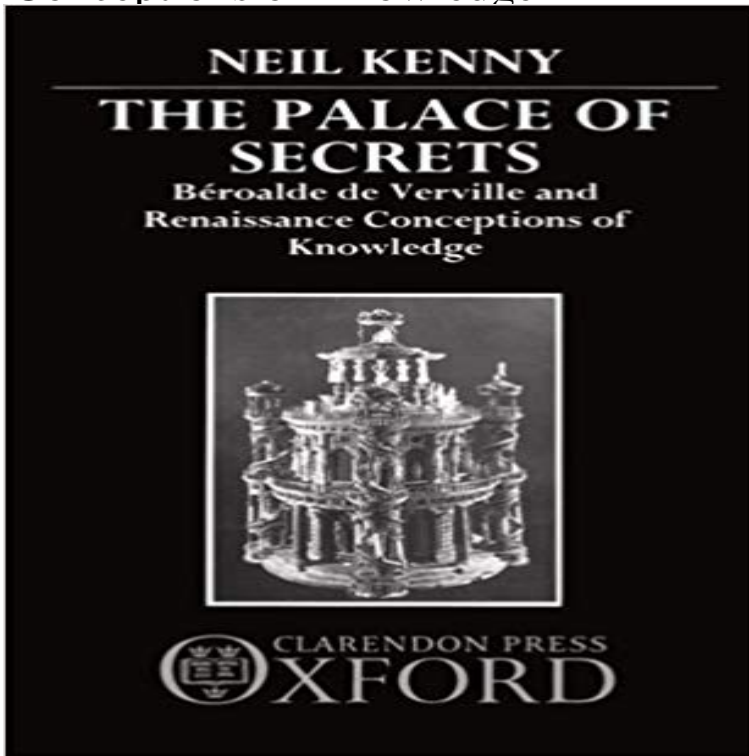


The Palace of Secrets: Beroalde de Verville and Renaissance Conceptions of Knowledge



During the Renaissance, different conceptions of knowledge were debated. Dominant among these was encyclopaedism, which treated knowledge as an ordered and unified circle of learning in which branches were logically related to each other. By contrast, writers like Montaigne saw human knowledge as an inherently unsystematic and subjective flux. This study explores the tension between these two views, examining the theories of knowledge, uses of genre, and the role of fiction in philosophical texts. Drawing on examples from sixteenth and seventeenth-century texts, and particularly focusing on the polymath Beroalde de Verville, Kenny provides an in-depth study of the two competing conceptions of knowledge.

Donald R. Kelley, *The Palace of Secrets: Beroalde de Verville and Renaissance Conceptions of Knowledge*. Neil Kenny, *Renaissance Quarterly* 45, no. 1. During the Renaissance, very divergent conceptions of knowledge were debated. Dominant among these was encyclopaedism, which treated knowledge as an ordered and unified circle of learning in which branches were logically related to each other. By contrast, writers like Montaigne saw human knowledge as an inherently unsystematic and subjective flux. This study explores the tension between these two views, examining the theories of knowledge, uses of genre, and the role of fiction in philosophical texts. Drawing on examples from sixteenth and seventeenth-century texts, and particularly focusing on the polymath Beroalde de Verville, Kenny provides an in-depth study of the two competing conceptions of knowledge.

Keywords: knowledge structure, Beroalde de Verville, writers, Renaissance

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