

Zitierhinweis

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Irene Bueno / Vincenzo Lavenia / Riccardo Parmeggiani (eds.): Current Trends in the Historiography of Inquisitions

As the title promises, the volume, based on the papers from a conference held in Bologna in 2021, is about historiography. It is not a coursebook or companion to medieval and early modern inquisitions and thus requires a certain pre-knowledge of inquisitions and their targets from its reader.

With that *caveat*, it is an extremely useful book for both students approaching the history of the inquisitions for the first time and senior scholars wanting to update their knowledge beyond their specific area of expertise.

The volume covers the history of the inquisitions (in plural, sometimes with capital I) from the thirteenth century to the twentieth century. It has three sections: 1. "Inquisition in the Medieval West", taking up roughly half of the volume, 2. "The Iberian Inquisitions, Europe and the World", and 3. "Rome and the Congregations of the Curia". The editors and authors thus aim to bridge the conventional divide between medieval and early modern inquisitions. To some extent, they are successful. However, as often happens in an edited volume, there are many excellent chapters but little discussion between them, especially over the medieval-early modern division.

All in all, the volume has 19 chapters, including the introduction. Most have a geographical setting, such as Fiona Somerset's chapter on anti-heresy repression in medieval England or Claudio Geremia's chapter on magic and the Spanish Inquisition in the early modern Canary Islands. Some chapters have a thematic focus: Thomas Scharff discusses the beginnings of the medieval inquisition, Matteo Duni covers magic and witchcraft and Giorgio Caravale surveys the historiography of the Inquisition and book censorship.

The solution is well justified. There are regional and national historiographical traditions that are best discussed as such. A good example is Gabriel Torres Puga's and Carlos Mejía Chavez's illuminating chapter on the historiography of the Mexican Inquisition from the nationalist polemics of the newly independent Mexico in the early 19th century to increasingly professional academic scholarship from the mid-20th century onwards. Other topics are best treated thematically or chronologically. Of such contributions, the closing chapter by Agnès Desmazières deserves a special mention: she expertly demonstrates how poorly we understand the modern history (19th-20th century) of the Holy Office, pointing out several new research problems. Kirsi Salonen's chapter on the Apostolic Penitentiary and the Inquisition is more of a practical guide to the use of the Penitentiary archives than a historiographical survey, but a necessary guide: from the mid-15th century onwards, the Penitentiary archives contain material on inquisitors,

witchcraft and heresy, practically ignored by the scholars of the inquisitions.

Most contributors adhere to the volume's title by focusing on the scholarship of the 2000s, while providing necessary background about the classics of the field. However, the approaches taken by the contributors vary. Some, like Riccardo Parmeggiani on medieval Italian inquisitions, strictly follow a historiographical focus, aiming to list and present the relevant recent research on the topic. Others, such as Jessalyn Bird in her chapter on French and Aragonese inquisitions, adopt a more thematic approach. Both approaches have their merits: the strictly historiographical focus benefits fellow scholars updating their bibliography, while the thematic discussion of relevant research problems is more palatable to readers familiarizing themselves with a new topic.

The contributions cover the relevant topics very well. I would perhaps have liked to see a chapter focusing on the inquisition and canon law. Also, the inquisitor's manuals and other forms of inquisitorial literature receive relatively little attention, although they are discussed in Parmeggiani's chapter, who himself has published essential contributions on the theme. The book would have been an even more valuable resource if the literature had been compiled into a single bibliography or bibliographies per chapter. I am aware that the citation style depends more on the publisher than the editors. However, the adopted style of giving the full bibliographical information only in the first citation makes it sometimes tedious to look for it among the copious footnotes.

Most of the chapters are of a very high quality. Thomas A. Fudge's chapter on the inquisitorial culture of medieval Central Europe is an unfortunate exception. The chapter lacks structure, and the author gives extremely scarce footnotes, especially for a contribution to a historiographical volume. Fudge fails to mention both essential classics such as Robert Lerner's *Heresy of the Free Spirit* (1972) and more recent important contributions such as Kathrine Utz Tresp's and Georg Modestin's studies on anti-Waldensian inquisitions in Fribourg and Strasbourg, Ivan Hlaváček's and Zdeňka Hledíková's studies on Bohemian inquisitions and Ingrid Würth's book on Thuringian crypto-flagellants (2012).

Despite minor critical remarks, the volume is a valuable and much-needed contribution to the study of medieval and early modern inquisitions. It has the potential to facilitate comparative and diachronic studies of inquisitions and inquisitors, as several contributors of the volume hope for. In the case of inquisitions of heresy, the research is not always easy to find: it has been published in all major European languages in academic journals, monographs, various *Festschriften* and other edited volumes, including local and regional publications. Although medieval historians still are polyglots in a world increasingly gravitating towards the use of English as the single academic language, there is no denying that language barriers and national historiographical traditions exist. Hopefully this comprehensive historiographical overview in English helps students and researchers to overcome such barriers and appreciate the richness of scholarship published in different languages.

