

women in the agricultural cycle and in pastoral economies. Then the impact of manorial obligations on women is scrutinized. This is followed by a consideration of the domestic roles of countrywomen, and finally there is a summary of the rural woman's life cycle. Chapter 4 is rich with details of women in urban communities. We learn about the unhealthy conditions of town life, the exploitation of female domestics, the role of women in trades and crafts, domestic life, the crucial role of wet-nurses, and prostitution. This chapter also concludes with a look at the life cycle of urban women. The focus in chapter 5 shifts to women and power, beginning with queens and then women of the nobility and landed classes. This chapter also includes a life cycle. The author believes that it might be worth reconsidering "the possibility of women actually wielding power," and the chapter ends with some examples such as Blanche of Castile, Margaret of Denmark, and others. Chapter 6, which concerns women and religion, includes discussions of nuns, mystics, beguines, teritiaries, saints, devotional observances of laywomen, women and heresy, witchcraft, Jewish and Muslim women, and, finally, the Reformation and women. The seventh chapter focuses on three women who exceeded society's expectations: Christine de Pizan, Clare of Assisi, and Joan of Arc. Chapter 8 summarizes some of the themes covered in the previous chapters, and the author ends by noting that by 1550, "there was about to be much wider voicing of women's equal right to education." Times were changing.

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Helen Rawlings. *The Spanish Inquisition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Pp. 192. Paper, \$30.95; ISBN 0-631-20600-0.

Helen Rawlings has written a first-rate introduction to the complex study of a subject that has entertained a second awakening within the scholarly world of historical literature. Intended for the mature student or general interest reader, *The Spanish Inquisition* is written almost in textbook form, providing for an easy to understand and well-organized volume of work. Rawlings examined both the work of past scholars and the newer research done by British, European, and American scholars, to establish a clear understanding of the structure of the Inquisition as an institution; when and where activity was most present; and the short and long term effects it had on Spanish society and culture. With over 41 books cited in this volume, combined with the author's authority on the subject, this is an excellent resource and a thought-provoking read.

With the discovery and study of fresh evidence, a new generation of scholars has re-examined the Inquisition. Rawlings, drawing on these new studies, confronts the severe left and right views of the Spanish Inquisition presented by older scholars. She is able to disprove the preceding conclusions that the Inquisition was either a completely evil institution or something that stood for all that was good about tradition and doctrine. She is able to prove that the Inquisition's reputation as a vicious means

of control and torture was not as severe as previously reported. She also shows that the Inquisition was a multifaceted, ever changing institution that left both positive and negative outcomes on Spanish society and culture.

Rawlings begins by clarifying the historiography of the Inquisition and then explains what the institution of the Inquisition was, how it was organized, why it was created, who was running it, and what its initial intentions were. She also follows how each of these components evolved over the length of the Inquisition's existence until the nineteenth century. The bulk of the evidence is presented in chapters three through six and breaks down the activities of the Inquisition by categories of targeted victims. She devotes a chapter to the *Coverso*, to the *Morisco*, to Protestantism, and to minor heresy. Each of these chapters is organized similarly and clear connections are made, making it easy to follow the progression of the Inquisition, despite its many layers and numerous victims. Rawlings is able to explain clearly why each set of victims was targeted and how the logic or process was similar or different from other victimized groups. She provides perfect examples that support her arguments, yet does not bog the volume down with quote after quote. There is a variety of evidence, both primary and secondary. Very interesting to the reader are the descriptions from actual cases of minor heresy in the sixth chapter. The seventh and final chapter does an excellent job of wrapping up the evidence and explaining how the Inquisition came to a final end on all fronts.

There is a simple map and several pictures to help stimulate and guide the reader, as well as a glossary of Spanish and Inquisition terminology. Overall, this is a great book for senior-level high school students, college students, or the general reader interested in topics such as Spanish/European history, Catholic history, Medieval history, religion, spirituality, and of course the history of the Inquisition itself.

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Kimberlee D. Garza

Link Hullar and Scott Nelson. *The United States: A Brief Narrative History.* Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2006. 2nd edition. Pp. xii, 234. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-88295-229-3.

In the spring 2003 number of this journal, Larry Madaras wrote a perceptive and highly useful review of the first edition of Hullar and Nelson's *The United States*. In the preface to both editions, the authors claim to offer up an account of "big ideas, major themes, important events, and basic facts ... arranged in a chronological narrative that tells a lively story without talking down to the reader." Yet Madaras noted that most of the 2001 edition was a "traditional accounting of political and military events." This second edition deviates little, despite the authors' assertion that they have "worked toward a cultural-literacy approach to deciding what goes in the text." The narrative still largely deals with standard political and military developments.