

establish that account must be taken of these sources in any further discussion of Chaucer's meaning and intention. In particular, the treatment of the *Book of the Duchess* in this light suggests an interesting relation between the figure of the Duchess and Dante's Beatrice, while the comment on the *Parliament* attributes to it a teaching which is certainly consistent with what appears from the so-called Marriage Group of the *Canterbury Tales*.

And yet, this interesting book is not wholly convincing. If all its proof be accepted it proves too much. It creates a figure psychologically different from that poet who records his own dialogue with the eagle in the *House of Fame*, and who made the Host of the *Canterbury Tales* describe him as seeming 'elvisch of his countenance'.

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COURTLY LOVE AND CHRISTIANITY, by Kenelm Foster, O.P. (Aquinas Paper No. 39); Aquin Press; 2s 6d.

The theological voices of the twelfth century give a general impression of hard feelings when it comes to affairs of the heart. Peter the Venerable stands out as a rare figure in his acceptance of the Abelard-Heloise situation. More typical is Saint Bernard, who thought nothing of breaking all kinds of emotional ties in order to get postulants for Cîteaux, while Hugh of St Victor felt obliged to put the relationship of Mary and Joseph into the very centre of his marriage theology. William of St Thierry speaks of his *schola charitatis* as the exact antithesis of the courts of love when he says 'Here (in the monastery) the study of love is pursued, and love's disputations held, love's questions answered . . .' His idea of a 'natural' love is the one that follows its 'natural bent towards God', while flesh is synonymous with corruption. As Emile Mâle says, 'pour le moine, la femme est presque aussi redoutable que le démon'. And so, bearing all this in mind, it is interesting and important that a cleric in the 1180's should set down in so many words the reasons why Queen Eleanor thought that young men make better lovers than old ones.

Having always been rather baffled by the *de Arte Honeste Amandi* of Andreas Capellanus, I feel extremely grateful to Fr Kenelm Foster for uncovering some of the layers of highly unexpected thinking that explain the goings-on at the courts of love. It wasn't that one disbelieved Andreas when he claimed to be reporting verbatim what Marie de Champagne said, and how Queen Eleanor backed her up ('We dare not oppose the opinion of the Comtesse de Champagne!'). It was just very difficult to see why they were so intent on laying down who may make love to whom, as if they all had dreadful scruples about what was non-u. Where, one wondered, did they get the rules for this prissy game of love, 'carefully controlled and directed by reason', with *mizura* so exalted and passion so played down? The ladies clearly felt a need to justify themselves, and so, possibly, did Andreas. This was an age of dynastic marriages,

often in prohibited degrees, with easy divorce for the very powerful. No wonder that love was visualised as something that happened essentially outside of marriage. But as Fr Kenelm so interestingly points out, love *had* to be kept outside of marriage anyway. This was a fantastic feature of the theology of the age, for marriage was all obligation and procreation, as laid down by the monastic scholars with their fear of concupiscence invading the sacrament. And so, inevitably, extra-marital love had to be justified, and who could justify it better than the *clergie*, nurtured on Ovid, and very much in the confidence of the ladies?

Andreas may well have been a priest, but I think it would have been to the point if Fr Kenelm had made something of the fact that many of the *clergie* were not. Like Ronsard in a later day, many were only tonsured or in minor orders. Some of them, Jean Frappier claims, were quite indistinguishable from the Goliards, and many were secretaries, readers, historians, or jurists, and these litterati did indeed create an image of themselves that made it possible for Eve de Deneuvre in the 'Council of Remiremont', for instance, to vote for them as the ideal suitors. 'Les beaux clercs' went with 'les beaux chevaliers' to the merry hell of Aucassin and Nicolette. The development of the tales of romance from tales of mere prowess is accepted as a testimony to the increasing rapport between the *clergie* and the noble ladies. Consequently Andreas can be seen to represent something of a breakthrough, a discreet revolt of the ladies and their gallant young chaplains against the great monastic disapproval of love. Yet the awkward theology had to remain, and there it is in Andreas, undigested and contradictory, as grotesquely charming as any of those things one sees in the Musée de Cluny which, taken singly, would be unexplained oddities, but which, being put in a context, become part of a reality. Fr Kenelm's paper makes more sense of courtly love than any of the literary approaches have done, for me at least. He acknowledges a large debt to Schlösser's *Andreas Capellanus: Seine Minnelehre und das christliche Weltbild um 1200* and again one is grateful, because Schlösser is without doubt extremely good, and which of us would have the courage to tackle him in the original?

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