical references and a compression of setting, the final category Religion departs from this trend in significant ways. In purely numerical terms, the ratio of locations is identical to that of Setting and thus the French poem names two such places for every single reference in the Irish text. However, such a quantitative statement proves misleading for a number of reasons. First, the setting is ubiquitous. It would hardly be possible to adapt the story while excluding significant locations such as Ma(n)tribil, Spain, Egrimor or Fladol. These places must be preserved for narrative reasons. With the possible exception of Rome, the pagans’ sacking of which provides the motivation for Charles to muster his army, the religious locations serve little narrative necessity and could theoretically have been easily excised should the adaptor have wished it. Secondly, the classification itself remains, in some instances, a matter of personal judgement. For example, the category includes the Saracen religious site of Mecca and references the Red Sea which, while perhaps evocative of the story of Moses, appears only in describing the extent of Fierabras’ territory. Both of the locations feature in the French but not Irish text. The exclusion of such places would make the ratio smaller thus providing the religious sites with the highest rate of inclusion in Stair Fortibrais of all five geographical classifications.

Perhaps more significant are the relative number of references to certain locations appearing in this category. Rome receives eleven mentions in the Irish text, appearing as

734 For additional support of this theory, see pp. 136-41, 162 and 222.
many times as Normandy and more frequently than Burgundy, Ma(n)tribil, Spain, Paris and Egrimor which receive seven, seven, five, three and three references respectively. Only France, with thirty-one references occurs more frequently. It also bears mentioning that two religious locations Dionysium and Persibus/Perndado are apparently innovations of the Irish text, not appearing in its French source. Admittedly, locations occurring only in the adaptation arise periodically in other categories as well. However, on all these other occasions, they are geographical indicators attached to a name whereas Dionysium and Persibus/Perndado appear independently. Of even greater significance, the religious category proves unique in one important respect: Rome represents the sole time in the entirety of the texts where a location appears more frequently in *Stair Fortibrais* than *Fierabras*, occurring eleven and eight times respectively. These facts suggest that the adaptor considered the religious sites to be of particular importance for his work.

Thus, the French poem with its more expansive, consistent and elaborate geography contrasts with the Irish text which limits the number of locations and compresses distance between important places but simultaneously treats religious sites as possessing particular importance. These facts prove significant for understanding the balance between history and religion within the works. Of course, these two elements are in no way mutually exclusive and each text includes both. But comparatively speaking, *Fierabras*’ more detailed, specific and consistent geographical presentation makes the work seem perhaps more historiographical at least in terms of content than its Irish counterpart. Conversely, the more general nature of *Stair Fortibrais* combined with its emphasis on religious sites accentuates the more universal aspects of the tale. Moreover, the contents of its manuscripts—all of which include religious content, while only TCD H.2.17 and Laud 610 appear to suggest a historiographical reading—support this theory.
Finally, the Irish text’s unique prologue, adapted from *De Inventione Sanctae Crucis* further reinforces this interpretation. Naturally, faith plays an important part in *Fierabras* as well but in a rather different context. In its prologue, the French poem states as its purpose to relate the origin of the Lendit. Conversely, by prefacing the story with Helena’s discovery of the Cross, the Irish adaptor places his work in a rather broader context. In his analysis of the cycle in Medieval Irish literature, Erich Poppe asserts that:

> The majority of medieval Irish narratives not only formed interconnected narrative universes, but were considered by their authors to be parts of a massive project of learned, collective *memoria* intended to preserve the country’s past as narrated history, within the textual genre of *historia* . . . There is an important second conceptual aspect to medieval *historia*, namely its role in Biblical exegesis at the level of literal or historical meaning.735

In light of these facts, it seems reasonable to tentatively theorise that the Irish adaptor largely sought to present his story as an episode in salvation history. Certainly, *Fierabras* itself could be interpreted similarly, at least in part, but within the French tradition it serves a number of other purposes as well, functioning as crusading literature, serving as a part of the broader corpus of *chansons de geste* and even elevating the significance of St Denis. These varied roles diminish or even vanish in the Irish text thus creating a tale that is often rather less specific in geography as well as other respects but in its generality also perhaps more universally applicable.

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735 Erich Poppe, *Of Cycles*, pp. 48, 50.
**Conclusion**

In their treatment of some important characters and themes in *Fierabras*, the Irish and Latin adaptations prove broadly consistent with their source material in most respects. Three of the central characters considered here—namely Charles, Oliver and Fierabras/Fortibras—prove remarkably similar to their French counterparts. On occasion the adaptors subtly emphasise particular aspects of the previously-established characterisation such as Charles’ role as a religious as well as secular figure or make minor alterations to reinforce the praiseworthiness of Oliver and Fierabras/Fortibras. This tendency toward a more positive portrayal also extends to characters who undergo greater modification. Roland appears as a rather more thoughtful young knight and is less prone to outbursts. Even those which do occur are often mitigated or motivated by reasonable provocation. Likewise, while Floripas often undertakes extreme actions for reasons of narrative necessity, she displays greater calm and self-control in her speech and manner. Balan/Admirandus also appears less prone to engage in cruelty. Arguably, he displays a greater sincerity in the Irish text, and he certainly demonstrates more leadership qualities. Given the translation complications associated with Ganelon’s character, it proves difficult to determine whether he follows these trends but it would appear that the truncated characters are less complex and therefore easier to comprehend for an audience perhaps unfamiliar with the nuances of the French epic tradition.

As in the case of characterisation, the adaptations’ treatment of religion also displays considerable continuity with the French text. This proves particularly true in the case of their approach toward Relics and Magic. Naturally, both of these aspects do undergo some modification but ultimately *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibras* preserve the centrality of the former and the understanding whether the latter should be considered good or evil depends upon its use. As the in French poem, Prayer and Piety remain important subjects in the translations. However, the adaptations appear to undergo a slight shift in emphasis from
frequency and repetition of prayers to divine potency and timeliness and from conversion to appropriate behaviour and reverence respectively.

Finally, the comparison of the geography presented in the French and Irish texts reveals that the adaptor assiduously preserved references to religious sites and arguably compressed the story’s setting. Thus, the evidence analysed in this chapter appears to support the notion that *Stair Fortibrais* attempts to present a version of the tale deeply steeped in the religious tradition which was clear and readily-comprehensible, if sometimes rather less complex and nuanced than its French source, but also possessed of perhaps a greater universality.
Chapter 4: The Irish Contribution

Introduction

The previous two chapters have explored the Latin and Irish adaptors’ treatment of their French source from the perspectives of general translation technique and the handling of important themes respectively. Both discussions support the theory that the translation sought to supplant the original text by presenting the tale not only in a new language but also with slight alterations to its content in order to make the work clearer or more relevant to the concerns of its audience. Therefore, it seems reasonable to explore some themes which are either not considered or only lightly touched upon in Fierabras but which the adaptors of Gesta Karoli Magni and/or Stair Fortibrais deemed worthy of further development. While most examples prove subtle, examining themes explored primarily or solely by the adaptors will augment the understanding of and appreciation for these texts. In the broadest terms, these topics may be divided into two categories: political and cultural. Naturally, considerable overlap exists between these classifications; however, for the purposes of this analysis the former will include topics such as rank and feudal duties, while the latter will consider matters like family, unity and moderate behaviour.

Political:

Rank

References to rank, particularly in Fierabras but also in its adaptations, prove ubiquitous yet are very rarely considered or developed in any meaningful fashion. The vast majority of occurrences in all three texts result from the work noting a character’s rank when discussing him. Although distilling broad principles from the textual trends is challenging, a few points prove worthy of note. First, while all three works utilise the titles duc/dux/diuice (duke), the Irish adaptor consistently renders comte/comes (count) as iarla (earl). Even accounting for this alteration, however, the honorifics do not always remain consistent between texts as summarised in this chart:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Fierabras</th>
<th>GKM</th>
<th>SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>Duc de Normandie</td>
<td>Count: 8, 102</td>
<td>Earl: 8, 102, 116, 171, 173, 186, 199, 205, 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duke: 116, 142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilemer/Gymer/Gilleber</td>
<td>l’Escot</td>
<td>Count: 68, 70</td>
<td>Earl: 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giefroi/Galfrid/Sefre</td>
<td>Duc d’Anjou</td>
<td>Count: 70</td>
<td>Earl: 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auberi/Auber/Amer</td>
<td>Duc de Bourgogne</td>
<td></td>
<td>Earl: 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehan/Seon</td>
<td>de Pontoise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Earl: 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tierri/Tirri</td>
<td>Duc d’Ardenne</td>
<td>Count: 108</td>
<td>Duke: 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guy</td>
<td>Comte de Borgoigne</td>
<td>Duke: 102, 117, 123</td>
<td>Duke: 102, 123, 237, 242, 244, 245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reignier/Reyner/Nemer</td>
<td>Duc de Gennes</td>
<td>Count: 93</td>
<td>Duke: 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>Comte de Gennes</td>
<td>Count: 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berart/Bernard</td>
<td>de Mondidier</td>
<td>Count: 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogier</td>
<td>li Danois</td>
<td>Duke: 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the titled characters, only Oliver does not undergo some modification in rank between *Fierabras* and its adaptations. His title receives no mention in *Stair Fortibrais* but in the Latin text as in its French source, he is identified as a count. The adaptors reduce Giefroi/Galfrid/Sefre and Auberi/Auber/Amer, previously dukes, down to count/earl.

Conversely, both *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* elevate Guy from a count to a duke. Other knights whose ranks the French poet does not specify such as Ogier li Danois, Guilemer l’Escot/Gymer/Gilleber, Berart de Mondidier/Bernard and a minor knight Jehan de Pontoise/Seon receive titles in the adaptations, with Ogier being identified as a duke while the others become counts/earls. However, the titles do not always remain consistent within the translations. For example, Tierri d’Ardane/Tirri is a duke in the French tradition but in the Latin text the adaptor refers to him on two occasions as ‘duke’ but once as ‘count’. Much the same discrepancy occurs with Richard, but in this instance the confusion may have originated in the French tradition since medieval poets derived the character from Richard I and alternately identified him as the Duke of Normandy or as the Count of either Rouen or
Normandy. In the case of both Richard and Tierri/Tirri, the Irish adaptor, perhaps seeking to clarify his Latin source, chooses a single title for the knight: earl for the former and duke for the latter. Similar confusion surrounds Nainmon/Reyner/Nemer and Reignier/Reyner/Nemer, but the conflation of the two characters in the Irish and perhaps Latin texts could easily result in the additional confusion regarding Reyner/Nemer’s title. With this caveat aside, however, it seems that when the character is undertaking actions performed in the French poem by Nainmon, the adaptations refer to him almost exclusively as a duke with one exception near the conclusion of the Irish version. More interestingly, the two texts disagree on the rank of Oliver’s father. Gesta Karoli Magni calls him a count while Stair Fortibrais agrees with Fierabras in making him a duke.

Although the treatment of rank in the adaptations does not prove entirely consistent, a couple of points merit mention. First, the Irish adaptor’s decision to render comes as iarla rather than using the loanword comit to provide a direct translation of his source suggests not only that he considered the matter of titles worthy of consideration but also that he sought to make his material more relevant to the audience by providing them with an insular rather than continental title. Supporting the theory that earls would find a more natural reception in Irish literature than counts is the fact that, according to the Dictionary of the Irish Language, comit appears in only three Irish texts between the ninth and fifteenth centuries: Bethu Phátraic (the Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick), Leabhar Breathnach (an Irish adaptation of Nennius’ Historia Brittonum) and In Cath Catharda (an Irish adaptation of Lucan’s Pharsalia). Secondly, while some exceptions—most notably Richard—do arise, it would appear that the adaptor utilises ranks to improve narrative clarity for an audience to whom certain aspects of the French tradition may have been unfamiliar. The application of titles to characters who

737 Some confusion also occurs regarding Reignier/Reyner/Nemer’s fief. See pp. 125-28.
have no such identifier in *Fierabras* quickly and clearly indicates their narrative importance and perhaps even their significance in the broader epic tradition. For example, Ogier plays a more important role than Jehan de Pontoise/Seon or even Guilemer l’Escot/Gilleber, so in *Stair Fortibrais* he is called a duke while they remain earls. Similarly, Giefroi/Galfrid/Sefre and Auberi/Auber/Amber have relatively minor parts in the story he wishes to relate, so their ranks are likewise diminished. Conversely, Guy who serves as a narrative linchpin receives an equally significant title. Thus, although the adaptor departs from the French tradition, in a sense he also displays fidelity to the story found in his source while developing his treatment of ranks in a fashion which would make the narrative more transparent to his audience.

While the treatment of titles is important for understanding the theme of rank, all three texts also explore to varying degrees the concept of over-kingship. Although the details differ to some extent, all three texts mention specific kings serving under Balan/Admirandus, as summarised in the chart below:739

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><em>Fierabras</em></th>
<th><em>GKM</em></th>
<th><em>SF</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mordas/Margan/Murgan</td>
<td>Chef sarrasin</td>
<td>King: 67</td>
<td>King: 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moradas</td>
<td>Roi</td>
<td>King: 104</td>
<td>King: 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sortibrans de Connibre/</td>
<td>Roi de Maltriblé,</td>
<td>King: 117</td>
<td>King: 117, 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sortibrand</td>
<td>Mordas, Achanas,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gambas, et Guivré</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordroé/Coldref/Coldres</td>
<td>Roi</td>
<td>King: 133</td>
<td>King: 133, 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarion/Clarion</td>
<td>Roi d’Espagne</td>
<td>King: 145</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempier/Geimper/Giber</td>
<td>Roi</td>
<td>King: 145</td>
<td>King: 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tornier/Tornifer</td>
<td>Roi</td>
<td>King: 153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brulans de Monmirés/</td>
<td>Chef sarrasin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruland</td>
<td>Roi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espallart de Nubie/</td>
<td>Roi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espulard</td>
<td>Roi</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Latin and Irish texts display a slight tendency toward classifying important pagans—Moradas/Margan/Murgan, Tempier/Geimper/Giber, Brulans de Monmirés/Bruland and Espallart de Nubie/Espulard—as kings, even if they were not expressly identified as such in

739 This arrangement whereby the most powerful Saracen ruler commands other monarchs either as allies or subordinates proves fairly common in *chansons de geste*. For example, it also occurs in *Chanson de Roland* and *Chanson de Guillaume*.
the French poem. This treatment proves consistent with the adaptor’s approach toward using
title to clarify relative narrative significance of Christian knights.

While Saracen leaders may not be called monarchs as readily in *Fierabras* as in its adaptations, the fact remains that the poem does implicitly introduce the notion of over-kingship by showing monarchs in service to the emir. Nor is the concept limited to pagans; while *Fierabras* does not expressly identify them as such, the broader French tradition often considers Ogier Li Danois and Guilemer l’Escot to be sovereigns in their own right allied with Charles and subject to his authority.740

The Latin and Irish adaptors expand upon the implications of over-kingship found in their source, especially as it relates to Fierabras/Fortibras who does not appear to rule over any other monarchs in the French text. However, from the opening of their story, *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* begin altering two descriptions of the pagan giant, the first occurring when Richard identifies him for Charles and again during the meeting between Oliver and Fierabras/Fortibras. The French passages are very similar; both state his name, the fact that he inspires great fear and then conclude with a description of how he sacked Rome and Jerusalem.741 The adaptations make two alterations to this template. First, both texts mention Jerusalem during Oliver and Fortibras’ conversation only. Secondly, unlike their French source, they reference some of Fortibras’ more illustrious subjects. *Gesta Karoli Magni* states: ‘*Est vero rex Alexandrie. Quinque enim magni sunt subiecti sibi*’ (For he is King of Alexandria, and five magnates are subject to him).742 As in the case of the Irish adaptor’s decision to render *comes* as *íarla* rather than *comit*, instead of directly translating *magni* as either *mochtaid* or *roduine*, he identifies them as kings: ‘*oir is e ri Alaxanndrie è, da fuilit .u. righa umal*’ (For he is king of Alexandria, and five kings are subject to him).743

740 Moisan, pp. 745-46, 542.
742 *GKM*, p. 307, ¶ 8.
743 *SF*, pp. 20-21, ¶ 8; p. 28-29, ¶ 24.
Interestingly, the Irish translation consistently presents them as kings. In contrast, the Latin text has Richard identify these men as magnates, while in the description’s reprise Fortibras refers to them as kings: ‘Vocor Fortibras qui rex sum Alexandrie habens sub me quinque reges exceptis ceterisque magnitatibus’ (I am called Fortibras, and I am the King of Alexandria. I have five kings who are subject to me not to mention other magnates).\(^{744}\) Regardless of the slight inconsistency in the Latin adaptation and indeed despite the fact that the Irish text never expressly uses the term *ard-ri* (high king), it seems clear that the adaptations emphasise the concept of over-kingship found in their French source.

Beyond this general point of interest, it may be worth briefly considering the fact that this alteration occurs in relation to Fierabras/Fortibras, particularly since the Irish adaptor revisits the issue near the conclusion of the text. During his dual coronation with Guy, Charles ‘do gabh da choroin ordha ele, 7 do chuir um cend ser Gido, 7 Floripes iat araen, 7 do chuir se ser Gido ’na tiagerna ar .iii. righthibh elec 7 Fortibras ana ardi tiagerna air’ (took two other golden crowns, and put them together on the heads of Sir Guy and Floripas, and set Sir Guy as lord over four other kings, and made Fortibras his overlord).\(^{745}\) As the king served by Guy who himself rules over four other sovereigns, Fortibras once again serves as the over-king of five of his fellow monarchs just as he did before his conversion. This fact lends itself to interpretation on multiple levels not all of which are political. For example, Fortibras’ conversion initially resulted in his loss of the lands he had held as a pagan. However, he did not ultimately have to trade material benefit for his salvation, since God restored his former fortunes—arguably even improving them—because he replaced his father who lost his kingdom and his life due to his unwillingness to accept baptism.

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\(^{744}\) *GKM*, p. 313, ¶ 24.

\(^{745}\) *SF*, pp. 374-75, ¶ 246.
However, it is noteworthy that not only does the Irish text depart from its French source in selecting the native Fortibras rather than the foreign-born Guy as supreme ruler, but the repeated identification of Fortibras as the king over five other monarchs might naturally cause an audience to associate such a situation with the traditional political structure dividing Ireland into five cúige (provinces, literally ‘fifths’): Connacht, Leinster, Munster, Ulster and Meath, each of which was ruled by a ri ruirech (over-king). Theoretically, then, sovereign of five over-kings would, in fact, be ard-ri (high king). Admittedly, this political system was, by the time of Stair Fortibráis’ composition, no longer operative even if one accepts the notion that it ever extended much beyond the theoretical and legendary. In addition, it should be emphasised that the references to Fortibras’ over-kingship are neither lengthy nor frequent. Thus, it seems unlikely that the adaptor sought to pursue a particular political agenda in this fashion. However, his alterations regarding this topic certainly serve to provide a distinctly Irish flavour to his work as well as perhaps emphasising and elevating the theme of kingship within Stair Fortibráis.

Yet the most dramatic alterations of rank occur in the two instances when Oliver misrepresents himself as being of humble origin to his pagan foes. First, he does so prior to his single combat with Fierabras/Fortibras, presumably to offer insult to the arrogant giant and also diminish the perceived value of his opponent’s potential victory should the battle turn against the Christian. In the second instance, when Balan/Admirandus questions Oliver and his other prisoners, the texts expressly state that the knight intends to prevent the pagan from realising the value of his captives. While the manner in which he describes himself and his fellow peers remains internally consistent as regards the ranks in all texts, Stair Fortibráis departs from its French and Latin source. In Fierabras, he identifies himself as the ‘fix a un

746 For a consideration of the topic of over-kingship and the complications surrounding it, see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality and Kingship in Pre-Norman Ireland’, in Historical Studies XI: Nationality and the pursuit of national independence, papers read before the Conference held at Trinity College Dublin, 26-31 May 1975, ed. by T.W. Moody (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1978), pp. 1-35.
vavasor / fiz a vavasor’ (son of a vavasour) and further informs Balan ‘et chil mi compagnon, que vos illec vëës, / sont pouvre chevalier et de bas parentës’ (and my companions, whom you see here are poor knights and of base parentage).\textsuperscript{747} Gesta Karoli Magni essentially agrees with the French poem by having Oliver call himself ‘filius unius vavasoris / filius unius vasalli’ (son of a vavasour/vassal).\textsuperscript{748} Of his fellow prisoners he asserts: ‘de exili gente orbatus sicut et socii mei’ (my friends have been orphaned from poor folk).\textsuperscript{749} Thus, while he vastly reduces the status of himself and his companions from peers of Charles to men ranking significantly lower in the feudal hierarchy, they remain members of the gentry.

The Irish text departs from this precedent rather dramatically. Oliver identifies himself as the ‘mac modhaidh boicht’ (son of a poor slave) and further states that ‘do cinedh anuasal me fen 7 mo companaich’ (I and my companions are of an ignoble family).\textsuperscript{750} This modification not only means that Oliver no longer seeks to represent himself as a member of the aristocracy but actually reduces him to the lowest social class. Accordingly it greatly increases the insult to Fortibras and significantly decreases his value to Admirandus as a hostage. Thus, the adaptor could have intended the alteration to clarify the narrative or increase the dramatic tension. Regardless, Oliver’s willingness to humble himself to such an extent remains quite striking. Furthermore, it is intriguing that through its modifications \textit{Stair Fortibrais} alludes to the full breadth of early medieval Irish society from over-kings to slaves. Naturally, this political structure does not reflect the reality at the time of the

\textsuperscript{747} \textit{Fierabras}, ll. 460, 2038; ll. 2040-41.
\textsuperscript{748} \textit{GKM}, p. 315, ¶ 30; p. 336, ¶ 80.
\textsuperscript{749} \textit{GKM}, p. 336, ¶ 80.
\textsuperscript{750} \textit{SF}, pp. 30-31, ¶ 30; pp. 120-21, ¶ 80. Stokes translates \textit{cinedh} as ‘race’ which is indeed a secondary meaning of the term but given the context, ‘family’ or ‘clan’ would appear to be a more accurate reading. It is also intriguing that while the French text mentions only the knights’ parents, \textit{Stair Fortibrais} refers to a wider kin group. This fact arguably provides additional support for the theory, discussed in pp. 255-60 that the family was a subject of particular interest for the adaptor.
adaptation's composition, but the references to a past political system increase its perceived historiographical nature.

**Feudal Duties**

Like concerns of rank, political matters do not frequently occupy the centre of any of three texts’ narratives; however, a careful reading of the story yields some information on such subjects. For example, the matter of vassalage, while never addressed at length, recurs throughout the narrative. During their combat, Fierabras/Fortibras offers Oliver a kingdom or a great lordship in the French and Irish texts respectively as well as the hand of his sister Floripas should he convert and, presumably, become a vassal of the pagan and/or his father.\(^{751}\) Similarly, before the concluding battle between the Christian and pagan forces, Charles sends Ganelon/Gentilion to Balan/Admirandus to inform him that by converting and, the message implies, by submitting to Charles he and his progeny will be permitted to retain their lands.\(^{752}\) Finally, when Oliver reminds his king that he has yet to receive a reward for his service, Charles offers him lands, towns, and castles in all texts.\(^{753}\)

However, the adaptations, particularly *Stair Fortibras*, exhibit innovations which, while minor, would appear to further emphasise the theme of vassalage. In all three works, when Fierabras/Fortibras suffers defeat at Oliver’s hands, he requests that the Christian spare his life and offers to convert and return the relics. Additionally, both adaptations augment his offer: ‘Ocus da n-ergersa cathachud co laidir a hucht creidme Crist 7 a hucht Serluis impir in tigerna saegulta’ (And if I recover I will fight strongly on behalf of Christ’s faith, and on behalf of the emperor Charles, the earthly lord).\(^{754}\) Naturally, Fierabras does become one of

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\(^{751}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 1368-79; *SF*, pp. 44, ¶ 55.

\(^{752}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 5632-38, 5656-72; *SF*, pp. 286-89, ¶¶ 222-23. In *Fierabras* (ll. 6008-12) Charles also issues his offer personally during his single combat with Balan. The Irish text omits this dialogue from pp. 368-69, ¶ 235. However, other concerns such as the narrative pacing likely contributed to the removal of this incident. See pp. 114-16.

\(^{753}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 275-285a; *SF*, pp. 24, ¶ 16.

\(^{754}\) *SF*, pp. 48-49, ¶ 63; *GKM*, pp. 327-28, ¶ 63.
Charles’ warriors in the French poem, and this fact is arguably even implied by his request to be brought to the emperor and baptised. Nevertheless, the Latin and Irish texts not only accentuate this dimension of Fortibras’ transition from Saracen prince to Christian knight by explicitly stating it, but also reinforce its importance by paralleling service to God in his offer of service to Charles.

Of course feudal responsibilities flow in both directions, and while all three works stress the duty of the knights to accept Fierabras/Fortibras’ challenge and defend their God and their king, Stair Fortibrais’ adaptor makes a small alteration to his Latin source which appears to acknowledge Charles’ obligation to those beneath him. In Gesta Karoli Magni, as in Fierabras, when the emperor seeks information as to the identity of the pagan challenging his knights, he directs his questions to Richard ‘quid multas terras et diversas comes ille peregrinaverat’ (since the count had travelled in many and varied lands).755 Thus, the reference to ‘many lands’ in no manner concerns the duties of a ruler; it merely explains why the king consulted with Richard as opposed to another of his men. However, the Irish text modifies Charles’ enquiry in an intriguing manner: ‘do fiarfraigh dhe narb’ aithnit dó dain le budh ail tiagernus 7 terainn imdha docinn Furtibrais do fregra’ (he asked him whether he knew anyone who would wish a lordship and many lands for answering Fortibras).756 Given the lack of ambiguity in the Latin adaptation and the tendency of the few translation errors which arise to occur between the Latin and the French works, it seems quite likely that this alteration represents not a misapprehension on the part of the adaptor but rather a conscious decision to modify his source material. Thus, the explanatory aside of Fierabras and Gesta Karoli Magni becomes in Stair Fortibrais a reaffirmation of the political structure: the king offers lands in return for military service. It may also be worth noting that Richard’s response

756 SF, pp. 20-21, ¶ 8.
in the Irish text closely corresponds to that presented in its French and Latin counterparts; he identifies Fortibras but does not address the question of who may be found to battle him. As a result, the French and Latin works flow slightly more smoothly which renders the Irish adaptor’s decision to amend the passage even more striking since, to the extent it has any effect, the change disrupts rather than clarifies the narrative. While admittedly minor, this modification, particularly when combined with Fortibras’ offer to serve Charles found in both adaptations, arguably results in a slightly greater emphasis on the bonds of duty between knights and their king.

In one particularly intriguing example of the treatment of feudal duties, the French text focuses upon the subjects’ responsibilities while its Irish counterpart stresses the monarch’s role. In both versions when the treacherous Aloris/Alloire asserts that his kinsmen should not attempt to rescue Charles who is trapped within Maltrible/Ma(n)tribil, Ganelon/Guinies opposes his brother. His argument in the former is that ‘De lui tenons nos terres et tout nos chasement, / Si le devons aidier et bien et lëaument’ (We hold our lands and all our fiefs from him, / so we must come to aid him well and loyally). Essentially, Ganelon stresses his family’s duties to their liege lord. Conversely, the Irish version focuses more directly upon the king himself: ‘da marbthai Serlus do gebdis na pagánaigh nert oruinn, 7 ni bedh nech le bud etir a bacail dibh’ (If Charles were slain, the pagans would gain power over us, and there would be no one able to hinder them). Guinies’ statement reinforces the notion that by defending their faith and lands Charles has served them well as king. In conclusion, then, the Irish text perhaps slightly emphasises feudal responsibilities, particularly those relating to a monarch’s duties toward his subjects.

757 Fierabras, ll. 5148-49.
758 SF, pp. 276-77, ¶ 201.
Cultural:

Family

The treatment of familial connections varies considerably between *Fierabras* and *Stair Fortibrais*. While the former addresses the topic to some extent, the Irish text not only dedicates additional attention to it, but also develops the theme in a rather different manner. The French poem focuses upon kinship in two primary contexts: Reignier’s love for his son Oliver and the relationships amongst members of the traitorous Maience clan to which Ganelon belongs. The first instance proves something of a narrative necessity; when the pagans capture Oliver, his father’s desire to discover his son’s fate prompts Charles to send the remaining seven peers to Balan/Admirandus and thus allows the plot to progress. Consequently, this relationship remains essentially unchanged in *Stair Fortibrais*.

Conversely, the relationship between Ganelon and his family receives a fuller and more nuanced exploration in *Fierabras* than in its adaptation for two primary reasons. First, as Ailes explains in her analysis of *Doon de Nanteuil*, ‘One important aspect of the links between poems in a cycle is the bond of family relationships between their heroes’. This connection to the broader French epic tradition creates dramatic tension by acknowledging that Ganelon has already in *Fierabras* begun to show signs of treachery—such as when he manipulates Charles into allowing a wounded Oliver to fight or attempts to convince his liege to abandon his peers and return to France—which comes to fruition in the *Chanson de Roland*. But at the same time this knowledge derived from the broader corpus of *chansons de geste* also allows the poet to counter his audience’s expectations by exploring Ganelon’s nobler aspects. For example, he attempts to assist Charles when the emperor becomes trapped inside Maltrible and risks his life without hesitation or objection to serve as Charles’ final emissary to Balan. Because of the French tradition of united, traitorous families, Ganelon

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opposing the will of his clan appears all the more heroic, and likewise his honourable service as his king’s messenger stands in stark contrast to how he utilises the same position to betray his comrades in the *Chanson de Roland*. While some members of *Stair Fortibrais*’ audience may indeed have possessed a solid understanding of the French tradition, the adaptor might have been loath to emphasise the complexities of Ganelon’s character and his relationship with his family when so much of the drama and interest inherent in the topic depends upon knowledge of the broader French epic cycles. The second reason that Ganelon’s Maience clan remains comparatively underdeveloped in the Irish text is that it divides Ganelon into two or possibly three different knights. Such a circumstance renders it difficult to explore his familial relationships in any depth despite *Stair Fortibrais*’ preservation of most episodes involving the clan.

In addition to deemphasising Ganelon’s family, the Irish text also occasionally defines relationships rather differently from its French source. As mentioned previously, *Stair Fortibrais* identifies Ganelon as the father of Maccairi, Gaibfreas, Airdir and Alloire and thus the head of his clan, while in the French tradition he is the son of Grifons d’Autefoelle and brother to Hardré, Berenguier, Alori, Gui d’Autefoelle and Florie. Such familial restructuring does not prove exclusive to their family. Guy of Burgundy becomes the *nepos* of Charles in the Latin text, despite no such relationship existing in the *chanson de geste*. This term is unfortunately ambiguous as it can refer to either a grandson or nephew. The Irish adaptor clearly interprets it as the former, calling Guy ‘mac mic do Serlus’ (the son of a son of Charles). However, it seems probable that the Latin adaptor intended Guy to be Charles’ nephew since he twice utilises the same term to refer to Roland, who is in fact the son of the

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760 See pp. 176-82 for an in depth discussion of Ganelon and the narrative alterations relating to him and his family.
761 See p. 178.
762 *SF*, pp. 264-65, ¶ 182; *Fierabras*, p. 563.
763 *GKM*, pp. 344-45, ¶ 96.
764 *SF*, pp. 130-31, ¶ 96.
emperor’s sister in the French tradition. But he, too, becomes a grandson instead in the Irish text. Regardless of this quirk of translation, however, adaptors generally appear to utilise familial connections in much the same manner that they do ranks. Roland is one of the best-known peers so they preserve his relationship to Charles. Moreover, the elevation of Ganelon to the head of his clan and Guy’s incorporation into the emperor’s family both emphasise the importance of these characters.

While the instances discussed previously represent only a slight development or modification of the French source, there is also one aspect of the presentation of families in which the Irish adaptor departs markedly from Fierabras: Floripas’ relationship with her father. In the French poem, she plots against him without remorse or even, seemingly, consideration to the degree that she advocates his prompt execution so that she may marry more expeditiously. However, while she ultimately behaves in much the same manner in Stair Fortibrais, she appears to show rather more consideration for her bond with Admirandus.

The first example occurs when Floripas attempts to convince her father to release the prisoners into her custody. Sortinbrans.Sortibrand objects, citing the perfidy of women which causes Floripas to erupt in anger and blaze that she wishes to strike him. The reason she refrains varies by text. In the French poem, she claims she would do so ‘Së or n’estoit mon cors d’autre fame blasmez’ (If I would not be blamed by other women henceforth). In the adaptation, however, she insists that she would attack him: ‘acht mana fechainn d’onoir dom athair’ (If I did not owe honour to my father). Now it must be acknowledged that this speech does indeed constitute an attempt to deceive Balan/Admirandus but the alteration still suggests that the adaptor may have considered her behaviour towards her family to be of

765 GKM, pp. 310-11, ¶ 16; p. 314, ¶ 27.
766 SF, pp. 30-31, ¶ 27.
767 Fierabras, ll. 2849.
768 SF, pp. 144-45, ¶ 120.
greater import than her reputation more generally. Moreover, this serves as only the first example in a series indicating a stronger connection between the princess and her family. The next example occurs only in the Laud 610 manuscript. When Floripas rejoices at her former suitor Lucafer’s death, she recalls: ‘nir sguir se do lo na d’oith[ch]e acht ’gum iarraidhsi ar m’athair 7 ar mu mathair’ (by day or by night he never ceased asking me of my father and mother). The reference to Balan/Admirandus occurs in all texts but the mention of her mother, a character who is not only absent but also utterly unmentioned in the French source reinforces the importance of family in the Irish text but also in Floripas’ experience.

The final examples all occur during the failed baptism of Balan/Admirandus. The first is the omission of Floripas’ reaction to her father’s initial rejection of Christianity: ‘Karles, que tardes tu, que ne l’as mort piecha? / Honnis soit il du cors ki ja l’espargnera!’ (Charles, why do you delay, why have you not killed him long since? Shame on the one who spares him now!). Moreover, while her second speech in the French text advocates the same position, the Irish adaptor completely alters her words: ‘a tiagerna, is roorb labrai lenar n-aithir inar fiaidnisi fen, oír is e bunudhus ar fola e’ (My lord, it is right cruel to speak with our father in our presence, for he is the source of our blood). It should be noted that in this instance, unlike a number of others, she does not possess an ulterior motive for her interjection, and this demonstration of familial solidarity appears by all indications genuine. This alteration begets others since she so influences Charles with her reproach that he places her father under her jurisdiction. Even once Floripas accepts Admirandus’ fate, she does not do so flippantly, much less eagerly: ‘Ocus mar do smuaintigh Floripes craidhe a hathar ar

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69 Her appeal to Admirandus exploits his weaknesses in a manner which reinforces the presentation of Floripas as less emotional and more logical than her French counterpart. See pp. 189-90.
70 SF, pp. 150-51, ¶ 131.
72 Fierabras, ll. 6144-47.
73 SF, pp. 372-73, ¶ 241. Naturally this modification also provides evidence of Floripas’ altered characterisation and of the adaptor’s tendency to moderate behaviour. See pp. 189-90 and pp. 267-68 respectively.
And when Floripas considered that her father’s heart was keeping the evil therein, she went to Roland mournfully. These modifications required reworking of the section and indeed result in a certain lack of clarity as to whether Charles or Floripas determines Admirandus’ final fate, and thus it seems reasonably clear that the adaptor considered of particular significance this re-characterisation of Floripas as more cognisant of the importance of familial relationships.

Unfortunately, it proves difficult to determine whether these alterations derived primarily from a desire to characterise Floripas in a particular fashion or from broader cultural concerns. However, one additional alteration in the Irish text would appear to indicate the perceived importance of familial solidarity. On two occasions, characters reference stories detailing the perfidy of women. The first, told by the gaoler Brutamont/Brutamind remains essentially the same in all three texts: a barbarian takes a Christian knight Aïnmer/Ha(y)mer captive and the pagan’s wife falls in love with the prisoner, betrays her husband and converts.

Conversely, the second tale departs rather markedly from the French poem. In Fierabras, Sortinbrans tells the story of Galienne who abandoned her infant son Marsilions for love of Girart. Gesta Karoli Magni presents the incident rather differently: ‘Habeas in memoriam ducem Milonem qui sic care nutrivit illam Galefer, qualiter illa decept eum et fecerit filiam suam praepulcrum vocabolo Marsilion, fraude et dolo exheretari’ (You should recall Duke Milo who reared Galafer so lovingly, and how she deceived him and had her very beautiful daughter called Marsilion disinherited by fraud and guile). Not only has Marsilion transformed from a son into a daughter, but the romantic love which served as the

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774 SF, pp. 372-73, ¶ 242.
775 See p. 154.
776 Fierabras, ll. 2177-83; GKM, pp. 339-40, ¶ 88; SF, pp. 124-25, ¶ 88. Intriguingly, the French text does not name the woman but the adaptations call her Lausa(g) or Biausa in TCD H.2.7.
777 Fierabras, ll. 2840-45.
778 GKM, pp. 357, ¶ 119.
impetus for her actions also vanishes suggesting that the desire for inheritance rather than Girart motivated her actions. The Irish text develops this theme further: ‘an fuil a chuímne agut Galef a haidi do marbad 7 a hingen dochum a oighrechta?’ (Do you remember how Galef killed her foster-father and her daughters to get the heritage?). Now her crimes increased from deception to murder of not only her foster-father but also her own children. The evolution of the tales renders Sortinbrans/Sortibrand’s point—that Floripas will betray her family for love—rather more obscure but also reinforces the notion of betrayal of family as a great evil by exponentially increasing the horror of her actions.

In conclusion, then it would appear that the Irish adaptor modified his French source’s treatment of the family in two primary manners. First, he redefined relationships to cement the importance of particular characters within the narrative. Rather more significantly, he also emphasised the importance of family through a series of notable modifications to Floripas, making her more respectful toward her father, and through his alteration of a brief yet memorable allegorical tale within the text.

Unity

Generally speaking, Fierabras presents its Christian knights as a united force with two primary exceptions: the Maience clan and the more minor division between youth and age. The division of Ganelon into multiple characters renders discussion of his family’s effect on the unity of Charles’ men problematic, but even so Stair Fortibras reflects the theme of subtle treachery growing at the heart of the emperor’s court. Conversely, the adaptors minimise the issue of rivalry between the young and old knights. While removing this theme entirely proves impossible since Charles’ vaunting of the grey beards serves as the foundation for Roland’s refusal to champion the king against Fierabras/Fortibras, at times of lesser

779 SF, pp. 144-45, ¶ 119.
narrative significance the Latin text and, to an even greater extent, its Irish counterpart reduces or outright removes cases of friction amongst the peers.

*Fierabras* often presents its generational conflict in terms of a rivalry for leadership of the knights between Nainmon and Roland, and it is within this context that the adaptors make their alterations. For example, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, and thus its Irish descendant, excise the brief quarrel between Nainmon/Reyner/Nemer and Roland over who will be first to deliver Charles’ message to Balan/Admirandus.\(^{780}\) Given that in their French source, Nainmon won the debate, they progress smoothly from the event immediately preceding—the pagans informing them of Admirandus’ location—to Reyner/Nemer addressing the barbarian ruler.

More intriguingly, the Irish adaptor further develops the theme of unity found in the Latin text by making additional alterations. One such case occurs when the French engage in a sortie against the pagans to secure food, and Roland realises that some of their number must stay behind to guard the gate. Since this episode has been the subject of more extended analysis previously,\(^ {781}\) a brief summation of events will suffice here. In the French poem Roland attempts to assign this unglamorous task to Nainmon and Tierri but the former refuses to comply. The young knight then suggests Tierri and Basin. Although Tierri still objects to the arrangement, he ultimately consents.\(^ {782}\) In *Gesta Karoli Magni*, Roland commands Tirri and Richard to remain behind. As in *Fierabras*, the former is opposed to, but ultimately accepts the order.\(^ {783}\) Thus, a softening of the conflict has occurred by the Latin adaptor’s removal of Nainmon from the episode. The knights remain eager to demonstrate their valour but also appear united under Roland’s leadership. The Irish text also has Roland issue the assignment to Tirri and Richard but eliminates any form of objection.\(^ {784}\) Such narrative

\(^{780}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 2667-71. Omitted from *GKM*, pp. 353-54, ¶ 113-14; *SF*, pp. 140-41, ¶ 113-14.

\(^{781}\) See pp. 63-65.

\(^{782}\) *Fierabras*, ll. 3321-46.

\(^{783}\) *GKM*, pp. 366-67, ¶ 142.

\(^{784}\) *SF*, pp. 156-59, ¶ 142.
streamlining is, of course, typical of Stair Fortibrais but in this instance it also contributes to the perception of unity amongst the Christians.

Furthermore, the Irish adaptor omits one additional instance of disagreement found in Gesta Karoli Magni. The Latin text, conforming its French source, has Nainmon/Reyner and Roland present differing solutions to crossing Maltrible/Ma(n)tibil: ‘Omnes vero perterriti suspirantes dixerunt: ‘Heu qualiter possimus evadere omnia haec pericula transeundo?’ Rolandus vero illos comfortans dixit ‘Nichil timeamus. Ego vero deo annuente de iantore vos liberabo.’ Cui dux Reimerus ‘Tu dabis unum ictum ut recipias xxı. Procedeamus caute in factum nostris. Vincamus eos per verba ficta et adulatoria’’ (They were all very frightened and said with a sigh ‘Alas, how can we escape all these dangers in crossing?’ But Roland said, comforting them ‘Let us not be afraid of anything. For with the help of God I shall liberate you from the porter.’ Duke Reyner said to him ‘You will only need to give one blow in order to receive twenty. Let us proceed craftily towards that which we have to do. Let us defeat them by means of lies and false compliments’).785 The Irish text modifies the passage: ‘Ocus mar do cualadur na ridiri sin adubrudur co hacaintech: ‘a Dia’, ar siad, ‘cinnus rachmuíd tar in guasacht sin?’ 7 adubairt Nemerus: ‘Na gabad ecla sibh, 7 mad ail le Dia, bermaidne tarrsu sud sibh le briathraibh ceilge’’ (When the knights heard this they said sorrowfully: ‘O God! How shall we get over this danger?’ And Nemer said ‘Have no fear; please God we shall overcome them by deceitful words’).786 Most obviously, the adaptor excises Roland’s rejected plan in its entirety but it should also be noted that the alterations are not limited to this omission. The young knight’s appeal to God has been incorporated into Nemer’s speech. This degree of care suggests that more than simplification of the narrative is

785 GKM, pp. 351-52, ¶ 110.
786 SF, pp. 138-39, ¶ 110.
occurring in the passage and the modifications certainly reinforce the notion that the knights are united under God in their mission.

Arguably, even during one of the few instances of disagreement amongst the peers preserved by the Irish adaptor, he utilises a different and more subtle technique to reinforce the knights’ concord. In all three texts, after killing the Saracen leader Moradas, Nainmon/Reyner/Nemer argues that they should return to Charles to inform him of this development, but Roland insists that they first fulfil their duty as emissaries. In *Gesta Karoli Magni*, as in *Fierabras*, Tirri agrees with the young hero and the company proceeds with its mission.787 *Stair Fortibrais*, however, replaces the avowal of one peer with general consent: ‘Ocus adubrudar uile co roibe an coir ag Rolandus’ (But they all said that Roland was right).788 While the French and Latin text imply that the majority of the Christians agree with Tierri/Tirri by virtue of the fact that the embassy proceeds, the Irish makes their agreement explicit and unanimous. Such generalisation, particularly relating to peers of lesser fame, is of course typical of the adaptor’s broader translation practice,789 but the recurrent use of the technique also reinforces the impression of the knights functioning as a collective. For example in *Fierabras*, the decision that Richard will break through the enemy lines to seek Charles’ aid is confirmed by his oath to Roland, whereas all the peers assent in *Stair Fortibrais*.790 Likewise even Roland’s anger at Charles’ praise for the old knights, attributed to him alone in the French poem, is shared by ‘ridirigha oga uile’ (all the young knights).791 Thus, it would appear that on some occasions at least generalisation has increased unification.

While diminishment of conflict and articulating general consent remain the two most common ways in which the Irish adaptor emphasises the peers’ unity, he makes two

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787 *Fierabras*, ll. 2547-55; *GKM*, p. 350, ¶ 108.
788 *SF*, pp. 136-37, ¶ 108.
790 *SF*, pp. 258-59, ¶ 172.
791 *SF*, pp. 20-21, ¶ 6.
additional modifications which depart from this mould. First, both the French and Irish texts include numerous prayers offered by Charles throughout the course of Oliver’s single combat with Fierabras/Fortibras, but after the conclusion of the emperor’s first prayer Stair Fortibras reports that ‘Ocus dobadur baruin uaisle na Fraingee ac fachain in comraic, 7 dobadur ag guidhe Dé im fortacht do thobairt do Oliuerus’ (And the noble barons of France were beholding the combat, and they were entreating God to give help to Oliver).\(^{792}\) The express mention of their prayer, not found in Fierabras, emphasises the connections between Oliver, Charles and all the knights. Perhaps most notably, the French poem features an episode at the conclusion of Oliver’s combat with Fierabras during which the Christian informs his companion that the Saracen hordes will soon overwhelm them. Fierabras then makes two speeches, comprising some thirteen lines over the course of two laisses, in which he pleads that Oliver not leave him behind.\(^{793}\) Although the Irish text preserves virtually every other aspect of this episode, it omits entirely this conversation between Oliver and Fortibras.\(^{794}\) In so doing, the adaptor not only avoids any implication that the Christian considered abandoning his new comrade but also suggests that Fortibras utterly and rightly trusts Oliver to stand beside him even in the direst of straits. Thus, the omission demonstrates rather dramatically the ideal of unity which the Irish adaptor stresses throughout his work.

\(^{792}\) SF, pp. 36-37, ¶ 43.

\(^{793}\) Fierabras, ll. 1671-84.

\(^{794}\) Omitted from SF, pp. 50-51, ¶¶ 65-66.
Moderate Behaviour

Perhaps due to its roots in the epic tradition, the story of Fierabras contains a substantial amount of grand and dramatic behaviour from the opening of the poem when Oliver, despite the severity of his wounds, insists on standing as Charles’ champion against a Saracen giant, to its conclusion when Balan rejects baptism despite being offered his life and lands in return. Many of these episodes serve the narrative necessity but even in instances where more alteration would theoretically be possible, the adaptors generally display their trademark fidelity toward their source. However, they appear to make a distinction between dramatic behaviour and intemperance. In Stair Fortibras, the adaptor makes a series of omissions throughout the text to excise immoderate actions or speech found in Fierabras.

The majority of examples discussed in this section relate to Saracens. Thus, one could conclude that the adaptors were attempting to present pagans in a more favourable light. While this possibility certainly exists, it is important to note that as Fierabras more commonly recounted inappropriate behaviour amongst Saracens than Christians, the elimination of extreme actions may have affected them disproportionately. Supporting the theory that the adaptor sought to moderate the behaviour of all characters is the fact that the first example occurring in the text involves not only a Christian but their emperor himself. During Oliver’s fight with Fierabras/Fortibras, the French poem recounts a clamor made by Charles: ‘Seinte Marie Dame, dist Karles, au fier vis, / Garissiez hui mon dru qu’il ne soit mort ne pris; / Ke, par l’ame Pepim, s’ill i est mort comquis, / Ja en mostier de Franche në en tout le païs / Ne seront clers ne prestres a nul jor revestis; / Trestoz ferai abatre autes et cruchefis’ (‘Holy Lady Mary,’ said Charles with the fierce countenance, / ‘Guard now my friend so that he does not die nor is captured; / because by the soul of Pepin, if he dies defeated here, / never in the monastery of France nor in the whole country / will clerics or
priests on any day don vestments; I shall have altars and crucifixes completely struck down").

This speech apparently strikes Nainmon as inappropriate and he rebukes his king: ‘Laissez ester tiex dis; / Homme qui si parole semble deu sens marris; / Mais proiez por le conte le roi de paradis, / Qu’il li soit enn aïe par ses seintes merchis’ (Leave be the things you are saying; shame on whoever speaks so he would seem insane; but let us pray for the count to the king of paradise, who will help him according to his holy mercy). The entire episode is conspicuously absent from Stair Fortibrais, which suggests that the adaptor was willing to excise immoderate speech even if it came from the mouth of the Christian emperor.798

Perhaps this desire to avoid presenting inappropriate religious behaviour also motivated an alteration during Balan/Admirandus’ baptism. While in both texts he strikes the bishop in his rage, the Irish text omits a single crucial line in its account.799 In Fierabras, the poet informs his audience that ‘Ens en fons beneïs en despit rescopi’ (He scorned the blessed font by spitting into it). The adaptor apparently felt that violence against a man of the cloth was more than sufficient to motivate Charles to surrender any hope of converting his foe and thus the additional detail was not a narrative necessity. Its omission suggests that the adaptor sought to moderate unchristian behaviour even when committed by a pagan.

Another sort of extreme action likely to be subject to modification is excessive violence, particularly toward prisoners. On two occasions the adaptor removes mention of pagan cruelty toward the captive Guy. While one barbarian does strike him, causing Guy to

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795 Fierabras, ll. 921-26.
796 Fierabras, ll. 927-30.
797 The omission occurs on SF, pp. 38-39 between ¶ 46 and ¶ 47.
798 Another factor contributing to the passage’s omission may be that clamores would have been less familiar to an Irish audience than its French counterpart.
799 Omitted from SF, pp. 372-73, ¶ 239.
800 Fierabras, l. 6127.
retaliate, the accounts of what occurs next differ markedly. In *Fierabras*, ‘Et Sarrazins
l’asaillent environ de touz lez, / Ke de poig et de piez, li ont maint coup donnez: / Touz li est
ses bliaux rompus et deschirrez. / Li amirant s’escrie: Gardez ne l’ochïez’ (The Saracens
assailed him from all sides, / with their fists and their feet, they gave him many blows: / such
that his tunic is torn and ripped to pieces. / The emir cried out to them: be careful not to kill
him). No such description occurs in *Stair Fortibrais*: ‘mar do chonnaire Admirandus sin
do furail a connmail; 7 do fogair gana marbad’ (when Admirandus saw that he ordered Sir
Guy to be taken, but forbade him to be killed). Moreover, the adaptor entirely excises
*Fierabras*’ description of Guy’s walk to the gallows: ‘A .XXX. chevaliers a ffait Guion
baillier: / Chil l’enmainent batant de bastons de ponmier; / En .XX. lieuz de la char li font li
sanc raier. / Guion vont une corde entour le col lacier; / Enfresi quë as fourkes ne vaurent
delaier’ (He [Admirandus] had Guy handed over to thirty knights: / they beat him soundly
with rods of applewood; / they caused blood to spurt from his flesh in twenty places. / They
put a rope around Guy’s neck; / they could not wait to get him to the gallows). Taken
together, the omission of these passages from the Irish text suggests that the adaptor did not
wish to depict ill treatment of unarmed warriors.

Finally, Floripas’ speech becomes rather more moderate in *Stair Fortibrais*. The most
dramatic example, her opinion of Balan/Admirandus’ baptism, has already been discussed; however, the trend occurs throughout the text. Compare, for example, her reaction to Guy’s
initial objections to their union. In *Fierabras*, she exclaims: ‘Se vos ne me preinnez, / Je vos
fera tous pendre et au vent encroerz’ (If you do not accept me, / I shall have you all hanged
and swinging in the wind). The adaptor presents a rather different statement: ‘an fuil a fis

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801 *Fierabras*, ll. 3562-65.
802 *SF*, pp. 160-61, ¶ 147.
804 See pp. 258-59.
805 *Fierabras*, ll. 2918-19.
agaibhsi gurub am laimsi ata bur lot 7 bur leasugud 7 an é dob ail let nó libh bur lot a n-
aisgidhe do faghail’ (Do you not know that your bane and your blessing are in my hands? And is it your pleasure to get bane for nothing?). The essential content of her statement remains unaltered: he should agree to their union because he is in no position to do otherwise and functionally, the scenes operate identically. In each instance, a fellow knight quickly convinces Guy to assent to her proposition. The greatest variation is the level of specificity in the threats which transitions from rather evocative and quite specific in the French poem to more general in the Irish translation. This alteration arguably moderates the speech somewhat as does the fact that she asks questions, albeit rhetorical ones, as opposed to making a statement.

Likewise, when the knights capture Balan/Admirandus’ kinsman Espallart/Espulard, instead of advocating his dismemberment as occurs in the French source, the Irish adaptor has her rather pragmatically remind the peers of his value should they ever need to exchange prisoners with their foe. This insightful proposal does appear in the source but it features as Nainmon’s counterargument to Floripas’ advice. It should also be noted that this same paragraph features another omission of the same sort. In Fierabras, Floripas prefaces her identification of Espallart by offering her maidens to the knights, a detail which is conspicuously absent from Stair Fortibrais.

Considered as a whole, the modifications suggest that the Irish adaptor had an interest in moderating the behaviour of both his Christian and pagan characters and over a wide range of topics. While he was willing to preserve extreme behaviour which served a narrative

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806 SF, pp. 146-47, ¶ 123.
807 Fierabras, ll. 4063-67; SF, pp. 258-59, ¶ 170. Her more moderate advice regarding Espulard’s fate may also relate to the fact that they are kin. For a more detailed discussion of the importance of family in the adaptations, see pp. 255-60.
808 This alteration provides additional evidence for the Irish adaptor’s characterisation of Floripas as wiser, more composed and less emotional than her French counterpart. See pp. 189-90.
809 Fierabras, ll. 4050-55; SF, pp. 259-59, ¶ 170.
function, when he deemed it possible to diverge from his source he consistently sought to present his
characters as more temperate than those found in *Fierabras*.

**Conclusion**

In analysing topics which appear to have particularly interested the adaptors of *Fierabras*, two primary
trends emerge: the desire for clarity and a change in the tale’s tone. The former concern has been
established in previous chapters, but it finds additional support here. For example, the Latin and Irish
texts use rank and familial relationships as a succinct method to indicate the relative importance of particular
characters. Perhaps related to the motivation to improve accessibility is the Irish adaptor’s replacement of the
continental rank ‘count’ with its insular equivalent ‘earl’ and the references to a political structure spanning the
full breadth of society from slaves to the over-king. These touches serve to facilitate the transition from the
French tradition to the Irish cultural milieu.

More significantly, much of the evidence suggests a shift in tone between the French texts and its adaptations.
Unfortunately, tone can be a nebulous quality indeed, particularly in works of this sort which span, or at least
incorporate elements from, multiple genres. Even so, the combined treatment of various themes in *Gesta Karoli Magni*
and to an even greater extent *Stair Fortibrais*—the emphasis on unity by reducing instances of friction and the
application of general consent, the omission of instances of extreme behaviour on the part of Christians
and more commonly pagans, the stress on the importance of familial relationships and even arguably the
focus upon equality of responsibility by devoting attention to the feudal duties of Charles as well as his
knights—demonstrates an approach to the material which departs subtly but consistently from its French source.
Because much of the humour in the French poem results from immoderate behaviour, the adaptations
possess significantly less comedy, but on the other hand the characters are—insofar as possible given narrative
constraints—less likely to quarrel amongst themselves or be subjected to torture, for example.
Thus, while all three texts blend aspects of realism with the fantastical and meld historiography with religiosity as one often expects in medieval literature, the tone is perhaps more serious and pleasant in *Gesta Karoli Magni* and *Stair Fortibrais* than in *Fierabras*. 
Conclusion

Perhaps one of the most remarkable characteristics of *Stair Fortibrais* and *Gesta Karoli Magni* is the fidelity they display toward their French source. While the adaptations exhibit a dramatic departure from *Fierabras* stylistically in their use of prose, lack of authorial intervention and excision of repetition and parallelism, they adhere rather scrupulously to the narrative. Moreover, some minor but nonetheless compelling evidence—such the identification of Reyner as the duke of Velner or the application of the title of count to Richard—suggest that the adaptor of *Gesta Karoli Magni* in particular possessed an understanding of the French epic tradition which extended well beyond *Fierabras*.

Yet despite the knowledge of and respect for his source, the Latin adaptor and his Irish successor unquestionably utilise translation as a means of cultural re-appropriation of the tale. While the majority of the alterations prove fairly minor singularly, together they subtly but consistently craft the story to ensure its clarity and appeal for a new audience. Omission and reduction make descriptions and battle scenes more concise. Substitution results in famous knights becoming more active. Reordering arguably creates a narrative flow which proves more focused and thus provides better accessibility. Characters become less nuanced and more idealised. Faith continues to find expression through reverence of the relics and prayer but the interest in proselyting decreases. The ranks and familial relationships of characters serve to indicate their narrative importance. The political spectrum expands to include a wider and more Irish breadth of society from slaves to the over-king. Monarchical responsibilities, filial piety, knightly unity and moderate behaviour all receive particular attention. Collectively, these carefully-chosen and attentively-crafted modifications ensure that *Stair Fortibrais* and its predecessor *Gesta Karoli Magni* provide not merely translations of *Fierabras* but rather unique and distinct contributions to its literary tradition.

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810 See pp. 125-28 and pp. 245-46 respectively.
Even so, perhaps the most significant indication of the reframing and repurposing of the story appears in its title and opening. For the French poet, it is the tale of *Fierabras* and the first *laisse* tells how Charles retrieved the relics and brought them to Saint Denis. The adaptors prove both more explicit and less specific in their approach. Their titles, *Gesta Karoli Magni* (The Deeds of Charles the Great) and *Sdair Serluis moir ag lenmain coroine Crist 7 taissi na naemh* (The History of Charles the Great Pursuing the Crown of Christ and the Saints’ Relics) would appear to more accurately summarise the narrative. The Irish colophon is particularly interesting in placing equal emphasis on the historiographical and religious elements of the text by its inclusion of Charles and the relics respectively. The opening paragraphs relate the story to (H)elena’s discovery of the True Cross which she brought to Rome before it was stolen by Admirandus, and that ultimately over the course of the tale Charles will return to Christendom. The context in which *Stair Fortibrails* and *Gesta Karoli Magni* appear in their manuscripts reinforces the religious and historiographical significance of the tale. Thus, it would appear that the adaptors conceived of their work primarily as an episode in salvation history.

This project has sought to raise awareness of these compelling texts and their potential contribution to interdisciplinary academic studies. Many avenues for exploration remain. Comparisons of *Stair Fortibrails* to other classical and vernacular Irish translation literature or to the wider European *Fierabras* tradition could be profitably pursued. The adaptors’ approach toward their task, particularly the practice of translating as they read their source, could be analysed within the broader context of medieval translation literature. Moreover, at least three closely related Irish texts have received very little scholarly attention: *Gabaltais Šearluis Móir* (The Conquests of Charlemagne), the Irish version of Pseudo-Turpin’s *Historia Caroli Magni*, and *Töruigheacht na Croiche Naoimhe* (The Pursuit of the
Holy Cross), an adaptation of \textit{Stair Fortibrais} appearing in two eighteenth-century manuscripts.

Still, regardless of where future research leads, one may state with confidence that \textit{Stair Fortibrais} and \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni} offer valuable contributions both to Irish studies and medieval scholarship more broadly. Their adherence to the general trends of translation literature in Ireland suggests that the adaptors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries assimilated the Anglo-Norman literary culture as completely as their tenth-century counterparts incorporated classical texts into the Irish cultural milieu. Moreover, \textit{Stair Fortibrais} and \textit{Gesta Karoli Magni} provide an important additional witness that Ireland was embedded in the wider European culture and actively engaged in adopting and adapting its literary traditions.
## Appendix 1: Tabular Summary of Manuscript Data

This appendix is designed to provide a convenient means of collating the data regarding *Stair Fortribrais* and *Gesta Karoli Magni* found in the Description of Manuscripts and their Contents section of Chapter 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Date of SF/GKM</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Patron</th>
<th>Folios/Page Numbers of SF/GKM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egerton 1781</td>
<td>Fifteenth Century (colophons mention the years 1484 and 1487)</td>
<td>Tullyhaw, Ulster</td>
<td>The Mac Samhradháin (MacGovern) family</td>
<td>fols. 1-18b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laud 610</td>
<td>Fifteenth Century (colophons mention the years 1453 and 1454)</td>
<td>Munster and Leinster</td>
<td>The Buitilléar (Butler) family</td>
<td>fols. 43v-57b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCD H.2.7</td>
<td>Fifteenth century</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>pp. 435-56</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCD H.2.17</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>pp. 433-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIA 23 O 48</td>
<td>Fifteenth century (colophons mention 1437 and 1440)</td>
<td>Connacht</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>fols. 1r-10r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCD H.2.12</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>12 fols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIA 24 P 25</td>
<td>1513-1514</td>
<td>County Donegal, Ulster</td>
<td>The Fánad branch of the Mac Suibhne (Mac Sweeney) family</td>
<td>fols. 1r-14r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Inns 10</td>
<td>Fifteenth century</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>fols. 1-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCD F.5.3</td>
<td>c. 1455</td>
<td>County Clare, Munster</td>
<td>Franciscan Monks</td>
<td>pp. 85-100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Comparative Summaries of the Narrative in *Fierabras* and *Stair Fortibrais*

This appendix is intended primarily for two purposes: 1) to assist the reader in contextualising various episodes discussed throughout the thesis and 2) to allow experts from one field, or indeed non-specialists, to orient themselves in the unfamiliar narrative(s). Due to both the fragmentary nature of *Gesta Karoli Magni* and the remarkable similarities between the two adaptations, this comparison does not include the Latin text. Generally speaking, *Gesta Karoli Magni* may be assumed to correspond to *Stair Fortibrais*. The narrative summary is divided by episodes. With the exception of proper names, any differences between the texts are boldfaced. The variations provided here should in no way be considered comprehensive, but rather to provide the reader with framework for considering the sorts of modifications which occur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fierabras</strong></th>
<th><strong>Stair Fortibrais</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Laissez</em> I-VI</td>
<td>pp. 17-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ll. 1-202</td>
<td>¶¶ 1-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The narrator invites the audience to hear the tale of how Charlemagne recovered the Crown, Nails and Shroud and gifted the relics to Saint Denis. From this donation arose the Lendit. Charles assembles his forces and rides to confront the pagans. Oliver’s scouting party is attacked by Saracens and would have been defeated if not for the intervention of Charles and the older knights. Roland suffers scorn as a result. *Fierabras*, issues a challenge to the Christians. Charles asks Roland to stand as his champion, but the young knight, angered by the earlier insult, refuses. This leads to an altercation between the two men.

According to a manuscript at St Denis, Constantine’s mother Helena took the Cross, Crown and Nails from Jerusalem and brought them to Rome. During the time of Charles, Admirandus, the father of the giant Fortibras and Floripas sets out to destroy Christendom. He and his son kill the pope and sack Rome before carrying off the relics to Egrimor. Charles assembles his forces and rides to confront the pagans. Fortibras lays an ambush for the Christians and then issues a challenge. During the ensuing battle, Charles renders crucial aid to Roland, and Oliver is seriously wounded. The emperor boasts about the prowess of the old knights, angering Roland and the other youths. Fortibras issues his challenge to the Christians again. Charles asks Roland to stand as his champion, but the young knight, angered by the earlier insult, refuses. This leads to an altercation between the two men.
The injured Oliver hears that no one has accepted Fierabras’ challenge. He orders his squire to equip him and goes to Charles. He asks the king for a boon in return for his service. When Charles agrees, Oliver requests to stand as the champion against Fierabras. Due to his injuries, Charles refuses, but the treacherous Hardré and Ganelon use Charles’ own mandate to force the emperor to give Oliver his consent. Charles threatens the pair with terrible punishments should Oliver die, but gives the young peer leave, despite the pleading of Oliver’s father Reignier. Oliver rides to confront Fierabras. The two combatants engage in a conversation prior to their combat during which Oliver identifies himself as Garin, the son of a poor vavasor. Fierabras, impressed with his bravery but displeased to fight a wounded man of low rank, repeatedly makes a series of chivalrous offers: he will allow himself to be unhorsed, permit Oliver to return to camp to fetch another challenger or provide him a sip of the healing balm of Christ. Oliver refuses all of these proposals. Finally, with Oliver’s assistance, the Saracen equips himself for battle. By evoking Oliver’s faith, Fierabras forces the Christian to reveal his true identity. Just prior to the battle the peer unsuccessfully attempts to convert his foe.

As the conflict begins, Charles prays for Oliver’s safety and Roland laments that he is not in Oliver’s place for which Charles chastises him. Roland accepts the rebuke. As they clash again, Charles issues a clamor for which Nainmon reproves him. Oliver makes credo épique which ends with his prayer for Fierabras’ conversion. Fierabras offers Oliver the balm. Oliver refuses unless he can win it himself. Oliver manages to wound Fierabras gravely enough that the
**Saracen uses the balm.** In striking at Fierabras, Oliver cuts the balm loose from the pagan’s saddlebags, drinks it and then throws it into the river to prevent his foe from using it again. Fierabras strikes a blow which accidentally kills Oliver’s horse. Oliver criticises Fierabras for slaying his mount and the pagan, insisting it was an accident, offers Oliver his own horse. When the Christian refuses, Fierabras dismounts so that they are both fighting on foot.

**Charles prays for Oliver’s safety and then an angel appears informing him that, after great pain, Oliver will win.** Oliver’s sword flies from his hand. Fierabras offers him land and marriage to Floripas should the Christian convert. When Oliver refuses, Fierabras gives him permission to retrieve his sword. Oliver rejects this as well and grabs the blade Baptesme from the saddle of the pagan’s horse. Using the sword to retrieve his own weapon, he offers Baptesme to Fierabras, who refuses. Oliver prays for Fierabras to convert. Finally, Fierabras raises his arm too high allowing Oliver to land the victorious blow.

**Laisses XL a-XLIX**
1568-1963

Fierabras says that he wishes to convert and return the relics to the Christians. The pair attempt to return to Charles but are intercepted by pagan forces. **Charles’ army rides to engage its foes, but Oliver realises he cannot win through to them. Fierabras begs Oliver not to abandon him.** Oliver hides Fierabras and fights the pagans but is finally subdued and taken captive. Charles’ forces attempt to rescue their comrade but are ultimately unsuccessful. The pagans also manage to take as prisoners Guilemer, Berart, Giefroi and Auberi. As Charles’ army is returning to camp, they encounter Fierabras who reiterates his desire to convert and return the relics. The emperor takes Fierabras back to camp and the pagan is baptised.

**pp. 48-56 ¶¶ 63-75**

Fortibras says that he wishes to convert, **serve Charles** and return the relics to the Christians. The pair attempt to return to Charles but are intercepted by pagan forces. Oliver hides Fortibras and fights the pagans but is finally subdued and taken captive. Charles’ forces attempt to rescue their comrade but are ultimately unsuccessful. The pagans also manage to take as prisoners Bernard, Gilleber, Sefre and Amber. As Charles’ army is returning to camp, they encounter Fortibras who reiterates his desire to convert and return the relics. The emperor takes Fortibras back to camp and the pagan is baptised.
Meanwhile in Aigremore, Brulans informs Balan of these events. When Balan questions the prisoners, Oliver says that he is the son of a vavasour. Balan orders them to be thrown into the dungeon. Balan’s daughter Floripas kills their gaoler, rescues the knights and hides them in her chambers. She arranges for the murder of her governess, who threatens to expose the Christians to Balan, and heals Oliver’s wounds with a mandrake. After making them promise to serve her, she confesses that she loves Guy of Burgundy and intends to convert so that she may marry him.

Meanwhile in Egrimor, Brulant informs Admirandus of these events. When Admirandus questions the prisoners, Oliver says that he is the son of a poor slave. Admirandus orders them to be thrown into the dungeon. Admirandus’ daughter Floripas kills their gaoler, rescues the knights and hides them in her chambers. She arranges for the murder of her governess, who threatens to expose the Christians to Admirandus, and heals Oliver’s wounds with an apple. She confesses that she loves Guy of Burgundy and intends to convert so that she may marry him.

At Charles’ camp, Oliver’s father Reignier begs the emperor to allow him to depart to find his captive son. Charles orders Roland to serve as his messenger to Balan and to tell the pagan king that he must return the relics and free his prisoners. When Nainmon objects that such a mission would be suicidal, Charles instructs him to accompany Roland. This pattern repeats until Basin, Tierri, Ogier, Richard and Guy have all become Charles’ emissaries. Meanwhile, Balan sends out his own messengers with demands for Charles. The two groups of emissaries encounter each other en route and the Christians overcome the pagans. When they reach the bridge at Maltrible, Nainmon deceives its giant porter into allowing them passage. At Aigremore, Nainmon and Roland argue over who should deliver Charles’ message first. The peers present their king’s demands to Balan. Floripas convinces her father to give her custody of the knights. She then tells them of her intentions. Nainmon persuades Guy to assent to marry Floripas. Delighted, Floripas shows them the relics. The pagan Lucafer comes to her chambers, but Nainmon kills him. Floripas provides them with equipment and they launch a surprise assault on the pagans and manage to capture the tower from them.
Balan wishes to assault the tower at once, but his counsellor Sortinbrans persuades him to wait until morning. Balan summons the thief Taupim to steal his daughter’s magical belt which will prevent the peers from starving. He uses magic to secure the girdle, but Floripas screams when he attempts to rape her and Guy kills the thief, accidentally destroying the belt in the process. Desperate for provisions, the knights prepare to stage a sortie. Floripas tells them that the pagan gods could provide them with assistance, but the knights persuade her that they are empty idols.

Roland instructs Nainmon and Tierri to stay behind to guard the gate. The former refuses, so Roland appoints Tierri and Basin instead. Pagan forces led by Clarion intercept them. Basin dies and Guy is captured in the skirmish. Oliver manages to secure some food before the Christians retreat. Floripas is devastated and enraged at the capture of her beloved. Meanwhile, Floripas brings forth the Crown of Thorns. Roland rescues Guy. The Christians secure more food and retrieve the body of Basin, who had been killed previously, and provide him with a proper burial.

Admirandus decides not to assault the tower until morning. Admirandus summons the thief Malpin to steal his daughter’s magical belt which will prevent the peers from starving. He uses magic to secure the girdle, but Floripas screams when he attempts to rape her and Guy kills the thief, accidentally destroying the belt in the process. Desperate for provisions, the knights prepare to stage a sortie. Floripas tells them that the pagan gods could provide them with assistance, but the knights persuade her that they are empty idols.

Roland instructs Tirri and Richard to stay behind to guard the gate. Pagan forces led by Clarion intercept them. Guy is captured in the skirmish and brought before Admirandus who orders him to be hanged before his comrades. Meanwhile, Roland manages to secure some food before the Christians retreat. Floripas is devastated and enraged at the capture of her beloved. The peers prepare to save Guy, and Floripas brings forth the Crown of Thorns. Roland rescues Guy. The Christians secure more food and retrieve the body of Basin, who had been killed previously, and provide him with a proper burial.

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<th>Laissettes LXXXVI-XCVIII</th>
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<td>ll. 3159-3802</td>
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<th>Laissettes XCVIII-CIII</th>
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<td>ll. 3803-4072</td>
<td>¶¶ 158-70</td>
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On the advice of his counsellors, Balan summons the engineer Mabon, whose siege tower and Greek fire nearly vanquish the Christians until Floripas extinguishes the flames with camels’ milk and vinegar. She then suggests that they take the gold from her father’s treasury and cast it from the tower. This causes the pagans to cease their assault to begin collecting the valuables, and Balan is forced to call off the attack. The Christians stage a counterstrike during which Roland captures Balan’s nephew Espallart. Floripas advises them to kill the
Tierri proposes that someone try to break through the siege to reach Charles. **Roland, Nainmon, Guilemer, Berart and Guy all volunteer**, but it is Richard who successfully presses his suit. **After waiting two months for an opportunity to pursue their plan**, Richard manages to bypass the pagan forces, but is spotted by **Brulans and Sortinbrans** who send a company of pagans led by Clarion to prevent Richard from reaching the emperor. Clarion, whose horse is possessed of supernatural speed and endurance, catches up to Richard. The two warriors clash; the peer kills his foe and commandeers the wondrous horse. Richard’s original mount returns to Aigremore causing pagans and Christians alike to assume he was slain. **Until Clarion’s men return with his body. In an attempt to prevent Richard from crossing the bridge at Maltrible, Balan sends Orage—a pagan who can outrun a camel—to the porter instructing him to close the bridge.**

When Richard arrives at Maltrible, he realises that the way forward is blocked. He **prays for God’s assistance, and a white stag appears and leads him across the roaring river.** After successfully crossing, he praises God for this miracle. Clarion’s men, unable to catch Richard, return to Egrimor with their commander’s body.

Meanwhile, Charles summons his knights to advise him on what course he should pursue. Ganelon and his treacherous clan counsel the king to return to France. **Reignier** opposes this plan, leading to conflict between him and the traitors. Before they can take up arms, Charles forces Aloris, the most egregious offender from Ganelon’s clan, to ask **Reignier’s forgiveness.** Even so, they manage to persuade Charles to abandon his peers. As they prepare to depart, Richard arrives and informs the emperor of the situation at Aigremore. The next day, Charles and his peers volunteer, but Nainmon suggests that they keep him as a hostage. Floripas advises them to keep him as a hostage.

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### Laisse CIII-CXVI
Il. 4073-4552a

Tirri proposes that someone try to break through the siege to reach Charles. **All the peers volunteer**, but it is Richard who successfully presses his suit. Richard manages to bypass the pagan forces, but is spotted by **Admirandus** who sends a company of pagans led by Clarion to prevent Richard from reaching the emperor. Clarion, whose horse is possessed of supernatural speed and endurance, catches up to Richard. The two warriors clash; the peer kills his foe and commandeers the wondrous horse. Richard’s original mount returns to Egrimor, causing pagans and Christians alike to assume he was slain. When Richard arrives at Ma(n)tribil, he realises that the way forward is blocked. A **snow-white youth appears and leads him across the roaring river.** After successfully crossing, he praises God for this miracle. Clarion’s men, unable to catch Richard, return to Egrimor with their commander’s body.

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### Laisse CXVI-CXXXVI
Il. 4553-5317

Meanwhile, Charles summons his knights to advise him on what course he should pursue. Guinies and his treacherous clan counsel the king to return to France. A **knight named Gilleber** opposes this plan, leading to conflict between him and the traitors. Before they can take up arms, Charles forces Alloire, the most egregious offender from Guinies’ clan, to ask **Gilleber’s forgiveness.** Even so, they manage to persuade Charles to abandon his peers. As they prepare to depart, Richard arrives and informs the emperor of the situation at Egrimor. The next day, Charles
forces set off for Aigremore. Richard and a small group of knights deceive the porter into allowing them onto the bridge at Maltrible so that they can lower the drawbridge for Charles’ army. The Christians launch an attack on the pagan city on the other side of the river. Charles and a small group of knights become trapped on the wrong side of the city gate. Ganelon unsuccessfully attempts to persuade his kin to save the king. Fierabras manages to rally the main body of the emperor’s forces to rescue Charles, and the Christians capture the city. Charles leaves a small force behind to secure the city and then the army departs for Aigremore.

Laisse CXXXVI-CXLVIII
ll. 5318-5783

When Balan hears of these events, he becomes so enraged that he breaks one of his idols, but Sortinbrans calms him. The pagans then launch another assault which forces the peers to retreat into the highest chamber of the tower. Floripas offers to show them the relics if they manage to repel a wave of attackers. After reverencing the holy objects, Nainmon carries the reliquary to the window and it miraculously kills the pagans trying the break into the chamber. As the skirmish continues, the Christians grab idols and fling them down on their foes. This causes Balan to despair and curse his gods. To restore his faith, a pagan sneaks into Mahonmet’s idol and, pretending to be the god, reassures Balan that he will achieve victory. Finally Charles’ army arrives at Aigremore. Fierabras asks the emperor to send an envoy to Balan, asking him to convert prior to the campaign’s commencement. Charles appoints Ganelon. The knight delivers the message but barely escapes with his life. Charles and Balan assemble their forces for combat.

and his forces set off for Egrimor. Richard and a small group of knights deceive the porter into allowing them onto the bridge at Mantrible so that they can lower the drawbridge for Charles’ army. The Christians launch an attack on the pagan city on the other side of the river. Charles and a small group of knights become trapped on the wrong side of the city gate. Guinies unsuccessfully attempts to persuade his kin to save the king. Fortibras manages to rally the main body of the emperor’s forces to rescue Charles, and the Christians capture the city. Charles leaves a small force behind to secure the city and then the army departs for Egrimor.

Laisses CXXXVI-CXLVIII
ll. 5318-5783

When Admirandus hears of these events, he becomes so enraged that he breaks one of his idols, but Sortibrand calms him. The pagans then launch another assault which forces the peers to retreat into the highest chamber of the tower. Floripas offers to show them the relics. After reverencing the holy objects, Nemer carries the reliquary to the window and it miraculously kills the pagans trying the break into the chamber. As the skirmish continues, the Christians grab idols and fling them down on their foes. This causes Admirandus to despair and curse his gods. Sortibrand convinces him to pray before Macamet’s idol. Finally Charles’ army arrives at Egrimor. Fortibras asks the emperor to send an envoy to Admirandus, asking him to convert prior to the campaign’s commencement. Charles appoints a baron named Gentilion. The knight delivers the message but barely escapes with his life. Charles and Admirandus assemble their forces for combat.

pp. 280-364
¶¶ 206-29
Laisses CXLI-CLVIII
ll. 5784-6071

The battles begins. Charles kills Brulans. Richard dispatches the emir’s brother Tenebré, causing Balan to enter the fray. Reignier slays Sortinbrans. Ganelon and his kin fight bravely. The peers ride out of Aigremore to join the battle. Charles and Balan clash. The emperor unsuccessfully offers his foe another opportunity to convert. Balan nearly kills Charles but Richard, Oliver, Roland and Ogier ride to his aid, subduing and binding the pagan. Fierabras again pleads with his father to convert, but Balan refuses. The Christians win the battle and capture Aigremore. The pagan Corsable manages to escape and inform the king of Cappadocia of these events. In the future, this will cause the pagans to launch another invasion but Charles again will repel them.

pp. 364-70
¶¶ 229-37

Laisses CLVIII-CLXVIII
ll. 6072-6408

The day after conquering the city, Charles seeks to convert Balan, but the pagan refuses. Fierabras wishes to attempt again to persuade his father, but Floripas says they should execute him. Fierabras finally manages to persuade him to be baptised. At the last moment he changes his mind, spits in the baptismal font and strikes the bishop. Charles decrees that Balan must die. Fierabras repeats his pleas and Floripas reiterates her desire to have him killed so her marriage can proceed expeditiously. One final time, Fierabras begs his father to convert, but Balan continues to reject the notion. Finally Fierabras abandons hope, and Ogier beheads Balan. Floripas is baptised and weds Guy. Charles crowns Guy and Fierabras who will share rule of Spain, with Fierabras holding his lands from Guy. Charles requests that Floripas give him the relics. The archbishop raises the Crown of Thorns into the air where it levitates, thereby proving its authenticity. The Christians reverence the relics. Charles places some of the relics inside a glove and

pp. 370-80
¶¶ 238-58

The day after conquering the city, Charles instructs Fortibras to convert Admirandus, but the pagan refuses. Fortibras finally manages to persuade him to be baptised. At the last moment he changes his mind and strikes Ogier and the bishop. Charles decrees that Admirandus must die. One final time, Fortibras begs his father to convert, but Balan continues to reject the notion. Floripas chastises the emperor for speaking harshly to Admirandus in front of his children. Charles places him under her jurisdiction. Floripas ultimately recognises the evil in her father’s heart. Ogier beheads Balan. Floripas is baptised and weds Guy. Charles crowns Fortibras and Guy who will share rule of Spain, with Guy holding his lands from Fortibras. Charles requests that Floripas give him the relics. The Christians reverence the relics. Charles places some of the relics inside a glove and holds it out to a knight behind him. It falls to the ground and later the Christians fear that it has been lost, but they find it and venerate the relics. That
holds it out to a knight behind him. The warrior does not notice, but the gauntlet remains suspended in mid-air. That night, Charles has a prophetic dream which Nainmon interprets to mean that the emperor will again battle pagans and that there is a traitor amongst the Christians. Charles and his forces depart from Aigremore. Upon arriving in France, Charles donates the relics to St Denis, leading to the institution of the Lendit. night, Charles has a prophetic dream which Nemer interprets to mean that there is a traitor amongst the Christians. Charles and his forces depart from Egrimor. Upon arriving in France, Charles donates the relics and orders a church to be constructed in their honour.
Appendix 3: List of Geographical Locations in *Fierabras* and *Stair Fortibrais*

This appendix catalogues all the locations referenced in *Fierabras* and *Stair Fortibrais*. Due to its fragmentary nature, *Gesta Karoli Magni* has not been included. For each work, the place-names appear alphabetically under one of five categories: Christian, Pagan, Other, Setting and Religious. The location is followed by a parenthetical reference to the line(s) or paragraph(s) in which it occurs. The * symbol indicates a place appearing only in the Irish text.

**Fierabras (Total: Ninety-Two)**

Christian (Total: 34)

Ais la Capele (5793, 6327)
Anglez (2897, 3529)
Ardane/Arda(i)(n)(g)ne/Arden(n)e (1650, 2404, 2555, 2734, 2751, 3831, 4073, 6053, 6200)
Aubefort (5984)
Autefo(i/e)lle (4556, 4606a, 4678, 4686, 5163, 5770, 5918)
Baviere (1307, 1315, 1647, 2433, 2486, 2559, 2652, 2675, 2885, 4044, 4359, 5425, 5447)
Biaupré (5830)
Bonivent (4628)
Borgoigne (1798a, 1808, 2342, 2359, 2415, 2792, 2908, 3186a, 3205, 3283, 3388, 3438, 3519, 3760, 3528, 3551, 3567, 3667, 3697, 3748, 3836, 4089, 5452, 5552, 5575, 5580, 6066, 6183, 6370)
Borguenon/Bo(u)rguignon (1823)
Compiegne (6390)
Estampes (756)
Franc(h)e (5, 8, 12, 86, 130, 264, 283, 329, 924, 1216, 1378, 1880, 1983, 2044, 2061, 2161, 2207, 2341, 2453, 2464, 2817, 2825, 2907, 2959, 3004, 3017, 3028, 3271, 3306, 3503, 3821, 4025, 4030, 4582, 4598, 4622, 4663, 4693, 4935, 5070, 5112, 5137, 5140, 5142, 5274, 5310, 5396, 5600, 5620, 5631, 5793, 5833, 6037, 6052, 6058, 6075, 6108, 6206b, 6290, 6336, 6346, 6392)
Gennes/Genvres/Genevre (232, 246, 252, 338, 369, 1204, 1461, 1505, 1651, 1722, 2285, 4620, 4635, 4647, 4668, 4680, 4741, 4841, 4854, 5275, 5313, 5768)
Hernonnie (2037)
Homgrie (2970, 4777)
Langres/Lengres (3435, 3795)
Lion (5919)
Loon (6400)
Mans (4853, 4871, 4955)
M(e/i)lant (5264, 5902)
Mon(t)Didier (263, 433, 469, 507, 1646, 1798, 1806, 1846, 1979, 3387, 3397, 3541, 3755)
Nantes (4852, 4877, 4956, 5095, 5231, 5281)
Normandie (1648, 1799, 2396, 2709, 2718, 2888, 2891, 3833, 4039, 4241, 4359, 4510, 4739, 4775, 4839, 5093, 5119, 5312, 5599, 5835, 5841, 6028)
Orliens (756, 6383)
Paris (84, 756, 1800, 5064, 5775, 6334, 6376, 6383)
Pasques (241)
Pavie (1066)
Pierrecort (459)
Pontoise (5825)
Roen (3287)
Roie (1949)
Saint Lis (5981)
Valée (4852)

Pagan (Total: 34)

Alizandre (50, 69, 391, 414, 532, 564, 607, 613, 630, 665, 768, 859, 934, 1014, 1039, 1107, 1144, 1198, 1302, 1326, 1416, 1449, 1483, 1500, 1518, 1532, 1541, 1604, 2149, 2156, 6206a)
Apire (4874)
Ar(r)ab(b)e (3279, 4237)
Aragon (5923)
Aufrique (5781, 5787, 6228, 6061d)
Aumarie (3348)
Babilone (51)
Bal(l)ésquez (3524, 4874)
Baudas (2346, 2948, 2971)
Brebant (4403)
Candie (4793)
Capadoce/Capa(i)do(i)sse (638, 834, 1557, 6062)
Castelle (2002)
Con(n)imbres (1637, 1756, 2810, 3121, 3234, 3363, 3570, 3805, 3897, 3923, 4343, 5332, 5480, 5488, 5882)
Cordes (3787)
Durestés/ez (2949, 2981)
Góre (2237, 2303)
Grimolee (3162)
Kologne (52)
Mont Rogier (3764)
Montlis (1808)
Morgorche (3420)
Morrauvis (1794)
Nubie (2710, 3988, 4036, 4060)
Persis/Percie (5995)
Pincenee (5807)
Pinele (2000)
Pontis (754)
Rusie (52)
Saragouchez (2449)
Serrie/Surie/Sulie (3347, 5314, 6031)
Tudele/Tudeille (1045, 1999)
Valnuble (6060)

Other (Total: 2)

Colchon (2133)
Orient (4737)

Setting (Total: 10)

Aigremore (1969, 2373, 2447, 2535, 2562, 2613, 2658, 4576, 4760, 4928, 4938, 5196, 5273, 5714, 5828, 5844, 5908, 6054, 6063, 6079, 6212, 6236, 6353)
Espaigne (53, 675, 4392, 4585, 4772, 6070, 6328, 6396)
Far(s) de Ronme (1098)
Flagos/ot (2582, 2651, 4435, 4480, 4498, 4519, 4523, 4530, 4794, 4864, 5040, 5257)
Guimer (4432)
Maltrible/Mautrible (1967, 2540, 2560, 2564, 3148, 3810, 4137, 4204, 4441, 4549, 4796, 4801, 4856, 4862, 4887, 4914, 4963, 5010, 5026, 5043, 5046, 5098, 5118, 5171, 5184, 5200, 5244, 5254, 5272, 5285, 5294, 5319, 5338, 5603, 5625, 5790, 5832, 6362)
Mor(r)imonde (27, 1032, 2461, 2814, 4718, 4734, 4828, 4829)
Orquenie (5588)
Val Josué (5597, 5646, 5694, 5712, 5842)
Val Raheir (30)

Religious (Total: 12)

Belleem/Belïant (1223, 5722)
Canelieu (5213)
Golgatas (1266)
Jerusalem (66, 141, 399, 2234)
Mec (4924)
Roge Mer (51)
Ronme (54, 136, 392, 553, 1098, 2344, 2744, 3834)
Seint-Denis (4, 12, 78, 2716, 2739, 2743, 2752, 2817, 5062, 5748, 6378, 6387)
Seint-Pierre (57, 3291)
Seinte-Trinitez (3288)
Sepulcre (67)
Temple Saléomon (974)
Stair Fortibrais (Total: 24)

Christian (Total: 7)

France (1, 3, 16, 19, 43, 44, 52, 68, 89, 96, 104, 128, 152, 160, 181 x 3, 182 x 2, 183, 185 x 2, 197a, 200, 201, 202, 204, 229, 231, 253, 258)
Normandy (8, 102, 116, 142, 171, 173 x 2, 186, 196, 199, 205, 231)
*Egne (21)
*Ambros (68)
Genoa (100)
Burgundy (102, 123, 146, 237, 242, 244, 245)
Paris (252, 256, 257)
Pagan (Total: 5)

Alexandria (8, 24, 52)
*Dansed (67)
Cornubia (67, 117)
Abia (169)
Valle Nubile (237 x 2)

Other (Total: 1)

Colchos (87)

Setting (Total: 5)

Egrimor (2, 76, 187)
Ma(n)tribil (76, 109 x 2, 181, 186, 191, 208)
Fladol (109, 189)
Spain (187, 237 x 3, 258)
Vale of Josue (223)

Religious (Total: 6)

*Dionysium (1)
Saint Denis (1, 117, 197a, 257)
Rome (1, 2 x 2, 3, 8, 24, 35, 63, 72, 96, 115)
City of Helena, i.e. Jerusalem (1, 24)
Sepulchre (35)
*Persibus/Perndado (257)
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