

The song of roland: eastern europe's early medieval society

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The song of Roland is a poem based on the French literature. It is about the battle of Roncevaux in 778 during the reign of Charlemagne. The composition of this poem derives major references to the early medieval society in Western Europe. This paper will analyze in detail the early medieval society in Western Europe. A brief highlight and discussion on the question of authority, leadership and government in the early medieval society will be important. An examination of the characters in the song of Roland will also be important. The question of religion in the time and how it was manifested by the poem will also be important.

The song of Roland represents the aspect of early medieval society in Western Europe by expressing the two nations of Frenchmen and Spaniards. The song of Roland shows their organizational structure, their religion, their past and their national heroes. The heroes like Roland showed good examples and were models for the perfect medieval behaviour at the time. Roland himself died the death of a martyr according to the song of Roland. He died blowing the trumpet in order to attract the attention of Charlemagne and his army who would avenge the death of his men.

The medieval society in Europe at the time was therefore expressed as that full of war and related military activity according to the song of Roland. Christianity also played an important role at the time where certain traits are expressed by heroes in relation to religion. They include; brevity, faith, honor, loyalty and the love for homeland. Both the Christians in France and the Muslims in Spain are shown to fight in the maintenance of their religious stand, as is represented in the song of Roland. The song of Roland plays

perfect in showing the early life of Western Europe during the medieval period by showing in detail the national characteristics of the people at the time.

The themes of authority, leadership and the governments are perfectly manifested in the song of Rowland. In the song of Rowland, three governments and three leaders characterize leadership and authority in the poem; Charlemagne of France, Marsilla of Spain and Baligant of Babylon. All these leaders possess different characteristics in how they govern their governments or countries. In the poem, Charlemagne is expressed as a brave and a loyal leader who is concerned for the welfare of his countrymen.

The Emir of Babylon Baligant and the king of Spain Marsilla are shown to share common liking and have a good relationship between them. This is expressed in the part where Marsilla calls for help from Baligant after Charlemagne gives an attack warning. Baligant responds by showing military support as he represents himself with his Babylonian army ready for war with the French. Charlemagne's leadership can be defined as authoritative and commendable as he does anything to ensure he comes out of war successful, and also fights for revenge after the death of his men during their encounter at Roncesvalles.

Personal identity in the song of Roland is manifested by the fact that people respect their culture, their language and their religion. This shows a personal stand for each individual character to these themes as all have similar stands. Group identity in the song of Roland is manifested by the fact that

both the Frenchmen and Spaniards unite in protecting their land and everything in it including the women and children.

The examination of individual characters in this poem is important. The poem is arranged in a chronological order in reference to the 7 years Charlemagne was at war. He remains with one city of Saragossa. He accepts the claim of defeat by the king of Spain when they confirmed to change religion from Muslim to Christianity in order to be spared. The character of Charlemagne here shows that he understands. The king of Spain marsilla calls for backup from the emir of Babylon in order to fight Charlemagne's army. This shows his character of persistence and smartness. Roland himself is expressed as a brave character and one with strong faith in himself and his country. This is evident when he refuted pleas by Oliver, to call backup before they were outnumbered by the Saracens. This shows that he had faith and hope that they could conquer the Saracens with the small numbers.

Religious belief as a theme in the song of Roland is well represented and is similar to life in Western Europe in the medieval period. During the period, Christianity was well in place and respect existed for it. Religion played an important role in the life of the individuals as it gave them hope and faith in war and socialization. Leadership was also closely linked to religion where certain individuals were respected for having divine powers.

In conclusion, the song of Roland plays an important role in manifesting how life was in mediaeval Western Europe. The song displays important virtues and describes how the Frenchmen valued and engaged themselves in war till

victory. Therefore, the song of Roland as an epic poem is a worthy cultural piece of the French as it reminds them of their past and the way of life of their forefathers. It also depicts their relationship with close neighbours like Spaniards and how they interacted.