

Aymeri of Narbonne: A French Epic Romance



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Reviews



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(Valentin Thompson)

AYMERI OF NARBONNE: A FRENCH EPIC ROMANCE



Italica Press, United States, 2009. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 213 x 140 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. Aymeri of Narbonne tells the story of Aymeri, son of one of Charlemagne's paladins, who alone accepts the great emperor's challenge to reconquer Narbonne in Languedoc from the Saracens. Epic siege and battle, betrayal, and acts of individual heroism evoke all the elements of the great age of French chanson de geste epitomized in the Song of Roland. Unlike Roland and many of its imitators - tales that breathe the air of military culture and the crusade - Aymeri of Narbonne takes a step forward, toward the age of the Romance, with a second plot that is no less important than great battles and Christian-Moslem conflict. Aymeri is advised by his court that he must seek and marry a noble princess. His quest eventually takes him across the Alps to Pavia, there to meet and woo Hermenjart, princess of Lombardy. On the way, the heroic epic takes a detour into the realm of self-discovery and social satire: of Italian merchants and German knights, and French obtuseness to the rules of courtly behavior and of civil life. But the real focus of the tale soon turns to the lovely - and courageous - Hermenjart. No passive object of desire or chivalric quest, the princess of Pavia becomes a character every bit as dynamic as her male suitor and his companions. Forthright about the status and prospects of a woman in chivalrous France, she long refuses many suitors and only welcomes Aymeri's advances when she is convinced of his sincere respect and love - and her own status. The couple goes on to high adventure and a long, triumphant life. This first English translation, by...

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