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Review Essay: Bartlett, Kenneth A., Konrad Eisenbichler and Janice Liedl. *Love and Death in the Renaissance*

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of synthesis until 1980, when Poly and Bournazel published *La mutation féodale, X^e-XII^e siècles*. This important book is now available in English.

Poly and Bournazel's book is actually less a work of synthesis than it is a survey of research and a presentation of the current state of knowledge concerning feudalism. As such, it serves as a guide for the perplexed by providing an overall view of the transformation of feudalism from the tenth through the twelfth centuries. The book owes much to the work of Jean-François Lemarignier, Jean Schneider, Georges Duby, as well as many others.

What lay behind the demise of Bloch? Bloch's analysis was not comprehensive enough and focused too sharply on the 'classic' feudalism that Bloch found between the Rhine and the Loire. Today, the existence of a 'classic' feudalism is denied. According to Poly and Bournazel, one single, changing movement covered all Europe and began at the end of the tenth century to destroy the old independent peasant society. Within a relatively short space of time — perhaps only a few generations in most places — dependence had replaced independence. The agencies of this change were the castellans who established local tyrannies in the environs of their castles and ended freedom in the countryside. Everywhere the peasant fell under control of the lord. This fact stands above all in the new understanding of feudalism.

In building their case, the authors review medieval society during three centuries and, in doing so, present a great survey of contemporary scholarship. The book is divided into two parts. The first — 'What Is Known' — surveys Europe from the emergence of the castral system in the wake of declining royal power and failing public institutions to the spread of dependency throughout society. The second — 'New Interpretations' — reflects on the consequence of this change.

Poly and Bournazel have done a great service in writing this book. It is badly needed and it fulfills its mission admirably. In addition to providing the latest scholarship in its pages, the book is richly documented, contains an excellent bibliography (augmented for the English translation), and an adequate index. Although at times crowded with factual material, it is well written throughout. Above all, *The Feudal Transformation, 900-1200* is very useful to the scholar and to the teacher.

Francis X. Hartigan
University of Nevada, Reno

RENAISSANCE

Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays: Hamlet to The Tempest*. Routledge, London 1992. xii + 379 pp, note on the text, notes, author index, index to Shakespeare's works, subject index. \$49.50 / \$15.95.

Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays: Hamlet to The Tempest* is reviewed on pp 172-3.

Bartlett, Kenneth A., Konrad Eisenbichler and Janice Liedl. *Love and Death in the Renaissance*. Dovehouse Editions, Ottawa 1991. 219 pp. \$28.00.

The twin themes of love and death form the focus of thirteen papers gathered to commemorate a conference, sponsored by the Renaissance Society of America, forming the third in a series, Dovehouse Studies in Literature. The diversity of the texts studied in these essays offers an illuminating and captivating discussion of the significance of these subjects in Renaissance literature.

Modest in dimension, *Love and Death in the Renaissance* suffers from the apparently thoughtless way in which it was put together. Why the double theme was chosen would, in itself, have provided an interesting topic of introduction or epilogue, allowing the editors to link its history in classical antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the writings of Arabs and other non-European medieval scholars. Conversely, the relation of love and death in a period in which theology shared an equal importance with the revival of classical ideas might have provided the subject of a few provocative thoughts.

All these matters can be gleaned only in a fragmentary way from putting together the various essays. And even that is made arbitrary and difficult. For there is no apparent order to the essays. The sequence is neither thematic nor chronological. The reader is tempted to wonder why it took three editors to plot a strategy that is merely alphabetical.

Among the very interesting essays contained here are two that stand apart for their brilliant insights: those of Daniel Martin, who studied Hermes as Mercury as St Michael the Archangel as Montaigne, and of Olga Pugliese, whose analysis of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* studies love and death as affecting each other in the elegiac perspective of the treatise. The essay by Linda Austern, which seeks to relate the twin themes of the volume to ideas of music in the English Renaissance, concentrates on exploring the theoretical link between love and music. William Bowen's essay on Ficino's theory of love provides a very intelligent demonstration of the relation between the classification of intervals in harmonic structure and the degrees of love described by Ficino in *De amore*. The essay on Juan Luis Vives's *Instruction of a Christen Woman* by Margaret Mikesell brings to light, though in a limited context, a little-known text focusing on the education of women. Most of the other essays consist in *explications de texte*.

The breadth and variety of the essays provide a fascinating document of the diversity of literary energies devoted to these themes in Renaissance times. However, lacking an overall intellectual direction that might have guided the interested layman and provided an essential background for the budding scholar, the volume offers little more than a memorabilia for the initiated of a very special conference.

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Cholakian, Patricia Francis. *Rape and Writing in The Heptameron of Marguerite de Navarre*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale 1991. xiv + 301 pp. \$34.95.