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Abstract
This dissertation from the University of Würzburg stakes out some carefully defined territory in the crowded field of heresy and inquisitorial studies. It does so by returning to some of the most frequently studied sources in this field: the early handbooks through which papal inquisitors established the legal and procedural framework of their new (in the thirteenth century) office. Scholars of inquisition going back to Célestin Douais and Henry Charles Lea in the nineteenth century, and indeed as far back as Franciscus Pegna in the sixteenth century, have worked with these texts. Bivolarov, however, identifies an area that he finds has not received systematic study: namely, the papal decrees and legal opinions of trained jurists on which thirteenth-century inquisitors relied when compiling their handbooks.

Disciplines
Cultural History | European History | History of Religion | History of Science, Technology, and Medicine | Medieval History

Comments
This article is published as Vasil Bivolarov, Inquisitorien-Handbücher: Papsturkunden und juristische Gutachten aus dem 13. Jahrhundert, reviewed in Speculum 91 (2016): 177-78. Posted with permission.

This book review is available at Iowa State University Digital Repository: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/history_pubs/77
review on his portrayal of the brother-in-law comes, rather too didactically, only on p. 56. Moreover, his account of the judge’s interrogation of Margarida is marred by over-interpretation and imputation of response—“the judge shifted tactics,” “the judge was at a loss,” “in frustration the judge asked . . .” (39)—none of which is in the trial record, which shows the judge sequentially following the main points of the indictment (145–51). And Bednarski makes too much of the revelation, in response to the judge’s question, that Margarida and her husband had not had “carnal relations”: “the judge was fascinated by this fact,” her “sexual dysfunctionality mattered enormously, perhaps more so than any other aspect of her trial” (49). The judge, far from being fascinated, immediately shifted to another line of questioning ("Did anyone have any anger or rancor towards her husband?", 146), and, far from this being the most important aspect of the trial, what really counted, across the whole trial and its outcome, was what the witnesses saw and heard. More self-reflection on his narrative choices in this chapter would have been welcome. And did she do it? Read the book and find out!

TREVOR DEAN, University of Roehampton


This dissertation from the University of Würzburg stakes out some carefully defined territory in the crowded field of heresy and inquisitorial studies. It does so by returning to some of the most frequently studied sources in this field: the early handbooks through which papal inquisitors established the legal and procedural framework of their new (in the thirteenth century) office. Scholars of inquisition going back to Célestin Douais and Henry Charles Lea in the nineteenth century, and indeed as far back as Franciscus Pegna in the sixteenth century, have worked with these texts. Bivolarov, however, identifies an area that he finds has not received systematic study: namely, the papal decrees and legal opinions of trained jurists on which thirteenth-century inquisitors relied when compiling their handbooks.

Using forty manuscripts from across Europe and one from Yale’s Beinecke Library, Bivolarov first assembles a list of nearly two hundred papal decrees bearing on the practice of inquisition from the thirteenth century. These extend from Gregory IX’s Excommissurus et anathematizamus in late 1230 or early 1231 to Nicholas IV’s Gratia nobis admodum in 1292. This catalog also fills the greatest part of this book, extending from p. 31 to p. 185. For each document, Bivolarov provides a brief description, often little more than who wrote the text and to whom it was addressed, notes its locations in his manuscripts, and lists all editions (all these texts have been edited). Then he presents the second major contribution of this study: a new edition of the Consilium of Guido Fulcodii (later Pope Clement IV) based on its sixteen complete instances in his manuscripts.

After this long catalog of papal pronouncements comes a much shorter list of forty-three consilia in which legal experts responded to questions and clarified matters pertaining to the practice of inquisition. Again Bivolarov provides a brief description for each document, often little more than who wrote the text and to whom it was addressed, notes its locations in his manuscripts, and lists all editions (all these texts have been edited). Then he presents the second major contribution of this study: a new edition of the Consilium of Guido Fulcodii (later Pope Clement IV) based on its sixteen complete instances in his manuscripts.

Having filled the majority of his book with such technical scholarship, Bivolarov then dedicates his last chapter, slightly over fifty pages, to the “Organisation und Praxis der päpstlichen Inquisitoren im 13. Jahrhundert.” Here, too, the guiding principle is to provide

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systematic coverage. In a series of short subsections, he moves through the legal principles guiding the establishment of an inquisition, the qualifications required of inquisitors, the duration of their appointment, the method of their selection, and so forth. He also specifies how inquisitors were expected to treat various categories of heretics and their supporters: credentes, fautores, receptatores, defensores, and relapsi. The process of an inquisition is also described, from opening sermon to final judgment. What gets treated here are officially prescribed forms of practice. There is no discussion of how prescribed practices were actually carried out and possibly modified in real situations, except in cases where a later pronouncement responded explicitly to some problem that had arisen in carrying out certain procedures.

Drawing on the standard and authoritative sources that created the office of papal inquisitor, Bivolarov presents a sound and thorough summary of how an inquisition was expected to operate in theory. Students looking for a clear description of the underlying legal framework of inquisitorial operations will be well served by this final chapter. In summarizing the results of his study, Bivolarov stresses its value as a basis on which scholars can build. He alludes to a few insights that his own diligent reading of these foundational sources has yielded, but he largely limits himself in this book to cataloging the sources themselves. The utility of his book as a reference work is, unfortunately, somewhat undercut by the decision to include only an index of proper names. Anyone looking to trace an idea or theme through the sources that Bivolarov has assembled will find no help here.

Michael D. Bailey, Iowa State University


This beautifully produced and generously illustrated volume brings together seventeen essays and an introduction from scholars working on the broad question of northern European nuns’ literacies and literary habits across the medieval period. The chapters collected here are developed from the original contributions to the first of three (thus far) themed conferences, which was held in June 2011 at the University of Hull (see the website for information about the 2012 University of Missouri–Kansas City conference and the 2013 Ruusbroec Institute of the Universiteit Antwerpen conference, http://www.nuns-literacies.org/). Subtitled The Hull Dialogue, the volume’s aim is to bring into conversation research on the wide range of literary practices nuns engaged in as “writers, readers, patrons, owners, benefactors, or inheritors of books” (xv), in both Latin and the vernacular languages, across a broad geographical diversity, and through the long medieval period, roughly the eighth to the mid-sixteenth century. The capacious approach proceeds through a series of case studies “across time and place,” as the editors note (xv), structuring the scholarly dialogue and introducing important research not traditionally well represented in English-language studies.

The editors acknowledge in the introduction some of the scholarly issues complicating this broadly inclusive “dialogue”: most evidently, an emphasis on both a comparative approach and individual textual examples from across a vast cultural, geographic, and historical sweep creates potential confusion around the use of terms and key concepts, at the very least. The introduction effectively distinguishes the terms and questions under discussion, identifying the issues that framed the inquiries and acknowledging the distinct