

and touch as the parent of all senses. His eloquent prose brings the tactility of medieval spirituality to life and illuminates the viscerally haptic roots of legend, liturgy, healing, and relics at Burgos.

Part 3 is dedicated to the visionary, a topic which David Carrillo-Rangel redefines as “seeing beyond the surface of materialities and ideologies that dominate the world” (175). To this end, his essay bucks the chrononormative view of history, which functions linearly and in isolation from the present. Here, and in his preface to the volume, Carrillo-Rangel “dig[s] holes” (xvii) in history and links past and present through common issues. By reading the fourteenth-century *Revelations* of Saint Birgitta of Sweden alongside works by the contemporary artist Erinç Seymen, he expands terms like *affect* and *queer* to encompass broader manifestations of performativity, transmission, and discourse.

The expansive queer recurs in Laura Saetveit Miles’s analysis of a visit between Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, which she explains through the prism of Visitation imagery and close readings of the *Book of Margery Kempe* and Saint Birgitta of Sweden’s visions. Miles highlights “heteronormative disruptions” not only in Julian and Margery’s relationship but in medieval patterns of patriarchal culture and gender roles. Her discussion of “queer touch” is literal, abstract, unexpected, and potent in knocking cultural norms awry.

Victoria Cirlot and Blanca Garí conclude the volume with the “secondary senses” of smell, taste, and touch as a “life-oriented female horizontality” undergirding topics such as healing, the iconography of God, affective piety, and mysticism. In the latter category, visionaries like Hadewijch, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Beatrice of Nazareth describe their relationship with God through bridal imagery redolent with haptic analogies.

This book is adept at advancing understudied facets of medieval spirituality against a backdrop of traditional scholarly biases. Readers will doubtlessly adopt new analytic tools from its broad range of methodological possibilities.

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Una Chiesa a giudizio: I tribunali vescovili nella Toscana del Trecento.

Lorenzo Tanzini.

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In this stimulating monograph, Lorenzo Tanzini rejects the notion that the late medieval Christian Church was defined by decadence and corruption. Instead, he identifies law and judicial institutions as key forces in ecclesiastical development during the fourteenth century. Tanzini’s exploration of episcopal authority, clerical culture,

and lay-clerical relations in the later Middle Ages bears careful attention. Through his analysis, he challenges historians to pay as much attention to the routine, mundane nature of episcopal judicial work as they do the colorful, dramatic records that it produced.

Fittingly for a project that prioritizes documents, chapter 1 begins with the archives. Here we find a learned discussion of Tuscan ecclesiastical archives, the structure and function of court records, and the history of legal developments in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Tanzini's comments about the importance of narrative to court records are emblematic of the critical approach to sources he takes throughout the book. He argues that the events recounted in court records are not simply factual descriptions. Instead, the use of narration in those records played an essential role in determining the outcomes of cases.

Chapter 2 focuses on officials who worked within ecclesiastical courts, including the significant figure of the episcopal *vicarius*, whose role within the judicial life of the diocese grew during this period. Within this discussion of officials Tanzini reexamines Robert Brentano's description of the Italian "notarial Church" whose structure was defined by the culture of the notaries who often worked for ecclesiastical authorities. Instead, Tanzini argues, bishops availed themselves of notaries while retaining firm control over the documentation produced by those notaries.

Chapter 3 turns to the clergy, whose activities were judged by bishops or their delegates in the episcopal courts. The lengthy discussion here reflects the fact that governance of the clergy was the principal concern of bishops in this period. The chapter examines how bishops' concerns were variously articulated in synodal legislation, pastoral visitations, and records from episcopal tribunals. Tanzini argues that the concerns expressed in the latter records were those of the episcopal curia, and they include clerics involved in violent or criminal acts, those who claimed the wrong status or lacked training, and those involved in sexual relationships. Tanzini further cautions against a straightforward reading of court cases as a window onto clerical culture, arguing that individual accusations against clerics (e.g., for concubinage) need to be understood as articulations of conflictual relations between clerics and laity and not simply as moral critiques of clergy themselves.

Chapters 4 and 5 consider the relations among bishops, clergy, and the laity during the demographic and social changes of the fourteenth century. In chapter 4, Tanzini argues that looking at the clergy through the records of episcopal courts allows for a better understanding of the relationship between clerics and the communities they served. He views the lay community as active agents within episcopal tribunals, arguing that the level of lay engagement with this body was a distinguishing feature of the Church on the Italian peninsula.

Tanzini also traces the effects of demographic crisis on the clergy, identifying a growing clerical proletariat at work in the parishes of the region, including a sizeable group of foreign-born clerics who served parishes across the region. Chapter 5 focuses on appearances of laypeople within the episcopal courts, particularly regarding civil matters such

as inheritance and credit. This chapter also contains a brief and ultimately unsatisfying exploration of women's appearances in these records, in a section titled "Marriage and the World of Women" ("il mondo femminile"). The discussion in this section elides women's participation in other aspects of the lay community (such as their participation in credit transactions). Further, it suggests that marriage and family were a concern for only women. The section would have been strengthened with further reference to more of the many recent studies that examine women's roles within the institutions of medieval Christianity.

Tanzini's book makes a noteworthy contribution to the fields of legal and ecclesiastical history. His refusal to simply mine archival records for colorful stories is particularly noteworthy. I would recommend the book to any graduate student planning archival work, as well as to all scholars of legal and ecclesiastical history.

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Writing Tamil Catholicism: Literature, Persuasion and Devotion in the Eighteenth Century. Margherita Trento.

Philological Encounters Monographs 3. Leiden: Brill, 2022. xiv + 369 pp. \$115. Open Access.

"A catechist (*upatēci*) without compassion—a cloud without water. A catechist (*upatēci*) without learning—a businessman without capital. A catechist (*upatēci*) without virtues—a dancer without legs. Learning and virtue are the catechist's (*vētiyar*) two hands" (99). These aphorisms, a quotation of Beschi's *Vētiyarolukkam* translated by Margherita Trento, summarize the main topics of her book *Writing Tamil Catholicism*—that is, the identity and formation of the local catechists active in South India from the early seventeenth until the eighteenth centuries, as well as the extraordinary literary talent of the Italian Jesuit missionary Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680–1747) in using classical Tamil poetic codes to write Christian contents. In analyzing these two issues, the rich historical documentation used by the author is remarkable: her documentation is gathered through field and archive research, which allows her to make a careful historical and philological reconstruction of Tamil Christian literature and to reevaluate the veracity of some folk memories.

The book is divided into three sections, titled, respectively, "Spiritual Institutions," "Rhetorical Education," and "Catholic Poetry in a Tamil World." Through the sources connected to the inquiry on the canonization of the Jesuit missionary João de Brito (1647–93), who was executed in the village of Ōriyūr, and the documents connected to the Malabar rites controversy, the reader is introduced to the institution of the Madurai mission and the spiritual retreats for the catechists organized in the village