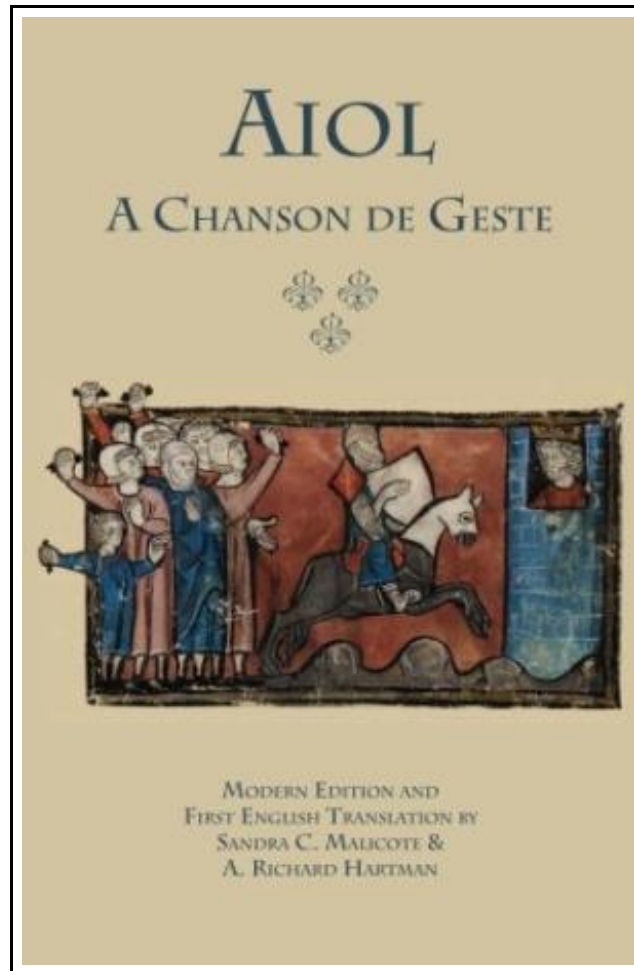


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Italica Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 650 pages. Dimensions: 8.5in. x 5.5in. x 1.6in. This chanson de geste records the exploits of the young knight, Aiol, as he reclaims by word and deed his fathers and mothers unjustly stolen heritage. He gains the love of a Saracen princess who converts when she is convinced, by his warrior prowess, of the truth of the Christian god. He then aids the French King Louis in ending a debilitating war led by rebellious vassals and (in an allusion to the Fourth Crusade) similarly helps Emperor Grasien, king of Venice, to end his own war against an enemy to the East. Aiols deeds ultimately bring justice to the kingdom of France. But the poem is far more than the tale itself. Aiol, like many other crusading and romance epics, recreates both the Christian culture of the West and the Islamic culture of the Levant. Poets writing in medieval French created richly textured literary metaphors or fictions about both the Christian and Muslim world, and they were themselves well aware that even though they were treating historically-based materials, they were also fabricating fictions and fictive truths, tropes and figures as literary art. Aiols literary allusions and fictive representations suggest a sophistication on the part of the chansons authors, who wrote for courts that knew well and first-hand the Muslim world. By the time of Aiols composition there had long been fruitful cultural, trade as well as military interaction between the two worlds. Islamic scholars were respected in intellectual circles in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and translators briskly adapted works of Arabic science and medicine for the readers of Latin Europe. Around 80 Old French epics are known from surviving 13th-century manuscripts. These were preserved and passed down by the aristocratic families who had commissioned...



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