

ity, & love where there is money as well as where there is none ... [and in a postscript] ... I perceive I have not told you the womans [sic] name, which thing is enough with some to say matrimony makes men mad. But I had rather acknowledg[e] my error than write this over again. Know ye therefore, in all earnestness, that I am neither marryd [sic] nor about to marry: but verily think I am as / good as\ married [sic] that is, better than married. How these reports are raised about me I cannot imagine. Almost every week I am likened ... to one body or other, widows old & young, maidens rich & poor, fair & foul (155-55).

No wife, in evidence, it would seem. His will provides for only his “kinswoman Mistress Mary Hales.” His sister-in-law receives his diamond ring. Relatives, friends, the poor, and those who have served him in some capacity during his life are recipients of other personal effects or monetary portions.

Buried on the property on which he spent most of his later years, the grounds of the rectory, beneath a memorial in which those he touched during his life testified to his charitable nature, George Davenport takes his final rest. Yet, he lives on in his letters, which chronicle one man’s everyday life in a small corner of England, within the broader context of the country as a whole. The political and religious transformation of the late seventeenth century and the occasional intellectual musings of an educated, well-connected cleric are offered to the reader in this well-structured collection, *The Letters of George Davenport 1651-1677*.

Federico Barbierato. *The Inquisitor in the Hat Shop. Inquisition, Forbidden Books and Unbelief in Early Modern Venice*. London: Ashgate, 2012. xxxiii + 396 pp. \$124.95. Review by R. BURR LITCHFIELD, BROWN UNIVERSITY.

This erudite and detailed book is a discussion of popular anti-religious opinion in Venice in the years 1640-1740, the period of the early Enlightenment. It is based on records of the local inquisition. The Venetian Republic declared against irreligion and blasphemy,

and condemned Protestantism in the 1560s, but the main agent of investigation was the ecclesiastical inquisition. The Church in Venice maintained some independence from Rome, but it enforced the decrees of the Council of Trent and individuals supporting claims of Venetian independence (as in works of Paolo Sarpi) sometimes fell under suspicion. All kinds of licentiousness were sought out: claims of the mortality of the soul, of the absolute freedom of natural instincts (including sex), of denial of the existence of hell and punishment after death, of the universal nature of moral codes, of miracles, and the concept that religion was a man-made product used for political ends. Anti-religious opinion was not new in sixteenth-century Venice, but it heightened with the emergence of Protestantism, progressing from discussion of Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anti-Baptism at the start of the period, to Quietism, libertinism and outright atheism later. This subject, with the exception of Carlo Ginsburg's study of Menocchio in Friuli (*The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* [1976, Eng. tr. 1980]) has been limited mostly to isolated intellectuals, giving the impression that the phenomenon was sporadic and socially limited. This was not true of Venice.

The book is organized topically rather than chronologically, beginning with discussion of sites in the city where subversive groups were found: reading groups, assemblies (including performances of the *Commedia dell'Arte*), inns, shops of copyists, gazetteers, booksellers, barber shops, coffee houses (new in the 1660s), foreign embassies, churches and convents, the ghetto, the University of Padova. Given the heterogeneous nature of the population, the constant passage of individuals from Venice's mainland and over-seas empire, and the many foreign visitors, the inquisition had a difficult task. We are not told precisely how it operated. The tribunal met twice a week, operated partly through informers, and its sentences could range from warnings to imprisonment. We are not told precisely the number of cases, but judging from the many examples cited they were numerous and the author asserts that through time more and more individuals became involved. Here we have Placido Gaeta in 1668, a blind beggar from Messina, who was reported to espouse the transmigration of souls: "there is no hell ... no purgatory ... there is no fire and ... sometimes God sends souls into streets, brothels, and the bellies of animals" (70).

Political developments evoked comment during the Turkish wars of the seventeenth century and others after. Around 1650 Francesco Mattei, former chancellor of the Patriarch of Venice, had stated “that God ‘doesn’t look after us any more ... by praying to Mohammed the Turks obtain victories against the Christians, and every day the rest of us pray the litanies, the body of Christ is displayed ... the defeats continue ... the devil works more miracles than God” (162). Convents were not exempt. In 1701, Sister Cecilia Serati, a Venetian nun from Ferrara, confessed. “Since her childhood ... she had denied the immortality of the soul, the presence of God in the Eucharist, and the remission of sins ... and she had ‘allowed people made invisible during the night by the work of the devil to enter the cloistered area, with whom I’ve been having impure relations for about twelve years” (286-287). Later in the eighteenth century we hear of the trial of a priest, Giuseppe Zanchi, who was reported by a coffee-house keeper in 1761. He “rejected almost everything concerned with religion and supported sexual libertinism....’ By abandoning his wife when he was fed up with her, the husband could go and take another wife, and the same way the wife ... without committing a sin” (187). One of his associates was Giacomo Casanova. But when the inquisition set out to find Casanova he was found to have left Venetian territory.

Prohibited books were objects of interest: a vernacular translation of Lucretius’ atomistic *De rerum natura* (the Latin original was thought ‘safe’), the notoriously homoerotic *Alcibiade fanciullo a scola* (written by a Venetian but published in Amsterdam), and Pierre Bayle’s *Dictionnaire* among others. Barbierato’s book concludes with the case of Bortolo Zorzi and the group of “free metaphysicians” that met in his hat shop in the 1730s. He was accused by a priest in 1739, thought to be a Free Mason (although Masonry had not yet arrived in Venice), and sentenced to four years in prison. In an appendix we find a list of the 71 suspicious books confiscated from Zorzi’s library. The author supplies no conclusion to his work, but we might surmise that if popular libertine opinion had progressed elsewhere as far as it had in Venice during this period there was ample foundation for acceptance of the later high Enlightenment.