PHILIPPE DE NOVARE: ANOTHER EPIC HISTORIAN?*

Some years ago, Jeanette Beer produced an important study of Villehardouin’s *Conquête de Constantinople*, which she entitled *Villehardouin : Epic Historian*. She concentrated, in the second part especially, on stylistic features and, after considering Villehardouin’s possible models, wrote in her conclusion:

« The fact that stylistically he reflects more of the medieval epic than of the medieval history has no doubt has (sic) a lasting though incalculable influence. He is not writing the history of century-old events which he has studied through the eyes of a Caesar or a Lucan. *La Conquête de Constantinople* is the eyewitness account of a Crusade for which hagiography, the Bible, and the *chanson de geste* provided inspiration. »

Philipp de Novare² wrote his history of the war between the Ibelin family and the Emperor Frédéric II some decades later (the last event he describes is the capitulation of Tyre and the Ibelin victory over the Imperialist forces probably in 1242). It is impossible to know the extent of the influence of Villehardouin’s chronicle upon his writing or, indeed, even to know whether Philipp was acquainted with his predecessor’s account of the Fourth Crusade at all. But it might be possible to gauge, as Beer seeks to do in her book, the extent to which, in matters of technique above all, another early historian draws upon the epic tradition.

It must be said that Philipp de Novare differs considerably from other thirteenth-century chroniclers in one important respect. Like Villehardouin, like Robert de Clari and Jean de Joinville, Philipp was a soldier who had a

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2 The French form, Philipp de Novare, has been retained for our author and other writers in French have been treated similarly. The names of historical figures have been presented in the accepted Anglicised forms.
part to play in the military activities he describes. But he was also a literary man. At the close of his last work, the *Quatre Ages de l'homme*, Philippe sums up his achievement in this area¹. He has written a legal treatise, the work commonly known as the *Livre de Philippe de Navarre* or the *Livre de forme de plaint*, a moral treatise, the *Quatre Ages de l'homme* itself, and an anthology, which apparently comprised a large section of autobiography, a number of poems, some about love, some about the war between the Ibelins and the Holy Roman Emperor, a history of the war itself and then, finally, some religious poems. Of this anthology, only a short fragment of the autobiography and the history of the war have survived. The history itself, often referred to as the *Mémoires* of Philippe de Novare², contains many indications of an extensive knowledge of the literature of the day. On more than one occasion, Philippe draws upon his knowledge of the *Roman de Renart*, and he composes what amounts to a new branch of the work: he exploits the fable *De leone aegrotante* and he also alludes to the role played by Guillaume d'Orange in the late epic of the cycle, *Foucon de Cande*³. Whilst Robert de Clari may have been little more than a common soldier, Geoffroy de Villehardouin was Marshal of Champagne and Jean de Joinville was a member of Louis IX's personal retinue: but none of them shows the breadth of literary knowledge so evident in our author.

² A word of caution is appropriate here, to the effect that the text of Philippe's *Mémoires* is far from perfectly established. His original work, with added annalistic notices, survives as the central part of a fourteenth-century compilation, the *Gestes des Chiprois*, in a manuscript which has been modified by interpolations from the *Étoiles*, the Old French translation and continuations of the work of William of Tyre. In 1887, G. Raynaud produced for the Société de l'Orient Latin the first edition of the compilation, *Les Gestes des Chiprois : Recueil des chroniques françaises écrites en Orient aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles*. Another edition of the compilation appeared in 1906, produced for the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, as part of the *Recueil des historiens des croisades*. The *Gestes des Chiprois* survives in a single fourteenth-century manuscript, which was missing for a considerable length of time until its rediscovery was reported in 1979 (see A. B. Rossebastiano, « Sul disperso ms. di Cérines delle “Gestes des Chiprois”, ora “Varia 433” della Biblioteca Reale di Torino », *Studì francési*, 23 (1979), 76-79). For this edition, the one which will be cited in this study (Philippe de Novare, *Mémoires*, 1218-1243, (éd.) C. Kohler, Paris, Champion, 1913, Kohler disentangled Philippe's work from the later material and supplied passages from the Italian translation of the *Gestes* which had been incorporated into the sixteenth-century *Chronique* of Amadi. The text evolved must inevitably be far from authentic in every detail.
³ For a fuller account of the literary content of the *Mémoires*, see G. N. Bromiley, « Philip of Novara’s account of the war between Frederick II of Hohenstaufen and the Ibelins », *Journal of Medieval History*, 3 (1977), p. 325-338.
This being said, the point must necessarily be made that in the case of the *Mémoires* we are dealing not with imaginative literature but with history, more specifically with history written in prose. Whereas for earlier historical verse narratives, what guaranteed the « truth » of the account was the professed reliance upon pre-existing written documents, with prose histories what authenticates the story are devices employed within the text itself. Philippe's *Mémoires* differ not merely from historical verse narratives but also from the *chansons de geste*, where reference is regularly made to external material. Examples are almost too numerous to mention: to take an obvious instance, the text of the *Chanson de Roland*, as it moves towards the trial of Ganelon, records that Charlemagne summons his men as « Il est écrit en l'ancieng Geste ».

But in Philippe's history there is a different point of reference, namely his own involvement in events, his own status as an eye-witness of what happened. Philippe is eager to establish his credentials at the very beginning of the history and it is worth citing the passage in full:

« Ici commence l'estoire et le droit conte de la guerre qui fu entre l'empereor Federic et messire Johan de Ybelin, seignor de Baruth. Et par quoy l'on peusse meaus entendre coment mut et comensa et fu cele guerre, et coment avint que partie des Chiprois se tint vers l'empereor et la plus grant partie vers le seignor de Baruth, Phelipe de Nevaire, quy fu a tous les fais et les conseile, et qui maintes fois a esté amès des bons pour le voir dire et hais des malvais, vous en dira la verité, aacy come en touchant les homes et les grans fais. » (§. 1)

The term *estoire* of the heading suggests a literary genre, as does the use of *conte*, but Philippe tries to move us away from the literary towards the real by emphasising that what he is about to relate is the « droit conte », the authentic account of events. The rest of the heading may also have vague literary reminiscences, with the presentation of the opposing parties recalling the sharp contrast between good and evil so much a feature of many epics. Of

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1 On this topic, and on Villehardouin's *Conquête de Constantinople* in particular, see M. Buda, « Early Historical Narrative and the Dynamics of Textual Reference », *Romantic Review*, 80 (1989), 1-17. She writes (p. 1): « While the historical verse narratives reach with routine regularity outside their discursive space to appeal to the pre-text of a “book” or other instantiation of scriptuality, the discourse of the prose chronicle situates this authority in its own textual topography. In defining its own textual space as the origin of reference, historical prose discourse inscribes its cognitive authority in the dynamics of auto-reference. »

course, the presentation is also tendentious, suggesting that John of Ibelin, the lord Philippe served, though undoubtedly important in his own patch in Outremer, somehow enjoyed the same prestige as the mighty Holy Roman Emperor. The opening paragraph goes on to reinforce the idea of two opposing forces, and implies that, if there is a distinction to be made between good and evil, John of Ibelin represents good, since a majority of the Cypriot knights supported the cause of the Old Lord of Beirut. More importantly, Philippe then goes on to say why his will be the « droit conte », by pointing out that he was an eye-witness of all the events he describes, « quiy fu a tous les fais et les conseils ». There is palpable exaggeration here, for there are occasions when Philippe admits his absence from an event which he, nevertheless, goes on to describe in some detail, often reproducing speeches apparently verbatim which he could not have heard in reality. To take a case in point, when the Imperial forces are on the point of being driven out of Cyprus in 1233, John of Ibelin responds to a message from Frederick II in which he is asked to meet the Emperor and to submit at least nominally to his rule. The speech is an artistic tour de force, but Philippe admits he was not there to hear it but had remained at the siege of Kyrenia with the Old Lord's son : « Tantost se party dou siege le seignor de Baruth et laissa en son leu sire Balian, son fis l'ainsné, o le roy Henry, et vost mener o luy Phelippe de Nevaire, mais sire Balian ne le vost souffrir. » (§. CXLVIII) Nevertheless, it is eye-witness status which, in Philippe's view, validates his account. In fact, he makes the same point in the closing paragraphs of the *Quatre Ages de l'homme* as he stresses that the quality of his account of the war stems precisely from his presence at the events he describes : « Et i. mout biau compe i a il de cele guerre meisme dès le commencement jusques a la fin, ou que il sont devisé li dit et li fait et li grant consoil des batailles et des sieges atiriez ordenéement: car Phelipes fu a touz. »¹

A further intratextual device is employed by Philippe to suggest the veracity of his account, the authentication by unnamed others of what has been said or done. Civil war breaks out in Cyprus in 1229. At that time, Frederick II has left the East and returned home, but he had interrupted his journey in Cyprus, had stripped the Ibelins of their powers and had nominated in their stead five *baillis* to administer the island on his behalf. It is at this moment that Philippe enters the story for the first time. He is approached by the five Imperial nominees who ask him for their support. Philippe refuses

and is imprisoned as a consequence. His resistance is noted: « _Les gens se
merveillerent mout de ce que Phelippe osa dire et faire._ » (§. 11) We have not
simply the author's word for it, because _other people_ assumed to be present at
this occasion confirm what has happened by the nature of their reaction. Further, the reader is being led to identify with the unnamed _gens_, to feel a
similar astonishment at the heroics of the writer, and, in legitimising in this
way the response of those present, simultaneously to give credence to this
account of events. Our willingness to accept Philippe's version here is helped
by the fact that it parallels an earlier event in which John of Ibelin himself is
involved and in which a similar device is employed. On July 28 1228,
Frederick II reaches Limassol on his way to the Holy Land and summons John
of Ibelin to his presence, instructing him to bring the young king, Henry, his
three sons and all his friends with him. The Old Lord's refusal to yield to the
Emperor's demands provokes general wonder: « _Le seignor de Baruth
respondy en telle maniere que tous ceaus quy la estoient se merveillerent, et
tous ses amis en douterent trop._ » (§. XXVIII) At the close of the Old Lord's
speech, the reaction of the Emperor is recorded, and the whole incident is
witnessed by the people who are there: « _L'emperere fu mout corouscie, et
chanja souvent coulour, et les gens regarderent moult le seignor de Baruth, et
mout y ot de paroles et de menaces._ » (§. XXX) Once again, the unspecified _gens_ act as eyewitnesses on behalf of the reader, the reader's reaction is
governed by the general response of these presumably impartial eyewitnesses,
and in endorsing the sentiments expressed we lend our approval to the
account as a whole.

In spite of this major change, in switching the point of authority from
outside the text to internal features within the text itself, there is no doubt that
Philippe's history reflects many of the features characteristic of the _chanson de
geste_. The matter of the history is war, as was the matter of the epic: consciously or unconsciously, this influences the treatment of the tale. I am
not seeking to suggest that the stylistic features to which I shall be drawing
attention are necessarily confined to the epic; indeed, few such features are
the exclusive property of any single genre. What I shall be arguing is that the
combination of characteristics one can identify may conspire to give to the
text an epic flavour.

The way in which the history is structured suggests, in a number of
elements, the characteristic mode of the epic. Philippe employs a formula to
give a hint of impending disaster, but in a much more restrained way than is
common in the epics (or, indeed, in other genres). Early in the text, John of Ibelin refuses to accept the general advice that he should avoid a meeting with the Emperor, and the author laconically remarks: « Ce luy eüst esté bon conseil. » (§. XX) On a number of occasions, Philippe anticipates events which will be related in due course of time. Towards the beginning of the history, he looks ahead and introduces the five baillis who will be entrusted by Frederick II with the administration of Cyprus. They are named, their sworn opposition to the Ibelins recorded, their future words and deeds are suggested, and we are assured we shall hear all about this: « Et si les oirés ci après maintenant. » (§. V) We are expected to take careful note of the content of this paragraph, for when Frederick appoints his five baillis on his way home, Philippe does not bother to name them but simply makes a reference back: « La fina il a les cinc baus que vous avés oí nomer, qui estoient de la soue partie, et lor vendy le baillage de Chipre et la terre por dis mille mars, jusque a l'age dou dit roy de Chipre. » (§. XLV) We associate the two paragraphs and join the author in contributing to the shaping of the narrative. One might note also that the anticipatory formula, « si les oirés », belongs properly to oral narrative, and although there is little doubt that Philippe's history came into being as a written work, it still borrows techniques from genres where oral delivery was once possibly the norm, notably, of course, from the chanson de geste. Perhaps more frequently, the formula is used not to link passages some distance apart but to anticipate what is immediately to follow. This occurs, for example, when John of Ibelin is about to raise the siege of his own fortress at Beirut: « Après oirés de monseignor de Baruth, qui estoit alé a Acre. Il porchassa et mostra tant de raisons a les gens dou païs, qui doutoient la seignorie des Longuebars, qu'il estoient lor destruction, que il le firent maire de la comune d'Accre. » Here, in truth, the formula is not strictly anticipatory but rather transitional, as the narrative concerns itself again with the Old Lord of Beirut after concentrating for a time on his son.

Similar oral formulae are employed for recapitulation, again an epic technique. Short bursts of recapitulation impose shape upon a narrative which might otherwise remain somewhat amorphous in the normal process of oral

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3. Mémoires, éd. cit., §. For other examples, see §. CXLII : « Et adès oirés comemt ce fu », and §. CLXXXII : « une tele aventure lor avint com vous oirés dire ». 
delivery. It must be said that the recapitulatory formulae are not exactly numerous, but the fact that they exist at all contributes to the general stylistic colouring of the history. One can cite the peculiar story of the old prince of Antioch, who feigned illness and dumbness in order to avoid swearing loyalty to Frederick II: « Le prince se tint a mort et dezerité; si contrefist le malade et le muet, et croit trop durement : “A ! a ! a !” ; et tant se tint ensi que il s’en party, ensi con vous avés oï ; mais si tot come il fu a Nefin, il fu gary. » (§. XXXIX) Here, the writer is alluding to an event described just a few lines before, but the same kind of formula can refer to events of longer standing. When Philippe de Novare prepares to insert his own branch of the Roman de Renart into his text, he reminds us that he has already given his enemies appropriate names before he introduced his first poem into the text (§. LIV) : « Et sire Heimery afigura il a Renart, et sire Aumaury a Grinbert le taisson, et sire Hue au singe ; et autre fois les avoir il ensi apélés, si com vous avés oï. »

A more common formula is one employed to sum up the content of a previous passage. It is true that we do not find in Philippe the full formula common in Villehardouin and of which Beer gives a number of examples, including: « Ensi fu croisiez li dux con vos avez oï. » But we do find examples of a shorter, but nonetheless effective formula, without the reference to the putative audience. The close of the text offers a case in point: « Adonc fu desraciné et araché le pesme ni des Longuebars, si qu'onques puis n'orent pooir en Surie ni en Chipre. Ensi fu prise la cite de Sur et le chasteau, en l'an de M.II. et XLI. » (§. CLXXXIX) The formula closes a sequence which began at the beginning of CLX, when the developments leading to the expulsion of the Longobards from their stronghold in Tyre start to unfold. The end of the history in fact recalls sharply the concluding lines of a slighter earlier paragraph, CLVII, when the expulsion of the Longobards from Cyprus is finally achieved: « Adonc demora Chipre en pais, mais en Surie demora un malvais ni, car sire Richart Filangier et ses freres et plusors [Longuebars] demorèrent a Sur. » We are meant to associate, via the similarity in phraseology, the end of the Longobard presence in Cyprus and the end of the

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1 There may be a similar type of allusion to a recent event in § XIII : « si com vous avés oï », but the editor suggests the phrase may not be Philippe's (p. 104). The same is suggested (p. 116) of a similar phrase in §. CXIV, « si come le conte a dit sa en ariere ».
2 Mémoires, §. LXXI. For a further example, see §. CLXXXII : « si com vous avés oï avant », where the author is referring to Richard Filangieri's departure from Tyre in §. CLXVIII.
4 The death of John of Ibelin, described in §. CLVIII-CLIX, thus emerges as a short, but important digression.
Longobard presence in Syria. The use of the near-identical image, «pesme ni», «malvais ni», naturally reinforces this association, and the writer is in effect creating his own formulae of closure. References to time, more specifically to dates, can also bring a sequence to an end. Of course, chronological references very considerably. We find vague notations, «En cel tens» (§. CLX, see also §. III of the fragment of autobiography), «En celuy tens» (§. V), but precise dates are also used as significant markers in the text. They may indicate the beginning of a sequence, announcing what is to come: «En celuy meisme an de M.II. et XXVII, messire Phelippe d'Ybelin, le bon preudome, quy estoit frere de monseignor de Baruth, monur en Chipre de cele maladie qu'il avoit.» (§. XVII) The next paragraph begins in the same, annalistic way: «En l'an de M.II. et. XXIX, l'empereur Federic passa la mer pour venir en Surie.» But dates can also come at the end of a sequence. The very end of the text (§. CLXXXIX), already cited, offers a case in point, but there are other examples. After the Battle of Nicosia, we read: «Ceste bataille devant dite fu a un samady a quatorze jors dou meis de juingnet, devant Nicosie, l'an de M.II. et XXIX.»(§. LXI) But later, the Ibelin forces suffer a setback at Casal Imbert, and their enemies, believing their business in Syria concluded for the moment, decide to turn their attention again to Cyprus: «Si ordenerent lor afaire et laisserent garnison a Sur, et tantost passerent en Chipre, a grant esfors et a grant bonasse, pour prendre l'ihle. Et ce fu en l'an de M.II. et XXXII. » (§. CIX) Dates employed in this way thus become formulae of closure, part of the general recapitulatory process.

Structurally, therefore, there are epic resonances in the text and similar resonances can be detected in the manner of characterisation. Jeanette Beer suggests that, when epic attitudes are found in Villehardouin, he may simply have been reflecting the mode of thinking of the crusaders themselves:

«His epic attitudes may not be peculiar to him, but may well have been universal to the Crusading army, since nothing would be more natural than that the soldiers should see themselves in terms of the popular literature of their time, that they should associate themselves with its aims, and that they should equate their successes and reverses with those of epic heroes. »1

Philippe de Novare's approach is perhaps more subtle, and there is probably more evidence that he himself wishes roles upon his protagonists rather than that they consciously elect such roles for themselves. The five Imperial baillis,

the Ibelin’s opponents on Cyprus, are compared by Philippe to characters in the Roman de Renart, but they are also, at the same time, presented in epic terms:

« Céaus cinc s'acorderent et jurèrent encontre le lignage de Ybelin. Et si avoient esté moult bien d'eaus, et avoient ressu moult de biens et d'amors d'eaus, escaieuament de monseignor de Baruth, plus que de nul home ; mais folie et orgueil, quy souvent muet de richesce et de repos, et que il y a moult de gens quy ne puent souffrir l'aise, les mena a ce que il firent et que il dirent, et toutes voies y ot acaisons. » (§, V)

The sentiments are hardly novel: folie and orgueil are key-words in the epic, and the words of Ganelon near the start of the Chanson de Roland come at once to mind: « Cunscell d'orguell n'est dreiz què a plus munt : / Laissun les folis, as sages nus tenuns ! »1

The words of Roland himself, when he mocks Ganelon’s threat against him, will also be remembered: « Respunt Rollant : “Orguill oi e fulage.” »2 The passage also contains echoes of the popular in suggesting, albeit obliquely, the proverbial ingratitude of the criminal3. We find as well the moral cliché, here describing the inability of man to be satisfied even with a very agreeable lot, and this kind of reiteration of an accepted truth could again be termed a feature of popular narration4.

The Ibelin family and their supporters are presented in contrasting style, suggesting that polarity of good and evil often characteristic of the epic. The presentation of Anceau of Brie may serve as a case in point. Early in the story, even before Frederick II has reached Cyprus, there is a dispute over the control of the island and Anceau opposes the bid for power attempted by Aimery Barlais, already identified as one of the future five Imperial baillis:

« Sire Anceau de Bries se leva et dist que de tant come messire Haymery Barlais en avoit fait et dit, avoit il fait que desloyal, et se il fust en my la place, plus l'en diret et le provereit. Celuy messire Anceau de Bries fu fis d'un cousin

1 La Chanson de Roland, éd. cit., v. 228-229.
3 « Le vres n'amera ja celui qui le respite des fourches » (Proverbes français antérieurs au xve siècle, (éd.) J. Morawski, Paris, Champion, 1925, 1048. See also §, LXXXIV of the Mémoires, where the Ibelins act magnanimously towards the defeated baillis, but the attitude of their enemies does not change: « Mais leur enemis garderent et retindrent leur foles volentés, et bien le mostrerent si tost com il porent. »
germain de monseigneur de Baruth et de son frère; si estoit jvenes hom et fort
et durs, membrus et ossus, vigourous et penibles, et entreprenans et faiseur,
amy et enemy cortois, et large de quanque il pooit tenir, blans et blondes et
vayrs et camus, a une chiere grefaignie, semblant au leupart. » (§. IX-X)

The precise physical details, especially those that close the introduction of
Anceau, are unusual, but other items in the description, vigourous, entreprenans,
large etc., are more predictable. On a later occasion, when Anceau reappears in
the company of John of Caeserea, similar terms return: « Adonques le jeune
seignor de Czaire, qui estoit nevou dou seignor de Baruth, et messire Anceau
de Brie, ces deus qui mout estoient preus et vigourous, li distrent. » (§. XXXIII)
Some time after this in the story, the Old Lord must surrender his sons to the
Emperor. Balian, who will himself become lord of Beirut, is described in
familiar terms: « et celuy, qui estoit plus vaillant bachelier et vigourous et larges et
avenant et plaisant a toutes gens sur tous ceaus desa mer, le servy volentiers et
amiablyment. » (§. XXXVIII) Other opponents of the Emperor are invested
with the same attributes. Frederick II provokes general antagonism in the
Kingdom of Jerusalem and has fallen out with the Templars in particular:

« L'empereor fu maintenant mau de toute la gent d'Acre; espesciaument dou
Temple fu trop mau; et au jor avoit mout vaillans freres au Temple, frere Pierre
de Montagu, quy mout estoit vaillant et noble, [et mout vaillant et sage] estoit
aucy le maistre des Alemans. » (§. XLII)

The term vaillant and its derivatives are becoming virtually indispensable,
forming with other frequently occurring words a body of favourable epithets
which can be drawn upon to sing the praises of the Ibelins and their
supporters. It emerges, in fact, that Vaillance is the war-cry of Henry, the
young king of Cyprus, for at the battle of Agridi, a knight from Lombardy is
killed in error, as a consequence of his failure to pronounce it correctly1. This
is not to say that these terms are used exclusively of the good. As the end of
the Imperial presence in the East is nearing, the Ibelins capture the city of
Tyre. A familiar formula of closure, and a classic piece of epic hyperbole,
describe the event: « Ensi fu prise la cite de Sur, quy estoit une des plus fors
dou monde. » (§. CLXXXI) The Ibelins then lay siege to the castle of Tyre itself,
which is controlled by: « Sire Lotier Filanger, quy estoit sage et vigourous
chevalier ». (§. CLXXXI) The favourable epithets given to Lothair tell us of the

1 See Mémoires, éd. cit., §. CXXXII.
magnitude of the task facing the Ibelins, just as the epic formula used in association with the mighty city of Tyre informs us of what the Ibelins have already achieved.

In so far as there is a principal hero to Philippe's text, the honour must fall to John of Ibelin, known as the Old Lord of Beirut, the appellation used by the writer in the Quatre Ages de l'homme and the law book\(^1\), if not in the history itself. Villehardouin, similarly, has a venerable hero, the Doge of Venice, and Jeanette Beer argues for epic influence in his presentation: «The portrait of the doge, who emerges as the principal human character insofar as the nature of the enterprise allows individuals much limelight, is largely executed in epic style.»\(^2\) John of Ibelin cannot lay claim to the same number of years as the doge, Enrico Dandalo, who was in his nineties in 1202, for John, being born in 1177 or 1178, is a mere stripling of just over fifty when the conflict with the Emperor begins. But it is clear that, like a Charlemagne, he enjoys seniority and the authority of age. John is the head of the family\(^3\), the elder brother of Philip of Ibelin, himself a powerful figure who acts as baili of Cyprus on behalf of the infant King Henry. He is the father of two sons, Balian and Baldwin, who are admitted into knighthood together (probably in 1223) and who will play a prominent part in the war to come. These are the two eldest, but there are three other sons, Guy, Hugh and John of Foggia, who will similarly be deeply involved in the conflict. Most of the major players in the conflict are thus defined by their relationship to the Old Lord. At the setback at Casal Imbert in 1232, the members of the family acquit themselves well:

«Onques gens si sorpris meaus ne se defendyrent ; les trois fis de monseignor de Barut, messire Bauduyyn et messire Hue et messire Guy y firent merceilles d'armes. Messire Bauduyyn y fu perilousement naffrè, et son nevou, messire Johan, qui estoit juene, y fist tant que toute sa vie fu plus prisié.» (§. CV)

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\(^1\) Les Quatre Ages de l'homme, éd. cit, §. 233 : «et le seignor de Barut, mon signor Johan de Belin le viel» ; Livre de Philippe de Navarre, Recueil des historiens des croisades, Lois, 1, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1841, p. 525 : «Après usai entour monseignor de Baruth le vieil jusqu'à sa mort».


\(^3\) For this topic, see H. Charpentier, «Histoire, droit et morale du lignage dans l'oeuvre de Philippe de Novare», in Les Relations de parenté dans le monde médiéval, Aix-en-Provence, Université de Provence, 1989, p. 325-334.
The identity of the last figure to be named, « son nevou messire Johan, qui estoit juene », gives the editor pause\(^1\), but it is clear that this is John of Jaffa, son of Philip of Ibelin. Yet what counts above all is his relationship to John of Ibelin, the fact that he is the nephew of the Old Lord. We are even reminded that Frederick II himself is a nephew of John of Ibelin, if only by marriage\(^2\). Other personalities outside the immediate family are also characterized by the nature of their link to him: we have already seen that Anceu of Brie, on his first appearance, is described as « fis d'un cousin germain de monseignor de Baruth et de son frere ». (§. X)

John of Ibelin makes an impressive entry, at §. III of that fragment of Philippe de Novare's autobiography which has been preserved precisely because it can serve as an introduction to the all-important account of the war:

« En cel tens avoit desa mer en Surie un haut home, quy avoit nom messire Johan de Yblin, et estoit seignor de Baruth, le quel avoit au réaume de Chipre moult grands rentes de cazaus et d'autres choses. Cestu seignor de Baruth si fu vaillant et moult hardy et entreprenant et large et cortois et de bel acuell a toute gent, et por ce il estoit moult amé et moult renomé partout, et par my tout se il estoit sage et connoissant et prudome et leau enver Dieu. »

One notes the return of familiar ‘epic’ epithets, *vaillant*, *entreprenant*, *large*\(^3\), and much of what follows in the history itself will illustrate the qualities described here. These begin to emerge even before Frederick II appears on the scene and the war proper begins. Soon after John's two elder sons are knighted, a quarrel breaks out between an Ibelin supporter, Toringel, and one of the future Imperial *vaillès*, Aimery Barlais, and it is the Old Lord who intervenes to restore peace between the warring parties. In order to create what he hopes will be a lasting peace, John is prepared even to be estranged from his brother: « et dist a son frere que il voloit en toutes manieres et en toutes guises que il pardonast a sire Heimery, et se il nel faisoit, ja mais a luy ne parleroit ni ne le verroit ». (§. VIII) Much the same thing occurs when Aimery quarrels with Anceu of Brie and is in grave danger of losing his life in judicial


\(^2\) *Ibidem*, §. IV : « Et toutes voies mandoit il moult amiabiles letres tous jors as deus freres, monseignor de Baruth et le bal sire Phelippe ; tout adès les apeloit oncles en ses letres, por ce que i l'estoient a la reýne Yzabeau de Surie, quy estoit sa feme ».

\(^3\) The terms *vaillant* and *entreprenant* are equally used for Philip of Ibelin in the very next paragraph.
combat. Once again, the intervention of the Old Lord is crucial both in saving Aimery from death and in making peace. Almost ironically, John's magnanimity, so we are told, is only guaranteeing trouble in the future: Aimery does not welcome the terms of the peace he is forced to make with Anceau¹, any more than does another Imperial supporter, Gauvain of Cheneché, when he quarrels with William of La Tour². These opening skirmishes represent a kind of prologue, suggesting what will be the Old Lord's mode of behaviour when he finally comes into open conflict with the Holy Roman Emperor.

In his confrontation with Frederick, John of Ibelin is presented as a model of patience and moderation. He rejects well-meaning advice that he should refuse to co-operate with the Emperor, arguing that to do so would mean that he and his supporters would be identified as «les...desloyaus d'outre mer» (§. XXI). He maintains his restrained demeanour, even under intense provocation, when called upon by the Emperor to surrender the city of Beirut and the income from the island of Cyprus which Frederick believes is due to him. Armed men have been secretly brought in and now openly threaten him, and the Emperor becomes increasingly more angry: «L'emperere se corrousa mout et jura et menassa» (§. XXVIII), «L'emperere fu mout corouscié, et chanja souvient coulour» (§. XXX). But John remains steadfast in his refusal to acquiesce in these demands. It is only later that he himself is moved to anger, when Anceau of Brie and John of Caeserea suggest that they might murder the Emperor.

«Le seignor de Baruth se corroussa trop et les menassa a ferir et a tuer, se il en parloient ja mais, et dist que ensi seroient honis a tous jors mais, et toute crestianté crieroit: «Li traïtour d'outre mer ont ocis lor seignor l'empereor.»

«Et puis qu'il seroit mors, et nous vis et sains, nostre droit seroit tort, et la verité n'en poroit estre crehée. Il est mon seignor, que que il face, nous garderons nos fois et nos honors.» (§. XXXIII)

John of Ibelin goes on to serve Frederick when he crosses to the mainland, and remains with him in spite of the dangers he so obviously runs: «Le seignor de Baruth ne le guerpi onques, et si ly avoit l'on loé moult souvent que il s'en partist, mais il n'en vost [riens faire].» (§. XLII) For the Old Lord, loyalty is all.

¹ Mémoires, éd. cit., §. XVI : «et sachiés que la pais fu vileine a sire Heimery.»
² See ibidem, §. XI.
When war inevitably comes, John shows that even with advancing years he is still capable of physical prowess. In 1229, the five baillis and their supporters are defeated at the Battle of Nicosia. He seems to play a full role in the fight, and when targeted by the enemy defends himself very efficiently:

« Les cinc baus avoient estably vint et cinc chevaliers, les plus vigourous que il eüssent de lor maignee, quy devoient entendre a ocrire [monseignor de Baruth]. Monseignor de Baruth fery par mi la bouche un d'eaus, car il n'avoit pas heaume a visiere, et de celuy cop le riu mort a terre. » (§. LVIII)

But in other battles a more nuanced picture emerges. At Casal Imbert some three years later, the Ibelins are in danger of being routed and the young king is forced to flee. It is reported to John that his own sons have been killed in the fighting. To this, his response is that it is the duty of knights to die in this way:


Later, to his relief, his children are found alive, but the anecdote has enhanced his status by demonstrating his firm adherence to the secular ideal of chivalry. But it is the religious dimension of his life which is given prominence as the story unfolds. Before the Battle of Agridi in the same year of 1232, he is presented as a warrior thanking God for allowing the opportunity for the battle and praying for a successful outcome: « Tendrement requist et proya Nostre Seignor que il, en cest jour, douast honour et victoire au roy et as suens. »¹ The Old Lord is also submissive to the will of the Church. At Agridi, he refuses to allow his eldest son, Balian, to take up his accustomed position as leader of the first troop, because he has been excommunicated by the Church for having entered into marriage with a relative, Eschiva of Montbéliard. The secular must yield to the spiritual: « Le preudom li respondy et dist: “Balian, je m'en fi plus a Deu que a vostre chevalerie, et, puis que vous ne volés faire ma requeste, laissés l'eschele, car, se Deu plaist, escoumenié ne sera ja conduisour de nostre bataille.” Ensi le dist et

¹ Mémoires, éd. cit., §. CXXVII. At his acrimonious meeting with the Emperor, John had expressed his willingness to submit to God’s judgement (Mémoires, §. XXIX).
ensi le fist.» (§. CXXVII) It is in death that the Old Lord’s stance is most strongly affirmed, the fact that he is, indeed, «l'eau enver Dieu». Like Enrico Dandolo, John dies before the situation is fully settled, but he has the satisfaction of knowing that Cyprus is free of Imperialist influence and that only the city of Tyre remains in opposition to the Ibelins. Following an accident, when he is injured when his horse collapses beneath him, John first sets his worldly affairs in order, then he fulfills an earlier vow made at Agridi and becomes a brother of the Temple at Acre, before dying an exemplary death. Unsurprisingly, one might detect here elements of epic exaggeration. His behaviour provokes the utmost admiration: «il fist son testament si ordeneement que toutes les gens se merveillerent de sa tres grant memoire» (§. CLVIII), «et si tres bele fin fist a sa mort qu'a merveille en creroyt l'on verité quy tout contast» (§. CLIX). Philippe de Novare has no hesitation in believing that, like Roland’s soul, the soul of the Old Lord is destined for Paradise.

Just as he does in aspects of structuring and characterization, Philippe also echoes the epic mode in his use of certain specific stylistic features. Even though much more of a literary man than Villehardouin, he nevertheless employs many of the same technical devices. The examination of one sample paragraph, §. III of the Mémoires, may help to bring this out:

«Tous les homes liges dou roy firent hommage come de baill a la dite reyne, et tous les homes liges prierent et requirrent a messire Philipe de Ybelin que il fist baill de Chipre por gouymer la terre et tenir la court et coumander sus les homes. Le roy Hugue meisme l'avoit avant prié et comandé a la mort. Monseignor Philipe ressut le baillage, si ot moutl de travail et noise, et la reyne ot les rentes, que molt largement les despendy. Messire Philipe d'Ybelin gouyerna moult bien la terre et en pais, et moult i fist de bien et de hennor et de loyauté et de largesse; et monseignor de Baruth estoit tout le plus en Surie, et a tous les besoins metoit grant conseil et grant aye au fait de Chipre.»

Particularly prominent in this section, and predictably so, are various forms of repetition. Jeanette Beer argues that repetition is well-nigh inevitable in a work of this kind1, and it is certainly true of this representative passage. One

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1 J. M. A. Beer, Villehardouin : Epic Historian, op. cit., p. 70 : « Repetition was so much part of the medieval literary climate that its appearance in any work of the time seems almost inevitable. Repetitive patterns were cultivated both in the elaborating of a highly rhetorical style or in the jongleur's more practical task of projecting a story well - familiarity breeds satisfaction rather than contempt in a listening audience. »
notices at once what Beer terms « the repetition of an idea through synonymic repetition »¹: « prièrent et requièrent », « l’avoit avant prié et commandé ». Both these examples, rather than being individual coinings by Philippe, smack of the formulaic². In fact, Beer cites as one of her examples from Villehardouin « commandoit et prioit », arguing also that the two synonyms are pitched at different levels³: in Philippe de Novare, the order of verbs suggests an « upward » progression, in Villehardouin a « downward » progression. In another example in this same paragraph, « si ot mout de travail et noise », we may arguably detect the same « downward » progression which we find in the Villehardouin example. Other sets of synonyms my be pitched at one and the same level. It is difficult to see any major difference in meaning between the nouns in « grant conseil et grant âye », an equivalence possibly reinforced here by the use of the identical supporting adjective. The influence of the Latin expression, consilium et auxilium, may also be reflected here.

Synonymic repetition, of the types identified in this one paragraph, is found extensively throughout the whole text. Forms of prier and requérir return and are associated together in §. XIX : « toutevois l'empereres manda mout cortoises letres a monseignor de Baruth...preant et requerant, come a son cher oncle, que il venist a luy parler »⁴. We find as well near-formulaic expressions: « en toutes manières et en toutes guises » (§. VIII), « sans lor gré et lor otroy » (§. VIII). In this same section, §. VIII, we have another set of regularly associated terms, « que ce seroit la mort et la destrucion de leur petit seignor ». With certain of these patterns of synonyms, the order of the expressions is not entirely fixed, but elsewhere we find what have been termed « irreversible binomials »⁵: « que il li rendroit maintenant ses deus enfans, sains et sans de vie et de meme » (§. XXXVI)⁶. The set of synonyms may have adjectival support: « a grant orgueil et a grant superbe » (§. IX). Parts of speech other than those already mentioned may also supply synonymic patterns : « et l'empereor les en mercy a mout liement, et dist que il les guerredoneroit largement et richement » (§. XXII). In this last example, synonymic repetition is far from formulaic, but

¹ Ibid, p. 73.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p. 74.
⁴ See also §. XLVI : « et li prièrent et requièrent ».
⁶ See also §. XLVI : « que il conduyroient luy et sa mainsée et toute la soue chose, saîne et saîve ».
serves to emphasize what will soon emerge as the thoroughly deceitful nature of the Holy Roman Emperor.

The text contains other forms of repetition identified by Beer as characteristic of the epic. The very beginning of § III, for example, offers an example of anaphora, the repetition of the same word or phrase at the head of successive clauses: « Tous les hommes lige dou roy firent hommage come de baill a la dite reyne, et tous les hommes lige prirent et requistrent... ». A further, extended example is found in § XVII: « Mout en fyst l'on grant duel, et moult fu grant damage a tous ses amis et a tout le pais ; moult fu pleint, et moult le dut bien estre. » Annominatio, the use of words belonging to the same root, is also to be found: « Messire Heimery l'otroya maintenant, sans ce que il eüst otroy de nul home de Chipre » (§. IX).

Philippe employs as well other devices deemed characteristic of the epic. Hyperbole has already been touched upon in the description of the city of Tyre, « une des plus fors dou monde » (§. CLXXI), and there are many other examples: « la plus grant feste et la plus longue qui fut onques desa mer » (§. VI), « quy avoit un des meillor fors dou monde » (§. XIV), « car nul seignor ne fu onques plus tendrement amé » (§. XI). Elsewhere, we find an example of the « discours collectif », what Beer refers to as « the anti-realistic device, the collective vox populi »1. Admittedly, it is only the five baillis who make up the collectivity in this particular case: « Et il respondirent et crient tous cinc » (§. XLIX).

Of course, this device, like many of the other devices, is not exclusively epic, but taken together with methods of structuring and characterisation it could be said to contribute to the epic colouring of the text. In the case of Philippe de Novare this is not quite the end of the story. As has been noted already, since Philippe in his Mémoires is concerned essentially with a war, and war is the main matter of the epic, the writer is necessarily influenced in the composing of his narrative by epic models. But what is striking about the Mémoires is the way in which the narrative flow is constantly, if irregularly, being interrupted by other elements, by other forms of literature. Philippe seems to have written seven poems in all for inclusion in the text, but of one a mere fragment remains and then only in Amadi's Italian translation2, and of another just three lines survive (§. XCVIII). The five poems which remain are varied in manner, scope and also in achievement. The first one, a « lettre rimee » (§. LV), displays some wit and alludes for the first time in the text to

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1 J. M.A. Beer, Villehardouin : Epic Historian, op. cit., p. 86.
2 See Mémoires, ed. cit., p. 113.
the *Roman de Renart*. The second poem, termed *a serventois* by Philippe, is unexciting (§. LXIII), and the third poem, whilst alluding to Ganelon, the epic arch-villain, again draws upon the *Renart* for its inspiration (§. LXVII). The fourth poem is a rather unusual *alba* (§. LXIX), and the fifth and final poem is the longest and most finished production, Philippe's attempt to produce a new branch of the *Roman de Renart* (§. LXXIII). What the insertion of these poems seems to suggest is Philippe's reluctance to allow himself to be confined to one literary mode. In relating his narrative, he may, indeed, be termed an epic historian; in interrupting the narrative in order to introduce other forms of material, he reveals his larger ambitions.