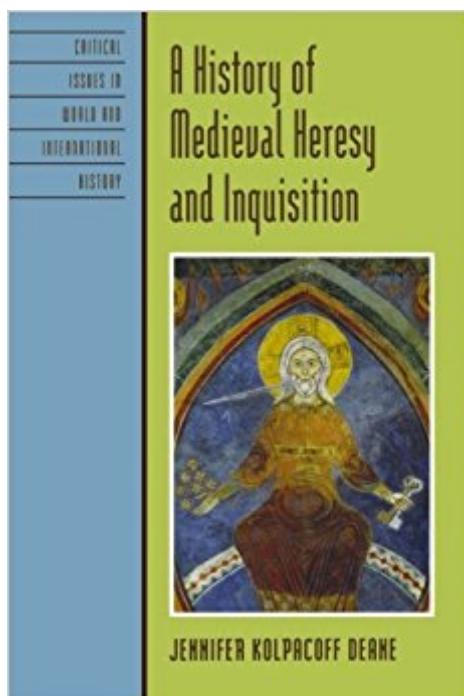


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# A History Of Medieval Heresy And Inquisition (Critical Issues In World And International History)



## Synopsis

In this concise and balanced survey of heresy and inquisition in the Middle Ages, Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane explores the increasingly bitter encounters between piety, reform, dissent, and the institutional Church between 1100 and 1500. Although the loaded terms of 'heresy' and 'orthodoxy' employed by ecclesiastical officials suggest a clear division between right and wrong, that division was in fact vigorously contested by medieval people at all levels of society. Deane investigates key issues that sparked confrontations between Christians, including access to scripture, apostolic models of poverty and preaching, the Eucharist and sacramental power, and clerical corruption and wealth. She traces the means by which Church elites developed an increasingly complex set of inquisitorial procedures and resources to identify, label, and repress 'heresy,' examines the various regional eruptions of such confrontations across medieval Europe, and considers the judicial processes that brought many to the stake. The book ranges from the 'Good Christians' of Languedoc and Lombardy and the pan-European 'Poor,' to Spiritual Franciscans, lay religious women, anticlerical and vernacular movements in England and Bohemia, mysticism, magical practices, and witchcraft. Throughout, Deane considers how the new inquisitorial bureaucracies not only fueled anxiety over heresy, but actually generated fictional 'heresies' through their own texts and techniques. Incorporating recent research and debates in the field, her analysis brings to life a compelling issue that profoundly influenced the medieval world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Writing a textbook that offers something new to this field . . . presents a serious challenge, one that is successfully met by Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane in this clear and useful book. . . . It is not attempting to provide an exhaustive reference . . . to medieval heresy, but an account of thinking about heresy, both contemporary and historiographical. It is a guide to the sources and to their modern commentators, which, used in conjunction with . . . other textbooks, will be invaluable for undergraduates and their tutors trying to navigate these increasingly choppy waters. (L. J. Sackville Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture) Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane has now written the most intelligent and lucid introduction to these subjects and clearly explained the character of the problems, methods, and means of interpreting them now available. She also includes a very useful and well-connected chapter on superstition and magic, demonology, and witchcraft (chapter 6), setting her articulate and intelligent history fully and intelligibly into the context of our best current understanding of all the relevant facets of the broad, complex, and rapidly changing society of early Europe from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. . . . The reader . . . has learned a great deal of very complex history, lucidly and masterfully explained. Deane . . . treats virtually all of Latin Europe with immense competence, great clarity, and manageable compass. This is a valuable book about a controversial subject. (Edward Peters, Professor Emeritus, University of Pennsylvania The Catholic Historical Review) In 1144, Bernard of Clairvaux preached a sermon against heresy based on a passage from his beloved Song of Songs; for St. Bernard, heretics were the 'malicious foxes' plundering the Christian vineyard. Hildegard of Bingen warned that heretics were hypocritical servants of the devil. Deane (Univ. of Minnesota, Morris) ably synthesizes the scholarship on those branded heretics by the medieval church, and those who attempted to enforce Christian orthodoxy. Beginning with a brief explanation of the Cathars, Waldensians, and other groups from outside the church hierarchy calling for religious reform, Deane investigates the birth of inquisitorial tribunals in the 13th century, the Spiritual Franciscans, and the role of religious laywomen commonly known as Beguines—<sup>a</sup> a term she rejects. The author then turns to witchcraft, another channel of medieval European religiosity that was clearly identified as being heretical, and concludes with an examination of John Wyclif and the Lollards—<sup>b</sup> another term she rejects—and Jan Hus and his followers in Bohemia, creating a clear introduction to medieval Christian heresy and the orthodox response to it. Well suited for undergraduate use. Recommended. Undergraduates and above. (CHOICE) Deane brings clarity to an enormously complex topic. She carefully navigates the intricate worlds of those branded as heretics by the medieval church but who typically considered themselves as Good Christians, the righteously poor, or pious reformers. Drawing on methodologies from anthropology, sociology, gender studies, and

literary theory, as well as history, she presents a balanced account of the European Middle Ages as both an age of intensely lived faith and at times a terrible 'persecuting society.' (Michael D. Bailey, Iowa State University) Deane's outstanding book is both accessible and sophisticated. It introduces the heresies and inquisitorial practices of medieval Europe, but it is more than merely a conventional survey. Deane lets us see the heretics both through their own eyes and through those of their opponents. She places the history of heresy within the general history of the later Middle Ages, gives a creative synthesis of recent scholarship, and explains how to interpret difficult historical sources. This is a masterful achievement. (Richard Kieckhefer, Northwestern University) Deane has given us the first English-language survey of medieval heresies and inquisitorial practices that is both deeply learned and instantly accessible. With a direct and engaging style, she steers her readers toward an understanding of the various strands of contemporary religious dissent and the Church's evolving attempts to repress them. Scholars and students alike will appreciate her thoughtful discussion of the sources and how best to interpret them. I certainly expect that my own students will eagerly devour the lucid analysis and vivid narrative of this concise study. *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition* will surely become a standard reference in the field and a classroom staple for many years to come. (Sean L. Field, University of Vermont) Jennifer Deane's book boldly and directly expounds movements treated as heretical and their repression over five centuries, setting them within broader historical contexts. She is very deft in introducing readers to the most challenging modern scholarly debates and in drawing them into questioning the evidence, and her clever decision to keep reminding readers of medieval vocabulary will stimulate unusual precision in their thoughts and reactions. Deane's great clarity and the sheer verve and energy of her writing will keep her readers hooked and make their access to arcane material and complex ideas very easy. Her students are lucky, as are all the readers of this book. It is a tour de force, a very remarkable achievement. (Peter Biller, York University) I (and my students) loved the book. It struck just the right balance in that it was clearly written and accessible to undergraduates while getting across the complexity of the topic. I will definitely use it again. (Tanya Stabler Miller, Purdue University)

Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane is associate professor of history at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Really interesting book for anyone interested in the topic. This is written in a very scholarly manner, not for the "light reader", but well-written nonetheless. I was required to read it for my college course, but I just might keep it to reread in grad school.

Informative book.

This book is for a class on Medieval heresy and witchcraft. Overall its not bad, although a bit biased against the Church (I'm not Catholic). Easy reading, and has a decent reference section to go look up other articles/books on the subject.

Textbook.

As a history major also minoring in Religious Studies, I have been greatly impressed by this book. I purchased it as required reading for a college course on Witchcraft and Heresy in Medieval Europe, and don't often keep textbooks after the course is over. This is one book that is going to remain in my library. I'm also a bit of a fanatic about keeping books clean, crisp and perfect condition... no highlights or notes, etc. Yet this book has so much good information that stands out I want to be able to find certain information quickly, and am highlighting the crap out of it. Very out of character for me. What this means to you is that this book is phenomenal and worth purchasing even if it isn't for a college course. If you're interested in History, Europe, the impact of religion and religious reformers as well as heretics and those burned at the stake for what they believed...this is the book to get. Great reading, detailed information, and gives excellent insights into events and people over more than a thousand year period. Buy it!

I really enjoyed reading this book and, despite the fact that it was published several months ago, find myself with the honor and privilege to be the first to comment. I should state at the outset that I am very much a general, or lay (in keeping with the ecclesiastical theme), reader and generally rely on the integrity of the author to present information faithfully. In the past I have found that many books with religious themes are simply Christian apologetics and are neither objective nor reliable having a deep rooted agenda to present Christianity in as favorable a light as possible. This is certainly not the case here and we can take comfort from the fact that the author is an associate professor of history in a secular university. Much of European history centers upon power struggles within the various segments of Christian hierarchies and this book covers major disputes from the 11th to the 15th centuries. The writing is lucid and concise and there are bibliographies that point the way to further reading. The story moves at a cracking pace as the betrayal, brutality and bloodshed of internecine power struggles unfolds. On the face of it the salvation of the human race

was the prize but increased wealth and prestige for the victors didn't hurt either. The basis of each heresy is explained as are the personalities involved. There are some standouts of course, and the tale of that martyr's martyr Jan Hus is of course compelling and inspirational. Certain of his salvation and protesting his innocence even as the flames were lit he went to his reward. For him, as for many others, heresy was heaven on a stake. Another is the tale of the Franciscans. That the followers of St Francis of Assisi wound up slaughtering each other was news to me and it is such a bizarre and sorrowful tale that I have purchased another kindle book covering their history in depth. While dungeons, torture chambers and battle hardened armies are no longer essential religious accoutrements and making out your will before an audience with the Pope is probably unnecessary, the human characteristics that give rise to totalitarianism are still very much with us. Let us hope that society continues to keep them in check. Overall this was a very good read and a fine addition to a medieval library. It is a good starting point for religious controversies and is a fairly easy read for the general reader. I thought the author struck a good balance between narrative flow and deep historical detail. But did she get the right balance? Since that which is right encompasses that which is good she passes and the matches stay in the pocket - for now. I read the kindle edition of the book and should say that some plates were missing. On my iPad I was able to jump to the Internet and follow up some there but none were vital anyway. I mention it however because I have found that some things that I find a minor irritation send others into a white knuckle fury, so kindle users be warned!

I ordered this book for a Heresy and Witchcraft class. My two comments from giving this a 4-5 star is (i) the pictures did not download and (ii) it was not audible capable. Otherwise, this book was good read, written well and easy to follow and look up words or search for certain passages.

This book was very well written and could be easily followed. The amount of research that the author put into this makes reading it very easy and interesting. Being an ex-Catholic, I had become appalled by what the Catholic Church and Protestant Churches had done throughout history in the name of "Christianity". I think one should always be aware of history and keeping yourself informed with books that reveal the past without bias makes it even easier to swallow the truth. You will find that in this book.

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