

L'intime du droit à la Renaissance: Actes du cinquantenaire de la FISIER.

Max Engammare and Alexandre Vanautgaerden, eds.

With Franz Bierlaire. Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance 117. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2014. 544 pp. \$102.

This collection of essays written in French — except for one in German — is a dense analysis of the interplay between legal discourse and daily life in the Renaissance. The poetic title, roughly translatable as “The intimate presence of the law in the Renaissance,” may induce the reader to expect a collection of works focusing only on legal history, such as regulations addressed to specific social categories. This volume is much more than that. In order to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation (1957), the International Federation of Societies and Institutes for the Study of the Renaissance organized an international conference focused on the presence of the law in the Renaissance. As a result, seven years later, this collection of essays came out. Although *L'intime* displays a solid philological structure, this traditional approach — Latin and ancient Greek quotations are often not translated — nevertheless casts light on a plethora of less discussed aspects of the Renaissance. It calls for a new (yet old) way of studying this period that includes the knowledge of Roman and medieval (both canon and common) law.

Five key figures are taken as iconic presences: the diplomat; the family father; the master, intended not only as a school teacher, but also as anyone who occupies a leading position over a category of individuals, like a guild, to which he can teach know-hows; the pastor, both Catholic and Reformed; and, finally, the judge. From these figures, the essays depart to unravel a larger scenario. The section dedicated to the diplomat delves into the international political doctrine at the dawn of international and diplomatic law. The section on the father (*paterfamilias*, rather), casts light on the daily life of families, seen not only as a legal entity, but also as a source of values and principles that will constitute the core of Western European society. The section dedicated to the art of teaching turns into a formidable reflection on the role of *paideia* and mentorship in general, reverberating insights valid in our present time (such as Quintilian's reflections on the pros and cons of private teachers versus school). Gender-studies scholars will find interesting pages on the pedagogical experiment enhanced by Thomas More with his daughters. The section dedicated to religion, rather than paying attention to the popular matter of persecution, which is nonetheless present, highlights intellectual and organizational achievements. In this section, the presentation of the dramatized debate among the allegorical figures of Justice, Truth, Peace, and Mercy constitutes a true delight for the reader.

Rich with literary references is the section related to the judge, who appears oftentimes as a mocked figure in Renaissance and medieval narratives. In this section, the pages dedicated to the fledging forensic medicine in Italy reveal an aspect of the Renaissance still relatively little studied. The presence of Erasmus's thought towers

throughout various essays. The amplitude of material covered notwithstanding, the entire book flows seamlessly. If the link between the Renaissance and the Roman law and jurisprudences is emphasized, importance is given also to the continuity with medieval civilization. Hence, the Renaissance is caught as part of a millenary cultural tradition, developed in Italy and from there spread to the rest of Western Europe, rather than a monad. Producing emblems was a pivotal intellectual practice in the Renaissance (and Baroque) society. Accordingly, the volume is embellished with Valérie Hayart's comments on the juridical emblems by Pierre Cousteau (1555), set as the incipit of the book and end of each section.

It would be reductive to categorize *L'intime du droit* as a text of interest for scholars of law, or law and literature, only. These 544 pages are an indispensable tool to the knowledge of the civilization of Europe, especially of France, which in the sixteenth century was shaping its identity. An English translation is recommended.

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