

Coon's short and thoroughly source-based biography of Hrabanus Maurus—Alcuin's student, Fulda's *magister* and abbot, and bishop of Mainz—focuses particularly on the connection of homoerotic structures of Carolingian circles of learning and the way these emotional communities expressed themselves in a diversity of literary forms, providing new insights into the monastic classroom and its functions within Carolingian society. The second chapter describes the technology of “bricolage” as a common determinant and as a link between a diversity of manifestations of Carolingian monasticism, ranging from architecture (Coon's examples are the gatehouse of Lorsch and the basilica of Fulda) to textual arrangements or narrative motives in hagiographical texts. Coon argues that the combination of elements rooted in a multiplicity of cultures, tradition, and periods makes the Carolingian world by no means epigonic or eclectic but shapes something new, which eventually resists all attempts toward standardization under one rule and one custom. Yet the objective of this bricolage is to shape a superior monastic body producing superior speech.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on one central element in this bricolage, the *Regula Benedicti* (itself a patchwork of ascetic traditions and Roman upper-class practices), first by investigating how an all-male gender diversity and distinction is constructed in the text itself (mainly through gradations of access to speech and purity of the mouth, in the dichotomy of oblates and monks and in the accessibility to education), then by analyzing how this concept has been reshaped, refined, and appropriated in Carolingian commentaries to the *Regula Benedicti*, particularly those of Smaragdus and Hildemar (a text that is still largely understudied and through Coon's book hopefully lifted out of its obscurity). In a fourth case study, Coon tries her notion of monastic genders out on the *Westwerk* of Corvey in which gendered spaces and gender anxieties are expressed in the mythological murals, in Fulda's Salvator Chapter, and—textually—in the gendered polemic on architectural excess in Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita Eigili*, an account of the overly ambitious building program of Fulda's deposed abbot Ratger. Her analysis of the Plan of St. Gallen shows how the notion of gender hierarchies and multiplicities can be inscribed on monastic space and its structures. On a much more abstract and esoteric level, Coon recognizes similar gendered structures on the masterfully structured pages of Hrabanus's figurative poem *De laudibus sanctae crucis*.

Coon's thesis about the multiplicity of monastic genders is compelling, although some chapters, especially those on architecture, would work perfectly, even without her theoretical framework. The gendered eye may have helped Coon to see structures that have been overlooked, although many of her insights are not as “gendered” as she might have hoped. This, however, works to her advantage since it makes the book relevant as well to scholars who would not buy into her concept of gender. Thanks to her obvious pleasure in drastic images and metaphors (there is a lot of licking, spitting, swallowing, touching, slurping, bodily orifices, and bodily fluids, which surprisingly often do flow out of her primary sources), Coon's book is a highly inspiring *scandalum*, in its literal sense: a stumbling block every scholar addressing the dynamic period of the Carolingian Renaissance will have to trip over.

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SULLIVAN, KAREN. *The Inner Lives of Medieval Inquisitors*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. xii+296 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

The medieval papal inquisition has never lacked for a captive modern audience, simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by a religious institution that was as

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revolutionary and charismatic as it was violent and morally dubious. It was also quite helpful that the persecution of heretics yielded numerous records, including manuals and court protocols, which in turn furnished a unique, if problematic, peek into different aspects of medieval religious ideas and practices. Of late, scholars tilling this rewarding field have begun turning their attention away from subaltern heretics and their beliefs to the activities and careers of individual inquisitors and their cohorts, who have left documentary traces well beyond this particular service, for instance, as priests, diplomats, missionaries, teachers, and scholars. Religious historians sifting through such records have updated our view of the inquisition by giving due weight to the men who made up the institution and who served it—sometimes at length, sometimes quite briefly—equipped with varying levels of education, burdened by numerous family and political ties, and operating within and outside the organizational framework of the mendicant orders, especially the Dominicans and the Franciscans.

Inquisitors, it turns out, were also all individuals. And this shift in approach, often dubbed “from Inquisition to inquisitors,” finds a logical continuation in Karen Sullivan’s vivid book, which explores seven medieval clerics engaged in different ways and to differing degrees in the persecution of heresy. While perfectly dovetailing with recent scholarship, the book’s concept is a surprisingly novel one: it examines these individuals’ religious psyches specifically as persecutors of heretics (and in one case as an opponent to this pursuit); that is, it seeks to present and explicate the available evidence as a gateway to individual inquisitors’ inner lives. As such, this study promises to improve our understanding of these men’s goals and motivations but equally importantly of their *modus operandi*, which often was both violent and sly. The potential contribution of the book, however, does not end here, for Sullivan’s choice of case studies has the merit of expanding the inquiry beyond “career inquisitors” to those involved only intermittently with prosecuting heretics and, at least in one case, operating explicitly against them.

Those expecting a Jamesian tour of inquisitors’ subjective experiences, a fresh insight into how men were willing to allow the use of torture and, ultimately, deceit in pursuit of a particular form of Christian *caritas*, may find the result somewhat disappointing. The character studies, while clearly presented and well researched, are not accompanied by a particularly penetrating psychological or even literary analysis. Sullivan provides a set of traditional (by which I mean broadly accepted) explanations for justifying religious persecution (moral righteousness, social utilitarianism, fear, charity) alongside examples of certain men (important but alas not particularly influential in this sense) who seem to have opted out of a coercive path in favor of dialogue, pity, and even (to follow Peter of Verona’s hagiographers) self-sacrifice. Similar observations have been made earlier and repeatedly by scholars in this field, as well as by students of an obvious coeval parallel, namely, crusading, who have demonstrated how religious violence was construed, at least by some contemporaries, as a form of charity or, in Jonathan Riley-Smith’s controversial phrase, as an act of love.

The book is structured chronologically, effectively moving toward grouping its subjects into two clusters of “zealous” and “charitable” inquisitors. The former, comprising the Cistercian luminary Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), the German theologian and priest Conrad of Marburg (1180/90–1233), the learned French Dominican Bernard Gui (1261/62–1331), and the Aragonese Dominican Nicholas Eymerich (ca. 1320–99), share not so much a cohesive

view of heresy as a willingness to strike unequivocally against unorthodoxy. The historical trajectory traced by these inquisitors' abrasiveness leads from authoritarian sermonizing that circumvented real debate, to severe penitential correction, to employing deceptive and violent means in order to secure confessions. The extremism of one of these men, Conrad of Marburg, got him killed; that of another, Bernard Gui, earned him literary (and cinematic) infamy and a nasty death in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. As Sullivan rightly notes, there were assaults aplenty against medieval inquisitors, but whether they died at the job or on the job is not always clear.

On the opposite pole we find the founder of the Dominican Order, Dominic of Guzmán (1170–1221) and his coreligionist Peter of Verona (1203/5–52). This duo, it is contended through a rather sympathetic reading of the extant sources, applied the example of Jesus's active passivity in engaging heretics benignly, objecting to the use of force against them, and, in Peter's case, surrendering to their assaults as a way of obtaining personal salvation for himself, effecting a genuine conversion of his assassin and furnishing an edifying example for posterity. An exception to these friars—unsurprisingly, given that he was a radical opponent of the inquisition—is the Franciscan Bernard Délicieux (1260–1319/20), who, while never denying the real possibility of heresy, argued that heretics are more often than not the brainchildren of inquisitors. As such, his character shines an important light on the inquisitorial office from within the church establishment, although the contribution of this specific case study to the understanding of inquisitors' inner lives is rather indirect.

While eloquent and innovative in her approach, Sullivan has followed a well-trodden path. The clerics she examines are mainstays of the field, and the case studies she develops around them are based on published texts alone, which are moreover not always sufficiently contextualized in terms of the audience they originally addressed and the particular agendas their authors pursued. The very promising evidence excavated by numerous scholars of the inquisition over the past generation (with which Sullivan is clearly familiar) could have helped round out the picture, aided by the author's evident philological talent. Nonetheless, the ensemble makes an important contribution in rendering accessible a diversity of medieval attitudes toward heresy (or heretics) and a variety of strategies to combat it (or them), as they emerge from a range of texts. The publisher's decision to omit a bibliography from the volume is to be lamented. G. GELTNER, *University of Amsterdam*.

RABLE, GEORGE C. *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. xii+586 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

While scholarly literature on the American Civil War is never in short supply, war anniversaries, in particular, are seasons of publishing plenty. To date, the run-up to and early months of the conflict's sesquicentennial have proven particularly fruitful for scholars of the war's religious dimensions—heretofore a relative lacuna in the historical record. In 2006, Harry Stout (*Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* [New York]) evaluated the internecine struggle in light of two (of the three) criteria of classic just-war theory (*jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*), which have deep roots in Catholic theology, and Mark Noll (*The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* [Chapel Hill, NC, 2006]) lamented

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