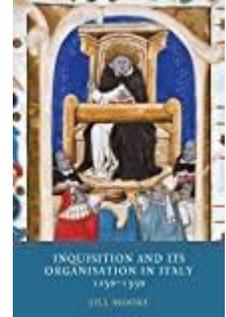


Jill Moore. *Inquisition and Its Organisation in Italy, 1250-1350.* Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2019. 314 pp. \$99.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-903153-89-5.



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Jill Moore's *Inquisition and Its Organization in Italy 1250-1350* makes a well-timed arrival amidst a flurry of recent studies in heresy, inquisition, and medieval bureaucracy. Compellingly, Moore first asks readers to privilege how heresy inquisition worked in practice as opposed to how it was theorized. She then endeavors to refocus scholarly attention on the more overlooked aspects of inquisition's workings: the people up—and particularly down—the hierarchy whose work and interactions with the wider social climate allowed inquisitors to pursue their targets. Constrained to the formative century of 1250-1350, Moore's monograph traces clearly the roles of the notaries, *nuncii*, *familia*, vicars, and *socii*, who realized—or perhaps better, contextualized—the vision of Innocent IV's *Ad extirpanda* (1252). Using a wealth of sources ranging beyond the usual inquisitorial records (chapter minutes, convent necrologies, clerical chronicles and diaries on the religious side; and statute collections, chronicles, civic financial accounts, civic criminal courts, notary matriculation rolls, and civic tax records on the

lay side), Moore concludes: (1) that the inquisition in Italy existed as an institution from 1280 on (ch. 1 and *passim*); (2) that that institution did not take over powers previously exercised by bishop and commune but rather shared power with both in a somewhat ad hoc fashion (ch. 8); and (3) that inquisitors did not step away from their orders but rather were supported by and supported them in turn (ch. 7).

One of the greatest strengths of Moore's work is her assembling of what she terms the “grubby” details of daily practice. Despite the challenge of working with what were often at best spotty records, Moore reconstructs the *how* of inquisition. How did a new inquisitor get his work started (ch. 2)? Since most of the time he might find books in the red, he could take out loans from colleagues to get things going. Perhaps due to such pressures, the most financially active time of an inquisitor's tenure then tended to take place during his first year (pp. 85-86). Who would work as a notary for the inquisition (ch. 3)? Not just other friars as a cost-saving technique but also well-established

local notaries from strong notarial families who held joint appointments in civic offices. What did inquisition look—or sound—like (ch. 4)? Contra Henry Charles Lea’s contention that inquisition operated with hallmark secrecy, Moore finds that it could often be only a semi-private affair, with testimonies taken in fairly public places like the naves of churches (for women), gardens, or doorways (p. 83).[1] This last point is a crucial one and one wonders what Moore makes of this publicity: does it speak to the institutionalization thesis she wishes to advance or perhaps indicate an important aspect of medieval bureaucracies writ large à la Daniel Lord Smail’s concept of the public archive?[2]

Of particular interest to political and judicial historians will be Moore’s reopening of the institutionalization question. What defines an institution in the Middle Ages? Moore accepts Richard Kieckhefer’s long-standing list of traits for determining whether personal or institutional power defines the work of a given entity (“continuity of primary agents, continuity of subordinate personnel, and systematic supervision and interaction within the institution”); but Moore, contra Kieckhefer, contends that at least for Italy, inquisition was in fact an institution by 1280 and not still in a transitional state between a loose collection of personal power-holdings and a *universitas quae non moritur* (an organization that never dies).[3] One of her best pieces of evidence for inquisition as institution is its apparent status as a legal entity *sui juris* in a Bolognese property contract from 1285 which acknowledges the owner of a piece of land to be the *officium inquisitionis* (p. 80). In that instance, the inquisitor Fra Florio is hiring builders to build a house on that land. Moore also assembles strong evidence for an established regional institution with her study of the support staff who either in themselves or via their sons provided a continuity of service to multiple inquisitors. That continuity seemed to hold true particularly for notaries (p. 116). But other instances fall short of the requisite evidence for institutionalization. Instead Moore’s

data consistently documents the particularities of circumstance that contoured geographically localized or order-differentiated practice so as to suggest the lack of a standing institution *sui juris*, as in the case of the convent *custos* holding funds during the interregnum of inquisitors (p. 85), *nuncios* holding multiple appointments to both commune and inquisitor (p. 139), the personal cultivation of spies by individual inquisitors (p. 162), and the variability in standing of the position of inquisitor in any order’s *cursus honorum* (p. 195). The difficulty of the evidence might suggest that Moore’s work provides fertile ground for the study of what institution and institutionalization might have meant for the time period rather than a lock-tight case for inquisition as institution.

The most successful of Moore’s second and third main arguments prove the power-sharing that characterized the operations of the triad of bishop-inquisitor-commune as well as inquisitors’ lasting enmeshment in their own orders (the money trails she details are marvelous). Yet in her development of the former claim, she misses the opportunity to bring her work into dialogue with one of the most interesting recent books about institutions’ power-sharing—Ian Forrest’s *Trustworthy Men* (2018). Moore repeatedly mentions *Ad extirpanda*’s twelve *viros probos et catholicos* whom the podestà was required to appoint as support staff for the inquisitor but notes that tracking them and their duties down is one of the most difficult challenges of her study. But given that one of the most alluring lines of the book is the final one that suggests that the inquisition’s powers were “ultimately limited by what the public would accept” (p. 266), one wonders whether that challenge was also an opportunity. What did the power-sharing Moore traces *mean* for lay-ecclesiastical relations? How might the relationship have been special in Italy, especially considered in light of Ronald Witt’s *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (2012) that explains Italian exceptionalism as a legal-rhetorical mentality articulated primarily by

the lay notaries who are the stars of Moore's study? In answering these questions, Moore's observations on this front would benefit from being put into conversation with Janine Peterson's 2019 study of the negotiated nature of inquisitorial power in Italy, *Suspect Saints and Holy Heretics: Disputed Sanctity and Communal Identity in Late Medieval Italy*.

The availability of the e-book means that graduate students and advanced undergraduates may encounter the book in their courses. Moore's detail-rich study will be a necessary read for all students of heresy and inquisition but will also benefit specialists in secular political history. In fact, Moore's delineation of the power-sharing between bishop, commune, and inquisitor requires that each school of inquiry—much like their medieval subjects—work with the other in mind.

Notes

[1]. Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1887).

[2]. Daniel Lord Smail, *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1423* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 207–13.

[3]. Richard Kieckhefer, "The Office of Inquisition and Medieval Heresy: The Transaction from Personal to Institutional Jurisdiction," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46, no. 1 (1995): 36-61; 39.

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