Forum

1973 Annual Meeting Discussion

I agree with Professors Niles and Dembowski (Olifant, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 8) that the Chanson de Roland has powerful appeal as a "Chanson de Charlemagne," historically, structurally, typologically (typology being the spiritual structure of history) and ideologically as an inspiration for the crusades. Charlemagne "changes" (L. Crist) and "survives" (J. Niles). In my portrayal of the special kingship of the emperor I tried to show how he alludes to the Christ that was, to the one that will be, not only the final emperor, but the King of Kings, whereas Roland is sent to his painful death, almost with the knowledge of Charles, thus alluding to the young actual Christ slain and sacrified, an interpretation which has recently gained more support and proof through the skillful application of iconography by Professor Brault in his talk at the last SAMLA Meeting. Professor Jean Frappier warns us that singing exclusively of "the glory of Charlemagne" may detract from the essential plot, namely the treason ("The Song of Ganelon's Treason") and heroic and tragic death of Roland. Of course, if we agree with the Christian hagiographie or typological explanation, the Greek concept of the tragic evaporates to a large degree. The death of St. Alexis under the staircase of his rich parents is tragic only to those who cannot see man's true destination (not destiny). Turpin guarantees felicity to the French warriors, and Roland is lifted up into Paradise. How much more dreadful is the death of Hector!

The papers presented at the 1973 [Annual Meeting] and the animated discussion of the participants speak for themselves and for the great value of the Seminar.

Marianne Cramer Vos
Alabama State University

Review of Karl D. Uitti, Story, Myth, and Celebration

The writer of the review of Professor Uitti's book, in the February 1974 Olifant (Vol. I, No. 3), although referring in his note no. 3 (p. 23) to Aquinian Latin, yet has some difficulty measuring up even to the standard set by GREGORY of TOURS and other pre-ALCUIN writers. I refer, of course, to his note 5 (p. 24) where we have a sort of neuter noun with a feminine adjective attached. The text should read: dominicam passionem, resurrectionem atque ascensionem, at least if it is to be in keeping with the best medieval practice. Proh dolor!

One should also note, same page, first paragraph, line 13, that one should read: "'privatization.'"

Larry S. Crist
Vanderbilt University

Note: The writer of the Uitti review mentioned by Professor Crist is not to blame for the misspelling of "privatization," an editorial error. The suggestion that there is a mistake in the Latin of Note 5, however, is more serious, for it implies that the reviewer is not a professor of Latin. Professor Crist's improvement makes the note more intelligible, but so too would repunctuation with no change in the words : missam (i.e., dominicam passionis, resurrectionis atque ascensionis) celebrare. Since both versions are grammatically correct, we hope that the reviewer and Professor Crist will be on speaking terms for as long as missa remains a neuter noun. —Editor

Advice and Consent

Olifant is a striking example of what we can and must do to communicate with each other; the transcription of the meeting is a boon not only to the ever greater numbers of us who are unable to travel for lack of funds, but also to those who attended and were not able to catch everything. The presentation of recent work in our field in the review section, with the perceptive comments of reviewers obviously chosen for their real interest in the works they are commenting on, may turn out to be the most important service a society like ours can render to its members in the information-heavy days to come.

You can say I asked who that Masked Man was, because I wanted to thank him. . . . Congratulations and do not falter.

Robert F. Cook
University of Pittsburgh

-o-oOo-o-

Olifant prints comments from readers on any aspect of this publication: its articles, papers, reviews, abstracts, and/or editorial procedures. Suggestions of what members of the Société Rencesvals would like to see in future issues are particularly welcome. Olifant will also publish general announcements and opinion on any aspect of medieval studies in the Romance languages. Communications should be addressed to John R. Allen; Department of Romance Languages; University of Manitoba; Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.