

subservient institution at the mercy of the Crown's fiscal needs and, by extension, those of the centralizing state, the assembly "defended ecclesiastical liberties and hampered royal attempts to extract more money from the church" (p. 5) via means of collaboration and negotiation. He examines in detail the strategies that the assembly's representatives—principally senior members of Castilian chapters who exercised considerable autonomy within the Church's wider structure—employed to protect their privileges and restrict their contributions toward the defense of Catholicism in the Mediterranean and northern Europe. These included the *cesación a divinis* or suspension of Divine Offices (including the administration of the sacraments, thereby endangering the spiritual foundation of the monarchy), the redress of clerical grievances, the verification of the value of diocesan incomes as a basis for the subsidy, and finally recourse to Rome as the ultimate arbiter. The protracted negotiating process more often than not resulted in concessions being granted by the Crown to release the funds, although there were still overall benefits for royal finances. The phenomenon sheds light on (a) the often-overlooked hierarchical and jurisdictional divisions within the Spanish church (including that between bishops and their chapters) that undermined its exercise of unified authority and (b) reinforces the contention that church-state relations throughout the Habsburg period were not always harmonious, but riddled with tensions and conflicts. Sean T. Perrone rejects traditional state-building theories and concepts of absolutism to explain the relationship between the ruler and his subjects in sixteenth-century Spain and instead posits a pluralistic view of the political sphere, based on consensus and shared partnership between the Crown and autonomous, intermediate corporate bodies, as illustrated by its dealings with the Castilian Assembly of the Clergy. In so doing, he foreshadows the refeudalization theories in relation to the decentralization of the state in the second half of the seventeenth century. This is a carefully researched and clearly argued study that makes an important contribution to our understanding of royal finance, governance, political practice, and church-state relations in sixteenth-century Castile.

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*Repertorium van Middelnederlandse preken in handschriften tot en met 1550: Vol. IV: Aerdenbout—Darmstadt; Vol. V: Den Bosch—Leeuwarden, Vol. VI: Leiden—Zwolle, and Vol. VII: Verantwoording en indices* [Repertorium of Middle Dutch Sermons Preserved in Manuscripts from before 1550]. Edited by Daniël Ermens and Willemien van Dijk. [Miscellanea Neerlandica, No. 29, Vols. 4–7.] (Louvain and Walpole, MA: Peeters. 2008. Pp. IV: v, 572; V: v, 561; VI: v, 609; VII: v, 701. 300,00 [for vols. IV–VII; €500,00 for vols. I–VII] ISBN 978-9-042-92203-7 for volumes IV–VII; 978-9-042-92230-3 for vols. I–VII.)

The late-medieval sermon continues to attract much scholarly attention not only as a source of theological belief but also as an opportunity to get a

glimpse of everyday religious life within relatively closed communities. Much research has been conducted in recent years, especially on vernacular sermons. As the editors themselves note, “the study of Middle Dutch sermons, however, has for a long time not kept pace with their level of historical importance” (VII:25). To fill this gap the University of Amsterdam and the University of Antwerp started a project in 1999 to compile a complete Repertorium of all Middle Dutch sermons up to 1550. This project is part of the international cooperative effort “SERMON: Repertorium of Unprinted Medieval Vernacular Sermons.” One primary goal was the publication of several “case studies” on the importance of vernacular sermons as channels of oral and written transmission of religious ideas and ideals. This has resulted in several articles in which, for example, the role of women in the process of writing and editing sermons, since they were not allowed to deliver sermons in a liturgical setting, was more widely acknowledged. The publication of volumes IV–VII of the *Repertorium of Middle Dutch Sermons* gives a complete coverage of the extant manuscript tradition of Middle Dutch sermons, covering, combined with volumes I–III that were published in 2003, over 11,000 sermons from more than 550 manuscripts stemming from libraries and archives across Europe and the United States. The *Repertorium* therefore opens a wide field of possibilities for further research.

In the preface, the editors emphasize that they consider the sermon as a literary genre: It is often very difficult and even impossible to tell to what extent “a liturgical act of sermonizing is involved” (VII:26). Therefore, the *Repertorium* includes only manuscripts that describe the text as a sermon, has the formal characteristics of a sermon, or has reworked a (Latin) sermon. The editors admit that even with these rather strict criteria, borderline cases will exist, such as sermons treated in historiographical texts (VII:27). As for linguistic limits, the exact boundaries among Middle Dutch, Middle Low German, and Eastern Low Franconian dialects are vague, especially in the eastern parts of the Low Countries. By Middle Dutch, the editors mean roughly a group of dialects, spoken and written in several parts of the Low Countries. Another criterion—which is, although certainly understandable, a somewhat arbitrary limit—is to include only manuscripts up to 1550. Manuscripts that cannot be dated to the first or second half of the sixteenth century are included, which seems contradictory, but is, considering the fact that it is sometimes hard to date a medieval manuscript, a logical choice. Furthermore, also texts originally written in Latin (for example, the sermons of Pope Gregory the Great and St. Bernard of Clairvaux) or German (the sermons of Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler) but translated in Middle Dutch are included. Not entirely surprisingly, these sermons written by some of the greatest minds of Christianity make up the vast bulk of sermons included in the *Repertorium*.

Ermens and Van Dijk have included several examples of manuscript descriptions that help the reader to grasp the best way to use the

*Repertorium*. Particularly useful are the short explanations of the different headings used in the inventory (such as description, provenance, theme, contents, literature, and scribe). Moreover, each sermon is numbered and given a code, which consists of an abbreviation of its location, the library number of the manuscript, and the number of the sermon within it. This code facilitates not only locating a certain sermon but also making cross references to particular texts. The brief introduction is followed by a detailed list of the libraries and archives included in the seven volumes. Next is the following: the signatures of the manuscripts included in the *Repertorium*; a list of manuscripts for which the current depository is unknown (mostly manuscripts that have been lost in private collections); an inventory of monasteries and other religious houses where the manuscripts were written (provenance); the scribes; a list of institutional and other owners; an alphabetical list of authors, translators, and works; a listing of the occasions (*Sermones de tempore*, followed by the sermons for the rogation/quatertemper days, the *Sermones de sanctis*, and the *Sermones de communi sanctorum et de occasionibus*). Of great importance for other researchers is the register of themes followed by an enumeration of possible lemmas, which consists of the first four nouns from the incipit. This enables scholars interested in particular themes or subjects to browse swiftly through the corresponding sermons. Volume VII ("Verantwoording en indices") ends with a practical list of the addresses and other details of the archives and libraries mentioned in the several volumes of the *Repertorium*.

The massive amount of work that the editors put into the gathering of the information and necessary details that make these volumes so valuable is really admirable. Undoubtedly there could be manuscripts in private collections that the editors missed, but this does not alter the fact that a huge step forward has been made with the publication of the last volumes of the *Repertorium*. The *Repertorium of Middle Dutch Sermons* is therefore an indispensable tool for every scholar who is interested in religious vernacular literature in the Middle Ages.

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BAS DIEMEL

*Libri, biblioteche e cultura degli ordini regolari nell'Italia moderna attraverso la documentazione della Congregazione dell'Indice. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Macerata, 30 maggio—1 giugno 2006.* Edited by Rosa Marisa Borraccini and Roberto Rusconi. [Studi e Testi, 434.] (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. 2006. Pp. 745. €90,00. ISBN 978-8-821-00811-8.)

The suppression of the Congregation of the Index in 1917 and the transfer of its competencies to the Holy Office (that continued to publish the Index of Prohibited Books until 1966, when it ceased to enjoy the force of ecclesiastical law) resulted in the transfer of part of its archive to the Vatican Library. Amongst these documents was a series of lists of books held by male