TWENTY-FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MEDIEVAL STUDIES

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, KALAMAZZO
10-13 MAY 1990

Joan Williamson (Long Island University), Vice-Président of the American-Canadian Branch of the Société Rencesvals, has organized four sessions for the 1989 International Congress on Medieval Studies. To enable members to participate more fully in the discussion, *Olifant* is publishing in this issue abstracts of the papers to be presented.

I. Problems in the Medieval Romance Epic, Section 1.

Présider: Joan B. Williamson, Long Island University.

"Florent et Octavien: The *mise en prose"* **Charity Canon Willard**, Emerita, Ladycliff College.

The prose version of *Florent et Octavien,* usually entitled *Le roman d'Othovyen,* was written for the Burgundian courtier, Jean de Créquy, Lord of Canaples, in 1454. A curious detail is that this version is more or less contemporary with two of the three existing manuscripts of the fourteenth-century poem in alexandrins, the subject of the paper I read to this group two years ago.

The fifteenth-century prose version is preserved in five manuscripts, of which the two most important are Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MS. 10387, which belonged to the library of Philip the Good, and Chantilly MS. 652, a delightful copy illustrated with 125 miniatures by the Wavrin Master. These manuscripts, in common with one of the manuscripts of the earlier poem, also include the text of *Florence de Rome,* the great grand-daughter of the original Octavien and the grand-daughter of one of his twin sons, whose adventures are recounted in all versions of the text.

Whereas the fourteenth-century poem dwells in particular on Florent's exploits in behalf of King Dagobert's defense of Paris against pagan attacks, the prose version develops at greater length the young Octavien's multiple adventures in the Middle East. His contacts with Arab leaders, extravagant as they may seem in certain cases, have a curiously contemporary overtone. Moreover, they are very entertaining. In the end, however, the whole family is reunited and Octavien's son, having reigned for a time as Emperor of Rome, becomes the father of Florence, whose adventures are continued at considerable length, thus rounding out the tale of five generations of one family.

Although the main episodes are constant, the details are obviously affected by the circumstances in which each of the three versions was composed. The particular circumstances that form the background of the *mise en prose* will be examined in this paper along with evidence that it, like the fourteenth-century poem, was intended to be read aloud, at least on some occasions.

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"L'émergence du Bâtard de Bouillon: Symbole d'un chaos littéraire et politique." **Muriel Aercke,** University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Abstract not available.

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"What *La chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise* tells us about Simon de Montfort." **Willa B. Folch-Pi,** Emerita, Tufts University.

La chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise, written in two parts in Old Provençal, provides us with two views of this devastating war, the only crusade of one Christian people against other Christians, and of its leader, Simon de Montfort. An epic poem of 9578 dodecasyllabic lines with epic caesura, in rhymed *laisses* each ending in a hemistich "cap caudatz," the first part (2768 lines) was written in favor of the crusaders by the Navarrese, Guillem de Tudela, between 1210 and 1213. Part two (6810 lines), written by an anonymous enemy of the crusaders, ca. 1228, gives us upon detailed study of the text (Martin-Chabot, Eugène, *La chanson de la*

Croisade Albigeoise, 3 vols., Les classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge, Paris, 1931-1961), a vivid picture of the war and of the man Simon, "le plus féroce, le plus ambitieux et le plus perfide des croisés" (Simonde de Sismondi, J. C. L. *La littérature du midi de l'Europe,* 4 vols., 2nd edition, Treuttel et Wurtz, Paris, 1819, t. 1, 218). This poet "reveals an enthusiasm and eloquence of style which makes his work outstanding." (Hill, Raymond Thompson, Bergin, Thomas Goddard, *Anthology of the Provençal Troubadours,* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1957, 231). We have here, then, a history in verse, much of it in dialogue, by an almost accidental "curious collaboration of the work of two persons of opposite views" (de Riquer, M., *Historia de la literatura catalana, part antiga,* 3 vols., Ariel, Barcelona, 1964, v. 1, 385, translation mine), a history both of Simon de Montfort and of the crusade in which "fanaticism lighted a fire which caused a retrogression of the human spirit [and] decided the destiny of Provence" (Simonde de Sismondi, op. cit. 206, translation mine).

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II. Problems in the Medieval Romance Epic, Section 2.

Présider: William W. Kibler, University of Texas at Austin.

"The French Epic after 1300: Continuity and Change." **Robert Francis Cook**, University of Virginia.

William Kibler has put the study of the poems once known as "late medieval French epics" on a new footing. He sets them apart from the chansons de geste and applies to them the new generic title *chansons d'aventures.* His goal is to restore the epic poems of the late thirteenth, the fourteenth, and the fifteenth centuries to a position in criticism that better corresponds to their importance.

Kibler's motive is unimpeachable; there is no doubt that these rather special poems are too often compared unfavorably to earlier epics—the *Roland,* the cycle of revolt, some of the William poems. His observations on the differences between poems like *Huon de Bordeaux, Lion de Bourges,* or *Baudouin de Sebourc* (to cite three out of about thirty similar texts) and earlier works in the

epic tradition are persuasive. I would, however, like to raise the generic question in other terms.

Kibler seems to me to capitulate too quickly to the scholarly habit of narrow definition for the epic. Instead of demarcating a new genre or sub-genre—an act which by itself will not necessarily elevate the status of the texts—we may better serve our object by insisting on everything that links the late works to their predecessor epics. Indeed the narrow definition down-plays form, and form is primordial in a popular, public, oralising genre.

Early students of the epic were anxious to confer prestige on the genre by emphasizing its elevated and moral aspects; that led to an exaggerated concentration on subject-matter. Yet the versification, formulaic aspect, and traditional styles of allusion too obviously made the late texts epics. It is precisely the resulting setting-aside of poems different in subject and tone that has caused the poems' present predicament in criticism. Kibler recognizes continuity in Old and Middle French epic by calling the latter *chansons;* but his strategy may perpetuate the ingrained definition through its insistence on changes in matter, on *aventures* and romance. To call the late epics *chansons de geste* is to remind ourselves that the reception of these poems is from first to last conditioned by the immediacy of the recitant's presence, as privileged transmitter of the text. The impact of these genre-specific elements on audience expectations may well have been greater, over the life-span of the form, that any modification in perceptions brought on by changes in ideology or tone.

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"The *Cleomades:* A text of Epic Proportions." **Suzanne Wilson,** Washington University in St. Louis.

Traditional theories of genre, which are based upon a principle of order that classifies literature and literary history by forms of organization and structure, do not take into account the transitional nature of many texts. Consequently, a text that resists attempts to situate it within a clearly demarcated realm by means of such theories of genre is often excluded from the canon. However, a work such as the *Cleomades* by Adenet le Roi merits scholarly

attention, because it illustrates with striking clarity the protean nature of the Old French epic, thereby implicitly suggesting the need to reconsider traditional understandings of genre and specifically of what is meant by "epic."

A detailed comparison of the *Cleomades* with earlier texts by Adenet le Roi reveals a concern on the part of the author with the way in which the epic was perceived and understood, and suggests a reading that traces Adenet's gradual departure from what his thirteenth-century audience would consider an epic and his arrival at a text that simultaneously boasts love songs and courtly allegories while emphasizing its themes of political alliance. In this way, it becomes clear that what is understood by "epic" must take into account certain characteristics that are generally associated with later genres.

Discussion focuses on Adenet le Roi's *Cleomades* and earlier texts, the *Beuvon de Conmarchis,* the *Enfances Ogier,* and the *Berte aus grans pies.* Theoretical considerations are based upon Paul Zumthor's *Essai de poétique médiévale* and Hans Keller's "Changes in Old French Epic Poetry and Changes in the Taste of its Audience."

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"The Figure of Roland: A Southern Exposure." **Robert L. Surles**, University of Idaho.

Spain has ever welcomed:—adopted and adapted—the stories and songs of a passing traveler. Her constant delight in the exotic is cause for many a legend's greater success on her shores than in the land of origin. Such has been the case with the *matière de France* (as it is still called in Spanish letters). After all, the legendary battle at Roncesvalles did concern Spanish territory and the deeds of Charlemagne and his Douze Pairs were surely sung on pilgrimages along Spain's *Camino de Santiago.*

I propose to "glide over" the Roland of Spain's early chronicles; i.e. *Crónica silense, Crónica najarense,* and *Crónica de Alfonso III* (all of the twelfth century)—even the later chronicles of *El Tudense* (1236), the *Historia gothica* (1243) and the *Crónicas generales* (1285-1460), all of which refer to the famed battle and its

heroes. A somewhat deeper reference will be made to the early literary portrayals of Roland, and by extension, others of the Twelve. These begin with the Latin versions of the *Nota Emilianense* (ca. 1060), the *Poema de Almería* (ca. 1150) and the *Codex Calixtinus,* the fourth book of which is also known as the *Pseudo-Turpín.* These are followed by the *Cantar de Roncesvalles* (ca. 1230), while but a fragment, on of the two extant examples of Spain's High Middle Age vernacular epic (the other being the *Poema del mio Cid).* Nor were these matters exempt from treatment by the erudite poetry of the *mester de clerecía,* or the "cleric's mode" of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; e.g. the *Vida de San Millán,* the *Poema de Fernán González* and the *Poema de Alfonso XI,* as well as the fifteenth-century *Libro de las bienandanzas y fortunas.*

However, while necessary for historical perspective, the foregoing works will serve as an introductory "backdrop" for the matter of my greater interest: the figure of Roland as portrayed in the Hispanic *romances*—the ballad fragments ensuing from early epic narrative and lasting virtually unchanged through the centuries to our own day.

From a considerable body of Carolingian *romances* (at this point, my collection counts 96 distinct versions and episodes), Roland is by far the most oft-cited of the figures named. Most of the ballads, called *juglarescos,* date from the fifteenth century and show marked poetic license regarding history, geography, and "cast of characters"—a license unusual in the realistic ballads of strictly Spanish theme.

Centuries after that fated August 15 of 778, Carlomagno, Roldàn, Oliveros, Beltrán, and others are known to have ranged France and Spain in their pursuit of tournaments, personal honor, and love—and, of course, in their unending confrontation with the Saracen Moor. The greater part of my discourse will consider Roland as Spain has pictured him in her balladry—such history as remains, the trappings added to please a different audience, and the myth he has come to be on a foreign soil.

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III. Problems in the Medieval Romance Epic, Section 3 (Spanish Epic).

Organizers: Joan Williamson and Mercedes Vaquero.
Presider: Mercedes Vaquero, Brown University.

"Elpha and Alamos: A Gothic Foundation in the *Cantar de mio Cid."*
Joseph J. Duggan, University of California, Berkeley.

The name "Elpha" derives from a Germanic form *albiz,* 'elf,' and its congeners Elbe and Albe were frequently used in Germanic lands in the Middle Ages. This places the legend of Elpha in the Germanic, and most likely in the Gothic, orbit. Looking in the same direction for the name Alamos, I have located its source: the Gothic anthroponym *Alamods,* composed of two elements, *ala-* 'all,' and *mōths* 'anger.' As a compound, it would refer to a warrior's battle fury.

Relying on Old Norse and Icelandic sources I explore the possibility that Alamos and Elpha are mythic reflexes of Alfhild, the daughter of the king of Elf-land, and Starkad, a gigantic warrior who held her captive. Their story is told in *Gautrek's Saga* and *Heidrek's Saga.* The latter traces the genealogy of the Gothic kings back to Starkad and Alfhild. Since the Goths still performed heroic songs of an historical nature about their ancestors at least as late as the sixth century, that is to say after they were firmly established in Spain, the myth of Alfhild and Starkad might have been transmitted through this medium. The poet would have thought of them as preternatural creatures—typical fate of mythic figures in later medieval Christianity.

In Norse mythology, one of Starkad's functions is to act as a *bjargvaettr,* lit. 'mountain helper,' that is to say a friendly giant who gives assistance to the unfortunate. This aspect of the legend would make it particularly apt that Alamos be mentioned in the poem at the point immediately before the Infantes de Carrión abandon their wives in the wilderness. The allusion to Alamos would, then, play a double role in the *Cantar de mio Cid* for an audience familiar with a local legend: it would recall an ancestral crime committed against a woman, and it would anticipate a situation in which a helper figure

appears in the mountains in a situation of extreme need in order to render assistance.

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"The Beginning of the *Cantar de Sancho II.* **Charles F. Fraker**, University of Michigan.

Years ago I wrote a paper on the *Cantar de Sancho II,* in which I maintained that the version of that song that is prosified in the *Primera crónica general* was not primitive, that certain marks in the text showed that there must have been an earlier *Sancho* quite different form the one known to the editors of the *Crónica.* The older version, as I thought, would have placed more emphasis on traditional, so-called Germanic customs, the law of vengeance, the validity of the judicial combat, and so on. This earlier *Sancho* would in this sense be more of a piece with the earlier Castillan epic songs as we know them, which, as Menéndez Pidal has insisted, are built around just such themes. It was on this basis, my guess about the character of the old poem, that I asserted that (the character) Sancho's appeal to the Visigothic law could not be part of this hypothetical text; we recall that the future king of Castile protests against his father's decision to divide his kingdom, saying that such dispositions go against the ancient customs of the Goths. An appeal to the written Romanized *Fuero juzgo* seemed out of place in a fully traditional epic song. I stand by this judgment today, but must confess that in the old paper I threw the baby out with the bath water: I also said that the whole passage on the division of the kingdom was also alien to the old song. I did this for two reasons: because the allusion to Visigothic law did not fit with the drift of the earlier *cantar,* and because I thought the traditional character of the piece might be greater without this episode. I think now that the Gothic material most probably is not primitive, but that the division sequence, the so-called *Cantar de Fernando,* almost certainly is. The French and Provençal chansons de geste are useful witnesses. In the first place, the vast majority of these conform to the general notion of genre defined by Menéndez Pidal for the Castilian songs. And second, the theme of the defective king whose imprudent act initiated a period of useless warfare is a virtual commonplace in these pieces, in *Renaud de Montauban,* for example, or *Girart de Vienne. Raoul de Cambrai* offers a close parallel to the *Sancho* in that the king's foolish act has to do with the disposition of land.

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"The Spanish Prosification of the Mocedades de Carlomagno. **Harvey L. Sharrer,** University of California, Santa Barbara.

The epic origins of the story of Charlemagne's ancestry and youth, especially the last part, the *Mainete,* have not been satisfactorily resolved. The overriding question of Spanish vs. French provenance has provoked considerable controversy (e.g., the differing opinions of Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Jules and Jacques Horrent). Likewise, the Spanish prosifications of the *Mocedades de Carlomagno* pose problems with regard to priority and textual relationships.

In the thirteenth century a now lost version of the *Mainete* was prosified in the *Estoria de España* or *Primera crónica general* of Alfonso X, and this prosification was included in a series of chronicles derived from the Alphonsine text. Toward the end of the thirteenth century, probably in the time of Sancho IV, a triad of stories concerning Charlemagne's ancestry, birth, and youthful exploits was conceived, taking the form of prosifications *of Flores y Blancaflor, Berta de los pies grandes,* and the *Mainete.* This triad of romance and epic material survives in various versions:

(1) a fifteenth-century copy of a reworking of the *Estoria de España,* in MS. 7583 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid.

(2) a fourteenth-century copy of *La gran conquista de Ultramar* (thought to have been originally compiled during the reign of Sancho IV), in MS. 1920 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid; and the 1503 Salamanca printing of the *Gran conquista.*

(3) a copy dated 1492 of Lope García de Salazar's *Bienandanzas e fortunas* (compiled between 1471 and 1476), in MS. 9-910-2/2100 of the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid.

Closely related but partial versions of the triad are also preserved in the fifteenth-century *Sumario de historia de España hecho en tiempo de Enrique III* and the *Sumario de historia de España atribuido al Despensero de la reina doña Leonor de Castilla.*

Studies by John Robin Allen, Jacques Horrent, José Gómez Pérez, and Jack Gibbs have advanced our knowledge of the history and development of the Spanish prosifications of the *Mocedades de Carlomagno,* but they have not taken into account all the known versions. That of the *Bienandanzas e fortunas,* for example, has been completely ignored, yet it provides important evidence for oral traditions concerning Charlemagne circulating in the fifteenth century alongside the learned prosifications.

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IV. Problems in the Medieval Comparative Epic, Section 4.

Présider: Larry S. Crist, Vanderbilt University.

"Characterization in the *Sege of Melayne"* **Susan E. Farrier**, Portsmouth, RI.

The English Charlemagne romances have generally been neglected by scholars of Middle English as well as those specializing in romance epic. What little attention they have received has focussed on the poems not as literature, but as evidence to support theories about lost French sources and dissemination of texts. One text that has lent itself to such a treatment is the Middle English *Sege of Melayne.* If a French source ever existed, it has left no trace. The text has no extant analogue and the events narrated in it are not mentioned in any other epic.

The *Sege* is unique in a number of ways, but one of the most interesting is its treatment of character interaction. Both Ganelon and Roland function almost iconographically, respectively representing treason and battle against hopeless odds. Since they are depicted in such broad strokes and only appear when serving their structural function, the audience's attention is redirected to the far more important character conflict between Charlemagne and Turpin.

Early in the poem we see that God has a mission for the emperor to perform. The lord of Milan, Sir Alantyne, has been driven out by Saracens and pressured to renounce his faith. An

angel appears to him in a dream, instructing him to seek help from Charles. The same night, Charles too has a dream, in which an angel gives him a sword to use in defense of the lord of Milan. When Charles wakes he finds the sword and when Alantyne arrives, Turpin tells Charles to offer assistance. The complicating factor is that Charles does not listen to either the angel or the archbishop. He follows the advice of Ganelon, who suggests that Roland be sent alone. The French army is slaughtered and the four survivors—including Roland—are taken captive. God now intervenes directly to save these prisoners since Charlemagne cannot be depended upon.

The tragic loss of Roland's army sets the stage for what is really the central drama of the poem: Turpin must teach Charlemagne to do his Christian duty. The archbishop is consistently depicted as the ideal Christian warrior. We see him assemble an entire battalion of bellicose clerics and lead them into battle; we watch him perform a miracle as God helps him multiply the wine and bread for an enormous pre-battle Mass; we hear him refuse to have his battle wounds attended to until the Saracens have been driven out of Milan. By contrast, Charlemagne shirks his responsibility not once, but twice, both times on the advice of Ganelon. He ought to take up the angel's sword and fight the Saracens, but instead he sends Roland and later tries to send Turpin. The archbishop is so furious that he excommunicates Charles, who responds by trying to kill the archbishop. Next Turpin besieges Charlemagne in Paris until the emperor takes the advice of Naymes and begs forgiveness. Charles is finally beginning to learn his lesson.

At this point in the story, the scene shifts to a less important character—and for a very good reason: we have seen all the worst in Charles, so the Saracen sultan must be shown to be worse. The king of Macedon sends the sultan Garcie a multitude of gifts, including sixty maidens. Garcie proceeds to rape them all in a single night (thus doubling Oliver's rather objectionable feat) before marrying them off to his knights. The narrator is very critical of the sultan's lechery, and by the time the story returns to Charles, the French emperor doesn't look so bad. He is finally leading an army to Milan. He is challenged to single combat by the Saracen Dardanowse. After a hiatus of 440 lines, Roland makes another appearance, requesting to take Dardanowse's challenge. The sole function of this request seems to be to show that Charlemagne has

learned not to let other people do his duty for him. Charles refuses Roland's offer, and after a lengthy battle he kills his opponent. The Saracens retreat into the city, and from that point on Charles and Turpin appear to work as a team, planning strategies and fighting valiantly. Turpin has succeeded in teaching Charles to perform his Christian obligations.

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"Warriors and Their Horses in Medieval Japanese War Tales." **Michael Watson,** Meiji Gakuin University, Yokohama, Japan.

Hundreds of war tales were written in Japan from the ninth to fifteenth century. This paper will examine the references to horses and mounted combat in the most famous examples of the genre, the romanticized yet historically largely accurate accounts of the Gempei wars of the late twelfth century. The descriptions of horses resemble in certain ways those in chansons de geste, but there are interesting differences in the warriors's attitudes to and concern for their horses. Another point of comparison is the question of whether it was ethical to kill one's *opponents* horse.

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"The Dutch *Reinaert:* Watching a Shift in Ideology." **Timothy Stevens**, CUNY-John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

The most popular version of the medieval beast epic, the Netherlandic *Van den Vos Reynaerde (Reinaert* 1) has its roots, as does the French *Roman de Renan,* in *Ecbasis captivi,* the first extended animal tale in Latin, written around 940 by a monk in the abbey St. Evre at Toul in northeast France, and *Ysengrimus,* another Latin poem from about 1149 dedicated to Master Nivardus of Gent. However, unlike the episodic *Roman,* the Dutch poem provides a sustained epical account of the fox Reinaert's escapades, indicating by implication the shortfalls of traditional courtly society. In its fourteenth-century reworking as *Reinaerts Historie (Reinaert* 2), the Netherlandic animal epic takes aim at not only the court, but also bourgeois society. In the poems from which *Van den Vos Reinaerde* and *Reinaerts Historié* develop, authority-—moral, ecclesiastical, courtly—is palpable. The social order may be violated for the moment, but its restoration is presumed. With the

appearance of Reynaerde, however, the outcome hangs in the balance, tipped back toward the Court and societal conventions only by an act of exclusion that is on the one hand necessary and on the other acceptable as the price to be exacted for the disruption occasioned by the fox. When the *Historie's* Reinaert wins his false vindication in combat with Ysengrijn, society is not only helpless, but prostrate, a victim of its own mores.

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COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL DE PARIS-NANTERRE SUR LA GESTE DES LORRAINS (16 et 17 novembre 1990)

La Section Française de la Société Rencesvals organise, pour la première fois depuis sa création, un Colloque qui prendra place entre deux grands Congrès Internationaux, en l'occurrence ceux de Barcelone (1988) et d'Edimbourg (1991).

Adresser—dès que possible et de préférence avant le 15 avril 1990 à

François SUARD
40, rue de Fleurus
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COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL

L'Association Rencontres Européennes de Strasbourg et l'Université de Strasbourg organisent, à Strasbourg, les 20 et 21 septembre 1991, un Colloque International

PROVINCES, REGIONS, TERROIRS AU MOYEN AGE
(Littératures, arts, civilisations)

Adresser—de préférence avant le 15 juillet 1990—toute proposition de communication ou de participation aux travaux à

Bernard GUIDOT
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