

## TEXT AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

### Notes about the text

The story of Roland is very popular in France. Almost everyone who has attended a French primary school will know about the most famous episode: Roland fighting bravely at Roncevaux Mountain Pass, blowing his horn and trying to destroy his sword...

There are many different texts relating this story. The one used here is based on "la chanson de Roland" (the song of Roland) following the Oxford Manuscript, written at the end of the eleventh century in Anglo-Norman language (which is a derivation from old French). Chapters and versification are based on the French edition of the text by Léon Gautier (1872). Verse numbers are indicated in brackets. Missing parts are indicated by [...] and added or modified parts by the corresponding text in [ ].

The text of the prologue doesn't belong to the original text and has been written especially for the piece using the Spanish language.

### 1 – Prologue – le Vent qui venait des Montagnes (*The Wind that came from the Mountains*)

Oïd, oïd la leyenda, escuchad la historia  
Escuchad la historia que trae el viento de los montes,  
Oïd la leyenda que cuentan las viejas piedras...  
Oïd, oïd

*Hear, hear the legend, listen to the story  
Listen to the story that the wind of the mountains is carrying,  
Hear the legend that old stones are recounting ...  
Hear, hear*

### 2 – La cité sur la colline (*The city on the Hill*)

(Chapitres I – VII)

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| (1)  | Carles li reis, nostre emperer magnes       | <i>Charles the king, our great emperor</i>                           |
| (2)  | Set anz tuz pleins ad estet en Espaigne:    | <i>Has stayed in Spain for seven full years:</i>                     |
| (3)  | Tresqu'en la mer cunquist la tere altaigne. | <i>As far as the sea has he conquered the high land.</i>             |
| (4)  | N'i ad castel ki devant lui remaigne;       | <i>There is no castle that resists him;</i>                          |
| (5)  | Mur ne citet n'i est remes fraindre,        | <i>There is no city wall that stay unbroken</i>                      |
| (6)  | Fors Sarraguçe, ki est en une muntaigne.    | <i>Apart from Saragossa which stands on top of a mountain.</i>       |
| (20) | « Consez mei cume me savie hume »           | <i>« Advise me, my men who are wise »</i>                            |
| (28) | « - Mandez Carlung ! [...] »                | <i>« - Send a message to Charles!</i>                                |
| (35) | « En ceste tere ad asez osteiet,            | <i>« He has now stayed in this land long enough</i>                  |
| (36) | « En France ad Ais s'en deit ben repaire »  | <i>« Tell him he can now go back in France, in his city of Aix »</i> |
| (89) | Dis [...] mules fist amener [...],          | <i>He (NDT : Marsile) asks that ten mules be brought</i>             |
| (92) | [Li message] cil sunt muntez [...]          | <i>The messengers climb on them</i>                                  |
| (94) | Vindrent a Carle ki France ad en baillie    | <i>And go to meet Charles who rules France</i>                       |

### 3 – L'Assemblée de Cordres (*Cordres' Assembly*)

(Chapitres VIII – XXVII)

|       |  |   |
|-------|--|---|
| (114) | Desuz un pin, delez un eglenter,                 | <i>Under a pine, near a wild rose tree,</i>                           |
| (115) | Un faldestoed i out, fait tut d'or mer,          | <i>Stands a throne made of plain gold</i>                             |
| (116) | Là siet le reis ki dulce France tient.           | <i>Here seats the king that holds fair France</i>                     |
| (119) | S'est ki l'demandet, ne l'estoet enseigner.      | <i>Those who want to see him know where he is</i>                     |
| (180) | « Seignurs baruns [...] »                        | <i>« Lord Barons,</i>   |
| (180) | « [...] Marsilies m'ad tramis ses messages »     | <i>« Marsile has sent his messengers to me »</i>                      |
| (192) | [...] « - Il nus i cuvent garde. »               | <i>« - Let's all be careful »</i>                                     |
| (196) | [...] « Ja mar crerez Marsilie ! »               | <i>« - It would be madness to believe Marsile !</i>                   |
| (210) | « Faites la guere cum vus l'avez emprise »       | <i>« Go to war against him, as you had planned »</i>                  |
| (220) | [...] « Ja mar crerez bricun, »                  | <i>« - Don't follow unwise decisions,</i>                             |
| (229) | « Laissum les fols, as sages nus tenum. »        | <i>« Let fools speak, and believe only the wises. »</i>               |
| (274) | « Franc chevalier, [...] »                       | <i>« - Frankish knights,</i>  |
| (275) | « Car m'eslisez un barun [...], »                | <i>« Choose for me a baron,</i>                                       |
| (276) | « Qu'à Marsiliun me portast mun message. »       | <i>« That will be my messenger to Marsile. »</i>                      |
| (277) | [...] « Co ert Guenes, mis parastre. »           | <i>« - It will be my step father Ganelon. »</i>                       |
| (329) | « - Jo i puis aller, mais n'i averai guarant ; » | <i>« - I can well go there, but nothing good will happen to me. »</i> |
| (335) | « De cest message nus avendrat granz perte. »    | <i>« - This message will bring us great misfortune. »</i>             |

## 4 – La Trahison (*The betrayal*)

(Chapitres XXVIII – LII)

(366) Guenes chevalchet suz une olive halte :  
(367) Asemblet s'est as sarrazins messages.  
(402) Tant chevalcherent e veies chemins  
(403) Qu'en Sarraguce descendent suz un if.  
(421) « [Charles] vus enveiet un soen noble barun »  
(424) [...] « - Or diet, nus l'orrum. »  
(470) « - Kar ço vus mandet Charles [...] »  
(472) « Demi Espagne vus durrat il en fiet »  
(473) « E sun nevuld Rollant l'altre meitet »  
(475) « Se ceste acorde ne vuelez otrier,  
(476) « En Sarraguce vus vendrat aseger. »  
(550) « [- De Carlemagne] merveille en ai grant »  
(556) « Quant ert il mais d'osteier recreanz ? »  
(557) « - ço n'ert [...] tant cum vivet Rollanz. »  
(605) « La traïsun me jurrez de Rollant [...] »  
(606) [...] «- Issi seit cum vus plaist. »

*Ganelon rides under high olive trees  
He has joined Sarasin messengers.  
They have ridden so long through roads and paths  
That they reach Saragossa and step off under a yew.  
« Charles sends you one of his noble men »  
« - Let him speak, we'll listen to him. »  
« - Here is Charles' message :  
« He will give you half of Spain  
« He will give the other half to his nephew Roland.  
« If you don't want to accept this,  
« Charles will besiege you in Saragossa.. »  
« - I am really amazed by Charlemagne,  
« But when will he be fed up with war? »  
« - It won't be as long as Roland lives. »  
« - Swear you will betray Roland »  
« - May it be as you wish ! »*

## 5 – le Départ de Charles (*Charles' departure*)

(Chapitres LIII – LXXIX)

(703) Charles [...] ad Espagne guastée  
(704) Les castels pris, les citez violées  
(705) Ço dit li Reis que sa guere out finée  
(706) Vers Dulce France chevalchet l'Emperer(e).  
(814) Halt sunt li pui et li val tenebrus  
(815) Les roches bises, li destreit merveillus  
(816) Le jur passerent Franceis à grant dulur :  
(817) De quinze liues en ot hom la rimur.  
(824) As porz d'Espagne ad lesset sun nevuld  
(825) Pitez l'en prent, ne poet muer n'en plurt.  
(814) [Tenebrus sunt li val],  
(825) li [...] Per [cil] sunt remés [...]

*Charles has destroyed Spain  
Taken the castles, raped the cities  
The king says his war is over  
And now he is riding towards fair France.  
High are the mountains, dark are the valleys,  
The rocks are dark, terrible are the gorges ...  
This day, the French passed with great grief:  
From fifteen leagues away we could hear them marching.  
He (NDT : Charles) has left his nephew on Spanish gorges  
He's suffering and can't help crying.  
The valleys are dark,  
The peers remained there*

## 6 – Présages (*Omens*)

(Chapitres LXXX – LXXXVII)

(1028) Olivers est desur un pui muntez  
(1018) Guardet suz destre par mi un val herbus.  
(1019) Si veit venir cele gent païenur  
(1051) « Cumpainz Rollanz, kar sunez vostre corn :  
(1052) « Si l'orrat Charles, si retournerat l'oz. »  
(1053) [...] « Jo fereie que fols,  
(1054) « En dulce France en perdreie mun los. »  
(1059) « Cumpainz Rollant, l'olifant kar sunez :  
(1060) « Si l'orrat Charles, ferat l'ost retourner »  
(1062) [...] « Ne placet Damne Deu  
(1063) « Que mi parent pur mei seient blasmet »  
(1 100) « Cist nus sun près [...] »  
(1107) « Mal seit de l'coer ki el' piz se cuardet ! »

*Olivier has climbed a high hill  
He looks on the right over a green valley  
He sees the whole pagan army coming  
« -My friend Roland, blow your horn:  
« Charles will hear it and the great army will return. »  
« - I would be mad if I did that,  
« In fair France I would lose all my glory. »  
« - My friend Roland, blow your Oliphant:  
« Charles will hear it and will return with his army. »  
« - Please God,  
« That my parents be blamed because of me»  
« Now they are so close to us »  
« Be damned the one who holds a weak heart and fears! »*

## 7 – L’Echo des Montagnes (*the echo of the mountains*)

(Chapitres LXXXVII – CLXI)

( 1211) « Ferez i, Franc ! Nostre est li premiers colps. »  
( 12 33) « Ferez i, Franc ! Kar très ben les veintrum »  
( 1258) « Ferez, Franceis ; nuls de vus ne s’ublit !  
( 1259) « Cist premiers culps est nostre, Deu mercit. »  
( 1561) [...] « Tant mare fus, [barun] ! »  
( 1585) [...] « Mult decheent li nostre. »  
( 1788) Carles l’oït [...]  
( 1789) [...]« Cil corn ad lunge aleine ! »  
( 1793) « Adubez vus, si criez vostre enseigne  
( 1794) « si succurez vostre maisnée gente  
( 1795) « asez oez que Rollanz se dementet »  
( 2114) [...]« Carlun averum [...] »  
( 1906) [...]« Aie nus [...]! »  
( 1910) [...]« E ! Kar nus en fuium ! »

« *Strike, Franks, the first blow is ours.* »  
« *Strike, Franks, we will defeat them.* »  
« *Strike, Frenchmen, no one should stay behind.* »  
« *The first blow is ours, thank God.* »  
« *Barons, what a misfortune!* »  
« *Many of our men die* »  
*Charles hears him.*  
« *This horn blows so long!* »  
« *Get ready, Sir, to shout your motto*  
« *Go and rescue your noble house:*  
« *You’ve heard enough Roland’s complaint.* »  
« *It’s Charles who comes!* »  
« *Help!* »  
« *We can now only flee.* »

## 8 – La mort de Roland (*The Death of Roland*)

(Chapitres CLXII – CLXXVII)

(2184) Rollanz s’en turnet, par le camp vait tut suls  
(2259) Co sent Rollanz que la morz li est près  
(2271) Halt sunt li pui e mult halt li arbre.  
(2272) Quatre perruns i ad, luisanz de marbre  
(2301) Dix colps i fiert par doel e par rancune  
(2302) Cruist li acers, ne freint ne ne n’esgraniet  
(2312) Rollanz ferit el perrun de sardenie  
(2313) Cruist li acers, ne briset ne n’esgraniet  
(2338) Rollanz ferit en une pierre bise  
(2340) L’espée cruist, ne fruisset ne ne briset  
(2375) Li Quens Rollanz se jut desuz un pin  
(2376) Envers Espagne en ad turnet sun vis  
(2391) Desur sun braz teneit le chef enclin  
(2392) Juintes ses mains est alez à sa fin

*Roland walks away. He walks alone on the battlefield  
He fills himself that death is near  
The peaks are high, high are the trees  
Here are four large shining marble stones  
He hits them ten times with grief and anger  
The steel screeches but doesn’t break nor chip  
Roland strikes the sard stone a second time  
The steel squeaks: it doesn’t break, it doesn’t chip.  
For the third time, Roland hits the pale stone  
The sword squeaks but still doesn’t break.  
The count Roland is lying under a pine tree  
He has turned his face toward Spain  
Bending his head over his shoulder,  
Joining his hands, he went to his end.*

## 9 – Retour à Roncevaux (*Return to Roncevaux*)

(Chapitres CLXXVIII – CCLXXX)

(2398) Li Emperere en Rencevals parvient.  
(2418) Il nen i ad chevaler ne barun  
(2419) Que de pitet mult durement ne plurt  
(2420) Plurent lur filz, lur freres, lur nevulz  
(2421) E lur amis e mur liges seignurs.  
(2443) Li Emperere fait ses graisles suner  
(2444) Puis, si chevalchet od sa grant ost, li bers.

*The emperor arrives in Roncevaux  
There isn’t a single knight or a single baron  
That cries with pity.  
They mourn their sons, their brothers, their nephews,  
Their friends and their lords.  
The emperor commands his trumpets to sound  
And gets ahead riding with his great army.*

## 10 – Epilogue

(Chapitre CCX)

(2909) Ami Rollant, jo m’en irai en France  
(2911) De plusurs regnes vendrunt li hume estrange,  
(2912) Demanderunt ù est li quens cataignes  
(2913) Jo lur dirrai qu’il est morz en Espagne.

*My friend Roland, I will return to France  
Strangers will come from distant kingdoms  
And will ask me: «Where is your captain?»  
I will answer them that he died in Spain*

(Chapitre CCXLIII)

(3305) Granz est la plaigne e large la cuntrée  
(3306) Luisent cil helme as perres d’or gemmées  
(3307) E cez escut e cez brunies safrées  
(3308) E cez espies, cez enseignes fermées  
(3309) Sunent cez graisle, les voiz en sunt mult cleres,  
(3310) De l’olifant haltes sunt les menées

*Large is the plain, large is the country  
Helmets shine with gold and gems  
Do you see those twinkling shields, those sparkling armours?  
These spears and these flags hanging from them?  
The trumpets sound and their voice is clear  
The sound of the Oliphant goes far and high*