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THE EXPRESSION OF 'NATION' AND 'NATIONALITY' IN OLD FRENCH

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ABSTRACT

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After discussion of the extent to which nation and nationality may be used of the Middle Ages, it is postulated that their counterparts may be assumed in order to identify the vocabulary to be studied. This is chiefly the words gent, terre, peuple, païs, and corresponding proper names.

The analogous Latin vocabulary is first examined, and it is shown to be organised in two series, referring to ordered societies, and tribal groups. The changes this vocabulary undergoes in the early Middle Ages are discussed, and examination of gent and peuple in Old French shows the importance of gent, designating the feudal group, and also subtending the ethnic adjectives. The use of terre and its implications are examined, showing that terre denotes named countries, other, partially synonymous, terms being of less importance in this context.

Gent and terre are then considered together, showing the close relation between them, and how, although feudal terms, they can be used to represent something corresponding to the modern idea of nation. A further chapter examines the relations between the four principal terms, showing how their syntactic usage, notably in possessive contexts, reflects their content, linking gent and terre with other feudal terms, and thus that the expression of nationality in Old French is essentially feudal in its articulation.

ABBREVIATIONS
used in references to authors and works

A	Ambroise
B	(Wace) *Le Roman de Brut*
CC	(Villehardouin) *La Conquête de Constantinople*
CDN	("Benoit") *Chronique des ducs de Normandie*
CGT	*La Chanson de Guillaume de Tudèle*
CL	*Le Couronnement de Louis*
CN	*Le Charroi de Nîmes*
CR	*La Chanson de Roland*
DELF	(Bloch & von Wartburg) *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*
DELL	(Ernout & Meillet) *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*
EGS	(Ambroise) *Estoire de la guerre sainte*
FEW	(von Wartburg) *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*
HCF	(Duby & Mandrou) *Histoire de la civilisation française*
R	(Wace) *Le Roman de Rou*
REW	(Meyer-Lübke) *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*
V	Villehardouin
VSA	*La Vie de Saint Alexis*
VSL	*La Vie de Saint Léger*
W	Wace

INTRODUCTION

"Tout vocabulaire exprime une civilisation"
A. Meillet[1]

The question whether anything which might be called a nation, in the modern sense of the word, as it might be used, say, by a Welsh Nationalist, "The nation . . . is an historic community, whose people have shared common territory, history, law, institutions, traditions and language"[2], actually can have existed in the Middle Ages is open to argument: "Il a été de mode, chez certains historiens plus récents, de refuser aux premiers siècles du moyen âge toute conscience de groupe nationale ou ethnique"[3], and more recently still the matter is seen as dubious: "if one can speak of nations when one talks of the Middle Ages"[4]. The purpose of this study is to examine that part of the vocabulary of Old French which is used to refer to those aspects of medieval civilisation that can be seen to correspond to the modern idea, that is to say, principally the Old French words gent, peuple, terre, païs, and by looking also at the equivalent vocabulary in

[1] Linguistique historique et linguistique générale II (Paris, 1938): 145.

[2] Gwynfor Evans MP, in a letter to The Times, 10 October 1968.

[3] M. Bloch, La Société féodale II (Paris, 1940): 232.

[4] Review of D.D.R. Owen, The Vision of Hell (Edinburgh, 1970) in the Times Literary Supplement 3660 (21 April 1972): 452.

Classical Latin, and from a comparison of the two, to establish how far this vocabulary in Old French may be said to reflect the different relationships which underlie the organisation of the medieval state, and, if indeed there is no consciousness of national or ethnic groups, to enquire how the groups of which men were conscious were actually envisaged in terms of the vocabulary used to denote them.

It has been said that "language alone afford the potential for relating man to the cultures which he has created."[1] Whether this is universally true is perhaps questionable. Even if "each language lays down its own boundaries within the amorphous thought-mass"[2] it is not to be expected that every aspect of a culture will be reflected in the language, nor, conversely, that every semantic distinction implied in the language will be culturally relevant. It may also be that in a period of change and transition such as the Middle Ages the vocabulary also will be hesitant and unclear: "en matière d'institutions sociales, le désordre des mots entraîne presque nécessairement celui des choses"[3] and this is no doubt true reciprocally. To a certain extent, however, we may accept that "the general conclusion to be drawn is that the language of a particular society is an integral part of its culture, and that the lexical distinctions drawn by each language will tend to reflect the culturally-important features of objects, institutions and activities in the

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[1] H. Basilius, "Neo-Humboldtian Ethnolinguistics", Word 8 (1952): 95.

[2] L. Hjelmslev, Prolegomena to a theory of language, trans. F.J. Whitfield, revised edition (Madison, Wis., 1961): 52.

[3] M. Bloch, La Société féodale I (Paris, 1939): 126.

society in which the language operates"[1] and the linguistic expression of the division of mankind into independent, possibly rival, groups or communities does seem to be important enough to be worth investigating. It is a topic which has interested historians. Denys Hay, for example, has traced the growing and changing importance of the grouping which we call Europe.[2] For Julien Benda the very existence of the words Gallia and Francia symbolised to the inhabitants of the region so designated "leur volonté d'être une nation".[3] Other historians, while still being intrigued by the importance of such labels, are more cautious in their assessment of the value which they might have had for those who used them: "car si l'on tente -- ce qui semble de bonne méthode -- de se référer aux images que le mot "France" pouvait évoquer dans l'esprit des hommes du Xe siècle les mieux outillés pour penser, on s'aperçoit que celles-ci sont très floues."[4]

But, although proper names may have great importance as symbols and emotional centres of reference, and for that reason the consideration of them will bulk large in such a study as this, they seem, as Stephen Ullmann pointed out, "to lie outside the province of semantics, or at least on the outer fringes of that area."[5] The function of the proper name is that of identifying, while that of the words which make up the vocabulary proper is classifying and the object of semantics is the study of this classific-

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[1] J. Lyons, Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics (Cambridge, 1968): 432.

[2] Europe, the emergence of an idea (Edinburgh, 1957).

[3] Histoire des Français, 2nd edition (Paris, 1932): 65.

[4] G. Duby & R. Mandrou, Histoire de la civilisation française (Abbreviated as HCF), 5th edition (Paris, 1968): I, 10.

[5] The Principles of Semantics, 3rd ed.(reprinted Oxford, 1963): 74.

ation, of the way in which "le mot socialise et rationalise le concept".[1] The name France identifies an area which is classified in the Old French lexicon as terre, and the significance of the name will be limited by the meaning of the word, which is itself in turn conditioned by two sets of factors, linguistic and external.

The linguistic factors which condition meaning are the possible relations which a word may contract within the language itself. It is accepted that the vocabulary is not merely "une liste de termes correspondant à autant de choses"[2] but a system of relations and oppositions in which terms derive their value from their place. The external factors are the "social and material realities" to which the vocabulary in question is applied[3], and the relative importance which these have for the users of the language. "En réalité, les mots n'expriment pas les choses, mais la conscience que les hommes en ont."[4]

The extent to which such unities as are implied by the modern words nation and nationality are expressed in the vocabulary of medieval French will therefore not depend solely or even primarily on whether these unities had any objective existence. Later historians find it legitimate and convenient to recognise them -- "la France avait existé avant la France"[5] -- but the question which is posed here concerns their importance in the eyes of the

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[1] G. Matoré, La Méthode en lexicologie (Paris, 1953): 43.

[2] F. de Saussure, Cours de linguistique générale, 3rd ed. (reprinted Paris, 1969): 97.

[3] K.J. Hollyman, Le Développement du vocabulaire féodal en France (Geneva-Paris, 1957): 14.

[4] Matoré, La Méthode: 43.

[5] F. Lot, La France des origines à la guerre de cent ans (Paris, 1948): 5.

medieval observer. The notion was not in this period a complete dead letter. "Nous parlons volontiers d'Etats féodaux. Assurément la notion n'était pas étrangère au bagage mental des doctes: les textes prononcent quelquefois le vieux mot de respublica."[1] But in some cases the divisions of which men were most clearly conscious transcended national boundaries; for example ". . . the final division in the world was between Christians and the rest"[2] an attitude typified in the Chanson de Roland[3]:

Paien unt tort e chrestiens unt dreit

(CR: 1015)

but where, on the other hand, they did coincide, they were seen in a completely different light. The state had receded into the background, and its place had been taken by the chain of feudal dependencies.[4] F. Lot remarks, "Le sentiment national existait, mais beaucoup moins fort que le sentiment vassalique"[5], but in fact, as it is hoped to show in what follows, the two were not as easily separable, and the one was conceived of in terms of the other.

The extension of the franchise in the Roman Empire, culminating in the edict of 212 AD, had created what was virtually a world-wide state, but the idea of the state was already moribund, and the fall of the empire was to deliver the finishing stroke. This is remarked on by R. Latouche in the introduction to his translation of Gregory of Tours' Historia Francorum: "La notion d'Etat a

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[1]Bloch, La Société féodale II: 194.

[2]Hay, Europe: 21.

[3]Edited by F. Whitehead, 2nd ed.(Oxford, 1946).Abbreviated as CR.

[4]Cf. J. Calmette, La Formation de la France au moyen-âge (Paris, 1947): 45.

[5]La France: 149-50.

subi avec la disparition de l'Empire d'Occident un coup qui lui a été fatal, et le vocabulaire même de Grégoire de Tours s'en est fait l'écho."[1] The present work will attempt to show how the vocabulary recorded and echoed changing ideas, and, in order to define better the "notion d'Etat" as it had previously appeared, will start by briefly examining first what this vocabulary had been in Latin, and then the changes which it underwent during the transitional period of the early Middle Ages, before turning, in chapter 3, to the analysis proper of the Old French vocabulary which was to replace it.

[1] Grégoire de Tours, Histoire des Francs, traduite du latin par R. Latouche (Paris, 1963-65): I, 21.

CHAPTER 1

"Il n'y a pas en indo-européen un nom de la ville"
A. Meillet[1]

It has been suggested that to the changes in the structure of primitive Latin society attendant on the creation of the city, "qui suppose le passage du nomadisme à la vie sédentaire et l'établissement stable des gentes émigrées"[2], there corresponds the introduction to the Latin vocabulary of a number of new words (urbs, populus, plebs), and the specialisation of others (for example, civis) in a precise juridical sense. Paradoxically, although this vocabulary expressing the divisions within and between communities appears to owe its existence in this form to the formation of the city, and although the city-state was the basic unit of Greek and Roman life and civilisation, "dans la pensée des Romains, la réalité fondamentale de la vie politique est la cité"[3], the word urbs, which is normally translated as 'city', is in fact marginal to this area of the vocabulary. It denotes the city, not as community, but as place of habitation, in opposition to rus and ager, both referring to the territory of the city used for cultivation:

divina natura dedit agros, ars humana aedificavit

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[1] A. Ernout & A. Meillet, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine (Abbreviated as DELL), 4th ed. (Paris, 1959-1960): s.v. urbs.

[2] A. Ernout, Aspects du vocabulaire latin (Paris, 1954):177.

[3] P. Grimal, La Civilisation romaine (Paris, 1960): 329.

urbes

(Varro, On Agriculture: III, 1, 4)

Urbs certainly had a great importance for the cultivated Roman of the later republic -- urbanus and urbanitas were the key words of the time -- but urbs (and its derivatives) came to refer almost exclusively to Rome, the city par excellence[1], and, as Ernout points out[2], this specialisation was no doubt a reason for its losing ground: it leaves practically no trace in the Romance languages[3], apart from its fossilisation in a few place-names (for example Orvieto, Oviedo). Urbs has nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, a negative importance, since its disappearance entails a shift in the rest of the vocabulary under discussion, and it will be returned to later.

Civitas, the word which later replaced urbs (cf. Spanish ciudad, Portuguese cidade, Catalan and Occitan ciutat, French cité, Italian città, Rumanian cetate, all with comparable meanings[4]) was current beside it in Classical Latin, although with a meaning different from that which it later acquired. Whereas urbs existed with the meaning 'city as habitation', civitas was used for the community, which was not necessarily urban, since the term is applied for example by Caesar and Tacitus to the tribal communities of Gaul and Germany who scarcely possessed cities as such. Its derivation from civis was evident,

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[1] Cf. C.T. Lewis & C. Short, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford, 1879): s.v. urbs.

[2] Aspects: 178.

[3] W. Meyer-Lübke, Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch (Abbreviated as REW) (Heidelberh, 1935): s.v. urbs.

[4] REW: s.v. civitas.

supported by a series of analogous derivatives. It did in fact belong to "the most productive type of qualitative abstracts derived from adjectives and nouns"[1], together with such words as libertas derived from liber, and urbanitas, already referred to, from urbanus, and the series was very evidently living and productive, since Cicero was able to coin qualitas from qualis.[2]

The formal meaning of civitas, the relation in which it stands to its base, may be illustrated by a sentence of Cicero,

omnibus municipibus duas esse censeo patrias, unam naturae, alteram civitatis

(Laws: 2,2,5)

Later in the context "naturae" is picked up and expanded. It is explained (in reference to Cato) by the phrase "quom esset Tusculi natus". Similarly, "civitatis" could be replaced in the sentence quoted by a phrase such as "quia cives sunt". The substitution of this phrase would not substantially affect the meaning of the sentence: the English translation (translation being a convenient, though no more than adequate, means of indicating meaning) would in either case be something like: 'In my opinion, everyone from the free townships has two homelands, one by birth, and one by citizenship'.

In this sense, the term corresponds quite closely with the suggested English translation, 'citizenship', in that both are abstracts, in a specialised sense of abstract: that is to say, civitas is the abstract of those features, rights, duties, and so forth, which the cives have in

[1] C.D. Buck, Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin (Chicago, 1933): 332.

[2] Ernout & Meillet, DELL: s.v. qualis.

common, with, however, the reservation that, in common with other Latin "abstracts", civitas was also capable of more concrete senses. Just as servitium, for example, might be opposed to imperium or regnum (abstract nouns in the ordinary sense of the word) to mean 'slavery', or to plebs to mean 'the class of slaves'[1], so civitas might have the sense of English 'citizenry', as in the following examples, where the usage of civitas is seen to be the same for Gaul and Germany:

totius fere Galliae legati principes civitatum ad Caesarem gratulatum convenerunt

(Caesar, Gallic War:1,30,1)

Cimbri . . . parva nunc civitas, sed gloria ingens

(Tacitus, Germania: 37)

sed arma sumere non ante cuiquam moris quam civitas suffecturum probaverit

(Germania: 13)

In some of the other uses of civitas, however, this concrete sense becomes more vague, and civitas appears to denote not citizenship, nor the body of citizens, but rather a corporate entity which transcends the individuals comprising it. This is apparently the case for instance in,

quorum singuli saluti huic civitati fuerunt

(Cicero, Republic: 1,1)

where the sense cannot obviously be reduced to either of the broad headings already mentioned. It is in this sense that civitas could overlap with respublica:

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[1] "cum secum ipse reputaret quam gravis casus in servitium ex regno foret"(Sallust, Jugurtha:62,9); "Lycurgus . . . agros locupletium plebi, ut servitio, colendos dedit" (Cicero, Republic:3,9;16); cf. Ernout, Aspects: chapter 6, from where these examples are taken.

civitatem esse omnem in armis; divisum senatum, divisum populum

(Gallic War: 7,32,5)

cur in una republica duo senatus et duo paene iam populi sint

(Republic: 1,19)

However, the difference between respublica and civitas may be demonstrated by substituting respublica in the sentence quoted above from Republic:1,1. *"Quorum singuli saluti huic reipublicae fuerunt" would mean, not 'who were each the salvation of the state', but 'who were each the salvation of the constitution', since, whereas any organised community could be said to constitute a civitas by definition:

civitas, quae est constitutio populi

(Republic: 1,26)

of which the civis was necessarily member, and to which in consequence any threat would be external, respublica referred to the particular kind of internal organisation,

et talis est quaeque res publica, qualis eius aut natura aut voluntas, qui illam regit

(Republic: 1,31)

which was not inherent in the community, since the individual citizen was free not to participate in it:

negant sapientem suscepturum ullam rei publicae partem

(Republic: 1,6)

and which was vulnerable to change from within -- the Latin expression for 'revolution' was novæ res[1] -- and, not surprisingly, since the word is of course a latinism, Modern French république has a similar sense, each république, from the first to the fifth, being characterised by a different constitution.

[1] Cf. Sallust, Catiline: 28,4; 37,1.

Respublica was of course the res of the populus, and was commonly contrasted with res privatae 'private interests'. Cicero insists on this decomposition:

est igitur . . . res publica res populi
(Republic: 1,25)

res publica, quae . . . populi res est
(Republic: 1,26)[1]

In its form a close parallel to English commonwealth, res publica is similar to it in meaning, both being applied equally to the public interest and to the political structure which serves it.[2]

Populus, on which respublica thus depended, was one of a group of four terms which might perhaps be considered as synonyms, since they could all equally be translated by 'people'. However, the relationship holding between these terms, populus, plebs, gens, natio, although there was a certain degree of overlap, was not one of interchangeability but of concurrence. Populus, on the one hand, and gens and natio, on the other, imply a vertical division, according to different criteria, while plebs, denoting a class of society, implies a horizontal division. Populus was generally applicable to any tribe:

tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(Vergil, Aeneid: 6,851)

. . . utrius populi Horatii, utrius Curiatii fuerint
(Livy: 1,24)

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[1] These are of course statements of more than etymology. Compare, in a similar vein, "itaque nulla alia in civitate, nisi in qua populi potestas summa est, ullum domicilium libertas habet" (1,31).

[2] Cf. New English Dictionary (Oxford, 1888): s.v. commonwealth, sections 2,3,4.

eodem anno Frisii, transrhenanus populus . . .

(Tacitus, Annals: 4,72)

but was normally the only word used for the Roman people: "pentru poporul roman însă termenul folosit este întotdeauna populus"[1]. In this use, in which it was coupled frequently with senatus[2], it implied, no doubt in large measure because of the influence of respublica, a stable community linked by common laws, and a definite social structure:

populus autem non hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus

(Cicero, Republic: 1,25)

and it is in this sense that it is applied by Livy to the cities of the Etrurian league:

legatis circa duodecim populos missis

(Livy: 4,23)

itaque a Perusia et Cortona et Arretio, quae ferme capita Etruriae populorum ea tempestate erant

(Livy: 9,37)

Thus, because of the availability of gens and natio for other communities, in some writers, of whom Caesar is one, it might be used normally for only the Roman people: "este de semnalat însă că unii scriitori, pentre a face distincție, întrebuințează numai pentru poporul roman cuvîntul populus, cîtă vreme celelalte neamuri sînt

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[1] F. Demetrescu, "Istoricul cuvîntului populus", Analele Universității din București (Seria Științe Sociale) 10 (1961): vol. 23 (Filologie): 560, 'for the Roman people however, the term used is always populus'.

[2] The formula SPQR was current in all periods, and even survived into imperial times, when the meaning of populus had merged with plebs, and the partnership to which it referred was no longer a valid force.

desemnate prin gens şi natio"[1], and in the example already quoted[2] where Caesar departs from this usage by applying populus to a Gallic tribe, this is because the tribe is here considered as an ordered civitas, composed of senate and people.

Conversely, although gens might be used in connection with Roman society, it had then a closely circumscribed sense, being limited to the Roman family groups or clans (bearing a common name, the nomen gentilicium: Julia, Claudia gens etc.). Since the term familia was also available to denote individual families within the gens[3],

Sulla gentis patriciae nobilis fuit, familia prope iam exstincta

(Sallust, Jugurtha: 95,3)

there was no contradiction between this usage and the use of the word in the wider sense of 'tribe' or 'race', and it was thus currently applied to non-Roman tribes:

Sueborum gens est longe maxima et bellicosissima Germanorum omnium

(Gallic War: 4,1,1)

Ipsos Germanos indigenas crediderim minimeque aliarum gentium adventibus et hospitiis mixtos

(Tacitus, Germania: 2)

In this sense it might be replaced by natio, a concretised abstract derived from nascor[4], which was

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[1]Demetrescu, loc cit, 'it should be pointed out however that some writers make a distinction by reserving populus for the Roman people, other tribes being referred to by gens or natio.'

[2]Above:11, "civitatem esse omnen in armis, divisum senatum, divisum populum".

[3]Cf. Ernout, Aspects: 174.

[4]DELL: s.v. nascor. Gens was similarly linked by its etymology with the idea of birth, though not so transparently, cf. DELL: s.v. gigno.

apparently however somewhat broader in scope:

Natio est omnis Gallorum admodum dedita religionibus
(Gallic War: 6,16,1)

The tendency to reserve populus, normally, although not necessarily, qualified by the adjective Romanus, for the people of Rome led consequently to gentes acquiring the sense 'foreigners',

qui tot annis de imperio cum populo Romano omnium gentium victore certasset
(Cicero, de Oratore: 2,18,76)

and Löfstedt[1] sees in this usage the germ of the later, Christian use of gentes with the sense of 'gentiles', 'heathen'.[2] However, this Christian use of gentes, even if it can be seen to have its starting point in Classical Latin usage, is more probably a reflection of the Greek ethne and the Hebrew goyim, of which it was normally the translation[3], and it would seem unnecessary to suppose a "strongly pejorative"[4] sense of gentes in profane Latin to account for it. It would on the other hand lead us to expect Christian Latin to use populus correspondingly in the sense 'congregation', 'faithful', and this does seem to be borne out by later texts.

Plebs, the fourth term in this series, originally referred to the unassimilated lower orders of society at Rome, "mulțimea necuprinsă în gens și lipsită de orice drepturi"[5], originally distinct from the populus, and an

[1] E. Löfstedt, Late Latin (Oslo, 1959): 74.

[2] As in, for example, Psalm 2: "Quare fremuerunt gentes ...?"

[3] C. Tagliavini, Storia di Parole (Brescia, 1963): 9-12.

[4] Löfstedt, Late Latin: 75.

[5] Demetrescu: 563-64, 'the masses not belonging to a gens and deprived of all rights'.

echo of this earlier use is to be seen in Livy:

> non enim populi sed plebis eum magistratum esse
>
> (2,56,11)

By the end of the fourth century[1] with the granting of more extensive rights to the plebs, and its eventual inclusion within the populus, the distinction became invalid, at least as it had formerly existed:

> plebs autem a populo eo distat, quod populi appellatione universi cives significantur, connumeratis et patriciis, plebis autem appellatione sine patriciis ceteri cives significantur
>
> (Gaius, Institutes: 1, 3)

In the classical period plebs was still in use as a term for the lower classes,

> nam plebes paene servorum habetur loco
>
> (Gallic War: 6,13)

but the consequence for the later development of the vocabulary of the disappearance of the plebs as a class distinct from the populus was that both terms came to be used as synonyms[2],

> dat populus, dat gratus eques, dat tura senatus
>
> (Martial: 8,15)

with an inevitable weakening in the sense of populus.

However, although the system did present some weak points such as this, it was in the main stable throughout the classical period and beyond, although it is of course true that to an extent this stability may have been the result of conscious effort on the part of certain writers anxious to mould their vocabulary to their own view of

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[1] M. Cary, History of Rome, 2nd ed. (London, 1954): chapter 10.

[2] OLL: s.vv. populus, plebs.

the institutions referred to[1]. On the one hand there was a group of three terms used in application to societies which presented an ordered structure: civitas, expressing both the bond of citizenship and the community united by it; populus (with which we may bracket plebs, since the word was applied either to one of the orders within the populus, or as a synonyms for it), the whole body of members of the state -- "populi appellatione universi cives significantur" -- and res publica the commonwealth of these citizens. On the other hand, there was the division into ethnic groups, for which the terms gens and natio were used. These two main divisions were not mutually exclusive, and the one could be to some extent superimposed on the other. The gentes of Germany and Gaul were seen as organised in civitates, and the Roman people (typically the populus) was subdivided into gentes who descended from a common ancestor. The main weakness of this vocabulary as a system was that populus could be synonymous with plebs, and, further, that populus, together with respublica, tended to be limited in its application and to be used only for Rome and the Roman people. The result of this was that the emphases of the vocabulary shifted, and new terms came to be central to this vocabulary. The mechanisms of this change as it can be observed in the vocabulary of medieval Latin will be discussed in the following chapter.

[1] Cf. above: 12, note 1; and below: 21.

CHAPTER 2

"Les mots, sans doute, ne tombent pas du ciel: ils naissent à leur heure"

G. Matoré[1]

The appearance of a neologism (as Matoré defines it, "acception nouvelle introduite dans le vocabulaire d'une langue à une époque déterminée"[2]) is generally imputable to external, non-linguistic circumstances. Its appearance is likely to have only a limited effect on the vocabulary as a whole. This is due primarily to the inertia of language, "the most massively resistant of all social phenomena"[3]. There is in the first place resistance to innovation: "il ne suffit pas de créer un mot, il faut aussi le faire vivre"[4], and it is not only "à des époques puristes"[5] that new creations do not easily establish themselves. Moreover, even when established, the new creations will of necessity operate along the lines already laid down by the pre-existing pattern: the network of relations within the vocabulary may be extended or more finely reticulated, but the overall pattern may hardly be changed.

Furthermore, this same inertia may maintain words in

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[1] La Méthode: 42.

[2] La Méthode: 41.

[3] E. Sapir, Language (New York, 1921): 220.

[4] K. Nyrop, Grammaire historique de la langue française (Copenhagen, 1908-30): III, 9.

[5] Matoré, La Méthode: 42.

the vocabulary even though the objects and institutions which they denote disappear or are replaced. The word may continue to be used in its original meaning, and thus become as it were fossilised, surviving only as an archaism, or, and this is potentially of more significance, the meaning may change, as the word comes to be applied to a succession of things serving approximately the same function for the speaker[1]. The demise of a word, therefore, does not depend solely on external circumstances, but rather on a multiplicity of causes, both linguistic and non-linguistic, often inextricably interwoven. There is, in spite of the conservatism of language, a process of wastage, as words -- perhaps it would be more accurate to say people -- die out, and this process may naturally, at times of rapid transmission, be accelerated: thus it could be argued that the reduction in the word-store of Vulgar Latin, in comparison with the classical language, is a result of the rapid spread of Latin as the administrative language of the Roman empire, and the consequent necessity for the local populations to learn in a relatively short space of time a minimum of Latin to ensure basic communication[2].

If the stability of a language is not easily affected by innovation, the loss of a word for any reason has often been seen as an event of possibly greater consequence. Gaps in the system may lead to chain reactions: "and so with the community of words: when one goes, its estates and duties are divided up; its successors have new and

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[1] Cf. on this latter point S. Ullmann, Principles: 209-11; Semantics, an introduction to the science of meaning (Oxford, 1962): 198.

[2] S.F. Noreiko, "La réduction du vocabulaire latin s'est-elle produite en latin vulgaire ou en proto-roman?", Bulletin des jeunes romanistes 17 (1970): 1-4.

sometimes embarrassing duties, which they can often perform only by divesting themselves of some of their earlier functions."[1] It could be said however that the loss of any one word, depending as it does on so many factors, is not necessarily historically significant: "ce n'est qu'un accident parmi tous ceux qu'enregistre l'histoire d'une langue."[2] It is preferable to consider that the significance belongs rather to the changes in the overall picture, to the sum of shifts, losses, and replacements.

Thus, the disappearance of for example Latin castrum, at least from the spoken language of Gaul, is of no particular significance, since the word is merely supplanted by its diminutive form castellum, which offered no doubt a more substantial phonetic form, whereas the loss of urbs, identified too closely with one particular city, and also at a disadvantage phonetically, since, as well as being a short word, it also presented a rare consonantal group[3], has as a consequence a change in the meaning of civitas, and what is important to note here is that civitas in its former meaning is not replaced, since the historical circumstances no longer required it.

Wartburg notes that by the end of the first century BC, that is to say, very soon after the establishment of the principate at Rome, the word respublica was already rare[4], and there was a tendency among Augustan writers

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[1] J. Orr, Words and Sounds in English and French (Oxford, 1953): 91.

[2] Saussure, Cours: 132.

[3] Cf. further below: 24.

[4] O. Bloch & W. von Wartburg, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française (Abbreviated as DELF), 5th ed. (Paris, 1968): s.v. république.

to substitute for it res Romana[1], a tendency which, in all probability, represents a conscious effort to replace the old affective term with one equally emotive, but politically anodyne, linked no doubt with the apotheosis of Rome and the spread of the cult of "Roma et Augustus"[2]. Rare though it did become, the word did not disappear from written Latin completely, but as the constitution denoted by it was superseded, it only survived as an archaism, stripped of its "republican" connotations. The use of it in later Latin appears to be an appeal to tradition, an indication of "the respect for the forms of the past" which Professor Hay recognises as a characteristic of the period following the fall of the Roman Empire[3]. In the work of Gregory of Tours for example the word is applied only to the remnant of empire in the East which preserved the appearance of continuity[4]:

qui multas gentes non tam gladio quam vigiliis et oratione conpescuit, rem publicam confirmavit, Constantinopuli urbem victor ingressus est

(Historia Francorum: 1,42)

The whole of this passage, including the use of urbs to refer to the capital city, has an archaicising ring to it. In the Variae Epistulae of Cassiodorus, which date from the first half of the same century, a similar tendency is to be remarked. The word occurs for example in a letter from Theodoric to the emperor Anastasius, where it is

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[1] DELF: s.v. république; Lewis & Short, Latin Dictionary: s.v. res.

[2] M. Cary & T.J. Haarhoff, Life and Thought in the Greek and Roman World (London, 1961): 326. It should not be forgotten that an important aim of Augustan patronage was the enlistment of the writer as propagandist, cf. J.W. Duff, Literary History of Rome, 3rd ed. (London, 1953): II, 317.

[3] The Medieval Centuries (London, 1964): 16.

[4] This was pointed out by R. Latouche in the introduction to his translation: I, 21.

applied to the eastern Empire,

in re publica vestra didicimus

(1,1,2)

or it is used to liken the Gothic kingdom to the Empire:

inter utrasque res publicas

(1,1,4)

But it may be replaced in the same context by regnum, with little distinction,

regnum nostrum imitatio vestra est

(1,1,3)

and it would appear evident from this that it is merely the word which has survived, with no trace of the sense of the organisation once denoted by it.

This eclipse of respublica was accompanied by a weakening of the meaning of populus. Although the old distinction between populus and plebs had become less important with the inclusion of the latter class within the state, and there are sporadic examples in writers of the republican period of populus used for plebs[1], the two did not become fully synonymous until the imperial period, "quand a été perdu le sens de la vieille organisation sociale et politique"[2]: the body of citizens to which the terms were applied had then long since ceased to play any part in the business of the state, and accordingly populus declined to the meaning of 'mass', 'multitude'. There is little evidence of reciprocity in this development: Ernout and Meillet note that counter-examples of plebs in the sense of populus are rare[3], and this would appear to be the sign that the convergence of the two terms was a

[1] Demetrescu: 566.

[2] DELL: s.v. plebs.

[3] DELL: s.v. plebs.

result of a change in the meaning of *populus* only. *Plebs* survived in Christian Latin with the meaning 'unbaptised faithful', which is a transposition of its original sense to the Christian register[1], another fact which would lead us to expect a similar evolution for *populus*, but *plebs* was eventually ousted from the common language by the concurrence of *populus*, which, now that the idea of the free citizen body and the prestige attaching to it were no longer felt as relevant or important, came to mean merely 'subjects', and acquired the pejorative overtones which had formerly belonged to *plebs*: one of the *Variae* (1,30), concerning circus rivalries, mentions with some disdain "querela populorum". The word now comes to be used beside *gens* with no apparent feeling of opposition between the two terms:

> omni quippe regno desiderabilis debet esse tranquillitas qua et populi proficiunt et utilitas gentium custoditur
>
> (*Variae*: 1,1,1)

At times it even appears that the old opposition between the native *populus* and foreign *gentes* has been reversed:

> quod gentem Francorum prisca aetate residem feliciter in nova proelia concitastis et Alamannicos populos . . . subdidistis
>
> (*Variae*: 2,41,1)

It was suggested above that *urbs*, although not

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[1] Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Niort, 1883-87): s.v. *plebs*; Ernout, *Aspects*: 213. Demetrescu's assertion "a disparut *plebs* în limbile romanice" (569) is not strictly accurate, since the word is continued by Italian *pieve*, but it would appear that it was only used in Christian Latin: *pieve* (like Welsh *plwyf*, and *Plé-* in Breton place-names) means 'parish' (cf. DELL; REW; A. Dauzat & C. Rostaing, *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de lieu en France* (Paris, 1963).

belonging directly to this sector of the vocabulary, had a negative effect on it by its disappearance. It can be seem from some of the examples quoted in the previous chapter how the areas of meaning covered by urbs and civitas were contiguous, and might overlap. The use of civitas for urbs was rare, but not in fact unknown in classical Latin. Löfstedt says, "Gemieden wird civitas= 'Stadt' natürlich im allgemeinen von Cicero, dagegen finded wir es bei Dolabella"[1],

ut tu te vel Athenas vel in quamvis quietam recipias civitatem

(Cicero, Ad Familiares: 9,9,3)

but there is in fact an instance in Cicero's own writings of civitas used in opposition to ager[2]:

eos plane non solum ex agris verum etiam ex civitatibus suis profugisse

Cicero, Second Verrine: 3,52,121)

Therefore, when urbs began to fall out of general use, both because of its "structure phonétique rare et difficile" and also because of its tendency to be limited in its application to Rome[3], civitas naturally took over its functions:

muros civitatis . . . augere nobis quam diruere tutius est

(Tacitus, Histories: 4,65)

sic et urbium captarum crescit miseratio. Sine dubio enim, qui dicit expugnatam esse civitatem . . .

(Quintilian: 8,3,67)

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[1] Philologischer Kommentar zur Peregrinatio Aetheriae (Uppsala, 1911, reprinted Darmstadt, 1962): 175.

[2] Quoted in DELL: s.v. civis (although both editions consulted, the third of 1951, and the fourth of 1959-60, give the reference incorrectly), but not elsewhere; Lewis & Short agree with Löfstedt's statement.

[3] Ernout, Aspects: 193; 178.

Such examples become more common in post-classical Latin, and the process continues: the Peregrinatio Aetheriae uses civitas, never urbs or oppidum[1].

The new sense of civitas was however acquired at the expense of the old. The two were evidently too close together to be denoted by the one word without risk of confusion, and the former senses of 'citizenship' and 'citizenry' were lost. Thus, when the word is used by Gregory of Tours it refers only to the city, and not to the community: he begins a description of Dijon thus,

> est autem castrum firmissimis muris in media planitiae et satis jocunda conpositum

and ends it with the remark:

> qui cur non civitas dicta sit, ignoro
>
> (Historia: 3,19)

This development was not without a certain importance for the toponymy of a large area of what is now France. It has often been pointed out that "un gran numero di nomi di luogo della Francia risalgono a nomi di tribù gallichi."[2] The explanation for this is quite simple: the community had always been called civitas, and when, with the decline of urbs, civitas became ambiguous, civitas de Parisiis, for example, might be understood to mean either the community, or the chef-lieu of that community, the town of Lutetia, and, as civitas lost its former sense, the name Parisiis, ousting the old Lutetia, came to be applied only to the town[3]. Because of this it is possible to determine

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[1] Löfstedt, Kommentar: 174; Ernout, Aspects: 178.

[2] G. Alessio, Le Origini del Francese (Florence, 1946): 19; also A. Dauzat, Les noms de lieux (Paris, 1926, reprinted 1963): 123; C. Jullian, Histoire de la Gaule (Paris, 1908): IV, 526-27.

[3] Dauzat, Les noms de lieux: 123.

the date at which the change in the meaning of civitas was completed. In general the name of the community seems to have gained its ascendancy during the fourth century[1], following a period of fluctuation which began in the first half of the third century[2]. It would appear then that the process must have been completed by about 250 AD. This, as both Jullian, and Dauzat after him, point out[3], is very soon after the edict of Caracalla of 212 AD which granted Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the empire. It is, to say the least, ironic that the loss of civitas in the sense 'citizenship' should coincide so closely with the extension of universal citizenship, and the fact has not passed without comment. Dauzat sees in this substitution of the name of the community for the name of the town "l'indice d'un profond bouleversement social"[4]. But this development was, as has been shown, set in motion by linguistic causes which date far back. What is significant here is that there is not a reaction, that no new term is found to carry on the old sense of civitas, and even this is not surprising: the Saussurean dictum "dans la langue il n'y a que des différences"[5] is true in more ways than one. When the citizenship had become common to all, and the edict of 212 was no more than the ratification of a state of affairs which had been developing for a long time, it no longer represented an important distinction, and there was consequently no longer any need to reserve a term for it.

Of this group of words, only gens and natio continued

[1]Dauzat & Rostaing, Dictionnaire: passim.
[2]Jullian, Histoire: IV, 529.
[3]Jullian, Histoire: IV, 525; Dauzat, Les noms de lieux: 123-24.
[4]Les noms de lieux: 124.
[5]Cours de linguistique générale: 166.

into this medieval period unchanged in meaning. There is however in their use a change of degree which is fully as significant as a change in kind. With the barbarian invasions and the fall of the western empire, barbarian and Roman mingle, but they do not mix, and within and without the several kingdoms, it is the distinction of race which becomes important, a distinction which is most evident in the legal sphere, in the "personnalité des lois", whereby Goth, Roman, or Frank, no matter where he dwelt, was judged according to the laws of his people[1]. Gens accordingly becomes the focal point of the vocabulary, and it recurs constantly:

novis regibus mos est per diversas gentes provectus sui gaudia nuntiare .

(Variae: 10,2,1)

numquid vos nova gentis facies ulla deterruit

(Variae: 10,14,3)

Similar examples are common.

It was noted in chapter 1 that the "hour" is conjectured to have struck for the political and ethnic vocabulary of Latin with the foundation of the city. This, although conjectural, is highly probable, and it further appears that this vocabulary was maintained in use during the period of internal development and external expansion and conquest until it was no longer firmly enough rooted in reality to withstand the processes of wastage considered above. But the decline of this vocabulary must be assumed to antedate the "disparition de l'Empire d'occident". The link between the two phenomena is not a direct one of cause and effect. Rather, the linguistic upheaval is a symptom of a climate of opinion which undermined the

[1] F. Lot, Les Invasions germaniques (Paris, 1945): 192-95; R.H.C. Davis, A History of Medieval Europe (London, 1957): 36.

empire, and made it the more vulnerable to external pressures.

The notions underlying the classical vocabulary belonged essentially to the small city-state community, and could not be transferred to the wider plane of the empire. Just as modern democracy has little in common with the Attic kind beyond the name, so, after the establishment of the principate, the Roman citizenship became "passive", and lost its political significance[1]. The edict of 212 was the final ratification of a process which had been long under way, and as the citizenship had spread, it had lost in importance. Similarly with populus and respublica: the closing centuries of the pre-Christian era had been times of unrest and upheaval at Rome, Sulla and Caesar had each in his turn threatened and modified the existing order, and Augustus had claimed to have restored it. The heightened significance of respublica in this period may accordingly be attributed to the consciousness of the threat to it, but, the crisis past, the term declines into obscurity.

During the centuries that followed the fall of the empire, the vocabulary centres on two terms, gens and regnum. As F. Lot remarks, "la seule institution qui subsista fut la royauté"[2], and it has been seen how regnum was substituted for respublica. The two terms gens and regnum sum up the framework of the society of the Dark Ages, as they are called, until a new factor enters into play, "la prééminence de la terre, à laquelle l'homme se rive de plus en plus, et qui aura pour point d'aboutissement le servage féodal et la territorialité des coutumes

[1] A.N. Sherwin-White, The Roman Citizenship (Oxford, 1939): 168.

[2] Les Invasions germaniques: 213.

remplaçant la personnalité des lois"[1]. It is with the Old French vocabulary which reflects this that this study will now be concerned.

[1] Dauzat, Les noms de lieux: 124.

CHAPTER 3

"Les mots n'ont plus le même sens qu'autrefois"
Raymond Queneau[1]

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to illustrate the chief distinctions drawn in the Latin vocabulary for national and ethnic groups, and to show how these were no longer maintained in the medieval Latin texts. Attention will now turn to the popular language, to the earliest texts in French.

Where classical Latin had possessed four terms for designating national or ethnic communities, _populus_, _plebs_, _gens_, _natio_, in Old French we find only two: _gent_ and _peuple_. _Nation_, coming from _natio_, is still found on occasion, but seems no longer to be important in its old sense. Bloch and Wartburg describe it as a borrowing from Latin[2], and the forms which are generally found, _natioun_, _nacioun_, with the absence of a diphthong in the first syllable[3], mark it as a learned word, as does also the fact that in most, if not all, instances it reverts to its etymological meaning[4], as in the following examples:

Iceste mort, dum le Satan
Teneit pris nostre pere Adan
E toz ceus en damnation

---

[1] _Zazie dans le Métro_ (Paris, 1959): 140.
[2] _DELF_: s.v.
[3] Cf _ratio_ > _raison_.
[4] See above: 14, note 4.

Qui de lui orent nation
Descendement ne concreance,
Oct Dex destruite . . .
("Benoit", Chronique des ducs de Normandie: 26349-54)[1]
Desci qu'en l'encarnation
Que le filz Deu prist nation
(Ambroise, L'Estoire de la guerre sainte: 12349-50)[2]

Although Godefroy[3] evidently lists no examples of the word in its modern meaning, in accordance with the stated principle of his dictionary, Lommatzsch does cite instances of the meanings 'Volk', and 'Heimat, Vaterland'[4]. Some of these however might also and as well be explained as examples where the etymological sense is still predominant, and in general this modern sense seems to be later: although Bloch and Wartburg give the twelfth century as the date of the modern meaning[5], examples are rare, and the FEW[6] gives the date 1270 for the meaning 'réunion d'hommes habitant un même territoire et ayant une origine commune, des institutions communes, une langue identique, etc.'[7]

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[1] publiée d'après le manuscrit de Tours ... par C. Fahlin (Uppsala, 1951-54). Abbreviated as CDN.

[2] publiée et traduite ... par G. Paris (Paris, 1897). Abbreviated as A, EGS.

[3] Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française (Paris, 1880-1902).

[4] A. Toblers Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch herausgegeben von E. Lommatzsch (Wiesbaden, 1915-).

[5] DELF: s.v.

[6] W. von Wartburg, Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch (Bonn-Leipzig, 1922-).

[7] The word appears common enough in the Latin of the period however: cf. Robert le Moine, Hierosolymitana Expeditio (in J.P. Migne, Patrologia Latina (Paris, 1880): CLV, 669-758): IV, 4, "ut terror eius fieret in universis nationibus . . . et vicinas nationes eorum disterminabat gladio". The

Of the surviving pair, peuple has the distinction of appearing in the earliest text which may be called French, the Strasburg Oaths:

pro deo amur et pro christian poblo et nostro commun salvament[1]

We may here recall the particular senses of 'heathen' and 'unbaptised faithful' which were given to the words gentes and plebs in Christian Latin[2], and the corresponding evolution which may be inferred for populus, and it should not surprise us therefore that in this context of the Oaths, taken solemnly in the sight of God and men, peuple should occur specifically in the sense of 'Christian people'. The word appears also in other hagiographic contexts. In the Vie de Saint Léger[3], for example, we find,

Missae cantet, fist lo mult ben
Pobl' et lo rei communïet

(VSL: 82-83)

where poble would seem to mean no more than 'congregation'. And in the Chronique des ducs de Normandie, we find, again in a religious context, two instances of peuple used in contrast with gent, in a way which evidently reflects the use of the two terms in Christian Latin:

L'eveques fait les sainz sonner

(continued) senses listed by Du Cange seem to be narrower, e.g.: §4, 'regio', and also the peculiar later medieval meaning of 'the different groups in the university constituted by people from the different provinces'(nationes §1), which occurs also in Middle French: Godefroy, complément: s.v. nacion, lists examples of the sense 'tous ceux d'une même nation qui habitent en pays étranger'; cf. also FEW: s.v.

[1] In A. Henry, Chrestomathie de la littérature en ancien français, 4th ed. (Berne, 1967): I,1.

[2] Cf. Löfstedt, Late Latin: 74.

[3] In W. Foerster & E. Koschwitz, Altfranzösisches Uebungsbuch, 6th ed.(Leipzig, 1921): 78 sqq. Abbreviated as VSL.

As jenz e au pople assembler

(CDN: 1669-70)

Li evesques por son fillol
Chante la messe hautement
E li poples vint e la jent

(CDN: 1696-98)

where we may interpret pople as 'congregation' in view of the context, and jent as referring to the people at large. This is in fact at variance with the general use of both peuple and gent as they appear to be used normally, but the Latin usage, and the frequency with which peuple occurs in this kind of context argues for considering peuple as having this special sense in a particular register of the vocabulary.

It was noted by Demetrescu[1] that later Latin populus has often merely the sense of 'great number', and it is in this sense that the word appears to be used in the majority of other examples which are to be found in Old French. Peuple is definitely the less common of the two words, and in many of its occurrences it is used together with and in opposition to gent: we note at once that, apart from the religious sense of the word, which belongs to a specialised vocabulary rather than to the common language, peuple has no connotation of any cohesion or unity in the group which it denotes; a peuple is a heterogeneous assemblage. The word is used, for example, to denote the many and diverse peoples who settled in Europe, and from whom the present populations are descended,

Por les estranges poples nez

(CDN: 279)

there being between them no necessary connection. It is

[1] "Istoricul cuvîntului populus": 570.

also used for a motley crew of warriors assembled from all over the countryside:

Estrange pople unt assemblé

(CDN: 3364)

It may also be used for the population, the inhabitants of a region or a town, in the sense defined by the FEW as, 'ensemble des habitants d'un pays qui n'appartiennent ni à la noblesse ni à la haute bourgeoisie' -- a qualification which is significant, implying as it does the exclusion of those thus designated from groups which possess a unity of their own -- as in:

Vit son pople multepleier

(Wace, Le Roman de Brut: 1215)[1]

Veneit li poples et naisseit
Molteploect si e creisseit

(CDN: 2227-28)

Si que en paiz e en quitance
I puisson vivre et tu renner
E le pople dreit governer

(CDN: 2294-96)

In Old Occitan, at a rather later date, some time after the start of the Albigensian Crusade in 1209, the usage is the same: for example in,

Mas al mais del poble sapchatz que no agreia

(La Chanson de Guillaume de Tudèle: 17,5)[2]

where it is explicitly question of the inhabitants of the

[1] Edited by Ivor Arnold (Paris, 1938). Abbreviated as W,B.

[2] In E. Martin-Chabot, Chanson de la Croisade albigeoise (Paris, 1931): I, La Chanson de Guillaume de Tudèle. Abbreviated as CGT. The first figure in references to this work is the number of the laisse, the second the number of the line or lines within the laisse.

town of Béziers, and also of an ad hoc assembly, in,

Si no fo grans lo pobles qui i era amassatz
Que de tota la terra era laïns intratz

(CGT: 30,13-14)

It is still in this sense that, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Villehardouin uses the word in his Conquête de Constantinople[1]. We find for example:

e i fu le pueple de la terre et li plus des barons et des pelerins

(V, CC: 64)

Mult ot illuec grant pitié del pueple de la terre et des pelerins

(V, CC: 67)

In all these examples which have been cited, where peuple is used rather than gent, the common characteristic, the distinction implied, the "marker" in the terminology of one school of thought[2], or the "sème", as it is termed by another[3], is a negative one. The criterion which appears to govern the use of peuple, when this use is considered in opposition to that of gent, is that peuple presupposes no unity in the group thus designated. For example, in

li bons dux de Venise, qui molt ere sages et proz, monta el leteri et parla au pueple et lor dist . . .

(V, CC: 29)

the pueple referred to are simply those assembled on this

[1]Edited by E. Faral (Paris,1938). Abbreviated as V, CC.

[2]For example, J.J. Katz & P.M. Postal, An Integrated Theory of Linguistic Descriptions (Cambridge,Mass.,1964).

[3]Cf. B. Pottier, "Vers une sémantique moderne", Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature 2, i (1964): 102-37.

particular occasion. On the other hand, gent, in the contexts in which it is used, seems in general to convey an idea of a certain cohesion or organisation. In such a sentence as,

Enki ot mult grant pueple assemblé de son lignage et de ses homes

(V, CC: 37)

in which one would normally have expected gent, pueple would here imply that this is a random selection from within a coherent group, the lignage, or the gent.

This can be better illustrated by considering in greater detail an instance which has already been quoted:

Estrange pople unt assemblé

(CDN: 3364)

As was indicated above, this phrase refers to a troop of irregulars; a few lines further on in the narrative, this same assembly is considered in a different light, and the use of the word gent here clearly indicates a different sense:

Li prince d'eus e li meillor,
Qui plus orent sen e valor,
Ordennent lor jenz e garnissent
E en conreiz les departissent

(CDN: 3369-72)

The extra-linguistic (pragmatic or referential) criterion for the selection of gent in this passage is the contrast between irregulars, and the same men considered as an army, under orders, equipped, and drawn up in battle array: the pople having been given an organisation becomes a gent. The intra-linguistic criterion is the use of the possessive adjective: this and other syntactic usages common with gent will be considered in greater detail

later[1].

If we consider first the question of reference, we find that, in general, where the word gent is used, it is applied to a body of people who are in some way linked. In his study of the vocabulary of Wace, H.E. Keller distinguishes six different senses of the word as a noun[2]. These are, respectively, 'les gens', 'ceux qui sont sous les ordres de quelqu'un', 'famille', 'race', 'troupe', and, for gent à pié and gent à cheval, 'soldats qui combattent à pied, à cheval'.

If we accept provisionally the analysis proposed by Keller, it is evident that, apart from the first, extremely general sense, which is the one which has remained in Modern French, and the continuation of the etymological sense, represented by the third and fourth glosses, for both of which senses the possibility of opposition to peuple is much reduced, the other glosses given[3] contain the same notion, the same sème, of a body of men subject to a common discipline. This much is clearly implied in the terms of the second definition given by Keller, 'ceux qui sont sous les ordres de quelqu'un', and if we were to list the other senses isolated by Keller in a tree-diagram, or some other form showing their hierarchy, this particular definition would most logically find its place at the first embranchment, since the senses 'troupe' and so forth depend naturally upon it, to the extent in fact that one

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[1] Below: 40.

[2] Etude descriptive sur le vocabulaire de Wace (Berlin, 1953): 156a (two references); 160b; 261a; 262a (two references). Whatever criticisms might be levelled at this work (see also below: 51) the definitions given are nonetheless instructive.

[3] Which might for this reason better be considered together.

may question the necessity of identifying them as separate senses.

This definition is in fact valid for almost all the examples which we find:

Brutus vit ke grant gent aveient

(W, B: 213)

Ad Brutus sa gent assemblee

(W, B: 405)

. . . con vos e la vostre gent . . .

(V, CC: 18)

Et li dux dist qu'il en parleroit à la soe gent

(V, CC: 24)

De la jent Rou unt assez mort

(CDN: 3292)

However, on closer consideration, this analysis seems to be unduly limiting in its compartmentalising, and there are still a considerable number of examples which cannot be fitted into this schema. Other senses, although not directly subordinate on the terms outlined above, may be seen to be related. In a sentence such as this one from Villehardouin,

car onques hom de son aage ne fu plus amés de ses homes et de l'altre gent

(V, CC: 37)

although we may, without doing violence to the meaning of the text interpret gent as meaning no more than 'les gens', it is clearly parallel to "ses homes", and refers to 'les hommes d'autrui', and the sense intended must be that of Keller's second definition, 'ceux qui sont sous les ordres de quelqu'un'. Again, in such other examples as,

la laie genz ere en discorde

(V, CC: 97)

or

de tote la gent christiane

(A, EGS: 42)

where the primary sense would seem to be the general one, there is however an obvious analogy to be drawn with

Por iceste grant jent paene
Fu en esfrei la crestiene

(CDN: 5239-40)

where the reference is to armies, and hence to a body of men under the orders of someone. Similarly, the use of gent in

nos ne somes mie tant de gent

(V, CC: 59)

Grant gent sunt e poi unt vitaille

(W, B: 351)

although appearing at first sight to be an instance of the general sense, cannot be placed exclusively in one or the other category, and conversely, in the sentence,

Riches huem fu, grant gent manda

(W, B: 842)

where gent seems an obvious instance of the sense 'those commanded', it would also be possible to construe it in the general sense. Furthermore, the confusion between singular and plural, natural enough for a word with such a meaning, which Keller notes in Wace only for the general sense, applies equally to the other senses, both in Wace and in other authors:

. . . cele gent de Troie fu,
Qui aloent tere querant
Qu'il eüssent a remanant

(W, B: 784-86)

Tost commande ses jenz armer

(CDN: 2920)

There is in fact no need to assume any of these several distinctions in accounting for the meaning of *gent* in medieval French, and we may suppose that the sense of 'ceux qui sont sous les ordres de quelqu'un' (or whatever more convenient label we may choose to give it) is present to some degree in all instances of the word. The *gent* is a coherent group, as opposed to *peuple*, and this notion of coherence implies (it would perhaps be better and more exact to say, is not differentiated from) the fact, or at least the possibility, of being under the command of, or owing allegiance to, someone. It follows from this that the person commanding the *gent* will often be specified, and, as was mentioned above, a notable syntactic feature of the use of *gent* in Old French is the frequent use of a possessive construction with *gent*: a possessive determinant, the preposition *de*, or a genitive equivalent:

Le jur emprés prist de sa gent
Les plus sages priveement

(W, *B*: 493-94)

E li reis de France ensement
Redona a ses genz granment

(A, *EGS*: 1075-76)

. . . la jent Rou . . .

(*CDN*: 3292)

. . . gent paienur[1] . . .

(*CR*: 1019)[2]

It is evident also from the texts that the other

[1]The parallel holds whether this expression is considered to be a fossil genitive, or an adjective. In view of the frequency of such expressions as "la jent Rou", and the fact that *paienur* is found only in this construction, it seems preferable to take it as a genitive.

[2]*La Chanson de Roland*, ed. F. Whitehead (cf. above: 5, note 3).

term of the possessive expression need not necessarily be the name of a person (or class of persons), whether expressed or replaced by a pronoun, but may also be the name of a place or region. This difference moreover does not imply any change in the sense of gent. An expression such as,

Al rei de France et a sa gent

(A, EGS: 1107)

remains strictly comparable with such others as,

le reis Guis et la gent de Pise

(A, EGS: 2977)

since because the feudal relation is essentially three-cornered the link is considered to hold between any two of its terms, and la gent al rei de France is also la gent de France:

La gent de France iert blecee et blesmie

(CR: 590)

The same is also true for what might be considered as examples of the general sense:

et grant partie de la bone gent de Champagne qui croisié estoient

(V, CC: 33)

. . . cele gent de Troie fu

(W, B: 784)

Les genz de Sur . . .

(A, EGS: 2729)

Similarly, just as the pronoun may be substituted for the name of a person, so the place-name may be replaced by an adjective,

la franceise gent

(CR: 396)

L'Ospital fud sor la marine

Ou trop aveit gent sarazine

(A, EGS: 2967-68)

and the writer may also establish an identity between gent and the ethnic adjective used pronominally, or the corresponding prepositional expression:

Mais teus genz orent l'ovre enprise
Qui mainte vile aveient prise:
Ço erent Norman et Peitevin
Gascon, Mansel et Angevin
Et de Engleterre en i aveit

(A, EGS: 741-45)

In the example already referred to from the Chanson de Roland[1],

Si veit venir cele gent paienur

(CR: 1019)

"cele gent paienur" stands in contrast to,

Icist ferunt nos Franceis grant irur

(CR: 1023)

where, moreover, Franceis is being used with a possessive determinant, as also in:

Karles l'oït e ses Franceis l'entendent

(CR: 1788)

It is apparent from this that gent de may be followed by a place name or a personal name, as also may any of the other expressions which are equivalent to it, such as ceus de, or les hommes de, and the meaning in all these contexts is the same, and this is further demonstrated by the fact that the same adjective, estrange, may be the negation of either usage:

Que des humes de son linage,
Que d'estranges qu'il ot menez,
Out ovec lui sis mil armez

(W, B: 9070-72)

Ja ne murreit en estrange regnét

[1] Above: 40.

Ne trespassast ses humes e ses pers
Vers lur païs avreit sun chef turnét
(CR: 2864-66)

Estrange est dite e apelee
Et d'estranges genz abitee.
Por les estranges poples nez
Dum toz cil rennes est poplez
Est Germaine sauvage dite
(CDN: 277-81)

It is also to be noted that where de with the name of a country is used rather than the derived adjective, as in the example already quoted above from the Estoire de la Guerre sainte[1], it is not always felt necessary to express the word gent. In the Chanson de Roland, for example, it is frequently the demonstrative which is found,

Par cels de France voelt il del tut errer
(CR: 167)

Fors cels de France . . .
(CR: 3032)

and the same applies to other works and authors:[2]

Ne preisa Hastenc les Franceis
Flamencs ne ceus de Vermendeis
Ne ceus d'Anjou ne d'Aquitaine
(CDN: 841-43)

In the contexts in which they are used, all these forms of expression are equivalent; we cannot distinguish any difference of sense whether the writer uses the form la gent de France, or la franceise gent, or cels de France,

[1] A, EGS: 745, above: 42.
[2] Further examples are quoted below: 55.

or even the expressions which occur almost like a refrain in the Chanson de Roland, Francs de France and Franceis de France; nor does the use of the name of a person, in any of the possible constructions, introduce any different shades of meaning: la gent de France is la gent Karlun, as are the Normans la gent Rou. The kernel of all these expressions is gent and the meaning which it possesses in the vocabulary of Old French, and sufficient evidence has been adduced in this chapter to demonstrate that meaning. In the vocabulary which is here being considered gent stands in opposition to peuple, and while this latter word, following an evolution begun in Latin, comes to be used only for an indeterminate mass of people, outside or below the feudal organisation, and is also a word which is noticeably less common than gent, gent, the more important of the two terms, serves to designate the group of people in some way organised: normally armed, as opposed to the typically non-combatant populace[1], and dependent, since this period knows only two modes of organisation, two poles of attraction, on an overlord, or attached to a fief. Not that it is necessary to distinguish the two, since the one presupposes the other, and in general there is little ground for assuming that the meaning of this, or any other, word can be so easily compartmentalised, each sense in a compartment corresponding to a definition in a hypothetical dictionary of the language; rather, all the senses are present, and we have seen how the constructions used do not distinguish between them, although one or the other may be brought to the fore through the influence of the particular context.

The meaning of gent is also conditioned by that of

[1] Cf Duby & Mandrou, HCF: I, 49, "Au XI^{e} siècle ce fut entre les hommes de guerre et les autres que s'installa la distinction majeure."

other words which may occur with it, and of these the most common and the most important for the topic here considered are those denoting 'country, land': this idea and that expressed by gent are, as has been said, closely bound up, and it will accordingly be necessary to consider further the scope and meaning of the term terre and its synonyms in Old French.

CHAPTER 4

"Cil ad oi e entendu
Que cele gent de Troie fu
Qui aloent tere querant
Qu'il eüssent a remanant"

Wace[1]

The basis of the Roman state had been the common citizenship, which was supplanted in the early Middle Ages by the ethnic community; this was in its turn superseded by another, different, principle of unity. Denys Hay sums up the change thus: "After invasion was over, the tribal law of the German intruders became fixed by the areas in which they dwelt -- became, to use the technical language of later days, 'territorialized', so that men asked a stranger not 'To what folk do you belong?' but 'Where do you come from?'"[2] And by "where" they meant 'from what land'. The process by which the cities had taken the names of their inhabitants was repeated on a larger scale as the names of the invading peoples became attached to the countries where they settled: Gallia and Italia were replaced by Francia and Longobardia,[3] formed on the names of the most noticed of the settling tribes, and just as citeien was later to be formed from cité and to take the place of the now defunct civis, so new

[1] Le Roman de Brut: 783-86.

[2] The Medieval Centuries: 59.

[3] For example in the Glosses of Reichenau (in Foerster & Koschwitz, Altfranzösisches Uebungsbuch: 1 sqq): 934;366; cf. also: "El trames sos sagels a Rome en Lombardia" (CGT: 50).

ethnica were formed from the new names of the countries: Francus clung tenaciously to existence, but Francigena[1] and Franciscus or Francensis were used beside it.

In his study of the development of the feudal vocabulary of French, K.J. Hollyman devotes a brief section to terre[2], in which he notes that although most of the uses of terre in French are already present or foreshadowed in Latin terra, there is however a notable difference in the structure of the society of this period which makes itself felt in the vocabulary. This is of course the chain of feudal dependencies, which, entailing as it does a radically changed conception of property and tenure, could not but have an effect on the attitude towards possessions.

Classical Latin terra possessed three main senses. At its most general it denoted 'land' as an element[3], opposed, as in the stock phrase "terra marique", to the sea, or to the air, as in:

Age ut a caelestibus rebus ad terrestres veniamus
(Cicero, De Natura Deorum: 2,120)

More particularly it could be used to denote a specific extent of land, a 'region' or 'country',

neu in Italiam reportaretur donec hostis in terra Italia esset
(Livy: 25,7,4)

or 'land for cultivation': Hollyman cites examples[4], both literal and figurative, of terra used with colere and

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[1] As in Robert le Moine, Hierosolymitana Expeditio. Cf. also P. Porteau, Deux Etudes d'histoire de la langue (Paris, 1962): 37-49.

[2] Développement du vocabulaire féodal: 29-32.

[3] Cf. DELL: s.v.

[4] Développement: 29.

and other verbs implying tilling or cultivation. Both these particular senses are present for example in:

et fruges in ea terra primus repertas esse arbitrantur

(Cicero, Second Verrine: 4,48,106)

All of these senses can be distinguished in Old French. H.E. Keller lists, in his study of the vocabulary of Wace, among the other senses of the word, 'la terre comme planète',

Deus prier et reclamer
Qui crea ciel et terre et mer

(La Conception Nostre Dame: 700)[1]

where, however, it would seem preferable to understand 'solid ground', 'dry land', in view of the obvious reference to Genesis: 1, 8-10, senses which are not too far removed from that which Keller glosses as 'matière solide dont le globe est fait'[2]:

et qui de terre vient a terre esteut venir

(Wace, Le Roman de Rou: II, 92)[3]

Keller also notes a sense 'pays', with the example:

Le rei Aralt orent mort
E la terre envaïe a tort

(La Conception Nostre Dame: 26)[4]

It is in connection with this that we must note another sense which begins to appear only in later Latin. In the classical language terra was not used to refer to any sort of administrative circumscription, but in an

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[1] Etude: 30b.
[2] Etude: 32a.
[3] Ed. A.J. Holden (Paris, 1970-71). Abbreviated as W, R.
[4] Etude: 209a.

indeterminate sense. In the examples quoted above[1], no boundaries are implied, and they would just as well, and perhaps even more accurately, be translated 'on Italian' soil', 'in Sicilian soil'. Later, however, the word begins to appear in a sense which Hollyman defines as 'terre cultivable ou cultivée attachée à une propriété'[2]; the normal classical word in this sense was ager, and this was opposed to terra,

> ut id quod agri efferant sui quascumque velint in terras portare possint ac mittere
>
> (Cicero, Republic: 2,4,9)

but, as is shown by the examples quoted by Hollyman[3], the two came to be synonymous in the documents of the early Middle Ages, and could occur in similar contexts without distinction:

> De his, quae parochiis in terris vineis mancipiis. . .
>
> (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges: III,1,6)[4]
>
> domum, agrum vel vineam seu mancipium
>
> (MGH, Leges: I,1,222)

This usage is the starting point for an expansion of terra, which later becomes a general term for all types of holdings: "De plus en plus terra devient le terme général qui désigne toute propriété terrienne; une fois mentionné le mot qui est la dénomination particulière de la possession, on emploie terra,

> campum . . . terram
> Villam Novam . . . terram
> mansum . . . terram
> alodum . . . terram"[5]

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[1] 47-48, from Livy and Cicero.

[2] Développement: 30.

[3] Développement: 29-30.

[4] Hanover, 1835-89.

[5] Développement: 31.

Nor is this "feudal" sense of *terra* confined to legal documents in Latin. *Terre* is also so used in some of the oldest literary texts in French. In *La Vie de Saint Alexis*[1], for example, it occurs in a specifically feudal sense,

O filz, cui erent mes granz ereditez,
Mes larges terres dunt jo aveie asez
(*VSA*: 401-402)

and the following strophe repeats this in a different form, using *honur*, which is, as Hollyman points out[2], another of the central terms of the feudal system, which was used in reference to the marks of honour, the fiefs held by a feudal vassal, which might be land, or offices performed for his lord, and which, whatever their actual form, were treated all in the same way and considered as equivalent:

Ma grant honur t'aveie retenude
(*VSA*: 407)

For this reason, as with *gent*, it should be noted that *terre* and the other terms denoting feudal holdings are used very frequently with expressions of possession.

In later texts, and in particular in the *Chanson de Roland*, this sense becomes more common:

Jo vos durrai or e argent asez
Teres e fiez tant cum vos en vuldrez
(*CR*: 75-76)

Si vos durai feus e honors e teres
(*CR*: 3399)

Hollyman notes that this feudal sense is closely linked with the classical sense of 'pays': "Comme l'a bien vu Bédier . . . il y a un étroit rapport entre ce sens et

[1] Ed. C. Storey (Oxford, 1946). Abbreviated as *VSA*.
[2] *Développement*: 33-41.

celui de 'pays, région', attesté aussi en latin classique et chrétien"[1], but he nevertheless considers them as distinct[2]. Keller also makes an arbitrary distinction between the sense 'domaine' and the other senses which he identifies (although such distinctions are in fact forced upon him by the nature of his treatment). There is an obvious danger in drawing boundaries other than those which "each language lays down . . . within the amorphous 'thought-mass'."[3] Medieval French terre (or any other word) is not to be thought of as possessing a certain number of discrete senses, definable in a neutral metalanguage, and which can in consequence be studied in isolation, but rather as covering "a single unarticulated section of a field"[4] of meaning. The only evidence that we can have for supposing that a particular culture possesses a particular concept is the existence in the language of that culture of a word which denotes it, and, unless it can be proved (which in the present case would appear extremely unlikely) that we are in fact dealing with homonyms, the fact that the language being studied classes together, by using the same word, what are in the metalanguage different concepts, is sufficient indication that in the object language no distinction is made between them[5].

In the case under consideration here it has been

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[1] Développement: 32.

[2] Cf. "Mais bien que ce sens se retrouve . . . on y rencontre le plus souvent . . .", ibid.

[3] Hjelmslev, Prolegomena: 52.

[4] S. Ohman, "Theories of the 'Linguistic Field'", Word 9 (1953): 133.

[5] As L. Bloomfield remarks (Language, revised ed. (London, 1935): 144):"we have to take the specific and stable character of language as a presupposition of linguistic study."

noted that the classical sense of 'pays' was in fact much vaguer, and it is only under the influence of the feudal use that terre comes to be used to denote particular, delimited areas of land. The arbitrary nature of the distinctions which are seen in the use of the word is evident in some of the passages which are quoted by Keller. That, already quoted[1], given in the article 'pays' closely parallels the example given under the heading 'domaine':

ne por cen n'osoient il autrui terre envaïr
(W, R: II, 52)[2]

Nor, in fact, should this surprise us, since, in practice, almost avery "pays" was also "domaine", and in many, if not most, of the other instances of the word, it is likewise impossible to say that one or other sense is meant:

Cil tient la tere entre qu'as Cazmarine/s/
(CR: 956)

Cil tint la tere entresqu'en Val Sevree
(CR: 3313)

Carles mandet humes de plusurs teres
(CR: 3743)

Si seit nostre la tere ou lor
(CR: 1960)

It is particularly significant that the verb used commonly with terre is tenir, which is the verb used for feudal possession, often with à or de, indicating the overlord from whom the fief or honour is held, but quite commonly used absolutely[3]:

La fut li reis ki tute Espaigne tint
(CR: 409)

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[1] Above: 48.

[2] Keller, Etude: 199a; quoted here after Holden's edition.

[3] Hollyman, Développement: 55-60.

De vos tendrat Espaigne le regnét

(CR: 697)

. . . li reis ki dulce France tient

(CR: 116)

. . . Carles, ki France tient

(CR: 470)

. . . li reis ki France tient

(CR: 755)

It is in fact impossible to say that in any of the cases where terre is used in a context allowing the translation 'pays, région' the feudal notions underlying the term are ever entirely absent, as Bédier realised, since in all but one (CR:50) of the following examples his translation keeps the original word. Spain and France are qualified by terre,

Tere de France

(CR: 1861)

France la lur tere

(CR: 50)

Espaigne la tere

(CR: 2636)

En la tere d'Espaigne

(CR: 910)

Espaigne la grant tere

(CR: 666)

and they are in consequence classified as feudal holdings, and referred to in the same terms as other holdings. It is perhaps diachronically true to say that the classical sense of 'pays, région' is still continued in early French terre, but it is so coloured and influenced by the new use of the word in these feudal contexts that the two cannot be considered separately. The speakers of the time did not make a clear distinction because no necessity was felt for such a distinction. As F. Lot[1] pertinently

[1] La France: 114.

remarks, "de richesse il n'en est qu'une, la terre", and since the landowner's vassals were bound to protect him, it was by that token the only power: the import of such a statement as,

Riches huem fu, grant gent manda
(W, B: 842)

reflecting as it does this social context, is worlds away from its straightforward translation into a modern language. "Le dévouement monarchique est un ressort fatigué"[1], and there is no essential difference between the power of the king and that of any feudal seigneur: the king may in fact be the weaker as his chain of command is the longer[2].

France, the country, is a terre, but it is also thereby a domain. Although often the authors, and this is particularly striking in the Chanson de Roland, seem to use the term France to refer to something that corresponds to modern France[3], frequently it refers only to an area whose dimensions shrink to those of "la France proprement dite", the area now known as the Ile de France, which was merely one domain among many others,

Et cil Folques . . . comença a parler de Dieu par France et par les autres terres entor
(V, CC: 1)

and in the series of laisses which are devoted to the

[1]Lot, La France: 113.

[2]Cf. Duby & Mandrou, HCF: I, 21, "Il est certain qu'au fin fond des forêts les plus reculées le dernier des paysans sait qu'il existe un roi, que celui-ci, élu par le peuple, sacré, oint comme un évêque de l'huile sainte, est investi par Dieu même d'une délégation de sa propre puissance et chargé de maintenir sur tout le territoire du royaume la paix et la justice. Mais ce prestige en vérité n'a pas d'application pratique . . . le roi n'est vraiment un chef que dans ses domaines patrimoniaux".

[3]This discussion is amplified below: chapter 6.

account of the battle order of Charlemagne's army in the Chanson de Roland, France is used in this narrower sense, and the terms France and Franceis are clearly paralleled by the terms referring to Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, and the other provinces of the Frankish empire:

De Franceis sunt les premeres escheles.
Aprés les dous establisent la terce;
En cele sunt li vassal de Baivere
(CR: 3026-28)

La quinte eschele unt faite de Normans
(CR: 3045)

La siste eschele unt faite de Bretuns
(CR: 3052)

Naimes li dux puis establist la sedme
De Peitevins e des barons d'Alverne
(CR: 3061)

E l'oidme eschele ad Naimes establie,
De Flamengs est e des barons de Frise
(CR: 3068-69)

La noefme eschele unt faite de prozdomes,
De Loherengs et de cels de Borgoigne
(CR: 3076-77)

La disme eschele est des baruns de France
(CR: 3084)

Here France and the other provinces referred to represent the terres into which the empire is articulated. They are not conceived of merely as geographical divisions, but as feudal holdings, each held and protected by an overlord. A similar situation is thus described by Wace:

Gofier, ki en out grant pesance,
Pur querre aïe ala en France
As doze pers ki la esteient,
Ki la terre en doze parteient
(W, B: 921-24)

These feudal holdings consist not merely of land, but of the wealth and power which go with it, and, more important, of the men who are attached to the land, who are in fact solidary with it. This interdependence of men, land, and wealth is impled for example in the bracketing of,

> Utlage l'orent tut guasté,
> Chacied la gent, l'aveir porté.
> Tute esteit la terre en guastine
>
> (W, B: 625-27)

and it comes out clearly in the tirade in the confrontation scene of the Charroi de Nîmes[1], particularly in laisses 13-15:

> Ge vos dorrai de France un quartier,
> Quarte abeie et puis le quart marchié,
> Quarte cité et quarte archeveschié,
> Le quart serjant et le quart chevalier,
> Quart vavassor et quart garçon a pié,
> Quarte pucele et la quarte moillier,
> Et le quart prestre et puis le quart moustier;
> De mes estables vos doing le quart destrier;
> De mon tresor vos doing le quart denier;
> La quarte part vos otroi volantiers
> De tot l'empire que ge ai a baillier
>
> (CN: 384-94)

The terre de France is seen as comprising all this, and even if we assume that much of the point of this passage lies in the use of exaggerated explicitness for comic effect, we must still allow that this dispute between "li rois Looÿs" and Guillaume "plains de mautalent" hinges on the accepted ethic of feudal society, and that this is an accurate expansion of all that was normally implied by terre in the feudal context, the social and material reality denoted by the word. Before examining

[1] Ed. by J.L. Perrier (Paris, 1970). Abbreviated as CN.

to what extent this reality may be said to correspond to a nation in the modern sense, however, it is necessary, to complete the picture of this sector of the vocabulary of Old French to consider also the other terms which are used beside terre.

CHAPTER 5

". . . de cui terre et de cui païs il estoient, et de cui maisnie . . ."

Geoffroi de Villehardouin[1]

The preceding discussion of the vocabulary of Old French indicates that the meaning of the word *terre*, its place in the system and its applications, are predominantly feudal. Before any attempt is made to discuss the overall pattern of this system, however, it will be necessary to consider the uses of other, connected elements of the vocabulary, and to establish to what extent such words as *païs*, *contrée*, *regne*, *regné*, and others overlap with *terre*, or are used in opposition to it.

There are certainly a number of examples, particularly towards the end of the Old French period, which would appear to indicate that *païs* does belong by its associations with the particular technical vocabulary of the feudal society. In the phrase quoted above from Villehardouin, *terre*, *païs*, and *maisnie* seem to represent three levels of feudal organisation[2]. Similarly in Old Occitan, the *Chanson de Guillaume de Tudèle* links together in one phrase,

la terra, la honor e lo païs

(*CGT*: 38,3)

In other examples however *païs* seems to stand outside this

[1] *La Conquête de Constantinople*: 370.

[2] Cf. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire*: s.v. *mesniee*.

system, and, although overlapping to some extent with terre, to be a term of rather wider application. There would seem to be a distinction, if not a contrast, implied between terre and païs in, for example,

Tere de France, mult estes dulz païs
(CR: 1861)

where the sense of païs appears to be that glossed by the FEW[1] as 'patrie, région où on est né', without the overtones which normally attach to terre. In other examples the sense appears to be still more general, and could be glossed as 'extent of land' without reference to any kind of political criteria, or to any clearly defined boundaries other than purely geographical. This is the case for example in:

En cest païs nos est venuz cunfundre
(CR: 17)

. . . si vus veneit a talent
K'en cest païs remansissiez
(W, B: 586-87)

Apparently comparable are

Est vus l'esample par trestut le païs
(VSA: 182)

and a similar example with trestut to mean 'all over this land':

Il n'a hul home en trestot cest païs
(CN: 107)

Païs is in fact in this vocabulary, as it is still in Modern French, where it may be applied to a country, as in "les pays de l'Europe", a region within a country, "le pays de Caux" for example, or "dans mon pays" to refer to the village where the speaker was born, and even, at least such is the usage in some areas of France,

[1] s.v. pagensis.

to a single farm[1], the general, unmarked term: from an originally closely circumscribed meaning, 'territoire d'un pagus'[2], it comes to be used for areas of any dimensions, the land which belongs to the city of Troy,

Quant Greu ourent Troie conquise
E eissillié tut le païs

(W, B: 10-11)

or the Holy Land,

Por la croiz que li monz aure,
Qui a cel tens fud destornee
Et des paens aillors tornee
Qu'el païs ou ele selt estre
Ou Deus deigna morir et nestre

(A, EGS: 22-26)

or the homeland of any particular group of people,

Tuit li omne de ciel païs

(VSL: 211)[3]

Puis assembla tuz les chaitis
E les chaitives del païs

(W, B: 217-18)

. . . li plus fort e li meillor
Deu païs . . .

(CDN: 3362-63)

Aprés la Pasque, entor la Pentecoste, encomencierent a movoir li pelerin de lor païs; et sachiez que mainte lerme i fu ploree de pitié al departir de lor païs, de lor genz et de lor amis

(V, CC: 47)

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[1]Cf. "Il a beaucoup fait, le maire: nous avons l'éclairage dans le village, et des routes goudronnées qui mènent à tous les pays." (the post-mistress of Champtercier, Alpes de Haute-Provence, August, 1970, referring to farms within the limits of the commune.)

[2]DELF: s.v. pays.

[3]Quoted by Tobler-Lommatzsch: s.v. païs.

In this sense of course the term *païs* does not appear to differ notably in meaning from *terre*, which could obviously replace it in many similar contexts: in examples such as

. . . et les genz de lor païs

(V, *CC*: 109)

. . . la gent d'iceu païs

(*CDN*: 3488)

the collocation with *gent* and the construction with the possessive are features which are also observed as being typical of the contexts of *terre*, and beside the example of *païs* from the *Roland*, quoted above,

En cest païs nos est venuz cunfundre

(*CR*: 17)

one could set a similar example with *terre*:

En ceste tere ad asez osteiét

(*CR*: 35)

There are however a number of instances in which the two terms *terre* and *païs* are used together with what would seem to be an intention of contrast:

Cunquis l'en ai païs e teres tantes

(*CR*: 2333)

et maint bon chevalier de lor terre et de lor païs

(V, *CC*: 149)

et les genz de lor terres et de lor païs

(V, *CC*: 152)

To some extent this usage could be explained as nothing more than a stylistic coupling of synonyms, but other examples in fact indicate that the synonymy is of a particular kind, and that the two terms are actually to be considered as in a relation of "opposition "supprimable" (neutralisable)"[1].

[1] Cf. E. Coseriu, "Pour une sémantique diachronique struc-

In such a sentence as,

Ensi pristrent congié por raler en lor païs

(V, CC: 32)

for example, païs indicates merely the place where they normally dwelt, and, although the substitution of terre for païs in this context would not necessarily imply that those referred to are the seigneurs of the land in question, which in fact they are not, it would be capable of such an interpretation, and would in any case link them to the terre in a closer, more specific way, since the use of terre would introduce the feudal connotation which is proper to it, and which païs does not possess. What is more, "Benoit" links gent and païs in a way which throws some light on the juxtaposition of païs and terre, and indicates that this is not a case of straightforward synonymy:

La jenz et le païs s'esfreie

(CDN: 2909)

Le païs dotent et la jent

(CDN: 3351)

In the first of these examples the two terms would seem to be contrasted, and gent refers to those bearing arms, and therefore taken into account as belonging to an ordered body[1], while païs refers to those not included in this framework, in the same way as peuple is used in opposition to gent. In the second example, what the wanderers fear is the country in itself, without the inhabitants, and, on the other hand, the inhabitants in

(continued) turale", Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature 2, i (1964): 152, note 14. Coseriu suggests that this is in fact the case of most synonyms (where these are not terms belonging to different registers or styles of one language).

[1] Cf. above: chapter 3.

their own right. In either of these two examples terre would not be possible, because its interpretation would not permit the same degree of separation between the entities thus referred to. The relation between the two words païs and terre is therefore best described in terms of inclusion: terre is the feudally marked term, a term belonging specifically by its use and its associations to the feudal system, and this term is subsumed under the general, unmarked, term païs, to which it may stand in opposition. This opposition is neutralisable in that païs may be substituted for terre; it may, for example, be found after tenir,

Si jo mureie, ki tendrat mun païs

(Chançun de Guillelme:1436)[1]

and similarly in Occitan,

qu'el tenga'l païs

(CGT: 85,7)

although such usages are exceptional[2]. Terre, however, cannot be substituted for païs without the meaning of the utterance being substantially altered: while

tot le païs ont a dolor torné

(Le Couronnement de Louis: 1401)[3]

is general and unspecific in its reference,

*tote la terre ont a dolor tornée[4]

would be specific in reference to a particular terre. It is because of the unmarked character of païs that it is able to develop its modern meaning when terre, as the

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[1]Quoted by Tobler-Lommatzsch: s.v. païs.

[2]The construction with possessive expressions is to be seen in a different light, and this question is discussed in the context of the vocabulary as a whole below: chapter 7.

[3]Ed. E. Langlois, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1966). Abbreviated as CL.

[4]Which is in any case unacceptable because of the assonance.

structure within which it had this particular meaning was replaced, lost its relevance and ceased to occupy a central position in the system of the vocabulary.

The other terms which are available in this vocabulary beside terre and païs are of lesser importance. Contree, which could be used coupled with païs, as if opposed to it,

En la cuntree n'el païs
(Marie de France, Guigemar; 162)[1]

or which could be almost synonymous with it, as in,

N'orent corage qu'eu païs
Feïssent ennui ne damage
. . .
Ne sanz la contree essiller
(CDN:3238-39;3242)

Des melz gentils de tuta la cuntretha
(VSA: 20)

. . . s'en fuit de la contrethe
(VSA: 75)

Ne sai le leu ne n'en sai la contrede
U t'alge querre
(VSA: 133-34)

E pur la contree cerchier
(W, B: 814)

which are not dissimilar to the examples quoted above for païs, appears to be less frequent than the other terms, and it is not a possible replacement for terre. Like païs, it is a general, non-specific term, without reference to the feudal system, but, unlike païs, it stands outside the main system of the vocabulary in that it does not ever appear to be used with the name of a fief or a

[1] Marie de France, Lais, ed. A. Ewert (Oxford, 1947, repr. 1960).

country, and although there are examples to be found of *contree* used with a possessive, as for example,

L'ire li fu au chef montee
Des feus qu'il vit par sa contree

(*CDN*: 2943-44)

where it is needed for the rhyme, such uses appear to be the exception rather than the rule.

Similarly, the latinism *region* is free of connotations of this type, and it is the general and neutral term for a region, of indeterminate extent, either uninhabited, or without consideration of the inhabitants:

Puis irrum quere mansions
Par alienes regions

(W, *B*: 525-26)

Quel region purreit trover
Bone e paisible a converser

(W, *B*: 665-66)

Entre Danube e l'Ocean
Qui cort devers septentrian
S'estent iceste region

(*CDN*: 271-73)

Besides these terms, which all come within the ambit of *païs*, there are a number of others which need to be considered with reference to *honour*, like *terre*, a key term of feudal vocabulary[1], and the one under which the other terms can be subsumed: the feudal investiture was *honour*, and this *honour* could be an office[2], but most

[1] Cf. Hollyman, *Développement*: 33-34; and above:50.

[2] G.S. Burgess, *Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire précourtois* (Geneva, 1970): 71, quotes an example from *VSL*: "Cio confortent ad ambes duos / Que s'en ralgent en lor honors" (119-20), in which, as the following lines (quoted in Burgess's footnote) indicate, *honor* refers to *evesquét*.

frequently was a *terre*, which could be further classified as *regne*, *regnet*, or:

> . . . lec contez e les reiaumes
> Les provinces e les ducheaumes
>
> (*CDN*: 443-44)

The organisation of these terms in the vocabulary is evident from their use in context. Thus *regne* and *terre* are put in parallel,

> Sun renne e sa terre a perdue
>
> (*CDN*: 2767)

and *regne* as an *honour* can be inherited:

> E de sun regne a heriter
>
> (W, *B*: 46)

while *regnet* like other feudal terms is used with *tenir*:

> De vos tendrat Espaigne le regnét
>
> (*CR*: 697)

All of these terms are used in apposition to names of countries: *France le regnét* (*CR*: 694), *Espaigne le regnét* (*CR*: 1029), *rëaume de Logres* (*Le Chevalier de la Charrete*: 1930[1]), and fall clearly within the class of *terre*, just as *terre* itself falls within the class of *honour*. And, as with *terre* itself, there is a degree of overlap with *païs*. It would not be at all inaccurate to sum up the organisation of this vocabulary by saying that a *terre* is an *honour* which is also a *païs*. Godefroy glosses *regnet* as 'royaume, fief', and *regne* as 'royaume, pays', and numerous examples bear this out. The three terms *terre*, *regne*, and *païs* refer to the same country, and are effectively synonymous in, for example,

> En la terre out un senescal,
> Heraut out non, noble vassal,
> por son priés e por sa bonté

---

[1] Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier de la Charrete*, ed. M. Roques (Paris, 1970).

out el regne grant poesté;
li plus forz hoem fu del païs,
fort fu d'omes, fort fu d'amis,
Engleterre out en sa baillie
com hoem qui a seneschaucie

(W, R: III,5565-72)

and it would be possible to substitute païs or terre for regne in such contexts as:

Cest renne aveient essillié

(CDN: 1935)

Aler vuelent en altres regnes

(W, B: 509)

De plusurs regnes vendrunt li hume estrange

(CR: 2911)

We may consider therefore that the key terms in the territorial vocabulary of this period are païs on the one hand, and, on the other, in the class dominated by honour, terre, and a number of terms subordinate to it, designating the "réalité matérielle et sociale"[1] which dominates the social and territorial organisation of the time. It is now necessary to establish how these terms, together with gent and peuple, were applied in the texts of the time to such notions as 'nation' and 'nationality', or, rather, to the medieval analogues of these modern notions.

[1] Hollyman, Développement: 13.

CHAPTER 6

"Returnent Franc en France dulce terre"

Stefan George[1]

It is a fact of some significance, remarked upon by F. Lot[2], that when, in the thirteenth century, the royal chancellery began to use the vernacular instead of Latin, the expression roi de France was preferred to the earlier formula rex Francorum[3]. Thus, towards the end of the Old French period, a change of expression acknowledged a changed order. Between the old and the new there had been several centuries of evolution in the forms of the state, from the settlement of the invading tribes and their consequent growing attachment to the land[4], to the increased importance of territory, and the efforts of the Capetian monarchs in the thirteenth century to extend their domain and consolidate their rule[5], becoming thereby the rulers of a territory, rather than the rulers of a

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[1] "Franken", Der Siebente Ring (Berlin, 1831). Cf. the passage from Gaston Paris, quoted below: 74.

[2] La France: 246.

[3] For parallel examples from other languages, see Hákon Melberg, Origin of the Scandinavian Nations and Languages, 2 vols, (Halden, Norway, 1951): I, 434-49, where it is pointed out (436) that rex Francorum remained a fixed formula in documents written in Latin until, with the advent of Henri IV, the desire for symmetry prompted the adoption of Franciae et Navarrae rex.

[4] Cf. above: 46; Dauzat, Noms de lieux: 124; Hay, Medieval Centuries: 59.

[5] Cf. Duby & Mandrou, HCF: 1, 149-54.

population[1]: the way is thus opened for the increasing importance of the country and its later superstructure of hypostatisation[2].

During the period which leads up to this, one writer at least, Ambroise, the historian of the third crusade, was conscious enough of the changes which had come about through the process of "territorialisation" to comment explicitly on them[3]: considering "la descordance Des barons et del roi de France"[4] he looks back with regret to the days of the old heroes, to the tribal unity which has now been replaced by regional rivalries:

La n'avoit estrifs ne barates,
Lors a cel tens ne anceis,
Qui erent Norman ou Franceis,
Qui Peitevin ne ki Breton,
Qui Mansel ne ki Burgoinon,
Ne ki Flamenc ne qui Engleis;
Illoc n'aveit point de jangleis,
Ne point s'entreramponouent;
Mais tote honor en reportouent,

---

[1]Cf. San-Antonio (Frédéric Dard), L'Histoire de France vue par San-Antonio (Paris, 1964): 15-16, "Pour être Français, il suffit d'habiter la France, car, à l'inverse de ce qui se passe dans les autres pays, ce ne sont pas les Français qui font la France (ils auraient plutôt tendance à la défaire) mais la France qui fait les Français."

[2]Cf. S. Serfaty, France, de Gaulle and Europe (Baltimore, 1968): 116, "Rather than a narrowly conceived territory, it is an idea, a view of France which is to be preserved"; also C. de Gaulle, Mémoires de Guerre: L'Appel (Paris, 1954): 1, "Toute ma vie, je me suis fait une certaine idée de la France", which is of course already foreshadowed in CR: 1062-64.

[3]As was pointed out by J. Crossland, Medieval French Literature (Oxford, 1956): 212.

[4]A, EGS: 8477-78; for A's use of the formula roi de France, see below: 73.

Si erent tuit apelé Franc
E brun e bai e sor e blanc

(A, EGS: 8500-10)

The temperamental differences between people from the different parts of the "hexagone", as modern jargon has termed this territory, were enough of a commonplace for Raoul de Caen to quote in the Gesta Tancredi[1] a "puerorum naenia" on the subject: "Franci ad bella, provinciales ad victualia" (LXI). Wace however must have seen a certain measure of unity, since he thought it necessary to explain, when speaking of the Gauls:

A cel tens aveit plusurs reis
En France, maistres des Franceis

(W, B: 2845-46)

There was indeed a certain unity, in spite of the tensions and differences which these writers saw within it, and for the poet of the Chanson de Roland as for the others, this unity was a compound of the people and the land:

Franceis murrunt e France en ert deserte

(CR: 938 & 989)

Franceis murrunt e France en ert hunie

(CR: 969)[2]

When we come to investigate in the light of the elements of vocabulary which have been studied so far how the vernacular authors speak of such topics, we observe that the two key words gent and terre set the pattern for whatever expressions are used.

This, and the link between the two words, may be seen in the expression Francs de France, which recurs in

[1] In J.P. Migne, Patrologia Latina: CLV, 491-590.

[2] A similar formula is also found at CR: 1734, "Vos i murrez e France en ert hunie".

the Chanson de Roland,

Des Francs de France en i ad plus de mil
(CR: 177)

Pernez mil Francs de France nostre tere
(CR: 804)

and is also used twice, almost like a refrain, in the anonymous chanson de toile, "Quant vient en mai que l'on dit as lons jors"[1]:

que Franc de France repairent de roi cort
(2)

voit Frans de France qui repairent de cort
(9)

This expression looks like a fixed locution, possibly an expedient to avoid homonymic clash between Franc as an ethnic adjective and franc meaning 'free'[2]; elsewhere, however, the Roland does use Franc alone, and does not scruple to use both words within the space of two lines,

Oiez ore, franc chevaler vaillant!
Carles li reis, l'emperere des Francs
. . .
(CR: 2657-58)

which are addressed to an assembly of paiens, indicating that fear of a possible confusion is not uppermost in the mind of the poet. Furthermore, the expression is not so much a set locution that the terms of it cannot be changed: "cels de France"[3] and "Franceis de France"[4] are also found, as well as "gent de France"[5], which is in one

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[1] In K. Bartsch, Romances et Pastourelles françaises des XII^e et XIII^e siècles (reprinted Darmstadt, 1967): 3.

[2] As in "Nus avum tuz tens franc vescu" (W, B: 3923); also W, B: 3943; 3949; 3959.

[3] CR: 167; 857; 1403; 1852; etc.

[4] CR: 808; etc.

[5] CR: 590; etc.

context equated with "Francs"[1]. It is in fact one of the number of possible expressions all based on the same pattern: a term which may be classed as *gent* coupled with a term which may be classed as *terre*.

In all these expressions, and those of the form *la franceise gent*[2], since, as the examples indicate,

Ceintes espees franceises e d'Espaigne
(*CR*: 3089)

Alemans sunt e si sunt d'Alemaigne
(*CR*: 3038)

the suffixal form *-eis* and the prepositional form *de* with the name of a country are indistinguishable in meaning and may be used interchangeably, the underlying pattern is the same[3]: the "magnifique idée de l'unité française"[4] is articulated around the two poles of *gent* and *terre*, the people and the country, which, while they can be envisaged separately, are nevertheless in a close interdependence, so that the two are frequently mentioned together, and very often in balanced expressions, such as:

Dist Blancadrins: "Mult est pesmes Rollant,
Ki tute gent voelt faire recreant
E tutes teres met en chalengement"
(*CR*: 392-94)

In some contexts the two are interchangeable, the one term which is used standing for both, as with *rex Francorum* and the French expression *roi de France* which is its vernacular equivalent; in the *Chanson de Roland*, the poet

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[1] *CR*: 587.

[2] *CR*: 396.

[3] Cf. above: 43.

[4] A. Pauphilet, "La date du *Roland*", in *Etudes romanes dédiées à Mario Roques* (Paris, 1946): 10.

refers to Charlemagne as both

. . . de France li emperere

(CR: 447)

and

Carles li reis, l'emperere des Francs

(CR: 2658)

Similarly, in the Estoire de la guerre sainte, although the expressions rois de France[1], and reis d'Engleterre[2] do by this time appear to have become normal, we find also:

Li reis Filippes des Franceis

(A, EGS: 441)

In this period the king is lord both of land and people, if not indeed lord of land because lord of people, and so it can be seen that the two terms are solidary. The definition of each necessarily implies reference to the other.

There is in the Couronnement de Louis some indication of a sentiment of the unity of the Frankish domain, when the assembled barons give thanks that the line of Charlemagne is to be continued in the kingship:

Pere de gloire, tu seies mercïez
Qu'estranges reis n'est sor nos devalez

(CL: 59-60)

But naturally enough it is in the Chanson de Roland that these stirrings of what one might, even at this period, with some justification call national feeling are the strongest. Understandably so, since this is the epic of Charlemagne and the vast Frankish empire: it is an epic which more than others looks back to a golden age. "Une magnifique idée de l'unité française incarnée en son

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[1] A, EGS: 561; 573; 1075; 1107; etc.

[2] A, EGS: 444; 563; 788; 899; etc.

empereur, de la suprématie royale, se dégage de ce poème, avec tant de netteté et de puissance que nous y sommes encore sensibles aujourd'hui."[1] As Bédier has observed in the commentary to his edition[2], the "France" of the Chanson de Roland is normally co-extensive with the empire of Charlemagne: it extends as far as the Pyrenees in the south,

Halt sunt li pui, e li val tenebrus,
Les roches bises, les destreiz merveillus.
Le jur passerent Franceis a grant dulur,
De .xv. liu/e/s en ot hom la rimur.
Puis que il venent a la tere majur,
Virent Guascuigne, la tere lur seignur

(CR: 814-19)

and it includes Aix-la-Chapelle in the north:

En France ad Ais

(CR: 135)

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[1]Pauphilet, "La date du Roland": 10. An interesting perspective is given to this point by G. Paris, "La Chanson de Roland et la nationalité française", an opening lecture delivered at the Collège de France on 8 December 1870, published in La Poésie du moyen-âge, première série, 7th ed.(Paris, 1913):87-118; cf. 107-108, "A côté de cette grande idée de la mission universelle de la France, celle de la profonde unité nationale inspire la Chanson de Roland. C'est ce dont nous devons surtout nous souvenir, ce dont nous avons droit d'être fiers devant le monde. Oui, messieurs, il y a huit siècles, alors qu'aucune des nations de l'Europe n'avait encore pris véritablement conscience d'elle-même, quand plusieurs d'entre elles, comme l'Angleterre, attendaient encore pour leur formation des éléments essentiels, la patrie française était fondée: le sentiment national existait dans ce qu'il a de plus intime, de plus noble et de plus tendre. C'est dans la Chanson de Roland qu'apparaît cette divine expression de "douce France", l'amour que cette terre aimable entre toutes inspirait déjà à ses enfants. Douce France! Les Allemands nous ont envié ce mot, et ont vainement cherché à en retrouver le pendant dans leur poésie nationale."

[2](Paris, 1927): Index des noms propres: s.v.

E vient a Ais, al meillor sied de France

(CR: 3706)

But in reality the imperial France of Charlemagne was no more than a memory. As early as the ninth century, Abbon, a monk of Saint-Germain-des-prés, when writing of the accession of Eudes to the kingship, makes a clear distinction between France and Neustria,

Francia laetatur, quamvis is Nustricus esset

(Le Siège de Paris: 2447)

and even in the Chanson de Roland the extended sense is not used consistently. It is however interesting to note that at one point in the epic, what appear to be cardinal points delimiting the extremities of France are named:

En France en ad mult merveillus turment

. . .

De Seint Michel del Peril josqu'as Seinz,
Des Besençun tresqu'as ⟨ porz ⟩ de Guitsand

(CR: 1423; 1428-29)

If we are to take Seinz as being the modern town of Saintes in the department of the Charente-Maritime, the points named delimit, very roughly, but significantly nonetheless, an area corresponding to the France of langue d'oïl, leaving out the Breton west, the Germanic north and east, and the Occitan south. Bédier in his edition translates non-commitally "aux Saints"; Whitehead hesitates between Xanten in Westphalia and Saintes. If Saintes is the fourth point the area enclosed is very plausible, although P. Le Gentil is of the opinion that Xanten gives, with the other three points, an area which corresponds to the limits of the country ruled by Charles le Simple in 911[1]; and it should be added that Sains, in the Ille-et-

[1] La Chanson de Roland (Paris, 1955): 29.

-Vilaine, only 11 kilometres from the Mont-Saint-Michel, is also phonetically more plausible.[1]

But for all the national sentiment which it shows, the Chanson de Roland is still a product of its time, the feudal age, and it projects onto the society which it describes the structures of its own time. The king and emperor is also

> . . . Carlemagne, sun seignor ki.l nurrit
> (CR: 2380)[2]

and the terms used to denote his rule,

> Carle . . . ki France ad en baillie
> (CR: 488)
>
> . . . li reis ki dulce France tient
> (CR: 117)

are, as suggested above[3], technical terms of the feudal system: France, however much the dimensions the poet imagines it to have may vary, and also Spain, are terre, and thus they are inseparable from the associations which attach to the word. And in the same way, the Franceis, the gent de France, the people to whome France is Tere Majur, are assimilated into the same structures: they are la gent Carlun[4] or ses Franceis[5]:

> Li emperere recleimet ses Franceis
> (CR: 3405)[6]
>
> Si me tolit .xx. milie de mes Franceis
> (CR: 3753)

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[1] The places mentioned are illustrated on the map overleaf: 77. I am grateful to Professor C.E. Pickford for bringing the last point to my attention.

[2] Cp. the use of norri 'commensal,serviteur':Godefroy:s.v.

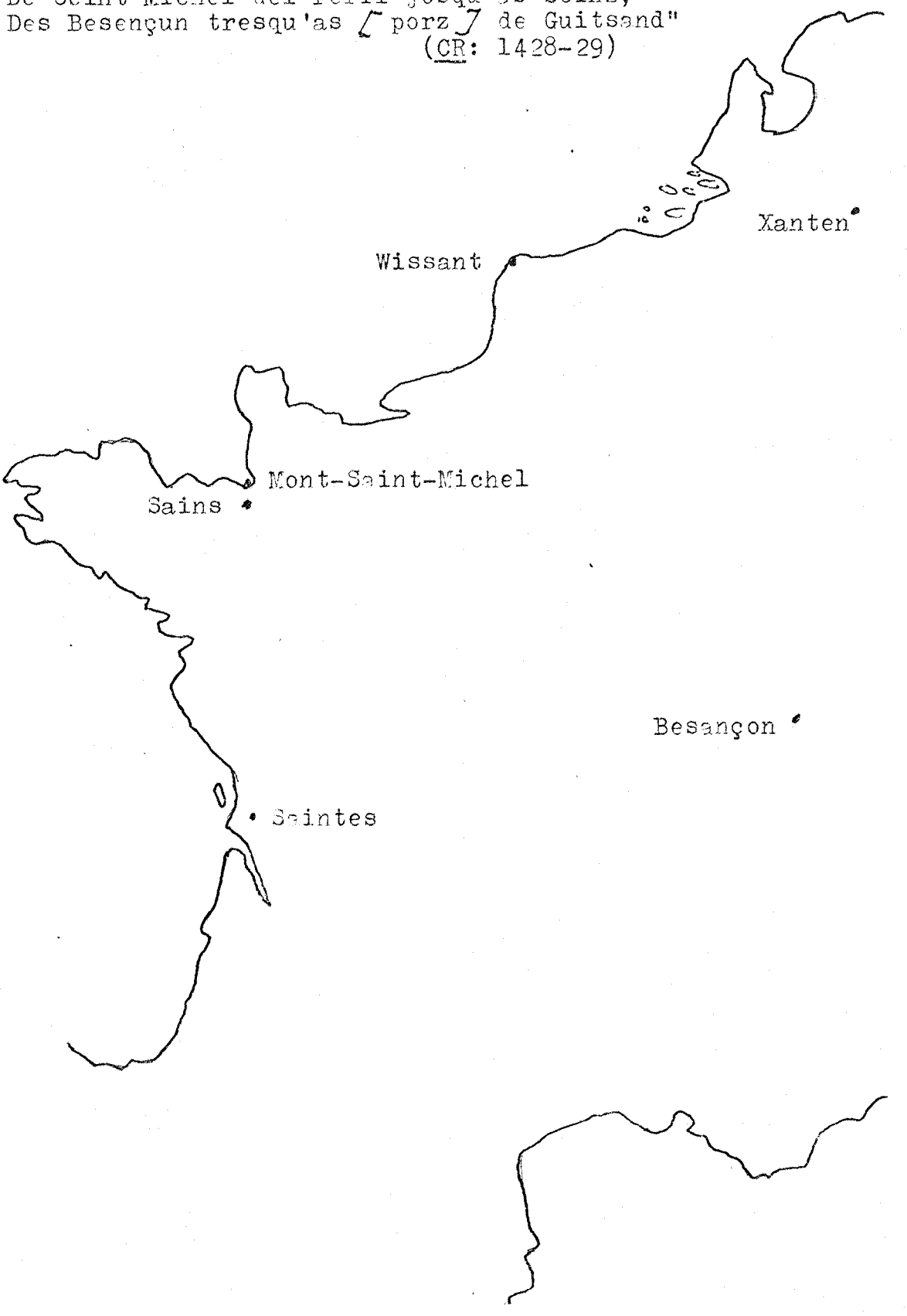
[3] Chapter 4.

[4] CR: 3303.

[5] Cf. above: 43-44.

[6] Cf. also CR:3556,"Li emperere recleimet ses parenz", in a laisse which assonates in ei.

"De Seint Michel del Peril josqu'as Seinz,
Des Besençun tresqu'as [porz] de Guitsand"
(CR: 1428-29)



Nor, even within the Chanson de Roland, do we notice any difference between these expressions and the terms applied to Spain and the Saracens: Spain is also nostre tere[1], and might be held as a fief from Charlemagne,

> Qu'il devendrat jointes ses mains tis hom
> E tute Espaigne tendrat par vostre dun
>
> (CR: 223-24)

and the Saracens are cil d'Espaigne[2] or Sarrazins d'Espaigne[3].

What is surprising here is that, although one can accept that the Frankish invasions were far enough in the past for the Franks to be considered, and to consider themselves, as indigenous to France, in spite of their Germanic connections[4], one would however, since the Moorish invasion was closer in time, and especially in the context of the poem, have expected the fact that the Saracens were invaders in Spain to have figured largely among the reasons for combating them. This does not in fact appear to be the case. Although they are at one point referred to as "cele gent estrange"[5] (which need not imply that they came from any farther afield than Spain[6]), normally the poet seems to assume that they belong in Spain as much as the Franks in France, and in the same way. Moreover, although the poet does distinguish the various foreign groups which fight with the Francs de

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[1] CR: 2119.
[2] CR: 1081.
[3] CR: 1083.
[4] Cf. the exemples quoted above: 74-75; although one wonders where Aix is situated in the poet's mind.
[5] CR: 1086.
[6] Cf. CR: 839; also above: 42-43; and Godefroy:s.v. estraigne.

France[1] -- although not systematically and consistently -- the Sarrazins d'Espaigne include for example Ethiopians[2]. What matters however is not where the people came from originally: although there are some signs of a kind of resentment of "foreign" domination[3], the processes of migration, conquest, and settlement do on the whole seem to be regarded with equanimity. There is a certain matter-of-factness about Wace's comment:

> Par remuemenz e par changes
> Des languages as gens estranges,
> Ki la terre unt sovent conquise,
> Sovent perdue, sovent prise,
> Sunt li nun des viles changied
>
> (W, B: 3775-79)

Rather, it is the fact of possessing the land which counts: a group which may have an identity independent of any territory, as the Saracens seem to have, for example, in the Estoire de la guerre sainte, where their occupation is conceived of as only temporary,

> L'Ospital fud sor la marine
> Ou trop aveit gent Sarazine
>
> (A, EGS: 2967-68)

acquires an extra dimension of unity or coherence through the possession of and attachment to a country. This is what we see to a greater extent in the Chanson de Roland, where the idea of Spanish-Saracen unity is developed together with the idea of Frankish or French unity, but

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[1] Cf. above: 55.

[2] "La neire gent" (CR: 1916-17). There seems to be a parallel in the use of Engle and Anglecyn for all the Germanic tribes in England, cf. Melberg, Origins: I, 163-164.

[3] E.g. CL: 59-60, quoted above: 73; and even here the eventual acceptance seems to be implied: there is no question of the barons not accepting an estrange reis.

it is not foreign to the attitudes underlying other texts. It is in this spirit for example that Wace says:

La terre ad tute avirunee
Tant cum ele est e lunge e lee;
La gent, ki esteit senz justise,
Ad tute atraite a sun servise.
Par tut le regne tel pais mist
Unches reis ainz si grant ne fist

(W, B: 8545-50)

There is, in short, a consciousness of such a thing as national unity, although this does not ammount to a consciousness of a stable institution.

Although the medieval cities were to foster the idea of belonging and being loyal to a corporate institution, it has been pointed out[1] that "medieval institutions did not extend this corporate notion to the whole state", and even here the first uses of citeen simply oppose town to country, without any idea of corporateness clearly to be distinguished from that which is applied to other groups, since we do in fact find the expression gent citaaine,

Granz fu la joie et li raveaus
Entre la granz genz citaaine
Qui le jor orent trait la paine

(CDN:21150-52)

which is hardly to be distinguished from the parallel form of gent de used with the name of a particular city, as in:

Les genz de Sur qui Deu amouent
E qui par deu se reclamouent
Guerpirent la citié mult tost.
Si [en] vindrent al rei en l'ost

[1]By D.F. Whitton,"'Cities' and 'citizens' in English and French usage"(in Studies in Medieval French presented to Alfred Ewert(Oxford,1961):232-41): 237.

Ço furent li preu Aleman
Qui grant liu i tindrent cel an
E li frere de Tabarie
La plus leial gent de Sulie;
Si i fu la vaillanz gent de Pise

(A, EGS: 2729-37)

Li reis Guis et la gent de Pise

(A, EGS: 2977)

The usage with ville is similar:

Et de chascune ville la ou il venoit, les gens faisoient la fealté l'empereor

(V, CC: 269)

Although a cité could be contained within a terre,

Ceste cité, dont je vos chant, de Nymes
Est en la terre de mon seignor saint Gile

(CN: 1092-93)

it appears clearly enough from the examples here adduced (as also from the passage quoted at the head of chapter 4) that whatever the statute of cities and towns may have been in the social organisation of this period, within the vocabulary they do not stand outside the general scheme of organisation which is discussed here: the expressions used in reference to them contain the same terms and are structured in the same way as the expressions applied to the other groups so far considered. When Ambroise, for example, brackets together a number of different groups, as in,

Mais teus genz orent l'ovre enprise
Qui mainte vile aveient prise
Ço erent Norman et Peitevin
Gascon, Mansel et Angevin
E de Engleterre en i aveit

(A, EGS: 741-45)

the terms which are used all conform to the same pattern,

since, as has already been pointed out, the ethnic adjective and the prepositional form de with a place name are equivalent, and since, even when the word is not expressed, all these forms of expression suppose gent, and thus are based on the pair gent and terre[1].

The same also appears true of whatever other groups one might consider. The fundamental distinction between Christian and pagan is articulated in the same terms as the other distinctions:

Paiene gent craventer et confondre
Et la lor terre deis a la nostre joindre
(CL: 75-76)

Por iceste grant jent paene
Fu en esfrei la crestiene
(CDN: 5239-40)

De tote la gent cristiane
(A, EGS: 42)

Qui ireit sor les gens herites
(A, EGS: 50)

or even:

la laie genz ere en discorde
(V, CC: 97)

While it is not to be denied that there was in the Old French period a sentiment that we may consider to be analogous to a feeling of nationality, that there was in fact a consciousness of a national unity, to the extent that a poet of the time felt it necessary to explain the disunity of a former age[2], it would appear that the vocabulary of this period did not give it a distinct

[1] Cf. the passage quoted above: 69-70; and the composition of the battle order in CR, quoted above: 55.

[2] Cf. W, B: 2845-46, quoted above: 70.

expression. Although the line

Alemans sunt e si sunt d'Alemaigne

(CR: 3038)

might, contrary to the rule, seem to give separate expression to ethnic unity and territorial affiliation, the feudal implications of the terms used are evident from other contexts, in the same poem and elsewhere, and they are not fundamentally different. In contrast with the vocabulary of classical Latin, structured around two different sets of criteria, that of Old French has of necessity to categorise all groups, whether they be territorial, ethnic, or bound by personal loyalty, in the same way: the group is *gent*, which is linked to the feudal organisation of society, and the *gent* which is analogous to the modern nation is bound to a *terre*, a term which again is closely connected with the set of feudal terms headed by *honour*. It is finally with the internal organisation of this vocabulary that this study will now be concerned.

CHAPTER 7

"La langue n'est pas un système de signes, mais un assemblage -- dont l'économie reste à préciser -- de structures de signification"

A.J. Greimas[1]

The present study of part of the vocabulary of Old French assumed as its starting point that the language would express in some way the divisions of the civilisation of the time, and that this expression would not necessarily correspond to that of a previous age, as examined in the opening chapters in order to provide a basis for comparison. The texts selected as the basis for study were those which seemed likely to be particularly concerned with the vertical divisions of the age, either because they deal with the fortunes of a particular group, taken by poet and audience as readily identifiable -- the Chronique des ducs de Normandie, the Brut, the Rou are examples -- or because they deal with expeditions, wars, and crusades, bringing different groups into conflict -- such are the Estoire de la guerre sainte and the Chanson de Roland[2]. From a study of these and other texts it appears that a great part of the vocabulary which is used to this end in Modern French is already existent and in use in Old French: the latinism nation is found; peuple and pays,

[1] Sémantique structurale (Paris, 1966): 21.

[2] A recent book suggests that it is significant that so many such texts should have been Norman in origin: cf. R.H.C. Davis, The Normans and their Myth (London, 1976): 15-16; 49 sqq; 124-26.

although not central to the vocabulary, are used; terre, while it has lost the principal meaning which it had in Old French, does not appear at first sight to be so far removed from the Modern French word; gent, admittedly having shed its singular in modern usage, is present in the language today as gens, with a meaning which does not seem to the modern reader to present an obstacle to the comprehension of the text. Only the Middle French latinisms patrie[1], and république[2] are missing from the Old French vocabulary, and of these two, république is not particularly associated with the sentiment of nationality, as the succession of républiques in France with their constitutional changes makes clear. The literature of the Third Republic abounds in references to antirepublican patriots[3]. Patrie is foreign to the conception which dominates the Old French period in its attribution to the abstracted idea of a country of a rôle which in feudal times belonged to a person.

However, continuity of form does not in any way suppose the same continuity in meaning, and even slight shifts of meaning which allow the modern reader to interpret the Old French text in terms of the senses with which he or she is familiar may render the comprehension of the text just as uncertain, and in a more insidious fashion, as the outright change of content where the assumption of the modern sense produces an incomprehensible reading. Old French nation is a case in point: the

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[1] DELF gives the date 1511 for patrie, s.v., and remarks, "Fontaine reproche encore à du Bellay de l'avoir employé: "Qui a païs n'a que faire de patrie"."

[2] "Vers 1410", DELF: s.v.

[3] Anatole France, Histoire Contemporaine (Paris, 1897; 1899; 1901) furnishes examples of this.

examples which are found of this word in the twelfth century do not make sense unless one supposes a totally different content for it from that which it possesses in the modern language.

But differences in degree can be fully as important as differences in kind, and for none of the words here studied can we assume total identity with their modern counterparts. Although the listing of the terms which occur seems to imply a certain measure of common ground between Old and Modern French, and although as far as France is concerned we would not be totally wrong to talk of a consciousness of French nationality in the Old French period, the differences in the applications of the terms used, and, just as important, if indeed not more so, the different relations between the terms as an ordered set, and their different syntactic usages, show a completely different conception of the notion which has here been identified by the necessarily arbitrary and misleading label of 'nationality'.

Without attempting to construct a coherent theory of semantics, which would be beyond the scope of such a study, and without going into current discussion of rival theories of semantics[1], it can be assumed that the vocabulary is, in Greimas's words, composed of "structures de signification", and that the terms which compose these structures or sets function in two dimensions: in relation to external referents in the universe of the speakers, and in relation to other terms in the same set: "Il faut donc supposer que chaque champ conceptuel a un contenu (une "valeur") unitaire et que ce contenu est subdivisé

[1] Cf. G. Leech, Semantics (Harmondsworth, 1974): 361, "basic issues are by no means decided in semantics."

par des oppositions entre des terms ("mots") à l'intérieur du champ même."[1] Further, it must be assumed that in addition to the static pattern of the set of terms as elements of the vocabulary, the dynamic syntactic relations which each term may contract in utterances in the language will also play an important part in the "économie" of these structures.

The first stage therefore in the overall analysis of the vocabulary studied is the consideration of the applications of the terms concerned. Subsequent to this the interrelation of the words and the typical syntagms in which they occur will be discussed.

As has been seen[2], in classical Latin the vocabulary corresponding to the ideas of 'nation' and 'nationality' comprised two series of terms which were applied to states and tribes in accordance with clear criteria: civitas being used for tribal states or city states, but supposing an ordered constitution, for which the term respublica was used, although the application of this word was steadily more limited, and which in its turn supposes rank and horizontal divisions. To designate these the important terms are populus, and plebs to a lesser extent. Other groups, presenting an absence of a constitutional structure, tribes, and similarly families or clans within ordered states, were designated by the terms gens and natio.

Although it is possible to divide the Old French vocabulary relating to this topic into two series, the

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[1] Coseriu, "Pour une sémantique diachronique structurale": 157.

[2] Above: chapter 1.

pattern, apart from this superficial similarity is no longer the same. There is in Old French a greater measure of fluidity in the vocabulary, and synonyms or near--synonyms are more readily interchangeable. Thus, while terre is the normal word used for a delimited area of land, of whatever dimensions, country, province, or domain, païs may be found denoting the same referents, even within the same sentence, and frequently within the same limited context. Similarly, païs may be used as a variant for region and contree which normally denote smaller units. But this mobility of synonyms does not appear to be possible symmetrically: contree or region, for example, cannot normally be substituted in the contexts in which terre appears, and this is one reason for assuming that païs and the terms which may be subsumed under it, contree and region, terms which are in any case undoubtedly less common, form a set apart from terre, and that the synonymy of terre and païs, if indeed one can speak of synonymy, is of a particular kind. While païs poses no particular problems, and may be assumed to be the dominant term of a set of synonyms, terre, although placed in a central position from the standpoint adopted by the present study, is merely one term of a series, but an especially important one for the form of society under consideration. This is the series of terms denoting feudal holdings of all kinds, fiefs and charges, of which the dominant term is honour. Païs and the other terms stand outside this set, but terre, as are also regne, regnet, is included within it. Thus, what is denoted by the term terre may also be denoted by honour, since terre is one kind of honour, and the relation may go as far as complete reciprocal synonymy, where the dominant feudal sense is not necessarily apparent, as is shown by a passage in the Occitan Boecis,[1]

[1] In C. Appel, Provenzalische Chrestomathie, 5th ed. (Leipzig, 1920): 147 sqq.

Cóms fo de Roma e ac gran valor
aprob Mallio, lo rei emperador:
el era'l meler de tota la onor

(Boecis: 34-36)

where the context clearly indicates that terre, or even païs or its synonyms, might have been used. Such examples for Old French would be hard to find, and it is more normally païs which is attracted in the other direction by the importance of the feudal terms, and which, as has been seen[1], may tend to appear in the syntactic contexts typical to terre. Nonetheless, as is shown for example by the usage of the Vie de Saint Alexis[2], terre, while it is not possible to distinguish clearly any difference in its application from païs -- "Tere de France, mult estes dulz païs", says Roland (CR: 1861) -- does, by its place in the system of the vocabulary, its inclusion in the set of feudal terms, and its possibility of replacement by honour, possess a dimension of sense which païs does not, that of land as feudal holding, and this is of course reflected in the syntactic usage of the word, as a closer analysis of this usage will show.

The principal syntactic formula which is typical for all the feudal terms of Old French is their appearance as direct object after tenir with personal subject, and often also with a personal prepositional object, indicating the overlord. The occurrence of terre, regne, and regnet in this formula is frequent, as the examples indicate. In spite of the measure of overlap between the terms, however, similar examples for païs were extremely rare in the texts chosen for study. Obviously related to this usage with tenir is the use of terre, and to a certain

[1] Above: 58-60.

[2] Above: 50.

extent also of *païs*, with expressions of possession. Thus the possessive determinants *mon*, *ton*, *son*, *nostre*, *vostre*, *lor*, are regularly found with both *païs* and *terre*, and to this extent we may say that the two terms overlap syntactically as well as semantically. But the relationship of possession, and the expressions thereof, are not symmetrical, and not all expressions of possession can be related to sentences containing *tenir*, or *avoir*. Expressions which imply owning rather than belonging[1], that is to say, expressions of the type *la terre nostre seigneur*, or *la terre est nostre*, are usually only found with *terre*, which as a feudal holding may be, at least within certain limits, possessed, and not with *païs*, which does not normally come into this category. It is significant that the counterexample of *païs* used in this way,

> de cui terre, et de cui païs . . . et de cui maisnie
> (V, *CC*: 370)

quoted above as the epigraph to chapter 5, shows *païs* assimilated into a set of feudal terms for which this type of expression is normal.

Although *terre*, and similarly *regnet*, may commonly be used in apposition to qualify a proper name, or introduce a proper name with *de*, usages which are not observed for *païs*, the proper names so categorised as

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[1] The terms *external* and *internal*, which are also inadequate, are sometimes used to denote this asymmetry of the possessive relation by which one may say, for example, in Modern French, both *mon livre*, and *mon genou*, but only *ce livre est à moi*, and not **ce genou est à moi*. In the same way, *mon livre* may be paraphrased both as *ce livre est à moi* and *ce livre est de moi*, the two different readings, of which only the first may be said to correspond to a sentence *j'ai un livre*, representing the different dimensions of possession.

as terre do not present exactly the same syntactic distribution as the common noun. Only the use as the direct object of tenir is observed with proper names such as France or Espagne. The absence of the possessives with proper names however does not authorise any conclusions, since the general restrictions of the use of the article in Old French would naturally apply to all classes of determinants, and *nostre France, in this period, would be as impossible as *la France. The occurrence of the expressions of the type France la lor terre indicates that this lacuna is merely grammatical, since the same content may be expressed in other ways.

The terms in Old French denoting groups of people, although historically identical with the two most important terms in Latin, show a reversal of fortune which tells eloquently of the reversal of circumstances which came about with the fall of the empire. Whereas in Latin populus had held the centre of the stage, as it were, relegating gens to the periphery, the tribal invasions swept away the populus, and in Latin documents of the early Middle Ages it is gens which dominates the scene. Likewise in Old French, gent is the more important term. Peuple is used in religious contexts with the sense of 'congregation', a reflection of its use in Christian Latin, but otherwise is usually confined in its application to groups which did not possess any particular unity, the undifferentiated mass of the population, perhaps it might not be an exaggeration to say populace. Gent, on the other hand, is used for the cohesive body: the troops under the command of their leader, or the totality of the members of the feudal chain of dependence, and so it belongs with the terms expressing this and the terms of kinship and household relations, with lignage, maisnie, and similar terms. Thus it is that while peuple and gent, not

surprisingly in view of the degree of overlap in the application of the two words, are both found with the possessive determinants, as are both païs and terre, only gent is found with external forms of possessives. Here the uses of gent and terre are in parallel: expressions of the pattern of la gent Rou, la gent Carlun are of frequent occurrence.

This distribution of possessive expressions with these four terms, terre, païs, gent, peuple, is of special significance. While there is a sense, for all these terms, in which a person may belong to, that is to say, originate from, or be a member of, the thing thus designated, and in which, accordingly, the use of the possessive determinant may be justified, as in one of the examples quoted, "raler en lor païs" (V, CC: 32), it is only for the terms which are part of the feudal system that the sense in which the objects denoted may be owned, or rather, commanded, is relevant, and this is why expressions of external possession are found normally only with gent and terre. Thus, among the terms denoting land and people, the two terms may be distinguished in their application and in their syntactic use as being specialised in feudal contexts.

These two terms together constitute a structure of meaning which, with its variations, is of notable importance. The basic framework of the feudal society of this period may be represented as triangular, composed as it is of the relationship between lord, land, and people. For the purposes of this study and from the frequency of the occurrence of such expressions as la gent de la terre, ceus de la terre, les homes de sa terre, or, with proper names, ceus de France, or ceus de Pise, it is evident

that the reciprocal relations between any two of the three poles are of equal importance, and that the links which hold horizontally across what might be called the base of the feudal triangle may be considered independently without necessarily referring to the third term of the framework. La gent de la terre adequately categorises a coherent group, and the synonymic or pronominal variations which are found of this basic pattern do not alter the meaning in any substantial way. Just as li reis mandet sa gent, where gent is specified in relation to the lord, may be paraphrased as li reis mandet ses homes, or even li reis mandet les suens, since [son] home or suen are equally terms of the feudal vocabulary, so, when gent is determined by reference to the land, as for example in "Carles mandet humes de plusurs teres" (CR: 3743), we find the same variation in terms: les homes de la terre, ceus de la terre, or more commonly, ceus de France. Li pueple de la terre is also to be found, which would seem to be an instance of the partial synonymy of peuple and gent, and it would not be impossible for peuple to be attracted into the sphere of more specifically feudal terms, but li pueple del païs would not be normal at this period, although it is a synonymic extension of the basic pattern, and one which becomes normal later as the feudal terms lose their former importance.

Where proper names are used in this framework, the element de [France] may be replaced by the corresponding ethnic adjective, and thus la gent de France can be expressed also as la franceise gent, and ceus de France as les Franceis. These terms, France, Franceis, provide Old French with an apparatus by which speakers of the language may identify themselves as belonging to a community, and having a homeland. It would be easy,

particularly given the nature of the subject-matter of much of Old French literature, to exaggerate the significance of this fact[1], and to attribute to the inhabitants of France in the twelfth century a patriotic sentiment which must surely go beyond their mental representation of the question when and indeed if they thought about it. But this mental representation whatever it may be cannot be said to have any validity apart from its reflection in the vocabulary of the language as it was used, and it would be a falsification to attempt to abstract these proper names from the "structures de signification" to which they belong and which are represented by the common nouns which have been examined here. In terms of these common nouns les Franceis are a gent, the expression ceus de France cannot be seen accurately if divorced from other expressions such as ses homes. The expressions are used, and they do give grounds for talking of a consciousness of French nationality in this period. This however is an interpretation of a later age, and when the French of the twelfth century call themselves Franceis they do so in terms which are feudal, and which do not admit of a representation which goes outside the existing framework of the feudal society. French nationality is perhaps a legitimate expression to use of this period, but it is articulated in terms which are specific to the time. As the idea of 'nation' which is closer to the modern conception appears, the terms in which the twelfth century expressed its own conception once again take on a new configuration, and peuple and pays become more important, new terms are introduced, the former senses of gent and terre are no longer relevant, and the terms

[1] As indeed there has been a tendency to do on the part of some French critics: cf above: 73-74, the quotations from Pauphilet and G. Paris.

which remain in use fall into new patterns.

CONCLUSION

"Il est aussi arbitraire de faire sortir la langue de la mentalité que la mentalité de la langue. Toutes deux sont le produit des circonstances; ce sont des faits de civilisation"

J. Vendryes[1]

It has not been the central purpose of this study either to prove or to disprove such statements as: "Nationalism as applied to the middle ages is an anachronism; group sentiments remained nearer to tribalism."[2] Such a judgement is no doubt an accurate summing up of the medieval viewpoint in terms of modern labels, but when applied to a culture as different from our own as that of the Middle Ages they remain labels and while they aid comprehension by assimilating the unknown to the known, in the last resort they do not lead to a deeper understanding of the medieval attitude towards this subject.

Nor has it been part of the intention to discuss the concept of 'nationality'. If indeed such a concept can be identified as a constant independent of its expression in a given language, then for that very reason it falls outside the scope of a linguistic inquiry[3]. Rather, what

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[1] Le Langage: introduction linguistique à l'histoire (Paris, 1921): 277.

[2] G. Leff, Medieval Thought (Harmondsworth, 1958): 81.

[3] Cf. K. Heger, "Les bases méthodologiques de l'onomasiologie et du classement par concepts", Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature, 3, i (1965): 7-32.

has been attempted here is the study of a group of expressions existing within the object language, and which are applied to the system of social organisation of the time, and which, by their articulation as a linguistic system, or sub-system, reflect the articulation of the entities and relations they denote.

In the study of such a linguistic field as certain measure of ontological and methodological confusion is difficult to avoid. To posit the existence of the concept and thereby of its expression in the language studied is in effect to prejudge the issue, and the matter is even more delicate when the labels used in the metalanguage to indentify the area studied are as tendentious and as leading as are 'nation' and 'nationality'. And yet, however potentially misleading, these words are only working labels and other than as such should not be taken to have any significance. They are a convenient device, no more, to identify an area of the vocabulary of Old French, which can then be studied independently of the implications of these terms. It may be assumed that, in Lyons's words, "between any two societies there will be a greater or less degree of cultural overlap"[1] and that the existence of ethnic and territorial groups is just such an area of overlap. The content of the terms compared may not, in fact is highly unlikely to, be the same, but the objects to which the terms are applied can objectively be approximately equated. Once the relevant vocabulary in the object language has thus been identified however, it is that vocabulary itself which must be studied in terms of its own particular internal organisation. The assumption of a common content between the object language and the metalanguage is then replaced by analysis of

[1] Structural Semantics (Oxford, 1963): 41.

of what is peculiar to the object language, and from this we arrive at a realisation of the essential differences in the Old French viewpoint. It is necessary to assume the similarities, but only in order to arrive at a better understanding of the contrasts inherent in the use of another language reflecting another culture.

In the present case, the assumption has proved to be justified. There is a measure of overlap, of common content, between Latin and Old French, and between Old French and Modern French, or English. But the common content of the terms used in the several languages is however counterbalanced by the differences which in each language are inseparably bound together in the expression and the different organisation of the vocabulary. It is in this way that, in spite of the similarities which make comparison possible, the vocabulary reflects the society which uses it.

Thus the Latin vocabulary envisages the individual as belonging to groups basically in two ways: as civis, member of a populus possibly, belonging to a civitas, and also as member of a family or tribal group, the gens. These two interpretations are not incompatible, and any one group can be considered in either light. But in each case it is the community which is of primary importance. There is no term specifically reserved for the area of attachment as such of the group. It is only later that civitas acquires a concrete sense, and it is at the same time that the vocabulary as it was previously is superseded by a new organisation of the terms, which gives importance to terre, referring to areas which can be identified with modern countries, or with smaller areas, and which is inserted in a set of terms specifically

feudal, and which is linked with gent, denoting the people, the inhabitants, but itself also a feudal term. The specific character of this vocabulary in Old French is that gent, as opposed to peuple, denotes the feudal group, and thus, while it is possible to see how France and Franceis can be used to denote a nation and a nationality, corresponding to what is so referred to in modern European languages, they are in Old French feudal expressions, and for Old French the definition of nationality and its expression are feudal.

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