Robert Schwoebel, ed. *Renaissance Men and Ideas*. New York: St. Martin Press, 1971. Pp. 137.

The present publication falls in line with a series of analogous symposia on the Renaissance (Kristeller-Wiener, Helton, Werkmeister), which attest to the vogue of that cultural epoch among the general public, and fulfill the needs of academic readerships. Perhaps the distinctive feature of *Renaissance Men and Ideas* is that all the papers except two were written by scholars recruited from the ranks of the historical craft – i.e., specialists in political, religious, scientific, intellectual, and artistic history. The editor, Robert Schwoebel, is professor of history at Temple University, and has to his credit a brilliantly original volume on an unusual theme: the *Renaissance Image of the Turk*. Schwoebel's own contribution to the present symposium deals with "Pius II and the Renaissance Papacy" (pp. 68-79). It is a model of judicial impartiality, a lesson in historical objectivity, a prime instance of "contextual" interpretation. Professor Schwoebel has thoroughly grasped the nature and the intrinsic requirements of the problem he has set out to solve. It is the following: "What were the lines of the papal policy directed against the Turks, and how is it feasible for us to understand the basis for the course of action (or inaction) which the Quattrocento pontiffs followed?" "For this purpose," Professor Schwoebel writes, "it is not enough to evaluate the pontifical record with an alien set of standards, whether those standards be those of the humanistic critics of the popes, or of Luther, or of modern historians" (p. 70).

The following paper, that of Professor Seigel, on "Renaissance Humanism: Petrarch and Valla," is characterized by an extremely ingenious, and, in my opinion, exact interpretation of the *vexata quaestio* of Valla's *De vero bono*. The remarks set forth on pp. 17-20 (closely related to Professor Seigel's view of the role of rhetoric in Renaissance humanism: see his *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism*) are worthy of being pondered upon with special attention. Professor Rudolph Hirsch's paper on "Renaissance and the Spread of Humanism in Germany" brings in heretofore uncollected (and important) factual and statistical information which shows that "although the contribution of German presses to the spread of classical and humanist learning did not compare, in the fifteenth century, with the Italian production, it was (like that of France and that of the Low Countries) by no means as negligible as it is currently assumed to be." Professor Hirsch has had the very clever idea of examining the membership records of the German Merchants in Venice (*Fondaco dei Tedeschi*). These records reveal that among the names listed are those of the patri- cians whose families played (or were to play) outstanding roles in the development of German Humanism: such names, for instance, as Martin Behaim, Willibald Pirckheimer, Hermann and Hartmann Schedel, Marcus Welser, Konrad Peutinger. For the purpose of demonstrating his major point, Professor Hirsch grounds himself on Albrecht von Heyb's *Ehebuch*, which, having been printed in 1472, went through no less than 13 editions between that date and 1520. Professor Hirsch notes that the *Ehebuch* contains an astonishingly wide number of selections from classical and humanistic authors (the tabulation given on p. 33 shows 22 classical authors, and 14 Renaissance humanists). Professor Hirsch's conclusion is that "the example of the *Ehebuch* belies the assertion that only a very few enlightened German readers at the end of the fifteenth and at the beginning of the sixteenth

centuries were at all familiar with considerable reaches of classical literature" (p. 36).

With Professor Edward Rosen's paper on "Copernicus and Renaissance Astronomy" we pass on to the history of science. It is a masterly piece of *haute vulgarisation*. Rosen's account of Copernicus' explanation of the absence of the annual stellar parallax, for instance, is so limpidly clear that any untutored undergraduate, unexposed as yet to any training in astronomy, would have no difficulty in understanding it. Dispelling the idea, not infrequently encountered, which attributes to Copernicus an assertion which he never made, i.e., that of the infinity of the universe, Rosen underscores the fact that that infinity was first proclaimed by Thomas Digges in England and by Giordano Bruno in Italy.

Professor Donald M. Frame (the most outstanding American *montaigniste*) takes his readers into the heart of a fascinating intellectual labyrinth with his paper on "Montaigne on the Absurdity and Dignity of Man." It is a contribution full of the subtlest and most sensitive discriminations and parallelizations. Most interesting are Professor Frame's remarks on the difference between Montaigne's view of "the absurd" and the conceptions of the same *Weltanschauung* formulated by modern existentialist thinkers like Sartre and Camus. Frame's admirable knowledge of the chronological evolution of Montaigne's thought, his indisputable conversancy with the variants of the successive editions of the *Essais*, enable him to clarify some important heteromorphisms and dialectical mutations of his Author.

Professor Lewis Spitz, whose *Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* has become a classic in the field, discusses "Luther as Scholar and Thinker" (pp. 82-94). Professor Spitz rightly points out that Luther, a man of many books, is not associated, in the memory of posterity, with a single work of his own (as Machiavelli with the *Prince*, More with his *Utopia*, Castiglione with the *Courtier*, for instance). Luther's name is, instead, linked with a translation, that of the Bible, into German. Spitz is concerned with Luther's exegetical rules relating to the Scriptures; according to Spitz, the one overriding hermeneutical principle followed by Luther is that the true prophetic spiritual meaning of the sacred texts can only be understood in terms of the reformer's Christology. From Spitz' analysis there emerges the fact that there are three different ways in which Luther uses the term *Vernunft* (Reason). As Spitz emphasizes, this is a sector of Luther studies characterized by vast dissent among religious historians (pp. 91-92).

In fact on "Machiavelli" (pp. 54-65) Professor Felix Gilbert stresses the fact that a discussion of this political thinker is, at the present time, particularly seasonable and opportune because there seems to be a singular affinity of our epoch with the issues and problems which beset the Machiavellian era, and on which Machiavelli meditated. Gilbert's plea in defense of the meticulous, microscopic methods adopted by modern Machiavellian scholarship in matters involving structural, textual, and semantical problems is appropriate and enlightening. Speaking of the first aspect (the structural one), Gilbert writes: "The question of the structure of the *Prince* is important, because, dealing with it, modern scholarship tries to determine whether the last chapter of the work, with its appeal for the liberation of Italy from the barbarians, constitutes an integral part of the *Prince*, or is a later, somewhat rhetorical addition. If we accept the latter hypothesis, we would not be justified in giving too much weight to the role of nationalism in Machiavelli's thought" (p. 63). Gilbert views as pivotal Machiavelli's emphasis on the criterion of "length of life of a state," and correctly links it with Machiavelli's admiration for Rome.

The last paper of the symposium, by Mrs. Roslyn Brogue-Henning, discusses the role of

"Music Culture in Renaissance Society" (there is a doctoral thesis by Professor Karl Anton on this very subject, deposited, in MS., with the Harvard University Library; I doubt whether Mrs. Brogue-Henning knew of it). Mrs. Brogue-Henning's contribution focusses on Castiglione's *Courtier*. She underlines the affinities of the *Courtier* with Plato's *Symposium* and the *Republic*. Her account of Socratic dialectic shows a lucid comprehension, as does her construal of Castiglione's concept of grace (it would have been rewarding to pursue the history of this concept as far as Tasso and beyond). The term *nonchalance* renders the Castiglionesque *sprezzatura* better than "disdain," or "carelessness."

Finally, a few words of eulogy to the St. Martin Press for the fine way in which the *Symposium* is printed and for the scrupulous conscientiousness with which the proof-correcting was done. I have noticed only one misprint (on p. 110: *Xenephon*, for *Xenophon*). In a book containing so many non-English names, this is a truly exceptional record of editorial precision.

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Jacques Heers. *Fêtes, Jeux et Joutes dans les Sociétés d'Occident à la Fin du Moyen Âge*. Conférence Albert-le-Grand 1971. Montréal: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1971. Pp. 146.

The twenty-first published *Conférence Albert-le-Grand* (devoted to medieval philosophy, theology and history) concerns late medieval festivals, games, plays and competitions. Jacques Heers' recent *Précis d'histoire de Moyen Âge* (1968) and *L'Occident aux XIV^e et XV^e Siècles* (1970), and his fifteenth-century Genoese socio-economic studies, make for a useful non-literary perspective on these phenomena. His two aims are to discuss them as manifestations "d'une certaine psychologie collective" that affirms or castigates society's order of values and beliefs; and to illustrate the social groups that organize, and are reinforced by, these festivals.

The first of four chapters argues that *fêtes* are historically significant in affirming society's power hierarchy and socio-political values. On the highest levels there are imperial, royal and papal entries and festivities (with civic triumphs including open-air tableaux); on a lower, tournaments, hunts and the rites of knighthood and chivalric fraternities. Society's corresponding *spiritual* beliefs were likewise buttressed by *fêtes*: liturgical ceremonies, Christianized seasonal festivals, the "dance liturgique" (rhythmically choreographed ecclesiastical processions), the "fêtes expiatoires" of the Flagellants and *Bianchi*, and (French and English) religious drama.

As the collective mind is infinitely divisible, so are its values and *fêtes*, however, and Heers shows in the last two chapters how the latter reflect the self-interest of special groups competing within and against society. Family units, the *maisons*, the *alberghi*, reinforced internal solidarity in wedding or funeral feasts. Parish neighborhoods had their sporting competitions and processional festivals; religious fraternities came together in spectacle-filled banquets; the Chester and York guilds expressed professional cohesion through the cycles, and even political parties like the Armagnacs and Bourguignons defined themselves festively by special array. Such rivalry often festered into violence, threatening social values, and *fêtes* like the Feast of Fools and theatrical farces affirmed