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Carlo Ginzburg

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The Cheese and the Worms is a study of the popular culture in the sixteenth century as seen through the eyes of one man, a miller brought to trial during the Inquisition. Carlo Ginzburg uses the trial records of Domenico Scandella, a miller also known as Menocchio, to show how one person responded to the confusing political and religious conditions of his time. For a common miller, Menocchio was surprisingly literate. In his trial testimony he made

references to more than a dozen books, including the Bible, Boccaccio's Decameron, Mandeville's Travels, and a "mysterious" book that may have been the Koran. And what he read he recast in terms familiar to him, as in his own version of the creation: "All was chaos, that is earth, air, water, and fire were mixed together; and of that bulk a mass formed just as cheese is made out of milk and worms appeared in it, and these were the angels."

A wonderful book... Ginzburg is a historian with an insatiable curiosity, who pursues even the faintest of clues with all the zest of a born detective until every fragment of evidence can be fitted into place. The work of reconstruction is brilliant, the writing superbly readable, and by the end of the book the reader who has followed Dr. Ginzburg in his wanderings through the labyrinthine mind of the miller of the Friuli will take leave of this strange and quirky old man with genuine regret. (J. H. Elliott New York of Books) Ginzburg has excavated a marvelous and melancholy tale. Lay readers know that historical work of this order requires formidable skills and dogged research... Ginzburg's discovery of Menocchio is a dazzling entry into the historical world of popular culture. (Lauro Martines Washington Post) Language Notes Text: English, Italian (translation) About the Author Carlo Ginzburg is a professor at Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Italy, and the recipient of the prestigious International Balzan Prize. He is author of *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century* and *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, also published by Johns Hopkins.