

## Editor's Note

The new issue of *Terminus*, entitled *Middle Ages in Romance Countries – Heroic Epics and Romances* includes a few texts offering new insights into the knightly culture of Castile, France and Occitania. Whether the original texts analysed in the articles are literary pieces or fragments of a legal code regulating the knights' privileges and obligations, they are important historical sources documenting customs, ethical values, ideas and regulations that knights had to obey in the 12th and 13th century. The literary works analysed in this issue are therefore seen through the lens of the historical, social and legal issues that they depict or reflect. This is possible thanks to the interdisciplinary competences of the Authors: beside being specialists in Romance studies, they use historical and sociological tools (Joanna Mendyk), draw on the history of law (Alicja Bańczyk, Rozalia Sasor) and on culture studies (Michał Sawczuk-Szadkowski). In this approach, literary analyses lead to the understanding of Medieval cultural codes, and the artistic value of literature coexists with its historical significance. The first two articles in this issue discuss two epic poems "on heroic deeds". In her paper "A Socially Conditioned Hero: The Protagonist of the *Cantar de mio Cid* and Iberian Frontier Mentality", devoted to the oldest Castilian epic (*cantar de gesta*) composed at the turn of the 12th and 13th century, Joanna Mendyk analyses social issues underlying the poem, which are relevant for the frontier between the regions of Castile and Al-Andalus, such as systems of values and social stratification within nobility and knighthood, as well as the possibility of transgressing the boundaries between them. Alicja Bańczyk explores two versions of the French *chanson de geste* – *Renaut de Montauban*, the poetic one from the 13th century and its prose adaptation from the

15th century. More specifically, her article “Between the Family Ties and a Vassal’s Obligations: Aymon of Dordogne in the Two Versions of *Renaut de Montauban* – *chanson de geste* and Its Prose Adaptation” scrutinises possible ways of resolving conflicts between a knight’s feudal obligations to his lord and those owed to his family. Further, Michał Sawczuk-Szadkowski in his article “*Flamenca* and the Joy of Play in the World of the Troubadours” presents the 13th-century Occitan heroic epic *Le roman de Flamenca*, investigating its elements of sociopetic play, which manifests itself on various levels: competition, as prescribed by the rules of *agon*; imitation, when protagonists hide themselves, mimic and pretend actions, and vertigo, which will ultimately lead to the desired end. The young knight and his lady participate in courtly games aimed to bring them joy, also of the erotic kind (*joi*), at the same time playing a dangerous game with the lady’s husband and their own feelings, all according to the rules of the courtly culture (*finamor*) of the late troubadour epoch.

The next paper in the issue is Rozalia Sasor’s commentary (entitled “Knightly Code of Conduct in Alonso the Wise’s *Siete Partidas*: Text and Context”) and translation of a fragment of *Siete Partidas*, a code of laws written in Old Castilian and commissioned by Alfonso the Wise, being a compilation of Roman law and canonical law, combined with local and common laws observed in Castile and León. The code regulated the norms of conferring knighthood upon a man as well as the code of knightly conduct. The text offers valuable details of the life on the Iberian Peninsula in the 13th century, thereby becoming an important source of information on the epoch and its social structure.

The last paper in the issue is “In the Wake of the Old Polish Muse” by Mateusz Wiater, a review of Maciej Włodarski’s book entitled *Staropolskim szlakiem*, published by the Jagiellonian University Press in 2020.

Enjoy the reading!  
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