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**Review Essay: Sheehan, Michael M. CSB. *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe. Collected Studies***

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passage in which the young nobleman refuses to hand on the third gift from his mistress to the beggar knight. Schröder provides an extensive apparatus in which the deviations in ms. D are listed. Stylistically and linguistically the difference to ms. H is quite noticeable, but the thematics are not as relevant as the editor claims. A problem arises with the discrepancy between the annotated differences and those on which he comments in the epilogue. For instance, at one point the guests in Cyprus who admire the young knight compare him with Arthur and Alexander (V. 926). At another time, at least according to ms. D, they compare him with "Olifer oder Reylant?" (V. 1230). The relevant passage in ms. H has nothing similar, and the apparatus neglects to point out this textual variation. Schröder only mentions it in the epilogue (174). The same problem arises several times, confusing the reader considerably and undermining Schröder's otherwise valid arguments.

At one point the anonymous author of the novella comments that the princess has lost her virginity (830-32?): "ich meine zwar, sie were ein wip / da zu stunden worden / vnd gedreten jn vnsern orden" (I think she had become a wife at this moment and had joined our order). The editor does not notice this curious line, but it might indicate that a woman composed this text. Nothing else, however, would support this claim, as the author does not specify anything about him/herself either in the prologue or epilogue.

The evidence is not strong enough to claim that ms. H and ms. D represent entirely different versions. Nevertheless, Schröder is correct in his claim that they can be identified as "variable Niederschriften" (180; variable copies). Considering the genre and the intended audience, however, this would not be very surprising, particularly because both manuscripts are imperfect and are marred by several textual gaps. Although Schröder chose ms. H over ms. D for his edition, the opposite decision would have worked just as well. However we view the manuscripts and the editor's choices, the new edition of this remarkable verse novella is a welcome contribution to late-medieval German literary studies.

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Sheehan, Michael M. CSB. *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe. Collected Studies*. Ed. James K. Farge. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1996. xxxi + 330 pp. \$45.00.

The untimely death of Michael Sheehan in a cycling accident on 23 August 1992 has been a major loss to medieval studies. Anybody working in the areas of medieval marriage, love, sexuality, and the role of the church in those matters has surely come across some of Sheehan's articles. Both in honor of his scholarly contributions and in order to allow the readers to gain an overview of his findings, James K. Farge has assembled and edited Sheehan's most important studies pertaining to the areas of marriage, family, and law, which were previously published in journals and monographs from 1961 through 1992. The compilation is entitled *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies*.

Sheehan has made major discoveries through his close reading of wills, church records, and other legal documents. He argued primarily as a legal and Church historian, trying to pinpoint the specific views espoused by the medieval church during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, occasionally dealing also with earlier and later periods. Wills indeed prove to be valuable sources for researching the question of how family property was handled and what family structures looked like. In addition, Sheehan investigated the influence of canon law on the property rights of married women in England and made interesting observations, although he himself admitted that many aspects remain uncertain and require further analysis.

Other areas that interested Sheehan were the formation and stability of marriage, the choice of marriage partners, marriage theory as developed within the Church, the life of late-medieval women, ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction, marriage practices among the unfree (slaves), the emotional bond between marriage partners, sexuality and morality within and outside of marriage, and inheritance law.

Insofar as Sheehan unearthed many important legal documents written by theologians, he definitely succeeded in identifying the official viewpoints espoused by the clergy. It remains a very difficult question, however, whether these documents actually reflect social reality, whether they present only the opinion of the Church, whether the laity agreed with them, and so forth. A good example might be the matter of affection within marriage. Although Sheehan is quite right in pointing out papal decretals or confessor's handbooks supporting this type of relationship, we know from literary and historical documents that conjugal affection was considered a rarity, and if marriage partners showed their love for each other the chroniclers noted this phenomenon with surprise. The authors of courtly romances, however, mostly would have agreed

with the decretals, whereas courtly love poets and clerics such as Andreas Capellanus viewed these matters very differently.

Nevertheless, Sheehan's articles continue to be valuable contributions to these topics, even if modern historians and literary historians would disagree with some of his findings. Not every article is as clearly structured as one could wish for, but as a collection of Sheehan's research, this volume will be an important reference work for those interested in his areas of specialty.

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Sigal, Gale. *Erotic Dawn—Songs of the Middle Ages: Voicing the Lyric Lady*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 1996. xii + 241 pp. \$49.95.

*Erotic Dawn—Songs of the Middle Ages: Voicing the Lyric Lady* is a full-scale analysis of the medieval Provençal *alba* and its analogies in German and English. In the introduction and chapter one we learn about previous scholarship and its failure to understand the difference between this lyrical genus and the *canso*. Only a feminist interpretation, of course, can catch the *alba* ladies' voice which "cries out for a hearing." Here, at least, women, being equal to their lovers and contrary to the "mute but exalted *canso domna* and the loud but lowly *pastourelle* shepherdess" (13), articulate themselves (even if their voice is a male invention, as the *troubaritz* did not write *albas*). It is certainly right that this feature should be underlined, and Sigal does this extensively enough.

Notwithstanding its very self-assured claim of innovation, most of this book is a rather conventional literary study paraphrasing again and again what the texts themselves say clearly. Repeating many times the very same passages of the poems in question (e.g., p. 38 = 40; 41 sq. = 55 sq. ecc.) may be a useful way of introducing this lyric genre to readers ignorant of medieval poetry, but whosoever already commands a certain knowledge of the subject will not learn much new about it. This is especially true of the first part describing literary perspectives, sex and social roles, and *fin'amors* as found in this genre or in others (how often have we read previously that it is typical for *amour courtois* to put the lady on a pedestal [99 sqq.] ecc., ecc.).

The second part, dealing with the structure of the personal relations of the couple and the psychological factors underlying them, presents,