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978-1-107-58556-0 - Savaric De Mauléon: Baron and Troubadour

H. J. Chaytor

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Baron and Troubadour

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PREFACE

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SAVARIC DE MAULÉON has an interest for English readers as being the only troubadour of whose residence in this country we have definite evidence from contemporary records. Bernard de Ventadorn came over in the train of Henry II, but the evidence for this visit, which there is no reason to doubt, rests upon the statements of his own poems. The visit of Marcabru is legendary. While Savaric has his place in every history of Provençal literature, no one has so far attempted a detailed history of his life; “dels sieus bons faich se poiria far un gran libre, qui lo volgues escrire”, “of his exploits there might be made a great book, if anyone would write it”, says his biographer. Such a book wanders far from the fields of literature, but it can provide a portrait of the continental baron who travelled between France and England, fought, intrigued, plundered, governed, and when occasion allowed, maintained a court at which poetry and song were encouraged and patronised. Such men, for there were doubtless others of the kind whose less distinguished names have perished, were not without influence upon the literature of this country, as I have attempted to show elsewhere.

The fullest account of Savaric that has appeared in France is the study by B. Ledain, “Savary de Mauléon et le Poitou à son époque”, which deserved a better fate than interment in the somewhat obscure pages of

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PREFACE

La Revue poitevine et saintongeaise of the year 1892. The author has made good use of local records, some of which are not accessible to readers in this country; I have to acknowledge my obligations to his researches in this respect. But he passes very summarily over Savaric's English connections; there are some two hundred references to Savaric in our Close, Patent, and Charter Rolls, not to speak of those in chronicles more or less contemporary; of these sources little use has been made by Ledain or by others mentioned in the bibliography. I have to thank Sir Ivor Atkins, Librarian of the Chapter Library at Worcester Cathedral, for the copy of King John's will with Savaric's attestation.

H. J. C.

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