
This edited volume represents a monument to the career of John Tedeschi, the unofficial dean of Italian Inquisition studies. It gathers many of his previously published articles and essays alongside newer work (some written in Italian, some in
English). Tedeschi frankly notes that much of his latest work, and the contents of this volume, were inspired by his father’s experiences fleeing fascist anti-Jewish policies through escaping to the United States in the 1930s. Tedeschi, in examining similar escapes of early modern historians, such as Paul Oskar Kristeller, asserts that the impact of Jewish intellectuals’ diaspora in the twentieth century resembled the experience of religious exiles who fled north to avoid inquisitorial prosecution in the sixteenth century.

The book is therefore divided into three parts; the first reprints many of Tedeschi’s seminal articles related to the Roman Inquisition’s organization, procedures, and historical records (including “The Roman Inquisition and Its Sources”). In these essays Tedeschi describes the features of the Roman Inquisition that are now quite familiar to scholars of the field, in many ways thanks to his efforts. The reconstituted Roman Inquisition did have procedural parameters and standards of evidence, and defendants did have the right to legal counsel (although legal counsel was quite limited in terms of what he could do to attempt to defend his client). Tedeschi also describes what records are available to scholars and where they are located, which is still valuable as a research guide for scholars.

The essays in the second part address various aspects of Italian religious exiles who moved north of the Alps to escape prosecution after the Roman Inquisition was reorganized in 1542. In several essays Tedeschi notes the rather extensive theological and cultural contributions of such religious exiles, particularly in “I contributi culturali degli esuli italiani religionis causa nell’Europa del cinquecento” and “Inquisizione romana e intelletuali: Gli esuli religionis causa nel cinquecento.” Both essays, among others, highlight how these exiles embedded themselves into Reformed communities and positions of influence. Giacomo Castelvetro, for example, married Erastus’s widow and used her first husband’s book collection to help formulate the ideas in his own publications; it was his uncle, Lodovico Castelvetro, who had helped publish Melanchthon’s works in Italian and promoted the reform in Valtellina. Italian religious exiles were also active in the printing industry, arranging for Italian works, such as Machiavelli, Boccaccio, or Petrarcha, to be published in a variety of cities and languages. Italian religious exiles in many ways contributed to cultural and intellectual life, continuing the Renaissance trend of popularizing Italian literature and art elsewhere in Europe. Italians even formed distinctive religious minorities in some cities, the presence of exiles from Lucca in Geneva being the most prominent example Tedeschi describes.

In the third part, Tedeschi examines the role of scholars in creating and maintaining similar intellectual networks and communities in the twentieth century, networks that were then put in the service of trying to help Jews emigrate from Nazi Germany or fascist Italy. Tedeschi locates Delio Cantimori at the nexus of this network (along with Roland Bainton) through his efforts to help Paul Oskar Kristeller and Elisabeth Feist Hirsh, among others. The author acknowledges Cantimori’s engagement with fascism as a political theory and his early fascination with German culture, which Tedeschi describes as “quietly, almost
imperceptibly . . . drop[ped]” (257), and Cantimori’s future relationship with Marxism. Tedeschi also notes Cantimori’s ability to help lay in his connections with the fascist Italian state, and he chronicles how Cantimori built relationships with these scholars through his and their research travels and his efforts to publish his fellow scholars in Italian translation (often despite the interference of the fascist Italian state).

In many ways, Tedeschi demonstrates a common intellectual methodology in all parts of this volume. He painstakingly charts the intellectual connections between scholars of like mind (if not exactly the same beliefs) on a European and, in the twentieth century, international scale, through the close examination of many types of records, including the personal letters of his twentieth-century scholars. Tedeschi paints a very interesting picture of twentieth-century intellectual circles of those who studied sixteenth-century religious exiles, and who then became exiles themselves.

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