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John Arnold, *Inquisition and Power. Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. ix+312 pp. Notes, bibliography, index, and acknowledgements. \$55.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0-8122-3618-1.

Review by Michael Goodich, University of Haifa.

The past forty years have witnessed the continuing publication of editions of inquisitorial trials and scholarly studies of medieval heresy. Stereotypically, heretics have been seen as agents of the Devil (according to the official church), opponents of feudalism and later of capitalism (in the Marxist view), or heralds of free thought or proto-Protestants (in the liberal view), and, in some cases, voices of ethnic identity against papal or monarchical repression (the romantic, nationalist view).^[1] Recently, a more textured portrait has begun to emerge—built upon microhistorical studies of the surviving texts—of the wider social and familial networks into which those labeled heretics by the church due to their heterodox theology were integrated. The same family names reappear in accounts of heresy and inquisitorial trials, suggesting that certain groups passed their heterodoxy on from generation to generation. Further, heretical views appear to have been spread through social contacts, rather than the transmission of canonical texts. The institutional history of the church has been de-emphasized in favor of a search for the underlying currents of faith and religious practice. The traditional picture of a monolithic, triumphant church has been replaced by a greater appreciation of the many new cults, the "women's" movement, the conflicts between the papacy and its episcopal and political foes, and the role of the laity in creating a dynamic world of faith in the central middle ages. Focusing almost exclusively on Cathars, John Arnold's work is an attempt to grasp the strategies employed by persons hailed before inquisitors in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Languedoc as they attempted to avoid being categorized, classified, tried, and punished by the authorities for their alleged errors.

This work is based largely on the published protocols of trials for heresy, in addition to the unpublished Doat collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Arnold attempts to reclaim the voice of the "subaltern" peasants and others who, due to these trials, have been granted a posthumous life by finding their way into the written record. The aim is not to flesh out the intellectual history of heresy (already well covered elsewhere by Grundmann, Lambert, Borst, and others). Arnold prefers to reread the record in order to situate his characters as deponents functioning within a particular social and judicial context, whose fluid views reflect a wide spectrum of opinion and behavior. He seeks "to find a way of addressing the dialectical relationship between inquisitor and deponent, between discourse and subjectivity" (p. 8). This work represents an honest effort to extract the deponents from the grip of their interlocutors, who employed the process of *inquisitio*, whereby witnesses were asked to respond to a fixed list of questions. The inquisitor sought to fix the deponents' views in relation to certain textual authorities, even though their answers (as *illitterati*) might be evasive, even naive, and not easily compartmentalized. The author repeatedly stresses the "textuality" of this process, whereby each player is forced to take on a role in a "Foucauldian" drama, and seeks to discover the "Catharisms" (p. 122) which lay beneath the hegemonic impositions of orthodoxy.

Arnold traces the transition reflected in the documents from the early thirteenth-century stress on the

heresiarch and the ideological threat he posed to the fourteenth-century interest in the errant lay person—no longer portrayed as naive, defenseless, and ignorant—whose views required policing. The *inquisitio* as a judicial procedure was more active than the *accusatio*, seeking out heresy, gathering information, and spreading its web to the interrogation of informants of all social backgrounds. Arnold further attempts to clarify and define the standing of the various kinds of persons hauled before the authorities: receivers of heretics, supporters, defenders, *credentes*, *heretici*, etc. Beginning in the mid-thirteenth century, following the Albigensian Crusade, whole parishes and villages were brought in for questioning, procedural manuals composed, gradations of punishment contrived, and inquisitorial personnel professionalized. Arnold nevertheless accepts Kieckhefer's view that "the Inquisition" was never a centralized institution, but rather a group of judicially trained personnel endowed with the particular task of seeking out heretics in accordance with an evolving procedure. As part of a policing mechanism, the interior individual was now more militantly sought out. As a consequence, the testimonies became longer, more detailed, personal, and richer as sources for social history, thereby rescuing the deponents from the contempt and amnesia of history. Such evidence reveals that "the sharp distinction between orthodox and heterodox belief and practice is...somewhat challenged by the records" (p. 160). As during the early Reformation, one might adhere to Cathar, Catholic, Waldensian, and individually formulated beliefs simultaneously.

The richest chapter ("Sex, Lies and Telling Stories," pp. 164–225) represents an attempt to focus on and unravel the strategies and stratagems employed by five persons who appear in the inquisitorial register of Pierre Fournier, bishop of Pamiers (1318–1325), later elected Pope Benedict XII. This register, dealing with the Sabathès and Ariège regions, was edited (1965) and translated into French (1978) by Jean Duvernoy and forms the foundation of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's well-known *Montaillou*.^[2] Two of these depositions, those of Arnaud de Verniolles and Béatrice de Lagleize, have been translated into English by the present reviewer along with a third deposition belonging to Baruch the German.^[3] Due to the length and depth of their interrogations, Arnold explores the possibility that both Arnaud's and Béatrice's depositions may be viewed as approaching autobiography, although the inquisitors were clearly merely looking for self-incriminating evidence. Many of the standard features of autobiography are to be found. In Beatrice's case, "sexuality and salvation" (p. 212) are the central foci. Although brought before the authorities largely for posing as a priest and hearing confessions, the subdeacon Arnaud's deposition likewise confronts the issues of sexuality and gender roles in its polymorphous insistence on a more flexible expression of lust. Arnold labels Beatrice's testimony "a textual performance of subjectivity within various sexual and spiritual discourses" (p. 199). I take this to mean that she makes a personalized effort to recall how both sexuality and spirituality found expression in her life. The narrative of her sexual adventures (and misadventures) with various men, including the local curate, serves as a subtext to her professions of heterodoxy. In the case of Arnaud de Verniolles, his radical justification of same-sex relations is underpinned by a theology of sex which may attempt to rationalize his behavior. He avers that, in any case, most of his escapades were consensual.

As Arnold rightly points out, many of these persons would have been disregarded by inquisitors a century earlier. Their acquaintance with orthodox and Cathar theology seems rather fuzzy, the impatient inquisitors experience difficulty precisely pinpointing their beliefs, and their errors appear to have been transgressions more of practice and morality than of belief: one refuses to pay tithes; another is uncertain about the "proper" views of the eternity of the world; and others voice perhaps self-serving and unorthodox views on sexuality (justifying fornication, same-sex relations, contraception). They are asked to construct their own understanding of certain difficult theological concepts (with which even trained theologians tenuously grappled!). Some make futile attempts to argue with their interlocutors. Some present rather original and creative views of Christian theology, often of unclear ancestry. Each one is called back several times to be re-questioned, to review and clarify his/her previous testimony, as the inquisitor digs deeper and deeper in his search for some incriminating statement and evidence of true penance. Their reports are enhanced by the testimony of friends and acquaintances. For example, the Cathar Jean Rocas de la Salvetat poses as a fool whose views are confused, although a sophisticated

reading may detect greater guile, revealing his own peculiar interpretations of the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, etc. Arnaud de Sauvignan presents himself as a naive, confused *illiteratus* in order to avoid prosecution. Such witnesses suggest that the line between heterodoxy and orthodoxy was not clearly drawn, that "cross sect adherents" might be simultaneously Waldensian, Cathar, and orthodox when questioned by inquisitors.

Comparison with the heretic trials of Italy and Germany, two areas for which such material survives, might have enhanced Arnold's study. Were the "strategies" employed by both accused and accuser any different? Does the same detail exist? The goal of Arnold's analysis of such terms as *boni homines* and others applied to heretics and their sympathizers is not always clear. Several of Arnold's proponents are given nicknames—Arnaud "the liar," Jean "the fool," Raymond "the free man," Jean "the story teller." But doesn't this very labeling defeat his purpose of rescuing the authentic voice of the deponents by again entrapping them in the inquisitor's plan to restrict them within the scope of the court's pre-conceived plans and entangle them in the rhetoric of power? The anticlerical farmer Raymond de Laburat of Quié is an eloquent spokesperson for a community-based faith. Arnaud of Verniolles and Béatrice argue well for the right to free sexual expression against Christian orthodoxy. Jean Joufre of Tignac stubbornly refuses to fit neatly into the inquisitor's cubbyhole, presenting a melange of theological views that may well possess their own internal logic. The narratives of each witness might be further expanded through the use of more complementary ethnological, geographical and even political background.

Nevertheless, this volume is a courageous contribution to the effort begun by Michelet to harness history to the difficult and sometimes frustrating task of uncovering the muffled voice of those silenced by the mechanisms of state and church. Arnold's volume raises the question of why historians should even bother with the rhetoric and power games of popes, emperors, diplomats, and bureaucrats when we can warmly embrace the flesh, blood, and spirit of living human beings, whose voice paradoxically reaches us through the records of their persecutors.

NOTES

[1] Heinrich Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages, 1000-1200*, trans. Denise A. Kaiser (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 105-126; Jeffrey B. Russell, "Interpretations of the Origins of Medieval Heresy," *Medieval Studies*, 25 (1963): 26-53; Grado Giovanni Merlo, *Eretici ed eresie medievali* (Milan: Il Mulino, 1989), 9-19.

[2] Jean Duvernoy, ed., *Inquisition? Pamiers. Interrogatoires de Jacques Fournier, Évêque de Pamiers (1318-1325)*, 3 vols. (Toulouse: E. Privat, 1966); Jean Duvernoy, ed. and trans., *Le Registre d'inquisition de Jacques de Fournier, Évêque de Pamiers (1318-1325)*, 3 vols. (Paris: Mouton, 1978); and

[3] Michael Goodich, *Other Middle Ages. Witnesses at the Margins of Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 39-52, 117-143, 201-215.

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