

Recent Dissertations

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RABELAIS AND MEDIEVAL EPIC PARODY: GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL.
(Portions of Text in French)

LISTON, Susan, Ph.D.
Michigan State University, 1974

Rabelais's Gargantua and Pantagruel are parodies of the structure of the chanson de geste: the childhood of the hero, his education, his adventures -- a fact widely accepted by Rabelaisian scholars. Yet no one has analyzed fully the extent to which Rabelais burlesques the medieval epic in these two works. The purpose of this study is to deal with the war passages of Gargantua and Pantagruel as parodies of the chanson de geste, since war is the major topic of such sagas. As a first step in this dissertation, the geste romances and romances of adventure which Rabelais knew were consulted, in order to summarize the treatment of war as it is found in relevant medieval epic literature. Rabelaisian and medieval works are then compared in order to determine parallels in the use of themes, motifs, narrative techniques, characters, episodes, and topoi. Within this study, parody is defined as a travesty of literary works with the intent of producing laughter.

Chapter I contains a review of literary criticism pertaining to the topic of this dissertation and an analysis of the topoi of war in the chansons de geste.

Chapter II deals with Pantagruel as a mock epic. The techniques which Rabelais uses to parody the epic are noted and comparisons with medieval works are made.

Chapter III treats Gargantua as a burlesque epic. The methodology employed to analyze Pantagruel is utilized with reference to Gargantua. The same parodie devices implemented by Rabelais in Pantagruel are present in Gargantua.

Chapter IV is a comparison between Gargantua and Pantagruel: the similar treatment of numerous topoi in both texts is discussed. Certain epic commonplaces burlesqued in both works are contrasted with respect to the change which the topoi undergo as Rabelais progresses from Pantagruel to Gargantua.

The appendix provides core plot summaries of the geste romances and romances of adventure which Rabelais knew. It is hoped that Rabelaisian

scholars may hereby familiarize themselves easily with the literature which serves as the basis for this study.

Instead of deserting medieval matter after Pantagruel, Rabelais proceeds to write a second mock epic. The portrayal of warfare in Gargantua more closely resembles the depiction of battle characteristic of the epic: in Pantagruel, the war is engineered predominantly by ruse, while war in Gargantua is recounted in detailed battle scenes where victories are gained through physical prowess; the ruseful heroes of Pantagruel are replaced by caricatures of the traditional epic warrior. In Gargantua Rabelais refines the techniques of epic parody used in Pantagruel.

DAI, Vol. 35, No. 9, pp. 6100-01-A.
Order No. 75-7204, 155 pages.

HUON DE BORDEAUX: A STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OLD FRENCH NARRATIVE

MEALY, Kenneth Charles, Ph.D.
Princeton University, 1974

Huon de Bordeaux (ca. 1210-29) is often described as a late epic poem which incorporates many elements borrowed from romance. Rather than analysing the text in order to categorize it as epic or romance, or to decry its exclusion from the canon of "great" medieval texts, this dissertation examines Huon as it participates in the dynamics of Old French narrative. The Song of Roland was chosen for comparison since it and the Huon embrace chronologically virtually all of medieval France's epic production. As different as these two poems are, both make use of similar themes and of three centrally important figures: king, traitor, and hero.

Careful examination of these three types has disclosed certain patterns of differences between their function in the Roland and their function in the Huon. Ganelon's acts are examined each in turn and presented concretely, whereas Amauri, in Huon de Bordeaux, is labelled a traitor at the outset and can be counted on to perform treacherous acts. The difference between the letter's function and Ganelon's is subtle, yet it may be useful to note that by the time of Huon a character's concretely presented acts form a concept abstracted from such acts. The narrative can then advance quite rapidly, since the traitor's treachery can be taken for granted. Similarly Roland's heroism, always focused in terms of service to king and community, contrasts sharply with Huon's in that Huon is simply good in much the same way that Amauri is treacherous. Once again, the complex series of acts which render concrete Roland's fundamentally heroic service to his god, king and community, seems to have been abstracted in Huon de Bordeaux to a notion of a central character so good

that he can do no wrong. Using characters such as Huon and Amauri, the poet could concentrate more fully on the complications of his plot than on the complex interrelationships between individual characters or between characters and external forces, such as the concepts of patriotic and religious duty so essential to the Roland.

In order to study the radical change in the literary figure of Charlemagne from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, two ninth-century Latin texts, Einhardt's and the Monk of St. Gall's, have been considered as well as the Roland and the Huon. Across these four texts, a current appears which simultaneously propels the figure of Charlemagne toward a superhuman excellence and multiplies the stories about him. In Huon de Bordeaux this drift toward the superhuman can be seen as splitting the Charlemagne material and thus producing both the supernatural Auberon and an unreasonable, human Charlemagne.

Such shifts in narrative technique from the time of the Roland to Huon de Bordeaux must be due to the working of both conscious and unconscious forces within the minds of the epic story-tellers. It seems to this writer that the most fruitful method of studying these forces is to examine the words themselves or what might be called the text's "diction." Huon's single, unfocused "goodness" allows the text freedom to weave around Huon an extremely ample narrative fabric. The creative forces which result in such a narrative must in some way be parallel to those forces which shape the development of language. Further study of Old French diction should sharpen our understanding of the narrative process of "layering" or "thickening" and the new literary and linguistic structures it produces.

DAI, Vol. 35, No. 9, p. 6102-A.
Order No. 75-6703, 185 pages.

PERSPECTIVES OF IRONY IN MEDIEVAL FRENCH LITERATURE

ROSSMAN, Vladimir Rodion, Ph.D.
Columbia University, 1972

The term ironia, borrowed from classical antiquity, was usually described as a trope or as a figure of thought. It is only one of many medieval tropes which we would consider ironic today -- e.g., permutatio, abusio, subiectio, contrarium, occupatio, commutatio, occultatio -- all familiar to medieval readers, but not necessarily considered ironic by them. Modern definitions of irony, which date from the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, include concepts known from antiquity to the present but which are not sufficiently precise to be applicable to texts of every period. In this study irony is

defined in terms of elements that readers of all times would have understood and is then applied to a variety of texts from medieval French literature.

Chapter I is devoted to a study of Socratic irony, irony as a rhetorical device, and irony of fate or dramatic irony, in order to formulate a definition applicable to all texts. Irony consists of at least two opposed terms characterizing the same object in relation to which they are logically incompatible.

The remaining chapters apply the criteria of Chapter I to medieval works representing different genres, themes and periods as well as contexts of varying size and extent, and thus show that irony appears throughout medieval literature. Chapters II through VI present a progression from small to large ironic contexts - i.e., from contexts associated with ironia to those belonging exclusively to modern irony. Irony of words, treated in Chapter II, corresponds most closely to medieval definitions. The passages discussed are "Je meurs de soif" by Charles d'Orléans, the Story of Alexander and Diomedes by Villon, and the "Marriage Rutebeuf." Episodic irony, discussed in Chapter III, results from the juxtaposition of two or more episodes usually not ironic in themselves. The selection includes passages from André de la Vigne's Moralité de l'Aveugle et du boiteux, Chrétien's Cligés, the Voyage de Charlemagne, the Chanson de Roland and Bérout's Tristan. Chapters IV (Aucassin et Nicolette and Yvain) and V (the Roman de la Rose) deal with irony in works wholly ironic. Their contexts consist also of juxtaposed episodes, but bear more on the overall structure of the work. In addition, the Rose reflects the viewpoints of two authors and thus offers a wider perspective than Aucassin and Yvain. Chapter VI, "Cyclic Irony," analyzes the Peacock Cycle, whose overall ironic structure is revealed only if the three romances involved are viewed as a whole.

The wider the context, the more intricate its ironic structure. Word irony sometimes adds to episodic, while both occur in wholly ironic works. In many instances irony on a smaller scale reflects wider patterns.

DAI, Vol. 35, No. 10, pp. 6679-80-A.
Order No. 75-9355, 424 pages.

LE ROMAN DU WILLEHALM DE WOLFRAM D'ESCHENBACH ET L'EPOPEE D'ALISCANS
ETUDE DE LA TRANSFORMATION DE L'EPOPEE EN ROMAN. (French Text)

WIESMANN-WIEDEMANN, Friederike, Ph.D.
Northwestern University, 1974

As the tools for the criticism of vernacular medieval works have yet to be discovered, the only recourse the critic has is to look for the

criteria of judgment and analysis in the works themselves. For the study of epic and romance a comparison of the French *chanson de geste* Aliscans and the German romance Willehalm seems particularly proper as Wolfram used the French text and transformed it into a romance. Even though we do not have the exact MS that Wolfram used, the MSS we do have give us a relatively good idea of the material the German author worked with.

The dissertation compares different aspects of both works, always having in mind the effect each specific aspect has on the hearer and reader. When it seemed fit, a short comparison with contemporary architecture and sculpture was made.

The first chapter deals with the structural framework of both poems showing the influence of the cycle of Guillaume on its individual branch Aliscans on one hand and the autonomous construction of the Willehalm on the other.

In the second chapter, the dissertation turns to the internal structure of each work, i.e., its organisation. There are several sub-headings: chronological and local sequence of the action, subdivision of the works (*laissez* vs. books and their relations within the poems), organization of corresponding episodes (the battles, the scenes in Orange), the arrangement of scenes (paratactic vs. syntactic construction), and finally linking devices (chronological and logical sequence, parallelism and variation etc.).

The subsequent chapters explore each poet's approach to the content. Consequently the third chapter treats the ideology of both poems. There are three subdivisions: religion, human condition, and war. The next chapter shows the transformation undergone by the characters in Wolfram's hands and their relation to the action and the deeper meaning of both works. An appendix to this chapter attempts to find out what the end of the Willehalm would have looked like, had Wolfram finished his romance.

The fifth and final chapter describes and endeavours to explain the esthetic effects produced by each work, the role the author played, the part that the audience was expected to play and its probably attitudes toward the works. It is in this chapter that the question of the essential differences between the epic and the romance is discussed.

The dissertation is written in French.

DAI, Vol. 35, No. 10, p. 6738-A.
Order No. 75-8011, 285 pages.

THE OLD SPANISH ISOMBERTA AND THE OLD FRENCH BEATRIS VERSIONS OF
THE SWAN KNIGHT LEGEND

ENGELMANN, Jari Anne Taylor, Ph.D.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1974

The purpose of this thesis is to show the development of the Swan Knight legend from folklore to a feudal epic, resulting in the thirteenth-century Old French epic poem, the Beatris version, and in the Old Spanish prose translation, the Isomberta version, found in the fourteenth-century La Gran Conquista de Ultramar. The Spanish work is principally a translation of the Palestinian bishop William of Tyre's Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum, and also of William's Old French continuators, Ernoul, and Treasurer Bernard, etc. The Spanish translator of the Gran Conquista did not use William's original Latin work, but rather the Old French translation with his continuators, Livre du Conqueste de Terre Sainte, or Estoire d'Brades. Chapters 47-139 of the Gran Conquista include the fictional Swan Knight legend, which is based on the Beatris version known also as Hélias, belonging to the French poetic cycle of the First Crusade. This cycle consists of the historical poems, La Chanson d'Antioche and La Chanson de Jerusalem, and the fictional poems, Hélias, Enfances Godefroi and Li Caitif.

The Swan Knight legend first appears in written form in the Romance languages in Johnnis de Alta Silva's Dolopathos, Sive de Rege et Septem Sapientibus, a collection of stories on the perfidy of women. Two branches of the Swan Knight legend developed after Herbert's translation of the Latin Dolopathos into an Old French poem, the courtly Elixo version and the epic Beatris version, which is the ultimate if not the immediate source of the Spanish narrative, the Isomberta version.

The folk origin of the Swan Knight legend shows that it is compiled from two separate stories, the swan-children story and the story of a mysterious knight, who does good deeds and who is drawn from place to place in a boat by a magical swan. These two stories were joined together to provide the story of the Swan Knight, who becomes the mythical ancestor of the actual leader of the First Crusade, Godfrey of Bouillon. The later versions of the Swan Knight legend show that the folk motifs and the magical elements are lost as the legend develops into its epic form. Secondary folk sources of the legend outside of the Latin, French and Spanish traditions may be found in the Germanic tradition, such as the Scéaf legend or the swan-maiden stories, and in the Celtic tradition, such as the Old Celtic tale of "The Children of Lir." In German, other related written versions of the Swan Knight legend occur after the principal French versions. They are Wolfram von Eschenbach's poem Parzival, the anonymous poem Lohengrin, and Konrad von Wurtzburg's Der Schwanritter.

After a comparison of the Beatris and the Isomberta versions to each other, it becomes evident that the feudal system of honor was imposed on the original folktale. Honor comes to mean the duties and responsibilities that a feudal knight had to God, to his sovereign, and to his vassals and to himself through this honor code. In folklore, a hero was not restricted by moral or social obligations, and he was basically independent. Examples of the feudal honor code as a literary tradition may be found in the Cantar de Mio Cid and in the Chanson de Roland. The interior virtues of a knight necessary for sustaining the honor code are bravery, fealty, vengeance, largess and piety.

In a historical perspective, the Isomberta version of the Swan Knight legend is a primitive novela de caballerías, and the Swan Knight may be seen as a kind of caballero andante.

DAI, Vol. 35, No. 12, pp. 7863-64-A.
Order No. 75-11,836, 204 pages.

MIMETIC AND EXEMPLARY MODES IN THE CHANSON DE GESTE: RAOUL DE CAMBRAI AND LA CHANSON DE ROLAND

STRANDNESS, Jean Theresa, Ph.D.
Michigan State University, 1974

The Old French chansons de geste occupy a pivotal position in the development of medieval narrative: personages in the early chansons de geste tend to be exemplary, superhuman, idealized beings like Beowulf and the heroes of the early Germanic epics; personages in later chansons de geste tend to be projected as individual, complex personalities, representative of actuality. To pinpoint this enormous change in the nature of medieval narrative, I have selected two chansons de geste, La Chanson de Roland and Raoul de Cambrai, as test cases for analysis of characterization.

Out of all the chansons de geste, I find that personages are most exemplary in the Roland and most mimetic in the Raoul. By "exemplary" I mean "typical" or "serving as a model." By "mimetic" I mean "representative of actuality." I sometimes define "mimetic" in a more limited way as "psychologically complex."

Throughout the dissertation I employ the concept of a continuum lying between exemplary and mimetic poles as a method of analysis. While the Roland lies close to the exemplary pole and the Raoul lies close to the mimetic pole, personages in both chansons, at times, move in the direction of the opposite pole.

The first three chapters deal with context. In Chapter I, I discuss the jongleurs' premises and the structures of the works. In the Roland the jongleur's premises are ordering principles and guides to personages for leading exemplary lives; in the Raoul premises describe a confusing, problematic world. The structure of the Roland - order, disorder, order - implies an exemplary life pattern: order may be upset, but a means exists to restore order when it is upset. The structure of the Raoul - order, disorder, further disorder - implies that "things fall apart" and that order cannot easily be restored.

In Chapter II, I establish that the presence of the supernatural in the Roland permits a vision of the world in absolute terms, while the absence of the supernatural in the Raoul reinforces a vision of the world as absurd, confusing, problematic.

In Chapter III, I treat the representation of time and space. In the Roland space is not localized and may have symbolic significance; time is compressed or suspended altogether. In the Raoul, space is localized and time is marked and extended. Also in the Raoul we find represented the fluid time of the human psyche.

In Chapter IV, I examine relationships between personages. In the Roland, where relationships tend to be exemplary, few relationships between personages are portrayed. In the Raoul the psychological complexity of personages is revealed through a network of mimetic relationships.

In Chapter V, I examine characterization in terms of the concept of an exemplary-mimetic continuum and in terms of three other continuums - the collective-individual, the generic-individual, and the supernatural-natural - which are allied with the exemplary-mimetic continuum. Personages may locate on more than one continuum simultaneously. Furthermore, personages may locate at different points of a single continuum during the course of narrative, although personages in the Roland are primarily exemplary and personages in the Raoul are primarily mimetic.

DAI, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 289-A.
Order No. 75-14, 842, 218 pages

THE ETHIC OF THE HEROIC WARRIOR: BEOWULF, THE NIBELUNGENLIED,
AND THE CHANSON DE ROLAND

SIMPSON, John Mack, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 1975

Supervisor: Edgar C. Polomé

Much of the criticism directed at Beowulf, the Nibelungenlied, and the Chanson de Roland has forced incomplete interpretations upon these

poems because some critics have ignored or devalued the importance of the heroic ethic in these poems. Beowulf has been called a traitor because he kills Siegfried after pledging his triuwe to Kriemhild; Roland has been charged' with desmesure for his unwillingness to blow the horn until it is too late. This dissertation argues that the ethic of the heroic warrior remains the fundamental and pervasive motif of these poems and provides a critical perspective from which to perceive a more complete interpretation of them.

In this dissertation two methods of analysis are used to ensure this perspective. First, the author employs philological analysis of key terminology. Second, he employs the theories of comparative structural mythology developed by Georges Dumézil. (Careful reference to such traditional historical commentators as Tacitus and Ammianus Marcellinus are also made as a supplement to the two main methods of analysis).

These methods reveal a general Indo-European (and, more specifically, Germanic) character of the heroic warrior in these poems. Superficially, this heroic ethic is easy to define. The warrior must be steadfastly loyal to his lord. He must protect the lord. Should the lord be killed, the warrior must avenge him regardless of the cost. The warrior's thoughts are rarely of personal safety or of any sort of prudence. In return for service, he expects protection and support from the lord. The reciprocity of the relationship between lord and retainer is absolute. This relationship is not the contractual or formally legalistic set of obligations typical of Roman law or of fully developed feudalism; rather, it is a personal relationship, and the personalities of the parties must be considered.

If one considers such warriors as Beowulf, Roland, Hagen, and Rüdiger as warriors within this context before anything else, one gains a surer perspective for understanding the poems in their cultural milieu. Beowulf fights the dragon because he must. Hagen commits no breach of fidelity when he tricks Kriemhild into revealing Siegfried's vulnerability in order, as he sees it, to protest his lord Gunther. Roland's obsession with his honor and reputation, and with Charlemagne's, determines his reluctance to call for help. The heroic ethic defines options for the warrior. All of these warriors are bound by the options allowed by the heroic ethic.

DAI, Vol. 36, No. 5, p. 2793-A.
Order No. 75-24,962, 172 pages

LA QUESTE ET LA CROISADE: LES DEBUTS DE LA PROSE AU
XIII^e SIECLE. (French Text)

HARTMAN, Allison Richard, Jr., Ph.D., University of Colorado, 1975.

Director: Professor Andrée Kail

This dissertation is a study of four prose works written in Old French at the beginning of the Thirteenth Century. Two Arthurian romances La Queste del Saint Graal and La Mort le roi Artu are compared with two chronicles of the Fourth Crusade by Geoffroi de Villehardouin and Robert de Clari, both entitled La Conquête de Constantinople. In the past, scholars have often sought literary parallels to these chronicles, but their efforts have almost exclusively been concentrated on the *chanson de geste* and especially the Song of Roland. Instead of this traditional approach, this investigation proposes to search for literary echoes and influences not in a genre which was already on the wane when Villehardouin was writing, but rather in the contemporary form of the romance.

The examination of two contemporary prose genres reveals that they both are the product of a new mentality, more concerned with rational, historical truth than with the poetic truth of Twelfth Century verse writers like Chrétien de Troyes. Was the introduction of prose responsible for, or rather the result of this change in outlook? This question is closely linked to the general conditions which favored the rapid success of the new vehicle of expression, and which are also investigated, being considered essential to the understanding of the relationship of chronicle to romance.

In addition to the discovery of a new mentality, the comparison of these two genres permitted the exploration of the complex relationship between the Quest of the Holy Grail and the Crusade Movement. This relationship emerges as a two-way street, in which the spirit of the Quest explains many crusader actions and attitudes which a study of the pertinent historical documents fails to elucidate.

DAI, Vol. 36, No. 5, p. 2878-A.
Order No. 75-23,604, 292 pages

WAR AND THE MISSING HERO: AN EXPLORATION OF THE POETRY OF BERTRAN DE BORN THROUGH COMPARISONS WITH THE AENEID, THE CHANSON DE ROLAND, AND BEOWULF

STABLEIN, Patricia Lynne Harris, Ph.D.
Northwestern University, 1974

DAI, Vol. 35, No. 10, p. 6682-A.
Order No. 75-7993, 295 pages

Previously published in Olifant, 2 (1975), 210-11.

This month we are happy to be able to present, once again in advance of publication in DAI, the abstract of a dissertation directed by a member of the Société Rencesvals:

FANTASY, HUMOR, AND TRANSCENDENCE IN THE ARTHURIAN ROMANCES
OF CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES

Kitty Delle Robbins

This study examines the nature and functions of fantasy and humor in the Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes, from the perspective of his achievements as an initiator of the roman breton and as the first Old French writer to illustrate the potential of that genre for the transcendence of ordinary reality through fantasy and humor. A preliminary analysis of the language, form, and structure of the roman breton, its development as a new form of vernacular literature in twelfth-century France, and its relationship with the chanson de geste and the roman antique, establishes the larger socio-literary context within which Chrétien's romances are set. Special attention is paid to the world view of each genre, its mythical/metaphysical aspects, with focus on the type and amount of the marvelous present and on the interplay of tragic and comic, serious and humorous within the genre.

The roman breton is characterized by a matière in which the marvelous elements, the motifs and archetypes of Celtic and other legendary lore, retain their vitality. They provide a mythic coherence which fuses with the new coherence of courtly idealism. Humor actively participates in the maintenance of this double coherence, both in conjunction with and in opposition to the fantasy.

A further conceptual framework for the study is provided by the elaboration of new working definitions of fantasy and humor as complementary modes of literary creation. In each case a paradigm of the sub-modes is developed: for fantasy, the sub-modes are the féerique, the fantastique, the fantaisiste and the fanciful; for humor, the sub-modes are the satiric, the ironic, the parodie, and the comic. The theoretical congruence of the two paradigms suggests possible interactions among the sub-modes of fantasy and humor that are then explored in the actual texts of Chrétien's romances.

In Chrétien's fictive universe an ideal courtly society is incarnated in the marvels of fantasy, while men's departures from that ideal, as well as the inadequacies of the conventional conception of the ideal, are demonstrated through humor. Fantasy is both the source of vivid motifs and the structuring principle which establishes aesthetic distance,

idealizes the real, embodies the ideal, and celebrates art and life. Humor enhances and nuances the narratives; it humanizes their heroes and heroines at the same time that it satirizes the crudities of brute reality and the excesses of ideals.

Chrétien plays fantasy and humor off against each other to achieve the maximum gain in intensity, variety, and pleasure, both frivolous and philosophical, within his literary discourse. Humor can reinforce the fantasy by denigrating the non-courtly who do not fit into the realm of ideal chivalry. It can undermine the fantasy instead, by pointing out with amused indulgence the failings of sympathetic characters. This denial of fantasy's claims to perfection leads, however, to an indirect affirmation of fantasy within the romance, for the humanization of the heroes and heroines increases our participation through wish-fulfillment in their magic world. Humor which parodies or deprecates the fantasy itself, its ridiculous extravagance, its absurdity, shatters the lovely illusion. Chrétien uses this humor to destroy the fantasy only to restore it again with more intensity. Chrétien's romances exist in a creative tension between fantasy and humor.

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Forthcoming Meetings

A Conference on Problems in the Relations between Literature and the other Arts in the Middle Ages will be held at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2-3 April 1976. This will be a small conference in which invited speakers will present reports on work in progress. Attendance is by invitation. A few places remain for scholars prepared to take part in discussions. Interested persons should contact Robert M. Jordan, English Department, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6T 1W5.

The Second Stony Brook Conference in Medieval Studies will take place on Saturday, 10 April 1976. Papers in the areas of medieval kingship, women in medieval society, and contact and exchange between cultures are of particular interest. There will also be informal workshops. For additional information, contact Joel T. Rosenthal, Chairman, Department of History, SUNY, Stony Brook, NY 11794.

The Medieval Colloquium of the Lehigh Valley announces the following lectures to be held at Cedar Crest College, Allentown PA, at 7:30 p.m., Room 1867, College Center: 1 March 1976, Donald LoCicero, "Humor in Early Germanic Literature," and 26 April 1976, Linda Lefkowitz, "The Oldest Spanish Poetry."