Many factors coincided in the eighteenth century to promote a revival of interest in the troubadours. The civilization of the South of France in the twelfth century was generally held to be the first notable secular culture since classical antiquity. As such it drew the attention of all Enlighteners, and as it had been an aristocratic culture, it appealed particularly to an enlightened aristocracy. Troubadour poetry was usually considered the first modern poetry. The Modernes were therefore interested in it from an historical point of view. They also enjoyed what they considered its simplicity and naïveté and tended to read it as pastoral. On the other hand, it is possible that the virtuosity of the Provençal poets—if anyone was capable of recognizing it, and not enough work has been done for us to say whether anyone was—intrigued an aristocratic public which admired any display of expertise, skill, and elegance, whether it occurred in poetry, on the battlefield, or in the boudoir. Most of the Modernes, moreover, held that good poetry was distinguished by the poet’s originality and inventiveness within fixed conventions; to them, artistic creation consisted largely in “la difficulté vaincue”—as against the view of the Anciens that true poetry has an element of divine inspiration. As lyric poetry the work of the troubadours also appealed, perhaps through a misunderstanding, to the new private and individualistic man of the eighteenth century, the inward-looking and self-conscious bourgeois; indeed, the themes of the troubadours found an echo in many contemporary writers. It is no accident that Rousseau’s Saint-Preux compares himself to Petrarch. Finally, the provincial pride which over the centuries had continued to sustain a modicum of interest in the poets of the Midi, was in a sense justified and given general significance by growing criticism of Paris and of the court. The dignity given by writers such as Rousseau or Gess-
ner to the simpler life of the provinces smoothed the way for a revival of interest in those poets who did not belong to the courtly tradition of absolutism or even to the humanist tradition of the Renaissance. The article “Poète” in the *Encyclopédie*, translated from the German of Sulzer, emphasized what the author considered the *popular* nature of medieval poetry. The medieval poets did not write for a restricted circle of specially privileged readers, it was argued, but for a whole society. On the Provençal poets Jaucourt had as yet little to say, but it is easy to see that the *Encyclopédistes* were ready to welcome any French equivalent of the Middle High German poets as Bodmer and Sulzer presented them. Provençal poetry thus entered into those vast considerations of poetry and its relation to society—of culture, in short—which Rousseau dealt with in the *Letter to d’Alembert* and which Grimm developed in the article “Poème lyrique” of the *Encyclopédie.*

In the eighteenth century the troubadours were thus no longer a mere antiquarian curiosity. On the contrary, they appealed to the most diverse tastes and for the most diverse and contradictory reasons. They could be all things to all manner of men—aristocratic and popular, courtly and individual, brilliant formally, charmingly naive and full of authentic passion. This was a substantial change from the previous age, which had shown only perfunctory interest in them. Pasquier, for instance, had devoted three pages of his *Recherches* to the briefest account of the forms of the Provençal lyric. At the end of the seventeenth century, Huet described their poetry with contemptuous irony. As a churchman with important robe connections, Fleury had little sympathy for a secular poetry

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1 “Lorsqu’un spectacle ne sert que d’amusement à un peuple oisif,” Grimm writes, “c’est-à-dire, à cette élite d’une nation qu’on appelle la bonne compagnie, il est impossible qu’il prenne jamais une certaine importance; et quelque génie que vous accordiez au poète, il faudra bien que l’exécution théâtrale, et mille détails de son poète [poème?] se ressentent de sa destination. Sophocle en faisant des tragédies, travaillait pour la patrie, pour la religion, pour les plus augustes solennités de la république... Chez les anciens, le spectacle était une affaire d’état; chez nous, si la police s’en occupe, c’est pour lui faire mille chicanes, c’est pour le faire plier à mille convenances bizarres.”


that sang only "de combats et d'amours; mais d'amours brutales et sottes, comme celles des gens grossiers." It was, he declared, in no way comparable with the poetry of the Hebrews and the Greeks, but the work of "des débauchés vagabonds." Huet did indeed concede that Homer was a wandering minstrel like the troubadours, and Fleury gave them credit for having been the first to use the vernacular as a literary medium. Nothing in the work of either, however, suggests that they themselves had any direct knowledge of Provençal poetry or that they considered such knowledge desirable or profitable.

This is not to say that all knowledge of the Provençal poets had disappeared from France. With all its faults, its inaccuracies, its crass fabrications, Jean de Nostredame's Les Vies des plus célèbres et anciennes poètes provençaux (published at Lyon in 1575) succeeded in preserving the troubadours from oblivion for nearly two hundred years. The Southern magistracy in particular cultivated the troubadours; the works of Catel and Caseneuve bear witness to this interest. Even at the close of the seventeenth century Pierre de Chasteuil had sufficient pride in his literary heritage to take offense at the current denigration of Provençal and of the poets who wrote in it and to recall that Provençal had once been the language of the most civilized courts in Europe, that its poets had perfected the use of rhyme, and that outstanding writers such as Dante and Petrarch had avowed their debt to their Provençal models.

The growth of interest in history which accompanied the early Enlightenment created a new context for the study of the troubadours. Works such as Crescimbeni's Storia della volgar poesia (1698) and Mervesin's Histoire de la poésie française (1706)
assured a definite place for Provençal poetry in the history of literature and of civilization. Fontenelle indicated what that place was. “Ces temps-là,” he declared, “furent fort ignorans, et il semble que la nature les choisit exprès pour faire voir ce qu'elle peut par elle-même, et pour produire des Poètes qui lui fussent tout . . . La poésie et les Poètes de ces temps-là étoient bien différents de ce qu'ils sont aujourd'hui. La Poésie étoit sans art, sans règle, telle enfin qu'elle doit être dans sa naissance.” One cannot therefore expect perfection. Nevertheless, these early poets are not without a certain charm which the civilized eighteenth century reader might savor if he maintained an ironical distance. “Ils ont une simplicité qui se rend son Lecteur favorable, une naïveté qui vous fait rire sans vous paroître ridicule et quelquefois des traits de génie imprévus.”

Despite its limitations, among them a marked tendency to read early poetry as pastoral, the historical outlook of the early Enlightenment brought Provençal poetry out of the antiquarian’s study. Everybody who wrote about poetry was now expected to have at least some awareness of it.

But there was no sign, as yet, in the histories of poetry of original research or extensive first hand knowledge. Like Pasquier and Huet, Mervesin and Massieu relied mostly on Italian scholarship for what they knew of the troubadours. In 1727, therefore, Falconet could truly complain to his colleagues at the Académie des Inscriptions that the history of French poetry and of the troubadours remained to be written.

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10 Fontenelle: ‘Histoire du Romieu de Provence,’ Mercure, Jan., 1751, pp. 7–8. There is a similar account, in almost identical terms, in Formey, Principes élémentaires des belles-lettres (Amsterdam, 1763), pp. 68–69. Fontenelle’s essay was reprinted in his Œuvres (Paris, 1767), 8:355–81.


12 ‘Essai de bibliothèque française,’ Bréquigny 61, fols. 10–33.
Sainte-Palaye undertook to write this history. He made it clear that he shared the views of Falconet and considered original research indispensable. "Les Troubadours furent en effet les fondateurs de la littérature chez les deux nations (France and Italy)," he wrote in his ‘Projet d'étude sur l'histoire de France,’ "et c'est de leurs ouvrages que doit partir quiconque veut se faire une idée juste du progrès de l'esprit en France." Hitherto, however, he went on, there have been only some general statements about the debt of Italian literature to Provencal literature. Bembo and many other Italian men of letters had made this point repeatedly. But few people were familiar with the actual works of the Provencal poets. Histories, like those of Crescimbeni and Bastero, "piquent la curiosité sans la satisfaire." The scholar who would write the literary history of the troubadours cannot consequently be satisfied to repeat a few traditional commonplaces, he must present the works themselves to the public. It was indispensable in Sainte-Palaye's opinion "que quelqu'un se dévouât à la pénible entreprise de les faire connaître."

The final product of Sainte-Palaye's interest in Provencal poetry was the Histoire littéraire des troubadours, published by the Abbé Millot in 1774 in three volumes. There were three distinct phases in its preparation. First, Sainte-Palaye collected, collated, and translated as many manuscripts of the Provencal poems as he could find; second, he prepared extracts from his own copies of the manuscripts; and third, he handed over these extracts to Millot, who arranged them for the press.

Sainte-Palaye set to work shortly after Falconet's paper was read to the Académie des Inscriptions, and by 1737 he had already made copies of the Provencal chansonniers in the Bibliothèque du Roi and of the d'Urfé chansonnier. According to the Marquis de Caumont, he had collected over two thousand poems in all. The work to be done on the troubadours was so vast, however, that he was forced to enter into relations with scholars pursuing similar interests in France and in Italy.

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13 'Projet,' Bréquigny 62, fol. 212.
14 Antonio Bastero, La Crusca provenzale (Rome, 1724).
16 Ibid., p. 181, Caumont to Mazaugues, 25.2.1737.
While Sainte-Palaye and Falconet were busy in the North, Thomassin de Mazaugues, who belonged to one of the foremost families of the South of France, had been collecting copies of *chansonniers* in Provence and Italy for a projected *Bibliothèque des auteurs de Provence*. The leader of a group of Southern French and Italian scholars interested in Provençal literature and history, Mazaugues was abreast of the latest techniques of criticism, and his Northern colleagues soon recognized that his assistance would be invaluable. In 1737 Caumont, who was a friend of both Falconet and Mazaugues, wrote to the latter on Falconet’s behalf, suggesting that he and Sainte-Palaye pool the results of their work. The collaboration with Mazaugues which resulted from this letter and which continued until Mazaugues’ death in 1743 turned out to be extremely fruitful. From Aix Sainte-Palaye received notices and copies of Provençal manuscripts, even as they were discovered or communicated to Mazaugues himself.

Outside the cities of the South, Italy was the main center of

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17. Achard, *Dictionnaire de la Provence et du Comté-Venaissin* (Marseille, 1787), 4:265-69. According to Achard, d’Aguesseau had tried to persuade Mazaugues to compose a history of Provence, but the latter was prepared to publish only “les pièces originales qui pouvoient servir de preuve à cette histoire. Il auroit effectivement exécuté ce projet, si la mort lui en avoir laissé le temps.”

18. The group included Lami and Muratori, whom Mazaugues had gotten to know in Italy (Carlo Pellegrini, *Tradizione italiana e cultura europea* [Messina, 1947], pp. 100-10).

19. Chabaneau, who examined his notes and papers commented on “le progrès sensible dans l’espace de quelques années, de Pierre de Chasteuil (1644–1727), qui copiait presque partout Nostredame, à Thomassin de Mazaugues (1684–1743), qui rejetait sans hésiter les fables de ce dernier, même les erreurs d’historiens plus autorisés (tels que Baluze) et ne s’en rapportait qu’aux documents originaux.” (Revue des langues romanes [1885], 28:79.)


21. Among the items he received through Mazaugues were copies of a *Vie de Saint-Honorat* in verse (Bréquigny 66, fol. 29, Mazaugues to Sainte-Palaye, 4.5.1742, and Bréquigny 65, fol. 130–133, Mazaugues to Sainte-Palaye, 24.9.1742), of the *Livre d’Estras* (ibid.), of a *Vie de Sainte-Marie Madeleine* (ibid.), of a *Vie de Saint-Trophime* (Bréquigny 65, fol. 153, Mazaugues to Sainte-Palaye, 19.10.1742), and notices of several Provençal *chansonniers* in Italian libraries: Florence, Riccardiana 2081 (MS F) (Cf. J. Bauquier, ‘Les Provençalistes du XVIIIe siècle,’ pp. 209–11), Venice, Marciana App. cod. XI (MS V) (cf. Sainte-Palaye’s ‘Notice’ of this MS in Moreau 1658, fol. 65, notice 2063, where Mazaugues is given as the source); Rome, Vaticana 3204 (MS K) (ibid. fol. 101, notice 2068) and Florence, Laurentiana Plut. XII, 43 (MS U) (ibid. fol. 86, notice 2085). It was also thanks to Mazaugues that Sainte-Palaye located the Milan *chansonnier* (Ambrosiana 71, MS G), ibid., fol. 86, notice 2085.
WORKS OF MEDIEVAL SCHOLARSHIP

Provençal studies. As the teachers and in some ways the models of Dante, Petrarch, and the poets of the dolce stil nuovo, the Provençal poets stood at the origins of literary Italian, and they had never ceased to be studied by writers and scholars in the Peninsula. The difference between the Italian and the French attitude toward the troubadours is illuminated by an important difference between the Vocabolario della Crusca and the Dictionnaire de l'Académie. Both were normative works; but the Vocabolario looked back to the fourteenth century for the authority of national writers in Italian, whereas the Dictionnaire "ne cite point, parce que plusieurs de nos plus célèbres Orateurs et de nos plus grands Poètes y ont travaillé et qu'on a cru s'en devoir tenir à leurs sentiments." It was not unusual in the Peninsula for a classical scholar, such as the celebrated Hellenist Anton Maria Salvini (1653–1729), to concern himself with the poets of the Trecento, with Dante, and with the Provençal poets. Salvini collaborated with Crescimbeni on the Giunta al Nostradamus, which the latter appended to the translation of Nostredame's Vies in the second volume of his Commentari (Rome, 1710), and in which he supplied information on some poets not mentioned by Nostredame. For the first time, indeed, in Salvini's Appendix, a number of Provençal poems and fragments were published together with Italian translations.

Not surprisingly, Italian amateurs had collected and annotated many manuscripts of Provençal poetry. As he wished to base his account of the troubadours on original sources, Sainte-Palaye was obliged, therefore, to visit Italy and to consult the manuscripts in Italian libraries. His two journeys to the Peninsula, in 1739 and in 1749, were undertaken in part with this task in mind. It was not

22 Santorre Debenedetti, 'Tre Secoli di studi provenzali,' in Provenza e Italia, studi pubblicati a cura di Vincenzo Crescini (Firenze, 1930), pp. 143-81. The Renaissance did not interrupt the tradition of Provençal studies. Ficino, for instance, referred gladly to the Provençal poets (see Walter Mönch, Die italienische Platonrenaissance und ihre Bedeutung für Frankreichs Literatur-und Geistesgeschichte, 1450–1550, Romanische Studien [Berlin, 1936], Heft 40, pp. 121–24). Humanists such as Bembo and Varchi, who saw the troubadours as the founders of modern lyric poetry in the vernacular did much to extend knowledge of their works (Axhausen, pp. 6–7). Santorre Debenedetti, Gli Studi provenzali in Italia nel '500 (Turin, 1911), provides a detailed account of the work of Italian scholars in the sixteenth century.


24 Natali, Storia letteraria d'Italia: il Settecento, 1:542–43.
always easy to fulfill, but Sainte-Palaye was fortunate in having influential contacts. Passionei’s intervention secured him access to the manuscripts of the Biblioteca Apostolica, and as a result he was able to examine seven Provençal chansonniers in the Vatican Library (K, g, L, H, O, M, and A, in Jeanroy’s classification). The Barberini collection, also in Rome, was easily visited for another chansonnier (b in Jeanroy), but the Chigi collection “estoiit bien plus formidable. Tout le monde m’assuroit qu’il n’y falloit seulement pas songer,” he wrote to Mazaugues. “Alexandre Albani avoit répondu que le Prince n’accorderoit jamais la permission d’y entrer; ces difficultés ont picqué Mr. le Card. Tencin; il l’a emporté et je suis maistre de la place.” The Chigi Library contained the important manuscript F. In Florence the Riccardi and Laurentian collections were made available to him without any ado and yielded further manuscripts of the troubadours (P, Q, U). In Venice he consulted the chansonnier in the San Marco Library (V) and in Milan the Ambrosian Codex (G). In Modena, Muratori showed him the celebrated Estense Codex (D).

By 1740, on his return from the first journey, Sainte-Palaye felt he had broken the back of his research work. “Pour les Poètes Provençaux,” he had already told Bouhier on the last day of 1739, “mon objet est presque rempli.” His correspondence with Muratori shows that he had taken ample notices of the manuscripts which concerned the troubadours, and that by 1740 he had received copies of most of the items required to make up his collections.

From the beginning his aim had been to make an exhaustive survey of all the manuscript sources. “Si l’ouvrage est par lui mesme très ingrat,” he wrote to Bouhier, “j’espère le rendre si complet que
personne après moi ne sera plus tenté d’y perdre son temps.” As a result of his endeavors he had tracked down and obtained copies of over twenty manuscripts containing Provençal poems in the libraries of France and Italy, and he was always on the lookout for additional sources. The thoroughness with which Sainte-Palaye sought out the elements of the written tradition was something quite new in Provençal studies. Colocci had been primarily concerned to annotate his own manuscripts. Bembo had compared a number of manuscripts but haphazardly, using those which he found to hand; his selection of readings from them was arbitrary and often based on the principle of the lectio facilior. There is no evidence that Barbieri and Castelvetro planned a complete survey of the manuscripts. Even in the eighteenth century Antonio Bastero, the Catalan author of the Crusca provenzale (Rome, 1724), was not more exacting. Although he promised to employ “ogni diligenza per leggere e scoprire dalle tenebre dell’oblivione i componimenti di questi antichi Maestri e Padri della Volgar Poesia,” in fact, a list of Provençal troubadours which he appended to the first and only published volume of his work shows that he took cognizance of only the Vatican manuscripts 3204, 3205 (a copy of 3794 which he appears not to have consulted), 3206, 3207, and 3208 (i.e., K, g, L, H, and O).

The question how Sainte-Palaye proposed to make use of the extensive material he had gathered together immediately presents itself. The most valuable consequence and probably the primary aim of his immense labors was that he acquired a more complete coverage of Provençal poetry than anyone before him. This was reflected in Millot’s publication, which included the lives of and extracts from the works of innumerable troubadours of whom no

30 B.N. Français 24418, fol. 372, Sainte-Palaye to Bouthier, 12.1.1742.
31 Bréquigny 165, fol. 47, Sainte-Palaye to Bréquigny 8.6.1764; and again Ibid., fol. 66, to Bréquigny, 25.3.1765, where he asks Bréquigny to have a notice made for him of a manuscript supposedly containing Provençal songs in England. He also tried to get a description of this manuscript from Horace Walpole (Letters of Horace Walpole, ed. Toynbee, Supplement, [Oxford, 1925], 3:179).
32 Debenedetti, Gli Studi provenzali in Italia nel ’900, pp. 87-91.
33 Ibid., pp. 71-102. Unlike Sainte-Palaye, Bastero seems to have been interested in Provençal poetry from the point of view of language rather than from that of history. His aim was to illustrate the dependence of literary Italian on Provençal, or, as he would have had it, Catalan. See, on his work, Mila y Fontanals, Obras completas (Barcelona, 1892), 4:444.
mention had ever been made in print, and of whom many were unknown to the Italian scholars of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{35} (Much of this additional material was found in manuscripts \textit{C} and \textit{R} of the Royal Library in Paris, which had not been consulted by the Italians.) Sainte-Palaye also looked into the poems themselves for reference to troubadours not otherwise known.\textsuperscript{36} The evidence of the texts thus helped him to judge how far his collection of the poems was complete. "Par le travail que je fais à present," he told Bouhier, "je reconnais avec complaisance qu'il me manque très peu de leurs anciennes Pièces, puisque je retrouve dans mes recueils presque tous les fragments dont il y a un très grand nombre citez dans les Poesies les uns des autres."\textsuperscript{37} As Diez pointed out, this use of the internal evidence of the texts themselves was an innovation in Provençal studies, and a further instance of the way Sainte-Palaye was bringing all the techniques of recent scholarship to bear on the study of medieval literature.\textsuperscript{38}

When it came to establishing texts, however, Sainte-Palaye was less successful. His collections show that his primary concern was to have a copy of every Provençal poem preserved in the manuscripts. He carefully wrote in variant forms, always with precise reference to the manuscript in which they had been found. If the manuscripts offered widely varying versions of the same poem, he had copies made of all of them, taking care to refer from one to another in his own volumes. But he rarely indicated a preference. In this sense he advanced no further than the most conscientious Italian amateurs of the sixteenth century. What Debenedetti remarked of Piero del Nero's variant notations applies equally well to those of Sainte-Palaye: "Son materiali raccolti, e null’altro: a quel forma egli desse le sue preferenze non resulta."\textsuperscript{39}

We have seen that in his study of Froissart, Sainte-Palaye tried to assess the value of the manuscripts, and that in one or two in-

\textsuperscript{35} See Appendix 5.
\textsuperscript{36} He compiled an extensive biographical guide to the Provençal \textit{chansonniers} in which he listed every proper name found in them (Arsenal 3099–3100, another copy in B.N. Moreau 1582, fols. 75–214).
\textsuperscript{37} B.N. Français 24418, fol. 372, Sainte-Palaye to Bouhier, 12.1.1742.
stances he went so far as to suggest relationships between them. His comments on the Provençal manuscripts reveal similar groping attempts to establish such connections. Thus he drew attention to the “grande conformité” of C and R,\(^{40}\) two manuscripts which later editors like Appel and Gröber found fairly consistently forming a united block.\(^{41}\) He was also careful to observe that Florence Ricc. 2981 (F*) is a copy of Chigi 2348 (F). His attentiveness to the order in which the poems were arranged in the manuscripts—the basis to a large extent of Gröber’s abortive attempt to draw up a stemma—is a further indication of his interest in manuscript filiation.\(^{42}\) But these tentative observations in no way offer the basis of a serious study of manuscript tradition.\(^{43}\)

The most urgent task, as he saw it, was the immediate one of reading the manuscripts. Many of those he consulted had been used by Italian scholars like Cariteo (M), Colocci (M, g), Piero del Nero (a\(^1\)), Bembo (D, E, K, L, O, g), Beccadelli (E), Fulvio Orsini (A, H, K, L, O, g) and Castelvetro (H), and their notes and occasional translations into Italian doubtless proved useful. But the task of mastering the language and the grammar of Provençal was one which Sainte-Palaye had to tackle himself. He set about it in his usual methodical way. By consulting early printed and manuscript glossaries and by carefully combing a number of Provençal texts in manuscript, he was able to compile a four-volume glossary of Provençal,\(^{44}\) which he supplemented with a further ten volumes drawn from the texts of the troubadours themselves.\(^{45}\) Neither work was intended for anything other than Sainte-Palaye's own personal use.\(^{46}\) To the same end he studied the grammar of

\(^{40}\) Arsenal 3091, fol. 1.
\(^{42}\) Bréquigny 65, fols. 119–48, notes on Florence Ricc. 2814 (MS a\(^1\)). Sainte-Palaye remarks on the unusual arrangement of the authors and poems in this MS: “Je ne trouve point de MS qui ressemble à celui pour l’arrangement des auteurs dans toutes les notices que j’ai faites des MSS d’Italie.”
\(^{43}\) The Provençal chansonniers do not in fact lend themselves to a simple classification. (Gröber, “Die Liedersammlungen der Troubadours,” p. 656.) In his edition of Bernart de Ventadorn ([Halle, 1915], p. 36, n.18) Carl Appel suggests that the originals themselves of some poems might well have contained author variants.
\(^{44}\) Moreau 1568–71.
\(^{45}\) Moreau 1572–81.
\(^{46}\) “... le Glossaire provençal que nous avons rédigé pour notre usage . . .” ('Projet d'étude', Bréquigny 62, fol. 212).
Old Provençal, consulting all the extant manuscripts of the gram­
mars of Hugues Faidit and Raymond Vidal.\(^{47}\) Rochegude’s criticism of Sainte-Palaye’s linguistic competence—"il a plus souvent deviné qu’entendu son texte"\(^{48}\)—was justly judged excessive by Ray­
nouard, who had good reason to appreciate Sainte-Palaye’s research at its true value.\(^{49}\) Had Sainte-Palaye’s knowledge of Provençal been as poor as Rochegude suggested, he would have been unable to detect mistakes in the work of Muratori’s copyist, yet it is cer­
tain that he did do so. The imperfections of his copies and transla­
tions are the imperfections of a pioneer scholar, not of an ignorant one.

At any rate, his project was in itself imaginative enough to excite
the curiosity of the reading public and the enthusiasm of the
scholarly world. Muratori in particular followed its progress anx­
iously and continually pressed Sainte-Palaye to publish.\(^{50}\) Mazau­
gues was equally enthusiastic and exhorted his friend not to weaken
in his resolve. "Je présume que vous suiviez constamment votre
projet," he wrote in 1742, "et que vous voulés toujours voir au
bout de nos Troubadours, et je m’attends que vous nous feres part
du progrès de votre travail et de vos découvertes."\(^{51}\) Lévesque de la
Ravaliere judged Sainte-Palaye’s work on the troubadours a vital
contribution to literary history, and urged him to communicate
the results of his research as early as possible.\(^{52}\) Even Bouhier, who

\(^{47}\) Of these he had used Paris, Bib. Reg. 7700 for his Glossary. He also consulted
\(^{48}\) Parnasse occitanien (Toulouse, 1819), Preface, p. xiv.
\(^{49}\) La Revue des Savants (May, 1820), pp. 191–93.
\(^{50}\) Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Arch. Soli Muratori, filza 85, fasc. 29, Sainte-Palaye to
\(^{51}\) Les anciens poètes provençaux vous sont aussi connus et aussi familiers que
celui du beau siècle de Louis XIV. Les six ou sept siècles de vieillesse qu’a leur
\(^{52}\) Journal des Savants (May, 1820), pp. 191–93.
\(^{47}\) Even Bouhier, who
could write unaffectedly of the "ennui" and the "travail fatigant" of reading medieval poetry, assured Sainte-Palaye that "si ... vous pouvez arriver au but, vous rendrez un grand service à la République des Lettres."\(^{53}\) In England Horace Walpole waited impatiently for the book to appear.\(^ {54}\)

Encouraged by the interest his work had aroused, Sainte-Palaye threw himself into it with energy and determination. "J'ai plus que jamais la frenesie des Troubadours," he wrote to La Bastie in 1740.\(^ {55}\) But the magnitude of the task he had prescribed for himself soon became apparent. There was no question of actually publishing all the poems in the manuscripts. This had never been Sainte-Palaye's intention, nor was it desired by any of his most ardent supporters. What was expected at the time was not a thesaurus of documents but a reliable history of the Provençal poets and their works, based on firsthand study of the texts, and illustrated by suitable extracts. Like Lévesque, Goujet looked to Sainte-Palaye to clear up the errors and uncertainties in Jean de Nostredame, while Lacombe desired "un choix de leur Poésie."\(^ {56}\) Likewise the Mercure reviewer who called on Sainte-Palaye in 1745 to publish the results of his research was thinking of a literary history, not of a collection of texts. Noting that the authors of an Histoire de
dégoûté des fables et des anacronismes ... " (B.N. Français 9355, 'De l'Ancienneté des chansons françaises, à M. de Sainte-Palaye,' fol. 431. A shortened version of this in Poesies du Roy de Navarre, pp. 185–86).

\(^ {55}\) Brequigny 66, fol. 12, Bouhier to Sainte-Palaye, 30.1.1742; fol. 14, Bouhier to Sainte-Palaye, 5.6.1742; fol. 15, Bouhier to Sainte-Palaye, 27.6.1742.

\(^ {54}\) In the article on Richard Coeur de Lion in his Royal and Noble Authors of England (London, 1759), 1:1–8, Walpole complained of inaccuracies in Crescimbeni. A few years later, he observed in a letter to Thomas Warton that de Sade's study of Petrarch was marred by the author's lack of critical judgment. "When you read the notes to the second volume, you will grow very impatient for Mons. de St. Palaye's promised History of the Troubadours" (16.3.1765, Letters of Horace Walpole, ed. Toynbee [Oxford, 1904], 6:198–200). Walpole had already heard of Sainte-Palaye in connection with the troubadours. Sir Horace Mann, who had procured him a copy of the Laurentian poem said to be by Richard, had referred to Sainte-Palaye in a covering letter as to a well-known authority on things Provençal. (Horace Walpole's Correspondence, Yale ed. by W. S. Lewis; Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann, vol. 5 [New Haven, 1960], Mann to Walpole, 25.3.1755 and 25.3.1758.) Among Walpole's friends, Thomas Gray and William Mason, in addition to Warton, were likely to be interested in Sainte-Palaye's work on the troubadours. They were preparing a history of English poetry and had been studying Provençal sources in Nostredame, Fauchet, and Crescimbeni. (William P. Jones, Thomas Gray Scholar [Cambridge, Mass., 1937], pp. 89–90.)

\(^ {56}\) Brequigny 68, fol. 86, Sainte-Palaye to Bimard de La Bastie, 29.9.1740.

du théâtre français "passent légèrement sur plusieurs Troubadours qu’ils appellent Poètes Comiques sur la foi de Nostradamus, quoique plusieurs d’entre eux n’aient point fait de Comédies," he pointed out that Sainte-Palaye possessed "tous les matériaux nécessaires pour donner une histoire excellente de ces Troubadours."\(^{57}\)

Realizing that he could not bring his task to a successful and speedy conclusion by his own efforts, Sainte-Palaye decided in 1741 to enlist the help of his friend Foncemagne,\(^{58}\) and in May of the same year the two men set off for Sainte-Palaye’s estate in Burgundy to devote themselves exclusively to the work of sorting and arranging the material. Sainte-Palaye was confident at this time that it would be possible to "expédier les Troubadours en moins de deux ans."\(^{59}\) With Foncemagne’s assistance, he put his material in order and began compiling the Extracts which would form the basis of the future history.\(^{60}\) These consisted of biographical notices of the troubadours and of summaries or translations of a selection of their works. As an earnest of what was to come two papers on the troubadours were read to the Académie des Inscriptions. The first, by Sainte-Palaye alone, concerned the life and works of Bertran de Born, and was read on March 5, 1740. The second, on Guillaume de Cabestain, was read on March 24 of the following year, and was offered as a joint contribution by Sainte-Palaye and Foncemagne.\(^{61}\) Both were well received.\(^{62}\)

The régime to which the two men subjected themselves in the summer of 1741 proved too strenuous, however, and before the end of the season both had succumbed to ill-health.\(^{63}\) Nevertheless, Sainte-Palaye thought he had gotten over the major hurdles, for in

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\(^{57}\) Mercure, Oct., 1745, p. 82.

\(^{58}\) B.N. Français 24418, fol. 362, Sainte-Palaye to Bouhier, 24.4.1741: "M. de Foncemagne mon ami a bien voulu s’associer à ce travail qui en ira beaucoup plus viste et qui en sera bien meilleur."

\(^{59}\) Bréquigny 68, fol. 84, Sainte-Palaye to La Bastie, 15.5.1741.

\(^{60}\) The Extracts are in Arsenal 3281-84. A duplicate copy, now B.N. Moreau 1584-87, is listed among ‘Manuscrits de M. de Foncemagne,’ in an ‘Ordre du Cabinet des Chartes et Diplômes de l’histoire de France à la bibliothèque du Roy au ler janvier 1782’ in Moreau 1799, fol. 21, nos. 10-17.


\(^{62}\) Bréquigny 68, fol. 82, Sainte-Palaye to La Bastie, 31.12.1740. ‘Le succès qu’a eu mon premier Mémoire sur les Troubadours m’encourage à en donner la suite.’ The two papers were selected to be read at the Academy’s assemblées publiques of 15-11-1740 and 11-4-1741. (Registres 1740, p. 125, and 1741, p. 48.)

\(^{63}\) B.N. Français 24418, fol. 364, Sainte-Palaye to Bouhier, 27.8.1741.
1742 he told Mazaugues that, though he would have to renounce “ces excez de travail dont j’ai esté si rudement corrigé,” he was confident that by continuing “doucement et paisiblement la petite tâche que je me suis imposée . . . à l’entrée de l’hiver j’aurai fini tous les extraits ou sommaires des pièces de chaque troubadour.”

The reduction of his material into a few volumes of extracts could not be left to others, since it demanded an ability to read the texts which few besides himself possessed. For this reason, he was determined to go through with this part at least of the future history himself. “Je ne veux point quitter mes Troubadours que je n’aie fini ce qui est du moins nécessaire pour que les peines que j’y ai prises ne soient pas entièrement perdues”—he wrote to Bouhier in May, 1742—“quoique je me modère beaucoup sur le travail j’ai la satisfaction de voir que mon assiduité me mettra bientost en estat de finir ce que d’autres auraient de la peine à faire sans moi.”

It is obvious, however, that he was already thinking of inviting someone else to mold the extracts into a form suitable for publication, for two weeks later he declared that “l’ouvrage qui doit résulter de tous ces matériaux (the Extracts) ne pourra pas être fait de longtemps.” With Foncemagne’s assistance the Extracts were probably completed according to plan. The long awaited Histoire littéraire des troubadours could now pass into the third and final phase. But even at this point, with the material ready and prepared for a willing editor, difficulties were encountered which held up publication until 1774.

It was not easy to find an editor for the Extracts. In 1767 Sainte-Palaye invited the Abbé Rive, a Provençal who had been recommended to him by Barthélémy, to undertake the work, but Rive imposed conditions which could not be met, and this plan fell through. Of a number of scholars who subsequently tried their hand at putting the work together, among them Meusnier de Querlon, only the Abbé Laugier completed the task, according to Le Grand d’Aussy. Laugier’s version of the Histoire littéraire des
troubadours is an honest one, consisting of straightforward biographies of the principal troubadours with extracts from their works usually in translation, but sometimes also in the original Provencal. Copious notes explained literary and historical allusions or pointed out how the poems illustrate the social and intellectual conditions of the age. There is no indication that Sainte-Palaye himself was dissatisfied with what Laugier had done, but it may have been too sober for the publishers. At any rate Le Grand recounts that his compilation "fut jugé ne pas mériter l'honneur de l'impression."

Sainte-Palaye looked around for another editor, and this time he found his man in Millot. The Abbé Millot had published histories of France and of England which had been sufficiently well received to win him an appointment to a chair of history at Parma, and which were still being reprinted in the early years of the nineteenth century. Intellectually he was drawn to the philosophes and they liked him. "M. l'abbé Millot est philosophe et vrai autant que son habit peut le permettre," Grimm observed. His Eléments de l'histoire de France depuis Clovis jusqu'à fin du règne de Louis XIV won Grimm's unqualified approval: "Voilà donc encore un abrégé! Peu s'en faut cependant que je ne fasse grâce à celui-là... Il faut savoir gré à un grand vicaire d'avoir en général des principes de droit public sains, et de préférer la cause du genre humain à l'intérêt et à l'ambition de l'Eglise. Je me sens du faible pour ce prêtre. On peut au moins mettre ce livre entre les mains de la jeunesse sans craindre de lui empoisonner l'esprit." Millot's reputation with the philosophes was made when he was condemned to be burned in effigy in Spain, whether for his Mémoires du Maréchal de Noailles, or for his Catéchisme d'histoire, is not clear. When, toward the end of his life, Voltaire was brought to a sitting of the Académie Française, Millot, together with the Abbé de Boismont, was alone present of the churchmen who were members...
of the Academy. The work which Millot published in 1774 from
the material Sainte-Palaye placed at his disposal bears all the marks
of a serious but unimaginative manufacturer of abrégés with a
sincere attachment to philosophie.

As Millot has frequently been held responsible for the shortcom­
ings of the Histoire littéraire des troubadours, it is worth consid­
ering briefly how far this is true and how much of the responsibil­
ity must be borne by Sainte-Palaye himself.

When he invited Millot to edit his material, Sainte-Palaye knew
that, lacking any knowledge of Provençal, the Abbé would have
to rely entirely on the extracts, notes, and translations placed at his
disposal. Millot himself makes it plain that Sainte-Palaye is the real
author of the Histoire and that his own role in its composition was
a minor one: "Le mérite de cet ouvrage appartient spécialement à
M. de Sainte-Palaye. Je n'ai fait que mettre en oeuvre avec plaisir
les matériaux qu'il a rassemblé avec tant de peines . . . Ses re­
marques et celles de ses premiers coopérateurs m'ont épargné
l'ennui des recherches."

Contemporary readers usually ascribed the work to Sainte-
Palaye as much as to Millot. The mistake of later critics has been

72 Memôres de Bachaumont, 1er avril, 1778.
73 This was more or less Grimm's view of him; cf. Corr. litt., 8:241: "M. l'abbé
Millot n'est pas un homme profond, ni un homme lumineux, ni un homme d'un
grand sens, mais simplement un homme de bon sens, un esprit droit et juste . . .
Son style n'a rien de distingué, ni en bien, ni en mal." Similarly Nodier, Mélanges
(Paris, 1820), 2:110—"L'abbé Millot ne sera pas cité parmi les historiens re­
marquables, mais il est digne de l'être parmi les écrivains bien intentionnés qui ont
appliqué les notions d'une philosophie tolérante à l'étude de l'histoire, dans l'éduc­
a­tion des jeunes gens."
74 E.g., Paul Meyer, review of Mahn's Geschichte der Troubadours, Romania
(1874), 3:303; Chabanneau in Revue des langues romanes (1879), 15:157. But the
same view was expressed by some contemporaries. In an article in the Deutsches
Museum of Nov., 1777, Herder compared the success of Millot's history with the
relative failure of Bodmer: "Wäre Bodmer ein Abt Millot, der den Säklenfleiss
seines Curme de St Palaye in eine histoire littéraire des Troubadours nach gefälligs­
tem Auszuge hat verwandeln wollen, vielleicht wäre er weiter umher gekommen
als irzt, da er den Schatz selbst gab, und uns zutraute, dass wir uns noch dem
Bissen schwäbischer Sprache leicht hinauf bemühen würden." (Werke, ed. Suphan,
9:528.)
75 Hist. litt. troub., vol. 1, Avertissement, p. x.
76 E.g., a note by William Cole inserted into Bodley copy of Horace Walpole,
A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England (Strawberry Hill, 1758)
1:12—"See an undoubted account of Richard and his poetical Abilities in an in­
genious work . . . by Monsieur de Sainte-Palaye, entitled Histoire littéraire des
troubadours." So too Burney, History of Music (London, 1776-89), 2:222:
"M. de Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye and his faithful squire, M. Millot . . ." Likewise
to overlook that Millot was compiling the work from Sainte-Palaye’s extracts and to assume that he was working from the Provençal texts themselves. In fact, a comparison of Millot’s text with that of the extracts reveals that Millot followed Sainte-Palaye fairly closely, both in his literary appreciations of the poems and in his historical comments. If a few minor alterations to the language of Sainte-Palaye’s translations hardly gave his style the “tournure plus libre et plus variée” which Millot intended, they did not harm it much either. Sainte-Palaye himself failed completely to convey any idea of the poetry, the humor, or the technical brilliancy of the originals, and Grimm was fully justified in holding him as responsible as Millot for this important weakness in the Histoire littéraire.

Nevertheless, the work produced by Millot was inferior in several respects even to the extracts. Sainte-Palaye had written to Muratori in the forties that his object was to “faire connoistre l’histoire de nos Troubadours et le goust de leurs compositions,” and this was also Millot’s professed purpose as he expounded it in his Discours préliminaire. Drawing attention to the inadequacy of eighteenth-century ideas of Provençal poetry, he wrote that “la plupart des gens de Lettres eux-mêmes ne s’en forment qu’une idée fort imparfaite. On se contente de savoir que ces anciens poètes provençaux fleurirent dès le XII siècle lorsque la barbarie et l’ignorance dominoient encore en Europe . . . qu’ils furent dans nos climats les pères de la poésie moderne. Mais on se les figure d’ailleurs comme des aventuriers sans état; comme des écrivains sans lumière et sans goût, dont les fades galanteries méritent un oubli éternel, et dont les ouvrages n’ont rien d’intéressant que pour ces amateurs d’antiquités qui passent inutilement leur vie à dérouiller de misérables monumens gothiques.”

The Histoire littéraire des troubadours was to correct and refine these crude notions. It was to give readers a real and firsthand knowledge of troubadour poetry, Millot declared, and to suggest that this poetry might be related in some ways to that of other

77 Herrmann, p. 12, makes the same mistake concerning Laugier.
78 Hist. litt. troub., vol. 1, p. x.
peoples at a similar stage of their development. The questions to be studied were listed: "Quelle étoit la poésie avant que les peuples sortissent de leur premier état de simplicité? Quels progrès fit-elle à l'époque des troubadours? quelle idée doit-on avoir des moeurs de leur temps, et sur-tout de cette galanterie célèbre qui les inspira sans cesse, parce qu'elle étoit comme l'âme de la société? quels grands événemens excitèrent leur génie, et fournirent matière à leurs compositions? quels sont les principaux caractères de leurs différents ouvrages? quelle influence ont-ils eue, ainsi que leur langue, sur la littérature moderne? enfin, quelles sont les sources dont nous avons tiré leur histoire?"  

Had Millot done what he said he would do here, his book would probably have been less severely criticized than it was, for it would have fitted well into the incipient inquiry into the relation of the arts and society which was occupying some of the most thoughtful men of the age. "Quand on voit les barbares, les sauvages mêmes chanter leurs dieux, ou leurs amours ou leurs exploits," we read in the Discours préliminaire, "on se persuade aisément que la poésie est presque aussi naturelle à l'homme que le langage, le chant et les passions," and Millot goes on to compare the cultures of "les forêts de l'Amérique, les montagnes inculites de l'Écosse, les déserts glacés de l'Islande," arguing that in all primitive peoples, poetry acts as a kind of communal memory and is intimately tied to the life of the community.

Millot's preliminary considerations and statement of aims were thus promising. But the promise was not fulfilled. In the articles themselves almost nothing remains of the good intentions of the Discours préliminaire. Having no firsthand knowledge of the Provençal texts himself and judging them from Sainte-Palaye's translations, Millot formed an even poorer opinion of them than Sainte-Palaye had had. Few of the poems, in his view, deserved to be remembered for their literary merit, and he did not hesitate to consign all the anonymous works to eternal oblivion. "La plupart ne renferment rien d'intéressant et doivent rester dans l'oubli," he declared. The principal and almost the only justification for the history of the troubadours came to reside in the light it would throw on the institutions and manners of the Middle Ages. "Le but de notre ouvrage," he announced at one point, in flat contradiction

81 Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.  
82 Ibid., pp. xvii-xviii.  
83 Ibid., 3:439.
to what he had said in his *Discours préliminaire*, “est de faire connoître les idées plutôt que le style des Troubadours.” In the end, the *Histoire littéraire* presented the poetry mostly as documentary material. Sainte-Palaye himself had emphasized this use of the manuscripts: he had carefully annotated his copies with historical observations, he had begun a *Dictionnaire des antiquités des troubadours* from the information he found in the poems, and he had composed an historical introduction, a *Tableau historique des siècles où régna la poésie provençale*, in which he tried to outline the political and intellectual background of Provençal poetry, and the “étrange confusion d'idées qui en étoit résultée dans les esprits.” Millot, finally, despite his promises, discerned no more than this in the voluminous extracts and notes Sainte-Palaye put at his disposal, no more than a mass of data on the political and social history of the Middle Ages—the decline of the nobility at the close of the period, the religious fanaticism of the Crusades, the abuses of the clergy, and the political struggles of feudal powers in medieval France. His choice of poems was largely determined by this predominantly political and historical interest. The works which he judged worthy of reproduction in full or at length were those which threw light not so much on the literature of the troubadours as on the religious and political controversies and on the social conditions of their age.

Even in this aspect of his work, however, Millot was disappointingly heavy-handed, imparting to his compilation a serious moral tone quite foreign to the worldly and aristocratic Sainte-Palaye. Once again, moreover, he promised more than he produced. The *Discours préliminaire* outlined what was to be found by studying the lives and times of the troubadours: “On y voit cette bravoure ardente et emportée, qui caractérisoit encore la nation... on y voit cette prodigalité des seigneurs, érigée en vertu essentielle de leur

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85 Moreau 1582, fols. 34-57.  
86 *Bréquigny* 154, fols. 193-214.  
88 Thus, Izarn's *tension* on the Albigensian heresy was printed in full, in translation of course; a long poem by Arnaut Guillem de Marsan was presented as “une espèce d'introduction de chevalerie,” which “peint les mœurs antiques et la manière de vivre des seigneurs, qu'on estimoit la plus honorable.” *(Ibid.*, 3:62.)  
89 Passages from Amanieu de Sescas were justified by what they told of the manners and deportment of ladies in the earliest age of gallantry; and Peire de Corbiac's works were described on account of the information they contained on the state of learning in Provence in the Middle Ages.
rang, aussi peu délicate sur les moyens d’acquérir que sur la manière
de dissiper . . . On y voit cet esprit d’indépendance qui entretenoit
les désordres de l’anarchie, quelquefois se pliant par intérêt aux
humbles démarches du courtisan . . . On y voit cette franchise mâle
et agreste, que rien n’empêche de s’exprimer librement et sur les
personnes et sur les choses . . . sans paraître se douter des égards de
la bienséance, encore moins de la politesse moderne. On y voit
l’aveugle superstition, se repaissant d’absurdités et de folies . . . On
y voit l’ignorance et le fanatisme d’un clergé vicieux; la pétulance
d’une noblesse inquiète et indomptable; l’activité et la hardiesse
d’une bourgeoisie à peine délivrée de la servitude.”89 As he presents
Provençal society here, Millot recognizes in it, as Sainte-Palaye had
done in the Mémoires sur l’ancienne chevalerie and as the Enlight­
eners did generally, the interdependence of apparently opposed
characteristics—simplicity, frankness, loyalty, high-spirited inde­
pendence, and at the same time anarchy, brutality, and ignorance.
But in the body of the work he was constantly proving that far
from damaging the quality of life or of morality, as its enemies
charged, Enlightenment was essential to decent behavior: “Les
aventures et même les pièces galantes des troubadours, épurées de
tout ce que la pudeur doit proscrire, peuvent servir sans pédantisme,
soit à caractériser l’esprit et les moeurs des siècles de la chevalerie,
soit à peindre le vice haïssable quand il trouble l’harmonie et les
devoirs de la société . . . Aussi l’histoire et la morale sont-elles
étroitement liées l’une à l’autre. La première offre les faits, la
seconde en tire les conséquences. Jusqu’aux satires indécentes de
quelques troubadours contre le clergé ou contre la cour de Rome,
tout devient matière d’instruction. Elles tiennent aux faits histo­
riques et aux moeurs du temps: elles prouvent que les siècles d’igno­
rance furent des siècles de désordres; que les ministres de l’église
nuisoient beaucoup à la religion même . . . que leur ministère
n’aurait point été en butte de la haine, si les lumières et la vertu en
avoient garanti leur personne.”90

As a Moderne, Sainte-Palaye himself would have agreed with
Millot that progress had been made in all areas since the time of the
troubadours, but he would have been less vehement in his condem­
nation of what Millot judged the gross immorality of the trouba-

90 Ibid., vol. 1, Avertissement, p. ix.
dours. "En vérité," Millot observed, "la morale de ces temps-là ne se conçoit point: mille exemples en découvrent les faux principes . . . Si nous ne valons pas mieux au fond, qu'on ne nous conteste pas au moins l'avantage de connaître les devoirs." The frequent comparison of divine and profane love was a monstrous impiety in his eyes: "Il n'est pas possible de s'accoutumer à des profanations si fréquentes." As for the troubadours themselves they were usually, for all their noble birth, ignorant reprobates. "Qu'il est ridicule," he wrote of Marcabru, "à des âmes de boue, qui démasquent leur propre honte, de s'ériger en censeurs de l'univers." Such were the reflections with which Millot hoped to "remédier autant qu'il est possible à une ennuyeuse uniformité." He had in fact turned the Histoire littéraire des troubadours into a rather clumsy machine de guerre against the enemies of Enlightenment.

It was in the matter of accuracy that Millot permitted himself the greatest divergence from his source. On this point at least Sainte-Palaye had been uncompromising. He had carefully indicated where he felt he could not vouch for his translations, he had noted with scrupulous attention poems which different manuscripts attributed to different authors, and he had invariably given detailed reference to the manuscript sources where the originals of his translations and his summaries were to be found. Millot professed his care for accuracy by attacking Nostredame in the Discours préliminaire and at several points subsequently in the text of the history. He himself, however, did not hesitate to publish translations on the validity of which Sainte-Palaye had explicitly cast doubt, he never mentioned the frequent alternative attributions recorded in the Extracts, and he omitted all reference to manuscript sources. Even the bare list of sources he printed at the end of the Discours préliminaire, a list which gave only a summary indication of the libraries in which the manuscripts were deposited, contains errors.

91 ibid., vol. 1, p. 441, sub Gui; p. 75, sub Arnaud de Marveil; 2:261, sub Marcabrus.
92 ibid., vol. 1, p. xiv.
93 E.g., sub Albert, marquis, Arsenal 3281, fols. 44-48, Hist. litt. trouv., 1:337-39. There are many such cases.
94 In addition to "5 du Vatican," Millot lists "5 de Saibante ou Vatican." This is an error. The only MS to which this can refer is Var. 5232, of which there was in fact a copy at Verona, Saibante 410, now lost, but which Sainte-Palaye had consulted.
Yet there can be no doubt that for most of these defects in the *Histoire littéraire des troubadours*, Sainte-Palaye must bear some of the responsibility. The dull, monotonous translations were substantially his, as were too the literary judgments and comments. He himself had shown his lack of feeling for the literary value of the poems and had pointed the way to an external exploitation of them as source material for the historian, or, at best, elements of a picturesque décor. Moreover, he expressed himself completely satisfied with Millot’s work. “Je vous ai entretenu il y a longtemps,” he wrote to Sinner, “du projet que j’avais de donner l’histoire de nos anciens Troubadours; j’en suis enfin venu à bout avec l’aide d’un excellent rédacteur.”

Sainte-Palaye may have been content. The public was disappointed. This was not the revelation that had been so long expected. After forty years of waiting for it, Tiraboschi complained, the *Histoire littéraire des troubadours* should have been a definitive work. “Ma l’espettazione degli eruditi e stata delusa.” Speaking for the scholarly community, Tiraboschi regretted not that Sainte-Palaye’s book did so little to make the poetry of the troubadours better known, but that it left the biographies, in his view, still uncertain. Even Sainte-Palaye’s friends on the *Mercure* were apologetic: “On doit s’attendre qu’un ouvrage de ce genre est plus utile à consulter qu’agréable à lire de suite.”

97 He charged (1) that Sainte-Palaye had not made sufficient use of the Estense MS (MS D); and (2) that the lives of the troubadours could be established only by comparing the Provençal biographies with external evidence, and that Sainte-Palaye had never gone outside the manuscripts themselves. Tiraboschi’s reproach was not entirely justified. Sainte-Palaye did sometimes try to use historical and even monumental evidence conjointly with the internal evidence of the texts and the Provençal biographies, in order to rewrite the lives of the troubadours. Moreau, fols. 6–8, for instance, contains a letter to Raimondo Niccoli, secretary of the Tuscan legation at Paris, with details of a tomb of Aimeri de Narbonne in the Church of the Annunziata in Florence. There is also a detailed drawing (fol. 8) of the tomb, on which the inscription is clearly legible. The correspondent also refers to a number of Italian historical sources on the death of Aimeri de Narbonne. There is no doubt that Sainte-Palaye asked his friends at the Tuscan legation to procure this information for him. Diez paid tribute to Sainte-Palaye’s pioneer work. (*Leben und Werke der Troubadours* [3d ed.; Leipzig, 1882], pp. v–vi.) It is true, however, that his efforts in this direction were sporadic, and he appears to have had no idea that the *Vidas* were in many cases put together by later writers from tales told in the poems.
98 December, 1774, p. 132.
Berlin was more outspoken: “Nous observerons que l’histoire que nous annonçons ne suffit pas pour satisfaire les gens de lettres: ils regretteront de n’avoir pas le texte même des poètes dont on a traduit quelques morceaux.”

From the camp of the gentlemen scholars and amateurs came another complaint. “Have you got the History of the Troubadours?” Horace Walpole asked Lady Ossory. “I have longed for it several years, and yet am cruelly disappointed. Sainte-Palaye was too old to put his materials together—his friends called, Odd man! and nothing was ever so dully executed. You will say of the chapters, as I did of the houses at Paris; there is such a sameness, that one does not know whether one is in That one is in, or in That one came out of.” It is in Grimm’s Correspondance littéraire, however, that we can see most clearly how far Sainte-Palaye’s work had fallen behind current interests in France in the second half of the century. Not deficiencies of scholarship, but an inadequate conception of the subject matter was what Sainte-Palaye was reproached with by the reviewer (in all likelihood, Meister). The difficulties Sainte-Palaye had had to contend with were fully appreciated and he received generous credit for what was considered a major piece of research. But both Millot and Sainte-Palaye, the critic charged, had forgotten that their history was in the first instance a history of literature. Works of art are not interesting because of the ideas in them: “Otez aux Homère, aux Virgile, aux Racine leur ramage, vous comblerez presque l’abîme immense qui les sépare des Ronsard, des Chapelain, des Pradon.” Millot’s mistake was to have imagined that he could write a history of the troubadours without giving any idea of their poetry. “Avec quel soin le traducteur des Poésies Erses [i.e., Macpherson] et même celui de la mythologie des Scandinaves [i.e., Mallet] n’ont-ils pas tâché de

99. May–June (1775), 7:89. Millot was urged to rewrite the work in this sense. Cf. also Herder’s comments, cited n. 74 above.
100. Horace Walpole’s Correspondence, Yale ed. by W. S. Lewis; Correspondence with the Countess of Upper Ossory (New Haven, 1965), pp. 217–19, letter of 23.11.1774.
conserver à leurs copies l’œil original, le tour antique, et ce qu’on appelle le goût du terroir. On ne pardonnera jamais ni à M. de Sainte-Palaye, ni à M. l’abbé Millot d’avoir négligé à ce point une partie si intéressante de leur travail.” The trouble with the *Histoire littéraire des troubadours* is that the author “dans un ouvrage de ce genre ne soit jamais qu’historien.” His own admission that he had determined to describe the ideas rather than the literary style of the troubadours is most damning: “Rien ne prouve mieux assurément qu’avec tout le mérite possible ailleurs, il n’était guère propre à faire l’ouvrage qu’il a entrepris.”

Judged severely by contemporaries and later scholars alike, the *Histoire littéraire des troubadours* was nevertheless an important literary event. It contributed considerably to existing knowledge of the medieval Provençal lyric, and through it and the works which derive from it—until Raynouard’s *Choix* it was the principal source for historians in France, England, and Germany—

the troubadours were popularized and incorporated securely into the pattern of modern cultural history. Even its defects, and the criticisms to which they gave rise, had in the end a salutary effect in that they led scholars to pay more attention to the literary qualities of the poems of the troubadours. When Le Grand d’Aussy, a disciple of Sainte-Palaye, used the *Histoire littéraire des troubadours* to question the international reputation of the troubadours,

102 In Papon’s *Histoire de Provence* 4 vols. (Paris, 1777–86), which included a “Dissertation sur l'origine et les progrès de la poésie provençale,” originally read to the Académie de Marseille in 1773, in the same author’s *Voyage littéraire de Provence* (1780) and in Achard’s *Dictionnaire de la Provence et du Comté Venaissin* (Marseille, 1785–87), there are clear echoes of Sainte-Palaye–Millot. In the course he taught at Geneva and which was published as *Histoire de la littérature du midi de l’Europe*, the great liberal historian Sismondi deplored the lack of good sources for the study of the early literature of the South. He knew of Sainte-Palaye’s work, he wrote, but “son immense collection qui se compose de 25 volumes in-folio n’a pas été imprimée et ne saurait l’être.” For lack of anything better, therefore, he said, historians will continue to have recourse to Millot.

103 “Leur histoire existe; ouvrez-la, qu’y trouverez-vous? Des Sirventes, des Tensons, d’éternelles et ennuyeuses Chansons d’amour, sans couleur, sans images, sans aucun intérêt; en un mot, une assoupissante monotonie, à laquelle tout l’art de l’Éditeur et l’élégance de son style n’ont pu remédier.” (*Fabliaux ou contes*, Preface, p. 11.) The publication by the Académie des Inscriptions of Zurlauben’s paper on the Swabian Minnesinger was likewise opposed by certain members on the ground that “les chansons des trouvères allemands qui se ressemblent presque toutes, ne diffèrent en rien de celles des Trouvères français dont M. de Ste Palaie nous a donné une compilation déjà trop longue. Les beautés techniques qu’elles pourraient renfermer disparaissent absolument sous la plume du traducteur.” (B.N. Nouv. Acq. Fr. 6196, fol. 283.)
the young Provençal poet L. P. Bérenger replied that the Northern French contes published in translation by Le Grand appeared superior to the Provençal poems only because as a genre the conte survives translation more easily than the lyric poem. The qualities of the Provençal poems, he said, "tiennent du génie d'un idiome délicat et poli. On ne doit pas en juger par les traductions qu'on nous en a données." 104

Above all, the Histoire littéraire des troubadours set a new standard in literary scholarship. Sainte-Palaye's work had made readers aware that medieval poetry was not really known and could not be properly discussed until the extensive manuscript sources in which it lay buried had been explored. By the end of the century Le Grand d'Aussy could dismiss Mervesin's Histoire de la poésie française as "une production d'écolier," while of a similar work by Massieu—who at the beginning of the century had been one of Sainte-Palaye's masters—he wrote: "Ce qui est inconcevable, cet homme qui entreprenoit de nous faire connoitre nos vieux Poètes n'en avoit pas lû un seul en manuscrit." 105 Sainte-Palaye was largely responsible for this change in outlook, and his work was a source of inspiration not only to his immediate disciples but to later generations of Provençalists in the nineteenth century. 106

104 L. P. Bérenger, Porte-feuille d'un troubadour, ou Essais poétiques, suivis d'une lettre à M. Grosley (Marseille, 1782), pp. 91-92, 94.
105 B.N. Nouv. Acq. Fr. 6628, fol. 50. In similar vein, B. de Roquefort-Flamercourt, De l'Etat de la poésie française dans les XIIe et XIIIe siècles (Paris, 1815), pp. 4-6.
106 A century after the publication of the Histoire littéraire des troubadours, Paul Meyer still recalled Sainte-Palaye's work with admiration and compared it favorably with that of later scholars. (Romania [1874], 3:303.) Cf. also Émile Ripert, La Renaissance provençale, 1800-60 (Paris, 1918), p. 15, where Sainte-Palaye is hailed as the "Columbus" of Provençal studies.