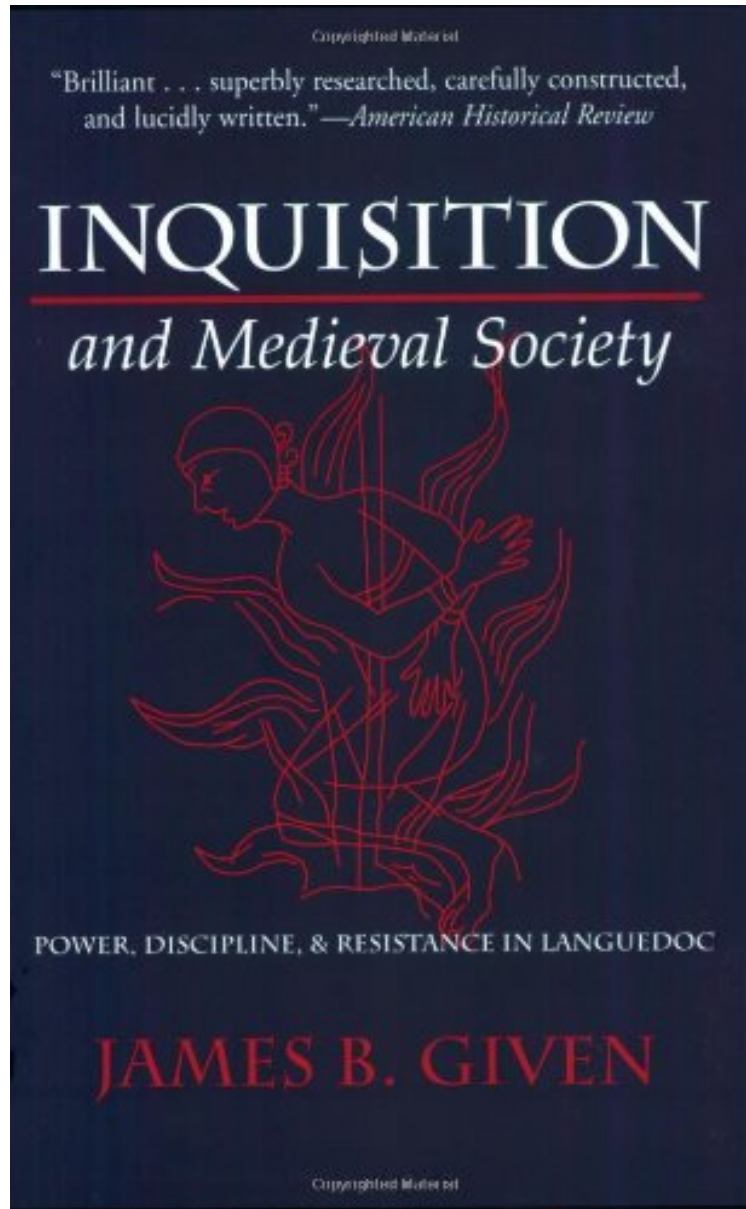


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Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc

James Buchanan Given

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Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Excellent study of inquisitionBy LARA1407I have used James Given's book not only in my own books and articles but also for most of my courses on Church history for several reasons. It is highly readable, but also makes many important points often ignored in the more 'popular' books on the Inquisition. He demonstrates the frequent antagonism that existed between Franciscans and Dominicans that people in southwestern France accused of heresy were able to manipulate. He also portrays 'victims' of the Inquisition as often far from helpless, with specific ways that they managed to evade their questioners. While some of these included physical evasion, he very helpfully shows that although the Inquisition had noted 10 ways 'heretics' typically got around the questions first noted by Nicholas Eymerich (e.g. equivocation, adding conditions, redirecting the question, feigned astonishment, twisting words, changing the subject, self-justification, feigned illness, feigned stupidity and a way of life that was apparently holy), were frequently used by those questioned. Given provides excellent examples of all such methods but shows the collective and individual resilience of communities faced with the Inquisition. In case studies, he also shows families divided by adherence to Catharism or Catholicism. This is one of the most valuable studies on the Inquisition, especially before the more famous Spanish Inquisition. It corrects many popular misconceptions. 0 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Too wordyBy RavenThe book was much too wordy, I don't think it got to the point of the Inquisition fast enough. 11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Readable explanation of Southern French InquisitionBy Lisa J. SteeleGiven's book discusses the papal inquisition in southern France through the lens of the inquisitors' methods and goals, attempts by others to turn the inquisition against their foes, and resistance to it by various political and religious factions. It is a good discussion not just of the papal inquisition, but of how medieval powers battled amongst each other for money and power to carry out their competing goals. A grounding in medieval French history (or at least the Albigensian Crusade) would be helpful to the reader. This book is not a good starting point for the topic. Readers might also wish to compare it with modern research into issues of false confession such as Gudjonsson's *The Psychology of Interrogations and Confessions* and modern police interrogation manuals such as Inbau's *Criminal Interrogation and Confession*.

James B. Given analyzes the inquisition in one French region in order to develop a sociology of medieval politics. Established in the early thirteenth century to combat widespread popular heresy, inquisitorial tribunals identified, prosecuted, and punished heretics and their supporters. The inquisition in Languedoc was the best documented of these tribunals because the inquisitors aggressively used the developing techniques of writing and record keeping to build cases and extract confessions. Using a Marxist and Foucauldian approach, Given focuses on three inquiries: what techniques of investigation, interrogation, and punishment the inquisitors worked out in the course of their struggle against heresy; how the people of Languedoc responded to the activities of the inquisitors; and what aspects of social organization in Languedoc either facilitated or constrained the work of the inquisitors. Punishments not only inflicted suffering and humiliation on those condemned, he argues, but also served as theatrical instruction for the rest of society about the terrible price of transgression. Through a careful pursuit of these inquiries, Given elucidates medieval society's contribution to the modern apparatus of power.

"A powerful book. . . . Expertly researched . . . frequently insightful and wonderfully discussable. I welcome it with enthusiasm." Robert Lerner, *The Medieval* "A well-written and fascinating analysis of the power structure (and the meaning of power) of the ecclesiastical inquisition in southern France." *Virginia Quarterly* "This is the first serious attempt ever made by a historian to get behind the documents and study the sociopolitical context within which the Inquisition operated. Given brings to bear not only his own deep knowledge of medieval history but also extensive reading in modern social history and sociology. With these insights, he has produced a highly sophisticated and convincing analysis of the role of the medieval Inquest within its social context. . . . This study is brilliant; it is superbly researched, carefully constructed, and lucidly written." Henry Kamen, *American Historical*, April, 1999. "A readable and interesting account of the grim determination and efficiency with which the inquisitors in southern France carried out their jobs. They succeeded surprisingly well in their task. Given does not assess the justness of their inquisitorial enterprise, only its working mechanism." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* "A strongly focused and accessible book . . . fluently and clearly written and a joy to read. . . . This is a neat, disciplined, and authoritative study, an enjoyable and worthwhile addition which earns its place in an already crowded field. . . . A rewarding and fascinating read." *Journal of Religious History* "Given's approach is new and provides an unassumingly theorised but nuanced account of inquisitorial activity and the sometimes unexpected, indeed unwanted, outcomes of the inquisitors' labours. . . . I thoroughly enjoyed *Inquisition and Medieval Society*. It is well-written and full of lively examples, and Given's three-pronged approach to the inquisition redresses some of the inadequacies of earlier top-down accounts. I find his use of various sociological theories fruitful, and appreciate such a historical monograph which . . . provides a model of the integration of theory and empirical research." Kathleen Troup, University of Waikato, Pareragon. July 1999. "A book of exceptional scholarly merit that adds considerably to our detailed knowledge of the inquisitorial

office."Ed Peters, University of Pennsylvania