

operated in Italy. Vergerio emerges not simply as a propagandist, but as an innovative one at that. As the restrictions on the importation into Italy of Protestant books increased in the late 1540s and 1550s, Vergerio turned from books and pamphlets to letters that could be sent through ordinary post. This direct mail method of spreading his views allowed Vergerio to present his ideas and his interpretation of events in a direct, vivid, and personal way to a broad range of readers. This also allowed his associates and followers to evade detection for many years.

Vergerio's work depended upon a committed reading public in northeastern Italy. The network of friends and supporters that sought out and exchanged Vergerio's pamphlets reveals a community of dissenters who maintained themselves well into the 1570s. The circles that found inspiration in him included lower-ranking nobles, doctors, lawyers, artisans, and clergy. The social networks formed by these readers promoted the continuing transmission of his ideas late into the century. An appendix to the volume that lists Vergerio's primary supporters, who were located broadly across northern Italy, documents his influence in this regard. In the absence of an institutionalized form of Protestantism, Pierce argues, "Vergerio's leadership, propaganda, and example provided many of his readers a cohesive center that served as an alternative to institutionalization of Protestantism" (192). Even after Vergerio's death, readers continued to come under his influence as he became a symbol of sanctity and resistance. One of the more curious incidents in the posthumous veneration of Vergerio involved the construction of a shrine in his honor in Capodistria that, ironically for one who had severely criticized Catholic practice in this matter, even included one of his bones. This indicates that for Vergerio's followers "the holy was contained in material objects that served to recreate the memory of the leader" (195), in a way that was consistent with the sixteenth-century Italian religious imagination. Catholic officials soon saw to the elimination of this memorial.

Historians have tended to be critical of Vergerio as a theological lightweight and Pierce does not essentially reject that view. However, he does emphasize that the pastoral, legal, and diplomatic training of his early career made Vergerio an appropriate candidate to take up the role of propagandist for and leader of the remnant of the reform movement in Italy.

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**L'Eresia dei perfetti: Inquisizione romana ed esperienze mistiche nel Seicento italiano.** Adelisa Malena. *Temi e testi* 47 "Tribunali della fede," ed. Adriano Prosperi. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003. xviii + 315 pp. €39.00. ISBN 88-8498-118-2.

REVIEWED BY: Anne Jacobson Schutte, University of Virginia

Since February 1998, when the Archive of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith—containing not only records generated by the Congregations of the Holy Office and the Index but also the intact archive of the Siense Inquisition—was opened to scholars on a regular basis, opportunities for investigating the repression of heresy on the Italian peninsula have expanded significantly. Using material newly available in Rome in conjunction with the records of "peripheral" tribunals of the Inquisition (Florence, Livorno, and Pisa) held in those cities, as well as manuscripts and books in several other archives and libraries, Adelisa Malena explores Tuscan manifestations of "Quietism," a congeries of spiritual attitudes and behaviors labeled and fiercely combated by the Inquisition. In this published version of her 2002 *tesi di dottorato* (Scuola Normale Superiore, directed by Mario Rosa), foretastes of

which she has given in numerous articles over the past decade, Malena advances a multifaceted argument that can be summarized as follows. "The heresy of the perfect" cannot properly be reduced to the "Quietist" theological propositions extracted from Miguel de Molinos' *Spiritual Guide*, condemned in 1687. In time, space, social class, and books, its manifestations ranged much more widely and deeply. Flourishing in and around female religious houses, its main modality was the relationship between spiritual directors and their devout clients—rarely a straightforward, "proper" one with the line of authority running from top to bottom. The campaign against "the heresy of the perfect" aimed deliberately at "the suffocation and marginalization of female charisma" (xi).

Not surprisingly, Malena employs the mode of studying the Roman Inquisition that was inaugurated by Adriano Prosperi, her undergraduate mentor. (For its fullest articulation, see his massive study of 1996, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* [Torino: Einaudi, 1996], reviewed by this writer in *SCJ* 28 [1997]: 1361–63.) In this paradigm, the records of the Holy Office constitute "the archives of repression." Rather than present modern scholars with dialogues between defendants/penitents and inquisitors/confessors engaged in a paternal effort to bring lost sheep back into the fold, Inquisition trial transcripts and orders conveyed from the Congregation to its agents in the field show the hegemonic central authority working relentlessly to bring clerics and layfolk into line with its confessionalizing agenda. Those using these materials need to employ a hermeneutic of suspicion. Above all, they must refrain from accepting any form of "heresy" as a preexisting, coherent phenomenon that inquisitors stumbled across. On the contrary, in the instance of "Quietism" as in others, agents of the ecclesiastical hierarchy deliberately constructed an unorthodox position as a systematic, monolithic entity in order to facilitate prosecuting and repressing it.

Malena's analysis focuses primarily on two complex cases. Suspicions about the Benedictine nun Francesca Fabbroni, a native of Livorno living in a Pisan convent, arose in the mid-1670s. Like many other holy women of her era, she had begun at an early age to suffer ill health, practice severe penance, experience mystical raptures and the stigmata, and (at her spiritual director's command) keep a diary. In 1663 she was elected abbess, a position she held for twelve years, during which she sought to reform the convent. Following the election of a new abbess, a faction of nuns who opposed her reform project began to raise questions about whether Fabbroni, who allegedly failed to fulfill numerous religious obligations on the ground that she was impeccable, was in fact genuinely holy. To abbreviate a long story, recounted by Malena with analytical finesse, she was first investigated by "discerners of spirits" dispatched by Grand Duke Cosimo III, then imprisoned in a convent in San Gimignano and interrogated by the inquisitor general of Florence. Impenitent, she died in 1681 without the last rites and was buried in unconsecrated ground. Inquisitorial proceedings against her dragged on until February 1689, when in a public ceremony held in Florence she was condemned for pretense of holiness, after which her portrait and bones were consigned to the flames.

The other case features a socially diverse spiritual group centered on the hermit Antonio Mattei. A few days after the abjuration of Molinos, seeing or sensing the handwriting on the wall, he "presented himself spontaneously" to the inquisitor of Siena. At issue was his composition called the "Protesta," a promise to offer one's will completely and definitively to God, which he had circulated widely among his numerous (mainly female) penitents. In the ensuing inquisitorial proceedings, it became clear that Mattei, who owned a considerable collection of books on mystical theology, had stressed the overwhelming priority of mental

prayer. This, along with abandonment of the will, was a prime element in the construct "Quietism." Despite his claim to have obeyed Jesuit confessors in all things, in November 1688 the hermit was found guilty, required to abjure *de formali* (renouncing heresy of the most serious kind), and condemned to life in jail, where he died ten years later. In consultation with the Congregation in Rome, the Sicenses inquisitor prudently decided to prosecute only a select few of Mattei's many followers.

In two concluding chapters on prosecutions preceding and following the condemnation of 1687 and the Congregation of the Index's identification and prohibition of mystical books, Malena drives home her points. In its chronological scope and broad appeal, "the new mysticism" was much larger than the construct of "Quietism" based on Molinos' propositions. Although heresy-hunters' right hands occasionally lost track of what their left hands were doing, repression was conducted with great thoroughness—not sufficient, however, to extinguish completely the sparks of dissenting views. I have only two formal complaints. Like most monographs, this one's subtitle is too broad; except in her last chapter, Malena focuses exclusively on Tuscany. The annoying Italian practice of not including a bibliography renders very difficult the job of a reader wishing to pursue the author's leads.

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**Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church.**

Ed. Timothy J. Wengert. Lutheran Quarterly Books 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. 274 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 0-8028-2486-2.

REVIEWED BY: Gordon A. Jensen, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon

This volume is a collection of previously published articles in the *Lutheran Quarterly*. Editor Timothy Wengert presents an excellent collection of thirteen articles on Luther's theology, ethics, and ecclesiology, written by scholars in Europe and the Americas.

Wengert divides the essays into three sections: "The Catechetical Luther," "Luther and God's World," and "Luther and Christ's Church." The first section contains essays entitled "Luther on Baptism" by Mark Tranvik, "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness" by Robert Kolb, "Luther's Seal as an Elementary Interpretation" by Dietrich Korsch, "Luther on Creation" by Johannes Schwanke, and "Luther on the Resurrection" by Gerhard Sauter. Each essay explores Luther's position on these topics over against the prevailing opinions Luther encountered or grew up with. Tranvik and Kolb are careful expositors of Luther, and the harvest they gather is rich indeed. Also appreciated is Korsch's section on the history of the seal and the circumstances of its interpretation (60–65). I suspect that the best place to read this article would be sitting on the bench in the portal at the Luther house, a gift to Martin from Katharine, while occasionally staring up at the Luther seal in the canopy. Korsch also does an excellent job of exploring the seal from the perspective of the theology of the cross, which he feels is embedded in the seal. In the article on creation, Schwanke does Luther credit by consistently relating Luther's theology of the Word to his theology of creation (84–89) by bringing out Luther's emphasis on the community in creation (88), and by noting Luther's careful distinction between dominion over creation and its nurture. Luther saw that dominion could easily lead to abuse and the treating of creation as a commodity to be used rather than as life to be nourished and preserved (91–97). The essay on the resurrection by Sauter makes a solid contribution to the understanding of the relationship between the cross and the resurrection in Luther's *theologia crucis*.

The second section, on the ethics of Luther, contains articles on "Luther and Vocation"