

clearly written, Peeters's book represents a welcome addition to an historiography which, until now, has often overlooked the importance of the impact of the Tridentine reforms on the republic of Genoa. The fact that the book has been published in a well-known scholarly series confirms the quality of Peeters's work.

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*Magic in Malta. Sellem Din al-Sheikh Mansur and the Roman inquisition, 1605.* Edited by Alexander Mallett, Catherine Rider and Dionisius A. Agius. (Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, 185.) Pp. xviii + 593 incl. frontispiece and 19 colour figs. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2022. €139. 978 90 04 49893 8; 0929 2403

*JEH* (74) 2023; doi:10.1017/S0022046923001124

When the Roman Inquisition was founded by Pope Paul III in 1542, with the bull *Licet ab initio*, its overriding concern was the spread of Lutheranism and other forms of Protestantism. One suspects that when a subsidiary tribunal was established in Malta in 1541 its particular preoccupation was possible heretical encroachment within the Knights of St John who had governed the island since 1530. That the Inquisition's interests were, however, somewhat broader in scope is well evidenced by its trial of Sellem bin al-Sheikh Mansur, who was the son of an Egyptian astrologer and was captured by the Knights and enslaved in Malta sometime in the late sixteenth century. In 1605 Sellem was denounced to the Inquisition for practising magic at the behest of some local Christians. The extant documentation of this trial is preserved in the cathedral archives in Mdina in Malta, and a transcription (in Italian, Latin and Arabic with a facing English translation) forms the first part and chapter of this volume, while a second part and chapter provides a micro-historical commentary. Both of these parts are by Alexander Mallett and Catherine Rider, while three other parts assemble a further ten chapters by various other scholars and the volume concludes with a chapter of 'remarks' by its editors. All these chapters find their springboard in the transcription of the trial's records, whence they explore various aspects of everyday life in the Malta of the time. The institutional structures of the Church, the Inquisition and the Knights, the details of the practice of inquisitorial procedure (interrogation and torture) and of sacramental confession, the institution of slavery, relations between Christians and Muslims, all receive attention. Most of all, though, the focus is on the practice of magic in its various forms (divination, necromancy, geomancy, talismans and amulets, the casting of spells, the recourse to astrology) among both Christians and Muslims. The wealth of material assembled in this volume casts light not only on Malta but on the entire Mediterranean world at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

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