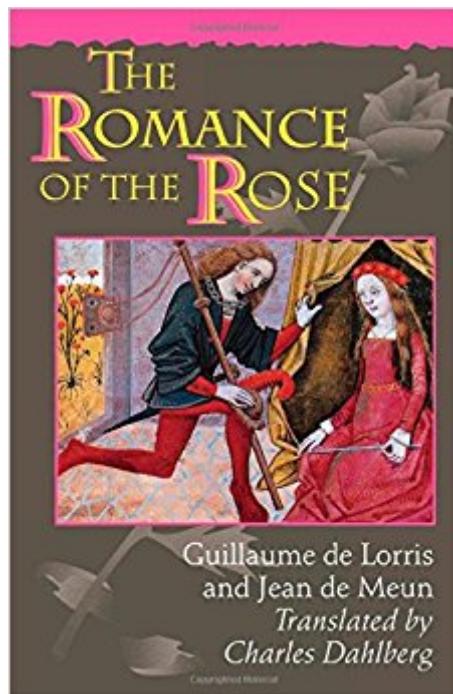


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The Romance Of The Rose: Third Edition



Synopsis

Many English-speaking readers of the *Roman de la rose*, the famous dream allegory of the thirteenth century, have come to rely on Charles Dahlberg's elegant and precise translation of the Old French text. His line-by-line rendering in contemporary English is available again, this time in a third edition with an updated critical apparatus. Readers at all levels can continue to deepen their understanding of this rich tale about the Lover and his quest--against the admonishments of Reason and the obstacles set by Jealousy and Resistance--to pluck the fair Rose in the Enchanted Garden. The original introduction by Dahlberg remains an excellent overview of the work, covering such topics as the iconographic significance of the imagery and the use of irony in developing the central theme of love. His new preface reviews selected scholarship through 1990, which examines, for example, the sources and influences of the work, the two authors, the nature of the allegorical narrative as a genre, the use of first person, and the poem's early reception. The new bibliographic material incorporates that of the earlier editions. The sixty-four miniature illustrations from thirteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts are retained, as are the notes keyed to the Langlois edition, on which the translation is based.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Romance of the Rose" is an intriguing example of medieval literature, an allegorical poem composed by two different authors with very different intentions. It is the tale of a Dreamer who finds himself in a vast dream filled with the embodiments/personifications of all types of social

expectations, states of being, and human emotion who falls in love with a Rose and tries to win her heart. Begun by Guillaume de Lorris and finished by Jean de Meun, "The Romance of the Rose" is a unique example of courtly love literature, allegory, and even satire. As Guillaume de Lorris began it, the poem begins with the Dreamer finding himself outside a walled garden, the outside of which depicts very negative aspects of humanity, while the inside seems filled with all sorts of delight. Once he gains entrance and falls in love with the Rose, he learns from the God of Love what he should do to win her forever, even though he is thwarted along the way. De Lorris did not finish his poem, although a short, anonymous ending was added to it after his death. Forty years later, Jean de Meun expanded greatly upon the work of de Lorris, changing the tone completely from straightforward allegory to often wry, sometimes funny, satire about courtly love and its expectations and contradictions. The Dreamer continues his quest, meeting many allegorical figures who proound to speak about love, only to confuse and contradict each other so that no one seems to know what love is or have anything authoritative to say. Jean de Meun is almost too obvious in his descriptions of what love is understood to be, especially in the end when the Dreamer wins his Rose, and the poem ends all too abruptly. It will leave readers with more questions than answers.

This review relates to the work, -The Romance of the Rose- by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, Translated by Charles Dahlberg, Princeton Univ. Press, Third Edition, 1995. 484 pp. This edition of -The Romance of the Rose- is interesting for it contains all 3 Prefaces which Charles Dahlberg wrote. In the Preface to the 1st edition, published in 1971, Dahlberg says: "This translation of the -Romance of the Rose-, the first in modern English prose, is one of nearly a dozen volumes during the past decade to present an edition, a translation, or a major commentary on the Old French poem. The aim of this book is to provide a clear, readable text that is as faithful as possible to the original, particularly in terms of imagery. Because translations have their pitfalls and because thirteenth-century assumptions about the use of imagery, indeed of poetry, are very different from ours, I have provided a variety of materials that may help the reader to approach the poem with an approximation of the perspective of that time. The Introduction, Notes, and Illustrations are designed primarily to elaborate and clarify such a view of the poem." In the 2nd Preface, to the 1983 edition, Dahlberg says: [after saying that minor errors have been corrected and additions have been made to the Bibliography] "During recent years, a number of writers have reemphasized the contrast between the two authors in their treatment of the poem's allegory."

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