

1988 MLA CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

Again this year, The American-Canadian Branch of The Société Rencesvals will sponsor two seminars at the MLA convention. To enable members to participate more fully in the discussion, *Olifant* is publishing, in this issue, abstracts of the papers to be presented.

A business meeting, presided over by Robert Francis Cook, (University of Virginia), American-Canadian Branch Secretary of the Société Rencesvals, will also be held in the course of the second session, and a report on the Barcelona meeting will be presented.

I. Problems in the Medieval Romance Epic I

Program arranged by the Société Rencesvals, American-Canadian Branch.

Chair: Sue E. Farrier, Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Secretary of meeting: John S. Miletich, University of Utah

"Texts Recreated from Memory: An Example from *Garin Le Loherain*." **Barbara Moorman**, University of Southern Mississippi.

A small number of chansons de geste or parts thereof—such as the *CL*, *CN*, and *PO* in B.N. 1448 (MS. *D* of the William Cycle)—may have been "reconstituted" from memory. I have found, I believe, another example of this phenomenon in two MSS. of *Garin le Loherain*, where the clearly defined break between the first and second segments has implications for speculation about methods of composition and the transition from an original (dictated? autograph? "reportation"?) to a fair copy on parchment. In addition, one might infer prior circulation of the poem in parts, and possible composition (certainly copying) in stages.

"Crisis Textuality and the 'Archaeology' of Medieval Epic."
Donald Maddox, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

Joël Grisward's *L'Archéologie de l'épopée médiévale* is prominent among the numerous recent studies of possible medieval ramifications of Indo-European trifunctionality. Like many studies that seek to demonstrate the trifunctionality of medieval culture using the methods of comparative mythology, Grisward's analyses of the medieval Romance epic are characterized by the application of a highly normative model. This paper raises questions about methodology and the results obtained thereby. Specifically at issue are the maximal narrative dimensions of the epic corpus examined in Grisward's study. The paper identifies therein a type of comprehensive textuality whose coherence is contradictory to precisely that idea of order presupposed by the canonic theory of Indo-European trifunctionality. The maximal features of this global design constitute a "textuality of crisis" whose properties are described. Trifunctional analysis leads to neglect of a powerful, integrative epic world view, one more in keeping with an epochal model recently identified with *historia*.

"Desire, Repetition and Analogy in the *Chanson de Roland*."
Harold F. Mosher, Jr., Northern Illinois University.

Roland Barthes's notions of the catalyst and index as potential narrative elements creating thematic analogies as well as delay in the reading process (and action) for the sake of suspense may be found in *La Chanson de Roland* in the form of what Seymour Chatman and Gérard Genette call multiple singulative repetition in the narration of such actions as formulaic gestures like asking for and giving counsel, giving and taking orders, and especially boasting. Nowhere does this delay and its release have such an evident parallel as in *laisse 93*, where the violence of language and act reaches a climax as if to break through the previous delaying restraints at both the levels of discourse and action.

II. Problems in the Medieval Romance Epic II

Program arranged by the Société Rencesvals, American-Canadian Branch.

Chair: Joan B. Williamson, Long Island University

"The *Chanson de Guillaume* and the Role of the Couple." **Patricia Black**, California State College at Chico.

Because the *Chanson de Guillaume* is believed by many to be a poem of two parts, it is an exceptional candidate for study by the method of comparison and contrast. In applying that method, I have discovered many structures which testify again to the fact that there are indeed two sections in this poem. These structures concern the role the couple plays and the uses to which language and political power are put.

Initially, it is the role the couple plays that makes it relevant to continue this comparative study and extend it outward to investigate the links between the *Chanson* and the genre in which the relationship between the couple and society is the mainspring of the narration, namely: the romance. Secondly, the different uses to which language is put in the two parts of the *Chanson* also make it logical to compare this epic poem to romance. One has only to consider the length of various texts to see that language is used in a very different way in G^2 than in G^1 , in *Aliscans* than in the *Chanson de Guillaume*, in twelfth-century romance than in twelfth-century epic. In a comparative study of the *Chanson de Guillaume* and romance several texts suggest themselves as candidates, the *romans antiques*, *Eric et Enide*, and *Aliscans*.

In comparing the *Chanson de Guillaume* with romances, several questions arise that ultimately have to do with our definition of the nature of epic and romance. That *Aliscans* was heavily influenced by romance is an accepted fact. But could the "proto-romance spirit" not already have influenced the style of the *Chanson* itself? For example, to what extent can William and Guibourc be compared to the knight and lady of courtly literature? To what extent can the couple's verbal outpouring of emotion upon William's return from battle in G^2 be tied in with a change in literary taste or social

mores? Why does G² generally use more words to make a point than does G¹?

Using comparisons to the romances cited above and to *Aliscans*, I shall suggest answers to questions like the ones given here by demonstrating that the *Chanson de Guillaume* is, in fact, a text that represents the transformation of literary style in the twelfth century.

"Formulaic Diction in Alfonso El Sabio's *Estorias*." **Olga Tudoricá Impey**, Indiana University, [no abstract available]

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Bibliographic Announcement

Samuel N. Rosenberg (Indiana University) brings the following bibliographical item to the attention of readers of *Olifant*:

Adriana da Rin. "Per la fortuna della *Chanson de Roland*: La traduzione de U. A. Canello." *Ugo Angela Canello e gli inizi della filologia romanza in Italia*, a cura di A. Daniele e L. Renzi. Biblioteca dell'"Archivum Romanicum" I, 204. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1987. 221-240.

Canello's translation (1881) was the first of dozens into Italian. Da Rin places it historically and analyzes its lexical, syntactic and prosodie features. One appendix provides bibliographic data on all Italian versions up to 1985; another tabulates the formal characteristics of the translations.

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