

cohesive section of the book. It would have been useful had the contributors here reflected more on the potential comparisons and similarities between their different contexts, rather than leaving them implicit by juxtaposition.

The remaining European chapters are fruitfully diverse, with Chanelle Delameillieure and Jelle Haemers drawing on a fascinating case study from Ghent to examine the role of property in marriage formation; Edda Frankot offering a lively and insightful study of the tradition of *wijncoep*, a shared drink which helped to validate extra curial legal business; and Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz demonstrating the way that property rights were enforced within the transregional legal regimes in which the Hanseatic merchants operated.

For the most part, the book seems to be aimed at specialists. Given this, and the enticing vernacular language available from the Aberdeen Council Registers—who could fail to love a legal record in which formal appeals (“falsing a doom”) are made by declaring a judgment “stinkande and rottyn”?—it is understandable that the editors decided to leave quotations from Middle Scots untranslated. Nonetheless, given the editors’ comparative aims, it did make some of the essays in the volume more difficult to grapple with. An explicit translation, even just in the footnotes, would have made it more accessible to scholars less familiar with the language.

For all this, however, the volume succeeds admirably in showcasing the Aberdeen material and setting it within a broader context, bringing together a varied set of contributions that will be useful to postgraduate students and researchers alike.

Tom Johnson, *University of York*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.556

*Marktstrategien der Kurienbanken: Die Geschäfte der Alberti, Medici und Spinelli in Deutschland (1400–1475)*. Kurt Weissen.

Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Press, 2021. xii + 648 pp. €64.90. Open Access.

---

The history of Italian, especially Tuscan finance in the late Middle Ages, has always been a particularly important topic of international historiography. A general opinion derived from more than a century of research holds that the Holy Roman Empire was uninteresting to the Italians for banking transactions—or, in the words of Arnold Esch, “While almost all of Europe was covered by a network of Italian-served *piazze di cambio*, from which bills of exchange could generally be found in all directions, i.e. cashless transfers, this system had a conspicuous hole east of the Rhine” (“Aus dem Alltag eines Ablasskollektors. Eine Reise durch Deutschland, die Niederlande und Österreich anhand der Buchführung 1470–1472,” in *Päpste, Pilger, Pönitentiarie: Festschrift für Ludwig Schmutge zum 65*, ed. Andreas Meyer, Constanze Rendtel, and Maria Wittmer-Butsch [2004], 124). Nevertheless, there was a need for financial

transfers—on the one hand, from a church council to the delegates in Constance or Basel, and, on the other hand, to transfer annuities, indulgences, and tithe payments from German bishops and abbots to the curia. The places for handling such payment flows were Bruges and Venice, where “the German-Nordic and the Italian” payment systems met (407, 416)—the latter being far more elaborate and efficient.

Weissen takes up the doubts expressed by Wolfgang von Stromer about Esch’s thesis. Stromer suspected that the payments from Germany were too significant in total for the Italian Bankers to not collect them directly at the place of origin. In this book, Weissen presents the results of many years of intensive archival research, primarily in Italy and especially in the holdings of the Alberti, Medici, and Spinelli banks. German sources could only be found in exceptional cases, mainly in Basel, Nuremberg, and in the archive of the Teutonic Order.

The introduction (chapter 1) deals with the subject area, the state of research, and the related archives. In the following chapter, on market attractiveness, Weissen shows on which legal foundations the money transfers from Germany to Rome were based and how comparatively small the payments from this area to Rome were in comparison to France, Italy, or Spain. The third chapter, on the means of money transfer, shows the possibilities of transferring purchasing power across the Alps. The transport of coins was significant, although naturally connected to high costs. Via bankers, there was the possibility of cashless transfers by bill of exchange. Venice and Bruges naturally lent themselves to such transfers, as substantial merchant groups from both language areas resided in these places since the thirteenth century. In the fourth chapter, on the curia banks active in the German market, Weissen names a large number of Italian banker families and documents their business in Germany. Cologne, Nuremberg, and Lübeck stand out as places with significant importance until a crisis and disconnection around the middle of the century.

In chapter 5, Weissen distinguishes market spaces in Germany. He sees no competition between the Italian bankers here but rather a subdivision of areas of engagement. The sixth chapter, on market space strategies, is short and deals mainly with trade-related aspects, such as the infrastructure used or the communications system. The conclusion bundles the results in a somewhat Solomonic judgment that both Esch and Von Stromer were right in their opposing positions, since the involvement of Italian curia banks in Germany was more intensive than Esch assumed, but that he was nevertheless right, in that payments from the Holy Roman Empire to Italy almost always took place via Bruges or Venice. An extensive excursus on trade practices and detailed remarks on the archival situation for relevant research, as well as impressive appendixes, conclude the work.

This book is undoubtedly a fundamental work that gives a profound insight into the role of the German area in the European—Italian-dominated—finance system of the late Middle Ages. The research efforts can be felt during the lecture, as a highly specific question was approached on the basis of a partly very rich, partly extremely fragmentary

collection of sources. The reading of a complex topic, for which a rather heterogeneous archival material was collected, is sometimes not easy—but it yields many insights due to its connection to the overarching research questions as well as a convincing framing in the introduction and conclusion. This work significantly enriches our knowledge of late medieval financial history far beyond the German context.

Magnus Ressel, *Universität Bremen*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.571

*Premodern Beliefs and Witch Trials in a Swedish Province, 1669–1672.*

Göran Malmstedt.

Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. xii +230 pp. \$139.99.

---

Although witch trials feature in the title, this book itself treats the trials more as material where a historian can find evidence on “the general conception of the world and the performance of supernatural forces in it” (14), as Malmstedt states. Nevertheless, the book gives an account of the Bohuslän witch trial period: its events, participants, and the construction of “witchcraft stories” in the trials’ examinations, testimonies, and confessions, where the court mixed elements taken from the local folk tradition and what Malmstedt calls “the scholarly tradition of witch belief” (14).

On this basis, the book goes on to consider dreams, dreamt-up experiences, and ideas of shapeshifting (in order to sink ships at night) that were presented in the testimonies. Personally, I found this part of the book the most interesting and insightful, as it moved between examples of the porous boundaries and entangled layers of reality, pointing to differences between things that people experienced and things that really—either in a physical or idealistic sense of the word—happened.

The next part of the book starts with emotions and witchcraft, the magical power of words and spells as well as magical objects. The first of these has recently seen considerable developments, whereas the latter topics are more traditional stock in anthropological approaches to witchcraft. Their connections are worthy of more attention than they have heretofore been given. Finally, the book returns to the layered reality of the world and popular beliefs about the roles of God and Satan in it.

The book is an English version of an originally Swedish publication, *En förtrollad värld: Förmoderna föreställningar och bohuslänska trolldomsprocesser 1669–1672* (2018). While the latter part of the title translates roughly to the present English title, the first part of it is only reflected in the heading of the concluding chapter. Nevertheless, it reveals the tone of the book and the tradition to which it belongs. “En förtrollad värld” translates into English as “a bewitched world” or “an enchanted world.” It is a reference to Weber’s modernization theory, part of which was