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"Mio Cid" Studies, edited by A.D. Deyermond. London: Tamesis Books Limited, 1977. Pp. 213.

A FEW YEARS AGO. Tamesis published a volume of *"Libro de buen amor" Studies*, edited by G.B. Gybbon-Monypenny, containing an extremely valuable selection of essays. The present collection achieves an equally high standard of scholarship—as one would expect of its editor—and thus it becomes a welcome companion to the earlier volume. Like the *"Libro de buen amor" Studies*, the *"Mio Cid" Studies* is largely written by established specialists and covers a wide variety of problems; consequently it too will be equally useful to both the medievalist and the generalist and will likewise take its place on the short shelf of books essential to anyone interested in Spanish medieval literature. The volume is attractively printed and includes a useful index. Errata are fairly frequent (this is perhaps inevitable for a mainly non-Spanish book printed in Spain), but usually are unimportant and present no problem for the reader with a good command of English.¹ I offer my commentary from the perspective of an interested non-specialist in the area of Cid studies; the disagreements I express with the various authors' opinions should be regarded in that light. (N.B. *PMC* stands for *Poema de mio Cid* throughout.)

¹The following are the more serious errata: p. 72, line 22, insert *than* between "rather by"; p. 100, line 9, read *handles*; p. 130, line 20, insert *received [or welcomed?]* between "being with"; p. 139, line 35, insert *so* between "do only"; p. 141, n. 3, line 8, insert *parecido* between "algo anteriormente"; p. 192, line 33, insert *have* between "may been").

The volume opens with Deyermond's own "Tendencies in *Mio Cid* Scholarship, 1943-1973" (pp. 13-47). Here Deyermond does for Cidian studies what he did for Juan Ruiz some years ago.² In both evaluations of the present state of scholarship, Deyermond proffers a remarkably complete, fair, and judicious summary of his material. Both guides are invaluable to specialists and students alike, since they provide at the same time a synthesis of past research and a concise résumé of problems still to be resolved.

Although the title of Deyermond's *Mio Cid* survey purports to cover only the years 1943-1973 (the last of the thirty-year cycles in which he sees Cidian research developing), in reality it devotes three extremely pithy pages to a summary of the highpoints of early *Cid* scholarship. In effect, then, Deyermond provides an overall critical perspective of the entire span of *Cid* studies. Deyermond's essay shows little overlap with Colin Smith's "A History of *PMC* Criticism" (in his edition of the *Poema* [Oxford, 1972], pp. lxxxi-lxxxvii), which is much briefer, limits itself to the most general critical tendencies, and concentrates principally on the early work. However, Deyermond's survey does cover much of the same ground as Miguel Magnotta's *Historia y bibliografía de la crítica sobre el PMC (1750-1971)* (Chapel Hill, 1976; this is a revision of his 1969 Ph.D. dissertation), and it is inevitable that the two should be compared. Magnotta's treatment runs to 300 pages—some eight times the length of Deyermond's. This means that Deyermond's survey is necessarily much more synthetic, but at the same time it has the advantage of a sharper delineation of the issues and proposed solutions; Magnotta's presentation is more complete, but also more repetitious. Magnotta organizes his summary according to topics (date, author, foreign influences, versification, etc.) and proceeds chronologically within each category; he then gives in his last chapter an overview which roughly corresponds to Deyermond's survey. Another difference is that Magnotta assumes an impartial stance, merely summarizing the diverse argumentations, whereas Deyermond furnishes an incisive commentary which serves as an invaluable guide. Surprisingly, Deyermond's synthesis is in some respects more comprehensive than Magnotta's: fundamental

²"*Libro de buen amor* Scholarship since 1938," in Félix Lecoy, *Recherches sur le "Libro de buen amor,"* 2nd ed., ed. A.D. Deyermond (Westmead, 1974), pp. xii-xxxvii.

problems dealt with by Deyermond but not by Magnotta are the establishing of a text, concordances, and the rôle of folklore. Medievalists will naturally find both surveys to be indispensable, but the non-specialist will doubtless prefer the more comprehensive, critical, sharply-focused and shorter critique by Deyermond.

The second study in the volume, Douglas Gifford's "European Folk-Tradition and the *Afrenta de Corpes*" (pp. 49-62), unfortunately reflects a case of considerable erudition gone astray. Gifford possesses a detailed knowledge of religious folk-beliefs and superstitions, particularly in regard to the Roman festival of Lupercalia. Yet his attempt to relate this fertility rite to the *afrenta* is, to borrow a phrase from the author, "absurd in the extreme" (p.56). The similarities that Gifford finds between the two events are "the proximity of caves, the woods and the spring, the two youths of noble birth, the leather strips, the beating of young women and possibly even the ritual laughter [and] the fact that the Infantes make love to their wives the night before . . ." (p. 56). At this point Gifford admits that "all these prove nothing," but he then tries—unpersuasively—to establish a continuity of the tradition of Lupercalia in Spain (despite its "official suppression by Gelasius in 495"). I regard the parallels cited as purely coincidental—a few odd details removed from their respective contexts and juxtaposed without regard to affinity of spirit, background or theme.

After a false start with a long initial paragraph on E.H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*, Thomas Hart contributes an interesting essay entitled "Characterization and Plot Structure in the *PMC*" (pp. 63-72). As his title indicates, Hart treats here two quite different aspects of the *Poema*; he aptly summarizes his conclusions as follows:

I suggest, then, that the formula *fortitudo et sapientia* may have served the poet of the *Poema* as a schema for constructing all the principal figures in the poem. (p. 68)

What is special about the *Poema* is that the limitations on the protagonist's freedom of action are to a large extent self-imposed. Thus, the Cid repeatedly refuses to make war on the King's lands, stubbornly insisting on remaining Alfonso's vassal even after the King has severed the legal bond between them by ordering him into exile... Most strikingly of all, he insists on seeking redress for the assault at Corpes by judicial means rather [than] by a violent revenge on the infantes. (p. 72)

These quite valid points (the second of which is made also by Geoffrey West later on) are unhappily obscured by the introduction of two irrelevant analogies in the argumentation—the irrelevant comparison of the *fortitudo et sapientia* formula to Gombrich's observations on medieval art, and the unconvincing analogy of the Cid's actions to a typically "novelistic" structure. Indeed, Hart's valuable comments on the hero's deeds in no way involve what is usually termed structure, but rather content.

Derek Lomax studies "The Date of the *PMC*" (pp. 73-81), and like most British commentators of recent vintage, he inclines toward a late dating. However, he honestly admits that:

Almost all the arguments so far adduced for any date are unconvincing, and ... we simply do not know when the poem was written. There is nothing to be said for 1140: 1207 has at least the authority of the only manuscript and fits in with the linguistic arguments of Pattison; but perhaps it would be safest to conclude merely that the poem was written in the reign, and probably in the kingdom, of Alfonso VIII. (pp. 80-81)

Citing somewhat different evidence, Deyermond also favors this conclusion (p. 19), as did Colin Smith in his widely-acclaimed 1972 edition of the *Poema* (although he later changed his mind).

In "Geographical Problems in the *PMC*: II. The Corpes Route" (pp. 83-89), Ian Michael finishes a study begun in the *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton* (London, 1976), pp. 117-128. The author patiently collects critical references to the topography of the *Poema*, in addition to reconnoitering the Spanish terrain in person. He concludes that the poet revealed "a faulty knowledge of the area near San Esteban in lines 2809-13" (p. 83); in his earlier article Michael had also concluded that "it is precisely at San Esteban that the poet made a geographical error" (*idem*). I find that Michael's evidence is slight:

It is very curious that Félez Muñoz should have taken Elvira and Sol from the supposed oakwood of Corpes which is at a height of about 3,060ft above sea-level down to the Duero, which is at 2,438 ft at that point—a descent of over 600ft—only to lead them back up to the Torre de doña Urraca which is at 2,946 ft—an ascent of 500 ft— when by proceeding further eastward along the flatter ground alongside the Duero he could have taken them directly to San Esteban. (p. 87)

This reasoning does not take into account that Muñoz's route could have been much easier, despite the increased descent and ascent, due to characteristics of the terrain such as woods, brambles, established paths, fords in the river, etc. These are all conditions which doubtless have changed considerably in the several centuries elapsed since the poem was composed. Moreover, Muñoz and his group were riding on horseback, which greatly decreases the necessity to seek out the flattest route. Michael's argumentation strikes me as too tenuous to carry the weight of the conclusion that he would place upon it—that the poet did not know the area around San Esteban as well as that around Burgos. But in any case, Michael has performed a useful service by sifting through the extensive Cidian bibliography and isolating the relevant geographical data.

Thomas Montgomery's "The *PMC*: Oral Art in Transition" (pp. 91-112) is one of the more thought-provoking essays in the volume. Montgomery brings to bear upon the *PMC* a wealth of background reading, not only on the epic generally, but also upon language and the mental processes of preliterate society. The result is a stimulating series of new perspectives, even when the reader is not completely convinced by the analogies proposed. Montgomery's ideas are wide-ranging, but his point of departure appears clearly in this early statement:

I do take it as axiomatic that the Spanish epic tradition is strongly oral in character, and that the poem's oral nature accounts in large degree for its peculiar greatness. Demonstrably, it has been altered by men who knew how to write. Rather than take up arguments about how much of it is oral, or how much written, I propose to observe some of its nonliterate aspects. (p. 92)

While Montgomery thus avoids the debate of recent years concerning the validity of applying the researches of Parry and Lord to early epic, and while he perhaps assumes more orality than many scholars now would, he nevertheless states that he does not "equate the processes involved in the composition of the *PMC* with those observed by Lord" (p. 92). His views are thoroughly enlightening, although one could object that much of the information quoted from Marshall McLuhan's studies of illiterate societies does not provide a parallel with that which produced the *PMC*. Montgomery is aware of this (pp. 106-107) but argues that "in its form of expression and its view of people and events it [the *PMC*] is more

primitive" (p. 107). He points out that the *Poema* does not present the characters' inner thoughts, but only their spoken words, a circumstance which he attributes to the author's illiterateness (pp. 99-100). I would suggest that it could rather be a narrative stance consciously assumed—it is simply the adaptation of a theatrical technique, where characters appear and speak their parts.

Many of Montgomery's most interesting observations stem from his analysis of the differences between the poetic perspective of the *PMC* and the objective one of the compilers of the *Primera crónica general* (pp. 96-107); Montgomery believes that these divergences reflect the minstrel's illiteracy and the chroniclers' status as learned men. Again, I would offer an alternative explanation. These differences can be attributed to the diverse genres themselves, rather than to an inequality in their authors' literacy. Montgomery's many perceptive remarks on various aspects of the *Poema* are too numerous to recount here, and I invite the reader to study them himself. One may favor other explanations for some of the questions treated, but all will agree that Montgomery has isolated many interesting phenomena.

The essay by Oliver T. Meyers, "Multiple Authorship of the *PMC*: A Final Word?" (pp.113-128), raises a problem of style within the article itself. As is normal, Meyers seems to announce early on his stance on the question enunciated in the title; "the intuitive, subjective hunch growing out of repeated readings of the *Poema*, that there is a noticeable shift in the point of view and that one hears a different music and a different singer after one is well into the work has led me to continue the search for proof of my subjective impression" (p. 114). Throughout the following presentation of data, which is arranged according to a separation of the poem into three equal parts, Meyers maintains this stance, constantly emphasizing the divergences between the first section (vv. 1-1244) and the third (vv. 2488-3730). From the manner in which Meyer states the case, it seems apparent that he is arguing for multiple authorship. While reading this part. I found myself reasoning against what appears to be the flow of his viewpoint. My objections were that the division into three sections of equal length corresponds to no internal division within the poem; much of the data presented does not point in any clear direction; he largely omits comment upon section two (vv. 1245-2487), which often serves as a bridge between the extremes of sections one and three, thus

establishing a continuum between what might otherwise seem to be a dichotomy; and one receives the impression that, using different objective criteria, the case could be argued in the other direction. I was then much surprised to see that Meyers draws the opposite conclusion from the one towards which he appeared to be moving: "After careful review of the materials set forth on the preceding pages, I have concluded somewhat reluctantly, that no strong case can be made in support of dual or multiple authorship for the *Poema* on linguistic grounds" (p. 125). I believe that this is the correct conclusion, but it goes against the grain of all the arguments he has marshalled. He then continues: "The most that can be argued, in my judgment, is that our text derives from several MSS, possibly a more primitive one contributing most to the early *laissez*, with those more proximate to the final version providing details for the closing sections, but all stemming ultimately from a single source" (p. 126). His final assessment seems eminently reasonable: The extant text of the *PMC* is the work of "a single creative poet, which has gone through the hands of a set of copyists, who did not refrain from patching, botching and garbling, or modernizing some unfamiliar archaisms, and who may even have added a favorite word or two in spots, but who did practically nothing to alter the underlying linguistic unity of the whole" (p. 128). This judgment coincides with that of Franklin Waltman in a number of studies cited by Meyers (see particularly the "Postscript"). Nevertheless, the issue may never be finally determined, barring the development of techniques similar to those used for resolving the authorship of different books in the Bible. The problem lies in that no other epic exists "of comparable age and length . . . unquestionably the work of a single author" (Meyers, p. 114), which could serve as a measuring stick. The answer to the question in Meyers's title has to be "no," at least for the present.

One of the most interesting articles in this volume is D.G. Pattison's "The *Afrenta de Corpes* in Fourteenth-Century Historiography" (pp. 129-140). Pattison traces in seven chronicles the changes introduced into the episode where the Infantes de Carrion beat their wives. He finds that the historiographers omit only one important narrative segment: "the Infantes' plot to murder Avengalvón . . ." (p. 130). Other significant changes include these: 1) in the *PMC*, the Cid sends his *sobrino* Féléz Muñoz to keep watch over his daughters, but this personage's name

becomes Ordoño in most chronicles; 2) likewise, in the poem Muñoz takes the girls to the home of a certain Diego Téllez, whereas most of the chronicles have them placed with a "omne bueno labrador"; 3) in the PMC, Asur González is a minor character who surges into prominence only in the court scene, where he offends the Cid and is challenged to duel; in the chronicles, González becomes the Infantes' uncle and he incites them to dishonor their wives; 4) whereas the poem shows the Cid suspecting simply on the basis of omens that his daughters' marriages are ill-fated, the *Primera crónica general* presents him arriving at this conclusion through reflection upon past events; 5) unlike the poet, the chroniclers "provide the Cid's daughters with a fitting escort" (p. 132), which leads to the question why this large group of knights failed to protect the brides from their husbands; and 6) whereas the PMC merely states that the news of the beating somehow reached the Cid, the chronicles make the escort convey this information to him. Pattison observes that the "differences in certain more or less important details... divide the manuscripts [of the chronicles] into two groups" (p. 135). Finally, he searches for explanations for the changes made by the historiographers; the primary reason he finds is that of "rationalization," which consists of playing down the importance of the supernatural and of making the characters' actions more sensible. Other factors are the desire to flesh out scant narrative details and to add new personages. Perhaps the most difficult change to account for is why the girls are taken to the home of the anonymous *omne bueno labrador*; Pattison suggests "It may be that the motive is to stress the pitiful straits in which the Cid's daughters find themselves by emphasizing the rustic nature of their temporary refuge" (p. 139). I would add that the refuge taken by a royal (or simply noble) character in a rustic house is a common novelistic situation (starting perhaps with Oedipus). Pattison finishes by stressing how the chroniclers' efforts to fill in omitted details not only blurs "the relatively simple line of the poetic narrative" (p. 139) but also leads to incongruities such as the escort's failure to prevent the affront carried out by the Infantes de Carrión. Pattison's comparative study illuminates both the PMC and the various chronicles by pinpointing specific modifications and by adducing persuasive explanations for those changes.

Highly absorbing is the article of Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas, "El PMC: nueva épica y nueva propaganda" (pp. 141-159). The main body of

the piece summarizes generally-accepted ideas about three conflicts presented in the poem: 1) between Castille and León, 2) between the inferior nobility to which the Cid belonged and the higher nobility of the Infantes de Carrion, the Count of Barcelona, and of the *mestureros* generally in Alfonso VI's court, and 3) between the Cid and his King. Here the main outlines of Rodríguez-Puértolas's argumentation are largely unexceptionable, building as they do upon studies by Menéndez Pidal, de Chasca, Guglielmi, Ubieto and others. But then Rodríguez-Puértolas alleges—in a complete *non sequitur*—that these facts prove that epic poetry is no more and no less than the propaganda of the ruling feudal class. The jump from literary fact to pat Marxist positions—class struggle, the inevitable triumph of the economically oppressed, etc., etc.—is totally arbitrary, with no logical relation whatsoever between the "evidence" produced and the conclusions drawn. However, the lack of links connecting the data collected to the deductions stated does not impede the principal part of the article (roughly from p. 147 through the middle of p. 158) from providing a useful synthesis of the various personal and political conflicts which give body to the poem. This section can thus be utilized without regard to the Marxist propaganda appended at the beginning and the end (it is not a little ironic that Rodríguez-Puértolas should attribute to the poet of the *PMC* his own propagandistic purposes). Rodríguez-Puértolas displays an impressive bibliographic control of his subject, although this quality is frequently put to ill use in mercurial references to Menéndez Pidal, to whom all Cid scholarship is so deeply indebted.

The most outstanding article in the collection is—as one might have anticipated—that of Colin Smith, entitled "On the Distinctiveness of the *PMC*" (pp. 161-194). Smith's main theme is that the Poema is not typical of the Old Spanish epic, and much less of Spanish literature generally (as has often been averred), but that it is the unique creation of one of the finest authors produced by Spain. To establish his point, Smith first lists the other medieval epic poems, both documented and hypothetical, and proceeds to compare the *PMC* with what is known or can reasonably be conjectured about the other texts. Noting that among these works the *PMC* alone survived in nearly complete form, he observes that the *clerecía* texts had a much higher survival rate. Smith believes it likely that "once the taste for epic recitation or chant had disappeared and once the

poems had been incorporated in the royal chronicles... the epic MSS had no further value and were discarded" (p. 164). It seems to me rather questionable that anyone would purposely destroy an epic MS, no matter how uninspired it might have been; perhaps a better hypothesis would be that these esthetically inferior poems were not reproduced in as many MSS, and therefore the chances of their survival were consequently reduced (conversely, one MS of the *PMC* was presumably preserved because many more copies were made of that poem). I would also observe that it is difficult to gauge whether the *Poema* was truly unique, in the absence of other complete texts with which to compare it.

Smith then describes in four splendid pages (pp. 166-169) the qualities of the *PMC* which make it "an altogether outstanding work of early European literature" (p. 166); he briefly examines the convincing characterization, the skillful use of direct speech and concrete detail, the felicitous choice of themes, the technical expertise, the utilization of humor, the artistic mastery over words, and the use of *préfiguration* in the portrayal of the approach to Corpes. One of his most intriguing suggestions is that the Infantes de Carrión may have consummated their marriages with their adolescent brides only as the first step in their brutal mistreatment of them. Having pointed out the artistic achievement of the *PMC*, Smith goes on to demonstrate how inferior the other extant epics are (with the possible exception of *Sancho II y cerco de Zamora*).

Given this disparity, it is surprising that many high-quality ballads derived from the other epics, but only three inferior *romances* stemmed from the *PMC*. From this Smith concludes that the *Poema* "lay well outside the mainstream of epic, not so much because it was early as because it was different. . . . This version . . . lay outside the popular domain of epic materials suitable for ballad-making" (p. 172). The reasons for this could lead to fascinating speculation, for certainly there are in the *PMC* numerous scenes of dramatic power which might have been turned into excellent ballads. Could it be that *romances* usually derived from oral epics? Perhaps the lack of oral currency of the *Poema* (as witnessed in the dearth of ballads descending from it) has to do with its learned character—Smith's next point. Here Smith summarizes an earlier study, where he drew attention to numerous similarities between the *PMC* and the Latin histories, on the one hand, and the Vulgate on the other, in matters of phrasing, learned words and narrative topoi.

Additional learned characteristics come from the imitation in the *Poema* of the French epic and Carolingian Latin (an aspect only alluded to here).

Smith reserves for last the feature which he considers to be most distinctive in the *PMC* and which constitutes its most important learned influence. This is the legal knowledge displayed by the poet: Smith devotes sixteen full pages (pp. 174-190) to the idea that the author of the poem was a lawyer, and more specifically, a notary named Per Abbat who was active in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The different categories of data examined by Smith include the mention of written documents, feudal relationships, fiefs and epithets, the naming of places, the description of the marriage between the Cid's daughters and the Infantes, the minute narration of the court-scene, and the pairs and binary phrases used throughout the poem. Although this is by far the most detailed portion of the study (indeed, it constitutes a lengthy article in itself), many readers will probably find it to be less persuasive than the rest. Perhaps no single datum cited falls outside what could reasonably be expected of an educated and wealthy person conversant with the law through normal business contacts and readings. Nevertheless, the sheer bulk of the evidence looms large, especially when Smith declares "Two classes of men only in Christian Spain in the early thirteenth century were equipped to compose such a work: a lawyer or notary . . . or an ecclesiastic" (p. 190). Forced to choose between these two alternatives, one would have to agree that the poem reveals much greater legal than ecclesiastical expertise. Still, I believe that such an either/or choice can be avoided. To cite a single example, could the author not have been a member of the same low nobility to which the Cid belonged, perhaps even a member of his family, who (like the Cid himself) had a considerable acquaintance with the law without being himself a lawyer? I suggest this possibility only to show that even accepting Smith's own argumentation, the choice of Per Abbat as the author of the *PMC* is not inevitable. At the same time, I think we must recognize that he constructs a good argument to prove the author was a lawyer (or alternatively, a person conversant with the law), rather than a priest. Deyermund (pp. 21-22) is reluctant to accept Per Abbat as the poet; he remarks that one large objection to Smith's candidate is that the *escribió* in the *explicit* of "Per Abbat le escribió" usually means "copied," rather than "composed." The fact that the name was common also complicates the situation. Probably the

wisest course is to recognize that Smith has made a very strong case for the legal knowledge (professional or not) of the author, particularly when it is opposed to the ecclesiastical elements, but that the candidacy of Per Abbat as poet—while a possibility—awaits more convincing proof.

While Smith may not have proved conclusively that a lawyer named Per Abbat composed the *PMC*, I believe that he has proved something equally important: after this study I think it will no longer be possible for anyone to cling to the theory of the oral composition of the poem, at least not as it stands in the version we know. This applies equally to the traditional notions of an *autor-legión* or of a minstrel-author, and to the more recent enthusiasm for the Parry-Lord researches on the Yugoslav oral epic as an all-important key to the understanding of the *PMC*. Most of us are aware that one of the major pitfalls of scholarship and criticism is the tendency to adopt current fashions uncritically, finding in them easy solutions for difficult problems. Fortunately, medieval scholarship has proved itself much less susceptible to passing fancies than other periods (the twentieth century in particular), resisting the charms of such sirens as Freud, Jung, Frye, Éliade and "myth" criticism. Nevertheless, Cidian studies recently emerged from an excessive obeisance to the theories of Menéndez Pidal, only to seek refuge in another set of ready-made ideas—those of Parry and Lord—without sufficient regard to the obvious fact that twentieth-century Yugoslavia presents conditions sharply different from those of twelfth- or thirteenth-century Spain. This is not to deny that the Parry-Lord investigations provide valuable insights for *Cid* criticism (just as Freud and the other fashionables cited above likewise offer occasional brilliant interpretations), but simply to state the self-evident fact that no study—regardless of its brilliance and validity—can be applied *in toto* to explain other works, especially those from a culture completely removed in time, space, and history from the original subject of investigation. Let us hope that the Parry-Lord enthusiasts will be convinced by Smith's painstaking analysis that the *PMC* could not have been produced by anyone except a learned writer.

One of the many merits of Smith's study is its equanimous and even-handed treatment of the issues; the author acknowledges the relative strength of each argument he presents, often including the counter-arguments as well. Thus, while emphasizing the written form of the *PMC*, he recognizes the need to postulate an oral background "to explain the

emergence of the *Chanson de Roland* and *PMC* as highly-developed written and partly learned works which cannot have arisen *ex nihilo*. But the oral tradition is hypothetical in regard to its exact form and its content in detail, for both are unknowable in times before the inventions of the tape-recorder and the shorthand note" (p. 162). Smith's study has been considerably enhanced by his close acquaintance with the French epic and its criticism. It is a piece rich in insights and suggestions for future research, and will doubtless take its place as one of the seminal articles on the *PMC*.

The last article in the collection, Geoffrey West's "King and Vassal in History and Poetry: A Contrast Between the *Historia Roderici* and the *PMC*" (pp. 195-208), is possibly the most sensitive piece of criticism in this volume of unusually good studies, and also one of the best-written. Despite the title, the contrast between the Cid and Alfonso VI in the chronicle and the poem constitutes only a point of departure (although an important one); the greater portion of the article examines the relationship between king and vassal in the *Poema*. Whereas the Latin history aspires to give an impartial account of both the Cid's laudable and reprehensible actions, the *PMC* either glosses over or changes the latter (for instance, the Cid's unauthorized attack upon Alfonso's Moorish vassals becomes a reprisal taken on the King's behalf): "In contrast to the factual and comprehensive narrative manner of the Latin historian, the method of the *PMC* poet is governed by artistic considerations. He substitutes a straightforward narration of the king-vassal relationship, in the form of a crescendo, for the more complex, less dramatic and ultimately inconclusive historical situation" (p. 197). One of the novelties of West's study is his rehabilitation of the king's character: "Alfonso seems to have a basic fund of goodwill towards the Cid, which is evidenced by the joy and pleasure that he shows whenever he learns of his success" (p. 198). This is all the more surprising in view of the negative presentation of Alfonso found in the *Historia Roderici*: a king who suffers from an inferiority complex because of his vassal's brilliant military achievements: "The vernacular poet, however, so alters the situation that the king is seen in a better light. He is no longer a jealous monarch, envious of his vassal's success, but the established ruler of the Christian lands of Spain, who at first is misled by the false advice of his counsellors" (p. 203). In the first section of the poem, the weak Alfonso is

misguided by his evil advisors; however, he learns exemplary kingship from his exemplary vassal, and in the second part he puts that code of conduct into practice. In the first portion, Alfonso's misuse of power causes social and moral disorder; in the latter section, he restores order and justice, rewarding the Cid and punishing his enemies. West's interpretation of Alfonso VI of course builds upon that of Edmund de Chasca, but presents the reformed king in a much more positive light. These new reflections upon the personality of Alfonso grow out of the comparison with his portrayal in the Latin chronicle; as happens so often, the comparative approach yields valuable insights unattainable by any other method. West's study brings a fine volume to a fitting close.

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