

Forum

Article Abstracts

I have noticed that Olifant frequently offers reviews of even rather short articles and it has occurred to me that it might be more useful to our field (which is so well-served by bibliographers) if, instead of actually reviewing and abstracting short articles which one can easily note and read for oneself, Olifant were to expand the Bibliographical Note to include a brief description of the contents (three or four lines). This could be so useful, especially for material that appears in out of the way places such as Festschriften. For example, in the latest Olifant, the Whitehead Festschrift is mentioned, but not a single article in it appears in the "articles" section. One is often prepared to delay submission of an article if one receives the "latest news" that a new piece of work has just appeared. I also think that the back numbers of Olifant would become much more valuable as a quasi-critical bibliography. The work could be shared out—it would be particularly fine job for graduate students. I do think that the abstraction of longer articles should be continued (articles of say, 30 pages or more).

You have doubtless thought much about such matters of format and I feel awkward mentioning it to you, but it appeared to merit the suggestion. The arrival of Olifant is an event in my life which, these days, is too much taken up with shuffling paper. It is a much more vibrant and interesting journal than most of the productions. I really wish you well and I plan to submit something to you within a year or so.

Howard S. Robertson
York University

Unity in The Roland

Professor Guy Mermier's paper ("More About Unity in the Song of Roland, Olifant, 2 [December 1974] 2, pp. 91-108), raises certain problems which deserve further comment. On p. 97, he writes that "Thierry, in a sense, is the new Roland" and emphasizes Thierry's importance in his following remarks. If Thierry is the new Roland, then the end of the poem (vv. 3993-4001), where Charlemagne is forced to continue fighting and Thierry is not even mentioned, is incomprehensible. Thierry's act represents a stage in the reluctant assumption of the active heroic role by Charlemagne. This assumption does not proceed linearly, and the Thierry episode is an aspect of Charlemagne's refusal to replicate the active heroism of Roland until this function is revealed as the inevitable will of God at the end of the poem.

I do not question the unity of the Chanson de Roland but rather Professor Mermier's presentation of how the elements of the structure relate to each other.

Patricia Harris Stablein
Fredericksburg, Virginia

-o-oOo-o-

Provençal Conference

The Seventh Congrès International de Langue et Littérature d'Oc et d'Etudes Francoprovençales will take place at Montélimar, from September 2 to September 7, 1975. For further information, write M. Jean-Claude Bouvier, Le Chambord C - Allée de l'Ecole Val-Saint-André, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, France.