Reliability of the Editions

Both editions of the Eracles contain instances in which their readings do not match those in the manuscripts closest to the original translation. The most significant of these differences provides the criteria for choosing sample chapters to establish a manuscript stemma. These variants include the addition of new material. While, hitherto, the Paulin Paris edition has been used for a comparison with the Latin text, here the RHC edition has been checked to see whether it contains the same differences.

The most striking change that occurs in the Paris edition is found in Book 1.17 where the lesser nobles who participated in the First Crusade are listed. William named:

Henricus de Ascha, Radulfus de Balgentiaco, Ebrardus de Pusato, Centonius de Bear, Willelmus Amaneus, Gaustus de Bederz, Willelmus de Monte Pessulano, Girardus de Rossellun, Gerardus de Ceresiaco, Rogerus de Barnavilla, Guido de Porsessa et Guido de Garlanda, Francorum regis dapifer, Thomas de Feria, Galo de Calvo Monte.1

[Henry de Esche-sur-Sûre, Ralph de Beaugency, Everard de Puy, Centule IV de Béarn, William Amanieu, Gaston de Béziers, William de Montpellier, Gerard de Rousillon, Gerard de Quierzy, Roger de Barneville, Guy de Possesse and Guy de Garlanda, dapifer of the king of France, Thomas de La Fèr, Galen de Moncalvo.]

Paris gave this list as:

Raous de Baujenci, Everarz du Puisat, Guy de Garlande seneschaus le roi de France, Thomas de la Fere, Guiz de Possesse, Gales de Chaumont, Giraz de Cherisi, Rogiers de Barneville, Henris de Asque et Godefrois ses freres, Centons de Monpeller, Girarz de Rousillon.2

[Ralph de Beaugency, Everard de Puy, Guy de Garlanda, seneschal of the king of France, Thomas de La Fèr, Guy de Possesse, Galen de Chaumont,

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1 WT, 1.17 lînes 20–25.
2 Paris, 1.17 vol. 1 pp. 31–32.
Gerard de Quierzy, Roger de Barneville, Henry de Esche-sur-Sûre and Godfrey his brother, Centon de Montpellier, Gerard de Rousillon.]

Godfrey de Esche-sur-Sûre, brother of Henry, has been added to this list, a name William mentioned later in the text as being a participant in the crusade. This particular addition is not found in F52, the base manuscript for the Paris edition, nor is it in F38 or F06. The only manuscript that contained this addition is F05. While F05 is an early manuscript, dated c.1245–48, F38 and F06 are also from the mid-thirteenth century. While Godfrey may have been dropped from the tradition, the fact that his name is not present in Latin or any early French manuscripts, except for F05, means that it is likely that shortly after the original translation was made, a copyist added Godfrey’s name to F05, or one of its possible antecedents.

The major difference with this list, however, is that the Paris edition lacks ‘de Bear, Willelmus Amaneus, Gaustus de Bederz, Willelmus.’ A comparison with the RHC edition shows that it contains a complete list that matches the Latin.

Raoul de Baujenci, Esvrart del Puisat, Gui de Garlande seneschal le roi de France, Thomas de Fere, Gui de Possesse, Gales de Chaumont, Girard de Cherisi, Rogiers de Barneville, Henris de Asque, Centons de Bearz, Guillaumes Amanez, Gasces de Bediers, Guillaumes de Montpellier, Girart de Rousillon.3

The RHC does not include the addition of Godfrey de Esche-sur-Sûre. Paris made a note in his edition of the existence of a variant reading containing the complete list in a manuscript that he labelled ‘Msc. 2836. B. N’.4 It is unclear which manuscript this is, as it is not one of the known manuscripts of the Eracles text. It is possible that Paris copied the classmark incorrectly and was using BnF fr. 2826 (F04), which Paul Riant noted was used by the editors of the RHC and, like the other manuscripts, contains a reading that matches the list from the Latin text.5 The RHC editors did not note that any of their manuscripts lacked the part of the list missing from Paris’s edition, nor do any of the manuscripts I have consulted lack any part of the list. Whereas this could indicate that Paris was using another, unknown, manuscript, it is more likely that he made a mistake at some point in preparing his edition.

3 RHC, I.17 pp. 45–46.
4 Paris, vol. 1 p. 32 n. 5.
5 Riant, p. 248.