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Mackay, Christopher S. "An Unusual Inquisition": Translated Documents from Heinrich Institoris's Witch Hunts of Ravensburg and Innsbruck

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the building of the reputation is a collective act of the community where she lives, and where—at a certain moment—the fragile balance, once accepted and tolerated, breaks down. Early modern treatises on witches highlight a crazed investigation for signs and marks left by the devil on women whom the Inquisition will describe as “old, bent and deformed by age and destitution, depending on others’ charity” (189). The male gaze focuses on lust, a symbol of original sin, and, by consequence, on the female body, used and sold by prostitutes, or the place where to look for devil’s marks on witches.

In the second part, case studies show different kinds of women: spies, adulteresses (who not only leave their husbands but also take with them the goods they considered their own), reformed prostitutes who try to get back goods that were stolen from them, a *dogressa* (the wife of the Venetian doge) accused of being a bit too “visible” according to the rules of the time, and, last but not least, raped young women—i.e., a different kind of humanity from the women featured earlier, but no less in need, by social standards, of rules and control. The last essay shows how, at the dawn of the eighteenth century, women’s desires and efforts to choose their husband themselves very slowly began to make inroads into social norms and expectations.

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Mackay, Christopher S.

“An Unusual Inquisition”: Translated Documents from Heinricus Institoris’s Witch Hunts of Ravensburg and Innsbruck.

Studies in Central European Histories 67. Leiden: Brill, 2020. Pp. 300. ISBN 978-90-04-42378-7 (hardcover) €105.

In the years immediately prior to the 1486 publication of the *Malleus maleficarum*, its main author—the Dominican inquisitor Heinricus Institoris—had been actively involved in witch trials in Ravensburg and Innsbruck. In this follow-up to his highly praised translation of the *Malleus*, Christopher Mackay has provided English versions of the records of the proceedings in these two jurisdictions for the first time. While original-language editions of some of

these sources were published by Hartmann Ammann (1890) and Karl Otto Müller (1910) and have led to some important studies in German on Institoris's early career, with the exception of an article by Richard Kieckhefer in 2006, the English historiography has not kept pace. Mackay's excellent edition of these sources should change that.

Institoris was active in Ravensburg in 1484, where, with the support of the municipal authorities, he conducted an inquisition that led to the torture, conviction, and burning of two women for diabolical witchcraft. A third woman was released after providing a document guaranteeing her good behaviour. The situation in Innsbruck the subsequent summer and autumn was more complicated. After a period of public preaching presumably about the dangers of witchcraft, Institoris issued a general summons calling on all those with information about acts of heretical depravity to report to him to be deposed. This process led to the denunciation of at least fifty-two women for an array of superstitious or magical practices. Of these, Institoris initiated formal proceedings against seven women, probably those he thought were the more clear-cut cases. Nevertheless, the trial quickly fell apart when the inquisitor found himself accused by the women's legal representative—with the support of the town's secular and ecclesiastical authorities—of various procedural irregularities. These included accusations that Institoris had acted prematurely in arresting the suspects, and that, in his questioning, he exceeded his authority by probing into matters not pertinent to the charges. As a result, proceedings were suspended and the accused released upon pledging surety. Institoris remained in Innsbruck for several months after this debacle, not leaving until pressed to do so by the local bishop.

Upon leaving the city, Institoris clearly believed that the bishop would renew the prosecution of the women whose trial had collapsed, and that he would also mine the summer's depositions for further cases to prosecute. To this end, the inquisitor left the bishop a summary of all the depositions, along with the protocols of the hearings conducted against the seven, and a list of questions he thought the bishop should pose to them when proceedings were reinitiated. He also left an extended memorandum outlining the legal procedure he thought should be followed in witchcraft cases. These documents, supplemented by a number of letters between the inquisitor and the local authorities and two sources from the Ravensburg inquisition, comprise the bulk of the material translated here by Mackay.

As Mackay points out in his extended introduction, the Innsbruck documents in particular complicate our understanding both of Institoris and the composition of the *Malleus*. First, we see how Institoris engaged with popular superstition and magic. At least insofar as they are related in the material he left for the bishop, the depositions he elicited through the late summer of 1485 dealt largely with accusations of harm which the deponents attributed to curses uttered by women already poorly regarded within the community. What is striking about these accusations—and those levelled formally against the seven women he subsequently chose to try—is that none contains any mention of the devil or demons. In that capacity, it is significant that, unlike the situation in Ravensburg where the prosecution of the accused was completed and the accused confessed to being in league with the devil, the trial of the women in Innsbruck never reached the point where the accused might have been handed over to be tortured. But it is clear from the list of questions Institoris left for the bishop that he was convinced that there was more going on in Innsbruck than met the eye. In this sense, the documents allow us to see Institoris's interrogation strategy, particularly how he advised switching between direct and indirect questioning. It also allows us insight into how he understood the testimony he heard. From this, Mackay persuasively argues that by the time he set up in Innsbruck, Institoris already had a fully formed idea of the nature of the heresy of witches, and that he was determined to understand the testimony he elicited through this filter of belief. This is what he was able to do successfully through the use of torture in Ravensburg. It was not what he was able to do in Innsbruck.

Second, these documents add to our understanding of how the *Malleus* was composed. Institoris makes only very limited use of case studies from his experience in Innsbruck. Recounting just two anecdotes from this period in the text, Mackay argues that significant portions of the work must already have been written by this point, the recent material inserted merely to supplement or embellish points already adequately made. This does not seem to have been the case with the third section of the *Malleus*, though. This section, which outlines what Institoris argued was the best way to proceed in witch prosecutions, was probably written after Institoris's experiences in Innsbruck, for it expands upon the contents of the memorandum the inquisitor left for the bishop. While Mackay argues that Institoris likely did not have the memorandum to hand

when he wrote this final portion of the *Malleus*, it can be taken as representing the inquisitor's early thinking on the subject.

This is an exceptionally rich collection of material, translated into clear, accessible English. Read along with Mackay's introduction situating the sources in their political, social, and intellectual context, the text will be an excellent and stimulating resource for both graduate and undergraduate students of early witch hunting. This is top-notch scholarship.

For those who might be interested, Mackay has also produced a parallel volume of new editions of these documents in their original languages.

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Marinella, Lucrezia.

***Love Enamored and Driven Mad*. Ed. and trans. Janet E. Gomez and Maria Galli Stampino.**

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: Toronto Series 72 / Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 567. Toronto: Iter Press / Tempe, AZ: ACMRS Press, 2020. Pp. xviii, 209. ISBN 978-0-8669-8625-0 (paperback) US\$41.95.

Lucrezia Marinella, one of the most versatile and prolific women writers of the early modern period, has once again reappeared at the forefront of scholarly attention, with a volume that acknowledges and honours her relatively little-known narrative poem, *Love Enamored and Driven Mad* (*Amore innamorato et impazzato*), printed in 1618 in Venice by Giovanni Battista Combi. The poem comprises ten cantos, written in *ottava rima*, each prefaced by short summaries and allegorical interpretations penned by the author herself.

Janet Gomez and Maria Galli Stampino offer us a prose translation that is highly readable, smooth, and faithful to the original's overall rhythm, its meaning, and its nuances. This is an especially remarkable feat given Marinella's intricate and convoluted baroque style. At the same time, Gomez and Stampino strive to maintain the richness and complexity of Marinella's language, an endeavour that is in large part successful. To give just one example of the subtlety involved in achieving a translation that is mindful of nuances,