Kimberly Lynn

Between Court and Confessional. The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xviii + 391. Hb, \$95.00.

There is no lack of recent scholarship about the Spanish Inquisition, but Kimberly Lynn argues that there *is* a lack of knowledge about the inquisitors who manned the fearsome courts. Rather than attempting a sociology of the judges, Lynn decided to study the careers and writings of five inquisitors, and in doing so, “uncover the range of concerns that informed inquisitors’ actions and the space that they had to maneuver in the world” (11). As the title suggests, Lynn views inquisitors as careerists, albeit ones with a special ideology, who climbed from one post to the next within the far-flung Spanish empire. The author selected her subjects on the basis of what each could reveal about the various modalities of inquisitorial careers and mindsets. Thus, she offers up the model practicing inquisitor, the Humanist legal scholar, the failed careerist, the ambitious, but ultimately disgraced courtier, and finally, the consummate, versatile royal official. A lengthy chapter is dedicated to each inquisitor along with an introduction, concluding chapter, and epilogue. Jesuits had few dealings with the Inquisition during the period studied, but make occasional cameo appearances throughout the book.

Of the five inquisitors profiled, perhaps only Diego de Simancas might be known to non-specialists for his autobiography, participation in the infamous heresy trial of Bartolomé de Carranza, archbishop of Toledo, and his treatise on inquisitorial law, *De catholicis institutionibus*. Simancas never worked as an inquisitor in a local tribunal: catching the eye of Inquisitor General Valdés, he vaulted straight from the position of consultant in theology at the tribunal of Valladolid to an appointment on the royal council of the Inquisition (the Suprema), and almost directly from there into the Carranza trial. Simancas was an ambitious man, and felt stymied by his lack of promotion and endless years prosecuting Carranza’s case in Rome. He employed his time writing and revising numerous legal treatises, thereby hoping to win a more prestigious appointment, but he never rose above dead-end postings as bishop of different dioceses in western Spain. Lynn effectively weaves together Simancas’s intellectual activities, his personal history, and his efforts to advance his public career.

Lynn employs the same approach to examine the lives of two more writing inquisitors, Luis de Páramo and Juan Adam de la Parra, who desperately wanted to advance their careers. Páramo chaffed at his appointment to the tribunal of Sicily, which effectively turned into life-long exile from court. He wrote a history of the Inquisition and a treatise about ecclesiastical jurisdiction, defending Spain’s claims to Sicily, but was dragged down by local politics

and ugly fights with the viceroy, the second duke of Feria. De la Parra, appointed at a young age to the new tribunal at the royal court in Madrid, chose a dangerous path by becoming directly involved in political affairs, writing anti-French propaganda for the Count-Duke of Olivares. In the provinces de la Parra had distinguished himself as a particularly aggressive prosecutor and specialized in being a vociferous anti-Semite. Ultimately, his hatred for Jews and conversos proved to be his undoing: convinced that he had uncovered a conspiracy similar to that described in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (*The Great Complicity*), he crossed the influential Portuguese converso bankers at court. In 1640, he was sent to prison in León, and eventual exile from court as an inquisitor in Logroño.

The remaining two inquisitors, Cristóbal Fernández de Valtodano and Juan de Mañozca y Zamora, enjoyed distinguished careers as practicing inquisitors and later, prelates. Valtodano was a hardworking, conscientious inquisitor in Toledo in the 1550s who then, along with Simancas, became a judge in Carranza's trial. He ended his career as bishop of Palencia. Of the five inquisitors profiled, Valtodano most closely resembles many inquisitors who were appointed during the height of the institution (1550–1650). That is, he was a diligent judge, visited his district frequently, avoided scandals, and was rewarded by high ecclesiastical office, which he used to promote the new Tridentine policies. He did not leave behind any writings that Lynn could find, although she might have studied some of the cases he tried to get a sense of his judicial temperament. Juan de Mañozca y Zamora, a Basque, was appointed in 1610 to head up the Holy Office's new tribunal in Cartagena de las Indias. From there he was promoted to Lima's tribunal, the Suprema, and finally became archbishop of Mexico. Perhaps because of his Basque origins, Mañozca maintained good ties with the Jesuit order while he was posted in Cartagena and Mexico. The relationship proved valuable to both parties: when Mañozca came under attack for his conduct in Cartagena, the rector of the Jesuit college vigorously defended him to the Suprema; and when the Society ran into difficulties in Mexico, Archbishop Mañozca singled out the Society as the best order operating in the viceroyalty. Depending on one's point of view, Mañozca was either extremely talented or very slippery, as he survived all of the accusations and intrigues that came his way in the course of a high profile career.

The concluding chapter of the book analyzes the inquisitorial mindset, pointing out how inquisitors resorted to a certain rhetoric, common to all university-educated men, to persuade their peers of their purpose. In my estimation, the chapter instead highlights the conceptual difficulty that marks the book as a whole: the co-dependency of the Inquisition and the Spanish royal administration. Lynn focuses her research on the years between 1550 and 1650,

when both the Inquisition and the Spanish empire reached their peak. The Spanish Inquisition, thanks to Ferdinand and Isabella, was part of the royal government: all of the salaried officials answered not to bishops or the pope, but to the royal council of the Suprema, and there was no requirement that its officials be ordained. The crown had a limitless appetite for *letrados*: university graduates, preferably jurists, who could carry out the tasks of governing the vast empire. A talented young man with a law degree from Salamanca or Valladolid could look forward to a career that included a variety of posts in his lifetime, including inquisitor, and even bishop if he was willing to be ordained. Despite the book's title Lynn never directly confronts the ambiguous nature of the inquisitors by discussing the empire's need for qualified jurists. Much of what is said about the five inquisitors in question would be true of any highly successful *letrado*, minus the service in the Inquisition.

Lynn has avoided writing an institutional history of the Inquisition about the internal operations of how inquisitors approached their work, which varied enormously by period and individual. Rather, she writes about "how they simultaneously elaborated the ideals of their office and exercised their authority on the ground" (3). Thus, the novel contribution of the book is to consider the inquisitor outside the secrecy of his court and to view him against the backdrop of his peers, connected to the issues of his day, and operating within society like any other man of the *letrado* class. Reading the book, it is easy to forget the human tragedy of the thousands prosecuted by such upright judges. That aside, the volume is exhaustively researched and expertly executed, and adds a new perspective on one of the most terrifying tropes in European history.

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