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summaries of scholarship. It can warn of pitfalls and inform diverse methodologies. Overall, this volume proves a significant collection of works inspired by Brewer and serves as testament to his continuing influence today.

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*The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England*, ed. by Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter. Westfield Medieval Studies 4. Cambridge: Brewer, 2013. 202 pp. ISBN: 9781843843368.

The editors of this welcome volume aim to shed light on the impact of the practice of inquisition in the literature and culture of late medieval England. Moving beyond the traditional research focusing on the legal aspect of inquisition with regard to heresy, the contributions in this volume provide the reader with case-studies investigating the literary and cultural perspective.

Indeed, inquisition has mostly been studied from a historical angle, and the geographical focus has traditionally been the French *Midi* and the Iberian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. The focus on 'the Inquisition' as an institution rather than a legal practice, on ecclesiastical prosecution and persecution of the Waldensian and Albigensian heretical movements in the early thirteenth century and on the Spanish Inquisition from the late fifteenth century onwards has not only monopolised the interpretation of the medieval concept of *inquisitio*, but also diverted attention away from both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and from north-west Europe.

In the last two decades the function of inquisition in late medieval England has been the subject of a growing scholarly interest. Recent publications like Ian Forrest's seminal *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England* have contributed to the appreciation of the wider role of *inquisitio* in England's ecclesiastical courts in the later Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, with a focus on the later Middle Ages, this collection of essays sits conveniently alongside David Loewenstein and John Marshall's *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture*.<sup>2</sup>

Aside from contributing to this scholarship orientated on the British Isles, the volume under consideration furthermore belongs within a context of recent directions in the study of medieval inquisition. It has been convincingly shown that *inquisition* was not merely the ecclesiastical institutionalisation of the prosecution of heresy, but rather part of a longer process influencing the existing religious, social, and cultural structures. Although the editors may appear rather ambitious by stating that this collection 'redefines the nature of inquisition's role within both medieval law and culture', the essays are most certainly valuable case-studies that contribute further to the investigation of the broader impact of inquisition on the different aspects of medieval society.

The articles gathered partly originated at a session on 'Inquisition and Confession' at the 2008 Kalamazoo International Congress on Medieval Studies, and at two workshops, 'Inquisition and Confession' and 'Imagining Inquisition in Medieval England', held at Queen Mary, University of London in 2009 and 2010. The editors must be applauded for their selection of highly complementary articles which represent some of the most recent developments in the

<sup>1</sup> Respectively, *The Haskins Society Journal*, 1 (1995), 197–87 and Oxford: Clarendon, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

field. In the introduction, 'Imagining Inquisition', the editors, Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter, provide a brief overview of the recent historiography on the topic and provide brief outlines of the collected essays.

In the first article, 'Inquisition, Public Fame and Confession: General Rules and English Practice', Henry A. Kelly sets the tone and analyses the institution and development of inquisitorial procedures in canon law. After emphasising that 'inquisition' does not only refer to 'heresy inquisition' and that Pope Innocent III's inquisitorial procedure was designed for crimes in general, Kelly outlines the medieval Church's view on private sin as opposed to public crime (*publica fama*) as it should be understood from the decree *Qualiter et quando* of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). The author goes on to discuss the application of *inquisitio* to heresy cases, the status of coerced confessions of non-public crimes, and how inquisitors dealt with the seal of confession. Kelly's investigation of inquisitorial practices in the English ecclesiastical courts, both the processes referred to as *inquisitiones* and the processes referred to as actions of 'correction' in the vernacular, shows how the practice of *inquisitio* prevailed over other practices like *accusatio* and *denunciatio* in the ecclesiastical courts. Although on the continent there was an erosion in the established inquisitorial procedures from the thirteenth century onwards, England appears to have observed the due processes. While offenders, and especially heretics, certainly feared being summoned and 'corrected', most parishioners too would be concerned about a visitation of the parish. Yet, despite the individual freedom the system left to the judge, especially concerning the rights of the summoned suspects, the paranoia about abuses in prosecuting heretics would only take root from the second quarter of the sixteenth century onwards.

In the second essay, 'The Imperatives of *Denunciatio*: Disclosing Others' Sins to Disciplinary Authorities', Edwin Craun further explores the notions of private sin versus public crime. Focusing on the pastoral tradition, Craun argues convincingly that despite the decline in the use of *denunciatio* in practice, the concept of charitable admonition remained at the core of canon law theory alongside inquisition. Referring to Guillaume Durand's *Speculum iudiciale*, which outlines the three steps to dealing with sin within Christian communities (private admonition by a disciplinary inferior, admonition before witnesses, and denunciation to a disciplinary superior), the author draws attention to the third step. Drawing on the thesis he developed in his book *Ethics and Power in Medieval English Reformist Writing*, Craun points out how the Dominican friars and Augustinian canons were responsible for bringing the practice of fraternal admonition and correction from the cloister into the entire Western Church.<sup>3</sup> Analysing the *summae* of master confessors, Craun shows how canonists and confessors alike thought that private admonition should be bypassed when it is more likely that the sin will be corrected by public disciplinary action. Confessors were, however, aware of and concerned with the danger a sinner posed to the temporal welfare of the innocent and when the sin becomes known and threatens to infect others. Craun concludes that both pastoral writers and canonists saw the process of denunciation as a way to protect the innocent and move offenders to repentance.

Ian Forrest, in 'English Provincial Constitutions and Inquisition into Lollardy', then builds upon recent research into the English anti-heresy law that emerged between 1382 and 1428 and investigates the relationship between the response to lollardy and wider cultural developments in canon law. In particular, Forrest looks at provincial legislation and argues

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 76 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

that a large number of the collections of provincial constitutions (*libri synodales*) were already copied and updated in the 1410s, before Bishop Lyndwood's *Provinciale*. Forrest goes on to point out that during this time the English reaction against heresy triggered a combination of the professionalisation of ecclesiastical justice, the prolific careers of the archbishops of Canterbury Arundel and Chichele, and the influence of the papal legates. The author concludes that from the late fourteenth century inquisition prompted an intellectual creativity among English churchmen and a renewed interest in provincial canon law, resulting in a large number of *libri synodales* in the early fifteenth century. Forrest sees Lyndwood's *Provinciale*'s attainment of actual legal authority as the explanation for the discontinuation of these collections of provincial constitutions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the fourth contribution to the volume, 'The Contest over the Public Imagination of Inquisition, 1380–1430', Diane Vincent moves the investigation from the churchmen to the laity and to vernacular texts, and discusses how late medieval English public discourse evolved alongside procedural knowledge about heresy inquisition. Vincent sees the discovery of the consequences inquisitorial questioning had for people suspected of heresy as a crucial moment in the shaping of the public imagination of inquisition. The author uses the public debate surrounding the trials of lollard John Oldcastle as a case-study to show the extent to which both Archbishop Arundel's vernacular publication of the *Processus* (the recorded process against Oldcastle), alongside the putative bills in *The Examinacion of the Honorable Knight Syr Jhon Oldcastell Lorde Cobham* spread in London by Oldcastle's supporters, were successful in influencing public opinion. Considering also the Middle English chronicles of the fifteenth century and Thomas Hoccleve's poetry, Vincent succeeds in showing the influence of Oldcastle's process on the public opinion of inquisitorial question and answer. Vincent concludes that for both the bishops and the accused, influencing the public image of inquisitional processes was far more important than the conviction or escape of one heretic.

In the fifth chapter, '“Vttirli Onknowe”? Modes of Inquiry and the Dynamics of Interiority in Vernacular Literature', the volume's editors Flannery and Walter continue the focus on vernacular texts and point out that medieval *inquisitio* must be seen in its broader context as but one form of inquiry available to ecclesiastical courts, entangled with other mechanisms such as auricular confession, the process of public crime (*publica fama*), and excommunication. Through three vernacular texts, *Dives and Pauper*, *Jacob's Well*, and *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, the authors investigate how different modes of inquiry relate to the dynamics of interiority. Considering the separation of canon law into the external judicial forum and the internal or penitential forum in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Flannery and Walter argue that in order to understand the role of the penitential forum in influencing late-medieval English notions of interiority and the production of knowledge, the concerns of the judicial forum also must be taken into account. The texts considered in the chapter show an awareness of the difficulty in accessing an individual's interiority and attest to the criticism of the mechanisms through which this knowledge was obtained by the ecclesiastical courts.

In the sixth article, Jenny Lee's 'From Defacement to Restoration: Inquisition, Confession and Thomas Usk's *Appeal* and *Testament of Love*', Lee discusses Usk's *Appeal* in a legal context, and his allegorical *Testament* from a literary perspective. Lee points out how the detailed recording of admissions of guilt in the practice of inquisitorial confession did not guarantee the same cathartic effacement of sins as sacramental confession offered to the sinner. Thomas Usk's writings represent a defendant's concern for the huge paper trail of one's sins produced by the inquisitorial system in the ecclesiastical courts. Both the *Appeal* and

*Testament*, Lee argues, illustrate Usk's self-fashioning and show the sinner's reaction against the defacement inflicted upon him by the inquisitional process. His *Appeal*, the self-identifying confession of his sins and the expression of penitence, ensured that the reader could connect his name to his sins and judge him. The *Testament* was intended to supercede the *Appeal*, and not only shows Usk's concern over how he would be remembered in history (*fama*), but was also meant to act as a counter-response to the documentary practices of the English courts.

James Wade's essay, 'Confession, Inquisition and Exemplarity in *The Erle of Toulous* and Other Middle English Romances', delves deeper into the cultural representation of inquisition in vernacular textual traditions and focuses on romance in particular. Looking specifically at the late fourteenth-century tail-rhyme romance *The Erle of Toulous*, Wade investigates how the reader can access and better understand the inquisitional culture of England through romance. He points out that concerns of interiority, public *fama*, and, in particular, the regulation of sexual relations are to be found in romance, and popular literature generally, just as in the legal discourses. After analysing the text of *The Erle* and identifying the protagonists as 'model characters' for the development of the inquisitional theme, Wade argues for two types of romance: confessional romance and exemplary romance. In the former's instance, Wade remarks that the confessional instances in the stories were often not orthodox and gives the examples of *Guy of Warwick* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. In *The Erle*, as Wade argues convincingly, one recognises the rhetorical device of the exemplum in the combination of comment and action, and the text belongs to the type of exemplary romance. Wade ends by linking the heroine Beulybon (*belle et bon*) to the frontispiece of Bodleian, Ms Ashmole 45 and argues that Beulybon would have served as an ideal example for the woman depicted receiving the book.

In the next contribution, 'Heresy Inquisition and Authorship, 1400-1560', Genelle Gertz explores defendants' self-authored statements of belief. At the end of a heresy trial, the defendant would show his or her rejection of the heresy he or she was accused of by means of an abjuration, a written agreement with the orthodox belief. Although this text would be written in the first-person voice and signed by the accused, it was in fact entirely drafted by the ecclesiastical court and represented the confession the prosecutors were looking for. Especially by the mid-sixteenth century, defendants would often write their own confessions of faith as a response to or reaction against the abjuration, despite being fully aware that these texts could be used by the court as evidence for a conviction. Gertz shows that the courts' pressure upon defendants to sign abjurations caused a counter reaction of written and oral confessions of faith, even by people who would normally not be inclined to write. By authoring their own confession, these defendants justified their refusal to abjure. Gertz emphasises the importance of these self-authored confessions for later protestants like John Foxe who used these texts for his *Book of Martyrs*.

Ruth Ahnert's essay, 'Imitating Inquisition: Dialectical Bias in Protestant Prison Writings', revisits the idea that the inquisitorial process was inconsistent with modern concepts of a fair trial. In particular, she points out that recent scholarship has exposed misconceptions in previous work: that the accused were arrested only on the basis of suspicion, that they were presumed guilty until proven innocent, and that trials were secret. Ahnert develops this to argue that heresy trials in the first half of the sixteenth century conformed to an ideal model of dialogue in which the defendant and the prosecutor had an equal opportunity to argue their case. However, as both the court and the accused were well aware that, in order to convince the reader, their records and confessions of faith had to look like an equal exchange

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of arguments, the result was a strongly biased polemic from both sides. Furthermore, Ahnert shows how Protestant defendants would appropriate inquisitorial discourse, enabling them to oppose the prosecutors and provide a true confession of faith. She argues that scholars must therefore carefully consider and oppose the dialogues produced both through *inquisitio* and in the Protestant trial narratives to identify the prejudices, acknowledge the argumentative strategy, and reconstruct the true dialogue of the trial.

The last piece in the volume is a response essay in which Emily Steiner first briefly reflects on the volume's achievement in showing how the innovation of *inquisitio* in medieval canon law both implicated and influenced literature. She urges a re-evaluation of the medieval-modern conundrum by pointing out how the relationship between legal innovations and late-medieval literature has been redefined and how the reciprocal influence represents a turning point between medieval and modern. Steiner draws the volume to a close by using Chaucer's writings as an example to demonstrate how inquisition provides an unexplored window to allow for critical interpretations of medieval English texts.

The volume aims to move away from a historical approach to inquisition and the editors set out to investigate the role played by inquisition in medieval English culture. It must be noted, however, that these essays deal for the most part with the influence of inquisitorial legal procedures on vernacular textual production and the public sphere, and are but a partial representation of all contemporary cultural manifestations. Agreeing with the concluding words of the introduction, a greater awareness of inquisition's place in medieval English culture is desirable and is certainly encouraged by this collection of excellent scholarship.

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