Joseph L. Allaire, ed. Marguerite d'Angoulême Reine de Navarre. *Le Miroir de l'Ame* Pecheresse. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1972. Pp. 105.

This critical edition is the third such edition of Marguerite d'Angoulême's poetry to appear in the last two years and attempts, like the other two (those of R. Marichal, *La Coche*, and G. Dottin, *Chansons Spirituelles*) to provide the reader with a sound basis for work on the Queen's poetry.

The collation of all available editions of *Le Miroir* has been done in detail and is a most useful tool for anyone studying the text of this important work. Unlike R. Marichal, Allaire has not taken a position on the question of the authority of the text. He reproduces the first edition (A) despite the fact that three subsequent editions (D, E and F) claim to have been revised according to the Queen's own manuscript. The reason given for this: "on peut mieux remarquer l'évolution de la forme des poèmes" suggests that not only do the editions follow one another chronologically, but that each subsequent one is built on its immediate predecessor; a doubtful assertion to say the least. The work is abstracted, in fact, from its creator, and we are left to judge on the question of authority, which is on the part of Allaire a realistic, if uncommitted stance.

Less successful, perhaps, are the "Eclaircissements" which are not particularly enlightening. Some comments seem purely gratuitous, such as that on lines 132-133, "Allusions à sa vie avant sa crise de conscience," an "éclaircissement" which might apply to many lines in the poem, or the remark on line 659: "Le monde, la chair, Satan ont toujours été groupés ensemble dans la littérature de spiritualité comme les trois sources de tentation"! More serious are the comments on lines 859-860. The meaning of the word "Threnes" should not be difficult to decipher for anyone possessing even such a minimal tool as *Le Petit Larousse*, where the meaning is given and the reference made clear immediately. This would seem inexcusable in view of the fact that the editor is attempting to prove that Marguerite used Lefèvre's translation of the Bible. What more telling indication than the "savant" use of a Greek term? Again, the comment on line 1375 that the editors of the editions "D E F G H I J ont mieux compris" when they substituted "altitude" for the "celsitude" of A, "mot inventé par Marguerite," seems to suggest that the editors knew better than the author, whose attributed intervention in editions D, E and F is again implicitly denied.

Although minor questions of formal consistency would scarcely distract one from admiring an excellent edition, in this case such recurring inconsistencies in numbering as the two consecutive references "Vv. 1201-1206" and "Vv. 1207-11," and the typographical error "rettachent" add to a general impression of rather hasty publication.

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Frank L. Borchardt. *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971. Pp. ix, 356. \$13.75.

The aim of this book, to quote from the blurb on the dust-jacket, is to reveal "something of what Germans in the Renaissance thought of themselves and their history"; and this

the author sets out to do by means of "a broad sampling of 'histories' written between the Council of Constance (1418) and the death of Aventinus (1534)." Thus much of what he has to offer will be primarily of interest to the student of Renaissance historiography. Yet from various remarks thrown out in the course of the exposition, we are clearly meant to view it as a contribution to German studies as well, and this review is accordingly undertaken more from the standpoint of the German specialist.

In the wider sense, of course, the writing of history is a branch of literature. History no less than the epic or the novel has to do with "telling a story," and the great historians, from Thucydides down to Gibbon and Ranke, have certainly possessed many of the qualities of the creative writer. Then again, it would be difficult to dispute Borchardt's contention that "myth, imagination, legend, and symbol as an intrinsic constituent of the intellectual life of the Renaissance" (p. 6) ought to be of interest to the student of literature. And yet to read on through the synopses conveniently supplied by the author is to be continually assailed by doubts as to whether this disparate mass of legend and myth, concocted for the most part out of classical antiquity and medieval chronicle, really deserves to be elevated to the status of "literature." Or perhaps these "histories" might justify the claim if they were read within the more leisurely context of the original. But this, too, raises a problem. Most of them, not surprisingly, are in Latin and therefore not properly part of the corpus of German literature.

Already in the introductory first chapter there are several debatable assertions which, in turn, call for a closer look at Borchardt's methodological premises. It is, for example, undoubtedly correct to cite Emperor Maximilian's interest in the transcription of medieval literature as the main reason why only one copy of the epic *Gudrun* has come down to us. But to proceed from there and maintain that there was therefore a "disrupted heroic tradition" (p. 4) among the Germans of the 15th century is to ignore, among other things, the tremendous popularity of a work like the *Nibelungenlied* which held its audience right up to the eve of the Reformation. Similarly, Borchardt is unduly hard on the Hohenstaufens when he castigates their ambitions as "irrational, impractical, and indefensible" (p. 5). As Haller and other historians have pointed out, there were some perfectly good reasons why the German emperors of the 12th century, with their own domains lying on what was then the periphery of Western civilization, should have set about bringing a large part of Italy under their control. Indeed, to judge otherwise is to set aside the reality of medieval politics, a matter of some consequence in a work dealing so extensively with the imperial idea which, after all, was not just a myth but also found expression in an actual political institution. Nor can I see much point in belabouring historians of German literature for generally preferring the term "Humanism" in their accounts of this period (p. 9). The short answer is, surely, that "Renaissance" has a considerably wider connotation, embracing the formidable achievements of that age in the pictorial and plastic arts; and these were fields in which the contribution of the Italians far outweighs that of the Germans. "Humanism," on the other hand, refers more specifically to intellectual and literary trends which, by definition, remain the prime concern of the germanist. And so one could go on.

The main expository part of the book, too, contains some minor inaccuracies, such as a reference to "the prestigious archbishopric (!) of Bamberg" (p. 276) or the statement that Rudolf von Ems (who, in point of fact, appears to have made a name for himself by about 1230) flourished between 1250 and 1254 (p. 244). And while on the subject of Rudolf von

Ems, it is worth pointing out that already in the later 13th century the idea of comparing and evaluating different accounts of the same events, in many ways the hallmark of the modern historian, was "in the air": witness the way in which this prolific Swabian poet set about compiling both the *Alexander* and the *Weltchronik*.

As already indicated, the greater part of this book consists of a summary of the many compilations from the 15th and early 16th century that undertook to provide the Germans with an account, usually more fictitious than factual, of their origins as a nation, and this is of considerable interest and importance inasmuch as we are introduced to a whole range of works with which even the most erudite colleague in German studies can hardly be familiar in toto. And some of this material, it should be added, actually pertains to Germanic philology in the strict sense, for the German Humanists showed great ingenuity in devising etymologies for their own mother-tongue. Far-fetched and implausible as their accounts of the past strike us today, they were avidly read by contemporaries, as evidenced by the number of editions that some of them went through. A few of them were still being printed in the 17th century. Indeed, when it comes to regaling the public with fantastic and unlikely tales, most of the Renaissance historiographers marshalled before us on the pages of Borchardt's book seem hardly different from their predecessors, the medieval chroniclers, and this, I think, would be my parting criticism. In his determination to depict the historical writings of the German Humanists as "a treasure-trove of imaginative materials," Borchardt passes all too lightly over the positive achievements of such figures as Konrad Peutinger and Beatus Rhenanus who, whatever their limitations, played no small part in bringing a new historical dimension to our view of the past.

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