Book Reviews/Comptes Rendus

Steven Ozment. *When Fathers Ruled. Family Life in Reformation Europe*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1983. Pp. xi, 238. US \$17.50.

This latest part of a distinguished *oeuvre* by the Reformation scholar Steven Ozment approaches the "hot topic" of family history from the viewpoint, not of the fashionable statisticians, but of the more traditional historian of ideas and high culture: "cross-roads," in the author's own words, "of values and structures" (p. vii.).

The chief theme in this candidly polemical work challenges the modern tradition, derived from Philipe Ariès, David Hunt, Lawrence Stone and others, that Protestantism brought greater authoritarianism and repression to family relations. Ozment seeks first to demonstrate how the advent of Protestantism marked a sharp break with medieval canonical ideas on such issues as the value of celibacy and the function of marriage. Using a wide variety of non-quantitative sources (contemporary didactic literature, court cases and, most effectively, contemporary woodcuts and verse) Ozment portrays Protestants as more concerned with the security of the family in both its internal operation and its social context, more understanding and flexible on the possibility of marital breakdown, and more respectful of its members' sex-roles than their Catholic predecessors and contemporaries.

In continuation of this aim, the second half of the work takes up the crucial question of attitudes toward the bearing and rearing of children. Here we have the writings of theologians, pedagogues and medical practitioners paraded before us to show the sensitivity and concern – though no over-indulgence – that Protestants bore towards their offspring. This discussion brings the work to the conclusion that "... there is every evidence that children were considered special and were loved ... Parenthood was a conditional trust ... and the home was a model of benevolent and just rule" (p. 177).

With Ozment's blend of erudition and graceful expression added to his publisher's happy concern for attractive production, this is both a pleasing and important volume. And yet its persuasiveness is slightly jeopardized by the coyness of its precise geographic, chronological and sectarian focus. The title, for example, announces "Reformation Europe." Yet the targets are chiefly studies set in France (Ariès and Hunt) and England (Stone) while the text remains chiefly in Germany and Switzerland (as acknowledged on the dust jacket) with occasional forays into

other areas. Chronology is also vague. Though reference is twice made to a span "from Luther to Milton," and anecdotes are drawn from the whole of the sixteenth century and occasionally (as with Ralph Josselin) the seventeenth, the weight of material is mostly early or mid-sixteenth. And, though Reformation is a suggestively broad term, the discussion omits Calvinism almost entirely. In the end, Ozment implies a homogeneity of ideas over a span of time, place and persuasion that – however probable its broader application – is not convincingly supported beyond the experience of sixteenth century Lutherans, Anabaptists and Zwinglians in Central Europe. About the remainder, we have still a great deal to learn.

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Millicent V. Hay. *The Life of Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester*. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1985. Pp.260. \$46.50 CAN

Our sense of the significance of Robert Sidney's place in Renaissance England has sharpened dramatically in the past decade. Peter Croft's discovery of his poems in 1972 – perhaps the most significant manuscript discovery in Renaissance literature in 40 years – led to a revaluation of Sidney's life, work and connections and of his place in the turbulent world of the late Elizabethan and Jacobean Court. Croft's edition of the poems, which appeared in 1984, should lead to further revaluations, but already there have been significant articles and dissertations on Sidney's work by Katherine Duncan Jones, Deborah Wright, Josephine Roberts, Jon Quitslund, and the present reviewer, among others.

Millicent Hay's study is the first full biography of the man who lived, before and after 1586, under the shadow of his elder brother Philip – and even, to a lesser extent, that of his younger sister, Mary, Countess of Pembroke. Her book was originally written as an Arizona State University dissertation in 1979, and unfortunately it bears all the marks of a careful, methodical but rather unanalytical piece of dissertation research. It is a narrative chronology, relying heavily on the State Papers, detailed where the sources are full, silent where there is less public evidence – so that Sidney's life in the Jacobean court, between 1603 and 1625, is given only one chapter (or a little more), whereas his (admittedly eventful) years in the 1590s – when he was struggling to return to the court and more paranoid than most about his reputation and when his correspondence with Rowland Whyte, in particular, is very full – is given four or five. As a piece of historical research, Hay's book is thorough and painstaking; as a piece of historical writing it is naive, superficial and soggy. It seems unsure of its audience: professional historians of the Renaissance, for instance, might well be impatient with its methodological naiveté, literary critics with its plodding paraphrases. It ignores forty years of research not only into the cultural contexts of the period, but into the kinds of questions we ask about such a time – economic, sociocultural and class issues are ignored; psychohistorical, statistical, demographic matters virtually absent. Even taking it at face value, as an old-fashioned "life and works" approach, the contextual