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Tannhäuser: Poet and Legend. With Texts and Translations of His Works by J. W. Thomas

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Turning to the German, after brief comment on the figure of the amatory chase in Minnesang, Wolfram's *Parzival*, and Albrecht's expansion of *Titirel*, the discussion is devoted to Hadamar von Laber's *Die Jagd* as "the major allegory of the love chase in the fourteenth century." This does, indeed, appear to be the Byzantine finale to the tradition. Nearly fifty allegorical hounds are introduced. The hunter meets gamekeepers, old and young huntsmen, and other companions with whom he discusses the fine points of Minne and his own torments. At the climactic moment when the stag stands at bay, the hunter turns upon his own hound and drags him back from the kill, and vows to pursue the deer perpetually but never capture it, i.e., to love chastely forever in the best tradition of Dante or Petrarch. The brief Epilogue notes a few occurrences of the figure of the amatory chase in later literature.

In sum, this book is valuable for the critical light it throws on such familiar pieces as the *Nibelungenlied*, *Erec*, *Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *The Book of the Duchess*, and for opening up less familiar pieces like *Li dis dou cerf amareus* and *Die Jagd*. In addition, it signals the existence of a literary tradition in which there is obviously much more work to be done, and points the way to interesting cultural and aesthetic interpretations calling for fuller examination.

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J. W. THOMAS, *Tannhäuser: Poet and Legend. With Texts and Translations of His Works*. (University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 77.) Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974. Pp. x, 202.

J. W. Thomas presents us with a fairly extensive introduction to what is known or surmised about Tannhäuser, a Minnesinger whose work seems to have been written for the most part in the fourth decade of the thirteenth century, and gives a running summary of the contents of his songs. In the most interesting portion of his study, Thomas speculates on the origins and development of the Tannhäuser ballad (which first appears in print in 1515) and the Tannhäuser/Venusberg legend. He then traces treatments of the poet and his legend in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German literature.

More than half the monograph is devoted to a reprint of the poems and the ballad with facing translation. The diplomatic reproduction of (for the most part) manuscript C is meticulous — a collation of approximately a fifth of the text revealed no significant misprints or misreadings except for the omission of superscript letters on eleven pages. Their omission is actually less objectionable than their use. Superscript *t* and other consonants, occasionally *e*, appear in the running text, most abbreviations are resolved (with rare exceptions the resolutions are italicized), certain omitted letters, primarily *i*, are inserted, and words deleted by the scribe are dropped.

Surely umlaut and *iu*, *üe*, *vo*, *ov*, etc. could have been tolerated? In printing occasional circumflexes Thomas follows the practice of F. Pfaff, the first editor of a diplomatic text of C, even though the curved line printed as a circumflex bears little resemblance to the other superscript characters used by the scribe.

Thomas's translation reflects to a degree the metrical form of the original, a debatable choice in view of its relatively meager formal sophistication. The few daring experiments with enjambment are rarely reflected in the translation, nor are the extremes of line length consistently retained. Numerous infelicities, e.g., loose paraphrases, deletions, and especially additions, stem from the artificial constraint of approximately mirroring meter and rhyme scheme. A glance at the first *Leich* reveals that roughly one fifth of the lines (more or less 143 — depending on one's treatment of short lines) are flawed in this way: e.g., lines 10, 14, 19, 28, 30, 34, 50, 62, 70, 72, 91, 97, 101, 107, 111, 123, 139, 140. The translation is full of errors. Some of them are relatively minor (e.g., 1 *ein wunneklichú zit* is 'the joyous season,' not 'a wondrous time'; 8 *wil* is 'will,' not 'would'; 21 *gar* contains an important concept left untranslated; 36 *die* does not refer to *ere*; 47 *alsam* is 'just like,' not 'always, like'; 58 *vert* is 'acts,' not 'rules'; 71 *plane* is 'field' or 'plain,' not (despite the contrast with *wazzer*) 'land'; 77 *schimpf* means 'sport' only in an archaic sense of the latter word; 110 *komen vf den* cannot mean 'be upon the'; 129b *ein swere* is 'a source of (love) sickness,' not 'hard.' Many of these may have been engendered by formal restrictions and be rather accidental in nature. Others betray a more basic misunderstanding. The *Reimzwang* paraphrase of line 16 *swem er da bútet sinen grûs* 'who's subject to his court and laws' obscures the sense ('whom he deigns to greet at court'). Here Tannhäuser is stressing the good fortune of those with comparable social standing to Friedrich, not the latter's excellence as overlord. The translation of line 43 is garbled: *Der ist behalden swannen er vert bi im ist er ein fromer man* does not mean '(he) can gain the lord's support and be, whene'er with him, an honored guest,' but rather 'he (the stranger) is sheltered wherever he goes in his (the lord's) land if he is a worthy man.' Line 64 *fragent von im mere* means 'ask to be told about him' (thus emphasizing the role of the singer) and not 'discuss him everywhere.' Line 91 *im zimt wol dc lachen* ('laughing beseems him') apparently is rendered as 'he calls forth merry laughter,' a translation which ignores the bow made to propriety — in itself a minor fault, but one which typifies the lax attitude of the translator toward the triangular tension between singer, subject and courtly audience that pervades this song (as it does most *Minnesang*). Another element of the poem is lost when line 104 *komen wir zesamne in der gasse von dien strassen* is given as 'when we come together at the corner of the street' instead of 'when . . . together from the country roads to the town streets,' a shift in locale which is central to the shift in focus from knightly deeds to courtly pleasures. One of the latter is the *bûhurt* described in line 110 *da man die ivngen mit scharen siht zû sigen* 'where one watches the young men sweep together in groups.' Thomas apparently

fails to recognize the mock battle, since he states this passage as 'when groups of youths and maidens come from all around' (the verb 'come' drifts in by association from the preceding clause). A confusion of genders also prevails in lines 112, 120, 125, and 140, where *kint* (*kinden*) 'young girls' becomes 'young folks' and the like: the point of these lines is that the pleasantries between the knight and the young girls are unencumbered by rivals. All in all, a non-specialist reading this translation could not get a very clear picture of what was being said. A number of the other translations in the collection are superior to this one — some passages are very well done.

There are several objections to be made to Thomas's presentation of Tannhäuser and his works. The decadence one can perceive in Tannhäuser's time is one of taste, and thus the comment on p. 11 doubting "that Tannhäuser's society was more decadent than that of the preceding generation" is misdirected. Morungen has specific reference to dance, as does Walther (p. 21). There is no support for the supposition that "the refrain would have been sung by the audience" (p. 25). The statement that the Jena strophes "support the possibility that the poet was a cleric" (p. 41) ignores the distinction otherwise well made between art and life (the treatment of a topic was typically determined by the traditions surrounding the topic, not by the experiences of the poet). The suggestion that French pastourelle and Middle Latin lyric verse do not "resemble those by Tannhäuser to the extent that one can assume a specific influence, but they do indicate a source from which he may have drawn" (p. 48) appears to use *influence* and *source* in a sense opposite that commonly found (cf. pp. 8–9, where Thomas rejects a relationship between Tannhäuser and the pastourelle). Thomas also uses the term leit motif in an unusual and unexplained sense (pp. 85–86). He ignores observations he himself makes elsewhere when he maintains that Tannhäuser "composed the first parodies in lyric verse of the idea of service of ladies" (what about Neidhart?) and severely overshoots the mark when he cautiously hints that all subsequent "*minne* parody, glutton songs, and drinking songs stem from him" (both quotes from p. 60). Here he completely overlooks both the influence of Latin poetry and the likelihood he mentions elsewhere that the artificiality of *Minnesang* probably prompted independent parodies.

The remarks on meter are uniformly uninspired, but errors are most apparent on pages 32 and 35 (Heusler, H. Thomas, Kippenberg, Bertau are not cited in the bibliography). A spotty use of scholarship can be seen in the omission, for example, of F. W. Wentzlaff-Eggebert from the discussion of crusading songs; Moret and Wapnewski from that of the pastourelle; Jammers in several contexts; F. Maurer and H. Moser in the comments on the interrelationship of strophes within a *Spruch* (cf. p. 40); and particularly K. H. Bertau, who devotes a considerable portion of his *Sangverslyrik* (Göttingen, 1964 [Palaestra 240]) to a discussion of Tannhäuser's fourth *Leich*, its form and its historical background (pp. 126–31, 161–70 and *passim*). On the positive side, the arguments in favor of attributing the strophes from the

Jena manuscript to Tannhäuser (pp. 39–41) are well phrased and convincing, as is the chapter on the Tannhäuser ballad mentioned above.

Thomas's study succeeds in its expressed purpose of acquainting a broader audience with a poet of some stature. The long list of objections it raises should not obscure the fact that a great deal of information is brought together which should but might not be common knowledge. Even the translations serve a useful function in providing in palatable form the general contours of a poetry remarkably different from that familiar to most non-specialist readers of *Minnesang*.

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COLIN G. C. TITE, *Impeachment and Parliamentary Judicature in Early Stuart England*. (University of London Historical Studies, xxxvii.) London: The Athlone Press, University of London, 1974. Pp. xii, 249. £ 6.50. May be purchased in USA from Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, \$19.50.

FOR medievalists, a short and thin first chapter surveys the conclusions of Maude Clarke, Plucknett, and Bertie Wilkinson about medieval impeachment, complaint, and accusation. The chapter ends with Dr. Tite "speculating upon the theoretical basis of the law administered by parliament," for "we do not know" much about the *lex parliamenti* (p. 22). However, he goes on to conjecture, to "wonder," and to "speculate" about the various forms of parliamentary judicature, 1604–1628, and at the end he is still "left wondering" (p. 194). This uncertainty results more from caution than from lack of evidence. Those deadly qualifiers — "perhaps," "possibly," "quite possible," "probably," "apparently," along with many a "may be," a "may," and a "might have been" — lead to uncertain conclusions or to negative ones, or to none at all. All this makes for a book that fails to satisfy. One difficulty is that historians themselves have not "agreed upon an exact definition of the medieval impeachment" (p. 6). Yet to define parliamentary judicature and impeachment, 1604–1628, is surely a task that his title imposes upon Dr. Tite. Since the records from the 1620s "rarely used the word [impeachment], and never, until 1626, in connection with these cases" (p. 41), he does not analyze the legal and constitutional ideas and the rules of public law that governed parliamentary judicature. Instead, he offers a political narrative heavy with detail gleaned from the compendious parliamentary diaries in print and manuscript. He recounts the speeches, bills, petitions, committees and their reports, debates, and votes in both Lords and Commons. His searchings have been extensive, but at times his findings seem to exceed the limits of relevance.

Relevance of data is a major concern in this day of massive *fonds* of