

the text's intentions.

Chakravarty's approach is rooted in an admirable and laudable belief that the seemingly "quotidian" aspects of the period offer overlooked evidence. A reader might find themselves often thinking about more obvious works that might play a role (possibly a larger one) in the shaping of English notions of slavery. The Bible would have been as likely a source to encounter images of slavery and service as *Paradise Lost*, and would have been far wider reaching than Terence, but it is conspicuously absent (perhaps the most theological text analyzed is a brief section of the *Book of Common Prayer*).

Still, the omission of such works falls in line with Chakravarty's call "that we must disorient and disrupt the spaces and places where we search for the archives and genealogies of slavery" (49). The approach, which stands almost as a dare to colleagues, will hopefully inspire more researchers to follow the approach of *Fictions of Consent* to go off the well-trod path.

In sum, *Fictions of Consent* is a provocative, wide-ranging analysis that lays down a solid foundation for those curious about servitude and slavery in the period. It offers compelling close readings of canonical literature and historical texts. I predict its taxonomies will direct the way scholars and students recognize the kinds of service they see depicted in early modern works, and that Chakravarty's framework will generate new curiosity for the "quotidian" and lead to greater scrutiny of how the familiar might capture unexpected fossils in the evolution of English notions of race.

Frank Sobiech. *Jesuit Prison Ministry in the Witch Trials of the Holy Roman Empire: Friedrich Spee SJ and his Cautio Criminalis (1631)*. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2019. xii + 539 pp. + 17 illus. + 2 maps. €60.00. Review by JONATHAN DURRANT, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES.

Frank Sobiech frames his study of Jesuit prison ministry to incarcerated witch-suspects as a multidisciplinary investigation into one of the most well-known works written about witchcraft in the early modern period, Friedrich Spee's *Cautio Criminalis* (1631). It

weaves biography and the histories of the Society of Jesus, spirituality, theology, law and witch persecution into a compelling study of the contemporary and historical importance of Spee's critique of witchcraft trials. In doing so, Sobiech demonstrates why Spee's intervention appeared only towards the end of the major witch-hunts in Germany, most of which ended in about 1630, and why *Cautio Criminalis* was a problematic text not simply for those credulous of witchcraft stories but also for members of his own congregation in its Upper and Lower Rhenish provinces. Furthermore, Sobiech's use of Jesuit circulars (*Litterae annuae*) and expert opinions sheds light on practices which help us understand why there was little sustained theological opposition to witchcraft trials in early seventeenth-century Catholic Germany and why Jesuits in Rome did not follow their German confreres and advocate for witch prosecution there.

*Jesuit Prison Ministry in the Witch Trials of the Holy Roman Empire* comprises five parts. Following the first part (the Introduction), we are provided with a biography of Friedrich Spee that focuses on his education and life in the Society of Jesus, and a lengthy chapter detailing the publication of the two earliest editions of *Cautio Criminalis*, the first in Rinteln in 1631 without Spee's knowledge, the second in Cologne in 1632 supervised in part by the author. Part III, the largest part, focuses on the prison ministry of the Rhenish Jesuits up to the publication of *Cautio Criminalis* and the influence of that ministry on Spee's doubts. The fourth part examines the reception of *Cautio Criminalis* from Spee's death in 1635 to the twentieth century and the difficulties securing an official commemoration of the author in the Society of Jesus. The final part summarises the conclusions of the study and suggests some research desiderata. Two appendices provide useful transcriptions and translations of original Latin manuscript reports, one a prison visitor's eyewitness account of the last hours of a condemned witch from 1628, the other a set of expert opinions relating to another case of 1629.

As Sobiech observes, the tendency in the historiography of the Society of Jesus to emphasise the Jesuits' educational works, based on their practice in many schools and universities, neglects the pastoral ministry to which they were assigned by Catholic territorial leaders in the Holy Roman Empire. This ministry brought them into close

contact with the ill and the incarcerated, including witch-suspects, providing them with a depth of experience of the human condition that few others could gain. Despite a professed desire to be sent to India as a missionary, Spee was retained in educational and pastoral roles in the Rhenish province and his experiences of both had a profound impact on how he viewed witch-suspects and the way they were interrogated. The regular *Annuae* issued by Jesuit houses and sent to Rome by way of the provincialate enable Sobiech to evaluate the orthodoxy of Spee's views as they record the experiences of many Jesuit prison visitors who ministered to condemned witches. First, however, he uses Spee's biography to try to tell us something of his character.

Most of the biography, lacking sufficiently robust sources, is factual when it comes to Spee's progress and appointments within the Society, but speculative when it comes to Spee's character. This chapter could have been more concise and more revealing of Spee's views; the summary of the chapter in Part V is more to the point. It is important to know that he ministered to the sick and prisoners and held several teaching positions, and that the Society's Lutheran enemies in Hildesheim tried to murder him because he had become involved in reconversion there. The most we can really gain from the chapter about Spee's character up to 1629, however, is that he was taught by Peter Cremer whose views on witchcraft and other matters may have influenced his own, that he was an above-average student, that he was not shy of writing to the Superior General Vitelleschi, mostly unsuccessfully, to promote his causes, and that it was claimed that he had "peculiar opinions on poverty and other matters" (88). Unfortunately, Sobiech's speculation does not extend to what these peculiar opinions might have been. In 1630, however, as Sobiech introduces the matter in Chapter 4, Spee seems to have strayed close enough to the mystical spiritualities of some French Jesuits that Vitelleschi first ordered that he remain unprofessed until he explained his claim that "he follows the Gospel in his way of thinking and living" (94) and then suggested that removal from the professorship of moral theology at Paderborn should be considered because he was "less prudent in the selection of opinions" (95). For speaking too frankly, Spee was demoted to father confessor. It is here that we finally reach the character who was prepared to write and

given time to finish, but not publish, *Cautio Criminalis*. A condensed biography might have got the reader to this point sooner.

Part III is the most rewarding of the study. Chapter 5 takes the reader into the prison by way of the Jesuit *Annuae*. Generally, historians of witchcraft only get glimpses into the prison incidentally when events happened there that were reported in the torture chamber, for example, succour offered to the imprisoned witch-suspects by their relatives or the occasional attempt to escape. The *Annuae*, alongside expert opinions, sermons and other sources, prove a rich source of Jesuit opinion and activity for Sobiech. Across the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, they detail encounters between Jesuit prison visitors and suspected witches, mainly at the point of spiritual confession as the Jesuits attempted to bring the condemned witches back to God before they were executed. Sobiech makes good use of these texts to establish the deeply entrenched orthodox Jesuit position in the Rhenish provinces, that witchcraft existed and should be punished by death even if a witch confessed and expressed contrition, contrasting it with their less convinced or wholly uninterested brothers in Rome.

In the *Annuae*, some of the condemned witches remained defiant, others despaired and attempted suicide, and many more professed to go to their executions gladly having confessed their crimes and their sins. This last group gives one pause for thought. In reading this lengthy chapter (143 pages), the lack of sustained cross-referencing with the interrogation transcripts becomes something of an issue. To anyone who has spent months reading harrowing transcript after transcript, the Jesuit reports of spiritual success just don't ring true. Sobiech does check the *Annuae* against the verdicts, where that is possible. The verdicts were, however, summaries of the crimes, spiritual and temporal, confessed by the condemned witches, designed to be read out to the spectators watching the executions. Inevitably, they corresponded to the spiritual confessions reported in the *Annuae*. They performed much the same function, too, justifying the action and edifying the audience. Within the Society of Jesus, one suspects that the reports of witches heading towards execution gladly, together with accounts of the efficacy of the *Agnus Dei*, were carefully edited to reflect well on the Jesuits. The same may be said

of the accounts of those who refused to confess or despaired; it was not the Jesuits' fault if they could not bring the condemned to a satisfactory state as they faced death. Sobiech does recognise these textual problems, but only in the further summary of the argument in the final part. Here, he amplifies a point made less effectively in Chapter 5, that the Jesuit reports "were heavily influenced by their theatre work" (381) and that they "possessed an expert eye for stage-worthy scenarios and the surreal" (382).

Chapter 5 is important because it emphasises the huge and courageous task that Friedrich Spee set himself in criticising the witchcraft interrogations. The weight of theological opinion and entrenched practice in the German provinces was against him, now a mere father confessor. Spee was not alone, of course, in his unease at what he was doing and witnessing and Sobiech is careful to locate his allies. Even so, it was a dangerous undertaking, to his soul and his faith as much as his position in the Society. Sobiech makes a striking observation in Chapter 6 that Spee's faith may well have been severely tested, quoting from another of Spee's works, the *Güldenes Tugend-Buch*: "Oh God, what atrocity is this? What kind of justice is this? [...] Oh you very mildest Lord Jesus, how can you bear that your creatures are tormented so despicably?" (318). The rest of Chapter 6 explains how Spee's own prison ministry and what he would have heard of the experiences of others when the *Annuae* were read out in the Jesuit houses informed his writing of *Cautio Criminalis*. The context of the work goes beyond Spee's disgust at his own experience to the very heart of Jesuit theology and practice. Rather than being isolated from the latter, Sobiech demonstrates that Spee was fully engaged with it, alongside others. The difference was that *Cautio Criminalis* did not remain a manuscript text for discussion within the Society but found its way into print, unauthorised by Spee or his superiors.

Part IV picks up where many discussions of Spee and his *Cautio Criminalis* leave off and plots their influence on German Jesuit practice when it came to witchcraft. It is all too easy turn the coincidence of the end of the major German witch persecutions (c.1630), the publication of the first and second editions of *Cautio Criminalis* (1631 and 1632) and Spee's death (1635) into the end of the story.

But witchcraft trials continued in Germany and Jesuits continued to minister to suspected witches in prison. In Chapter 7, Sobiech shows how Spee's criticisms infiltrated the Society's opinions on witchcraft trials over the rest of the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries, if not always in a smooth fashion; in Chapter 8, he reports how Spee became reconciled to the Society posthumously through attempts to give him official commemoration. Sobiech ends Chapter 7, however, with an extraordinary example of the text's continuing importance. In 1939, a new German translation of *Cautio Criminalis* by Joachim-Friedrich Ritter was published with blurb quoting a review in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* noting its contemporary significance. That contemporary significance was the criminal trial in Munich of Walter Hildmann for stating that "the state of today is less interested in justice than it is in power" (351–352).

The final part of Sobiech's book summarises significant elements of the preceding chapters and offers some suggestions for further research. That some of the summary could have gone in the relevant chapters is fundamentally an editorial issue rather than a criticism of the argument. The scholarship is impressive as is the use of the Society's *Annuae*, and there is much to learn about Friedrich Spee and Jesuit prison ministry that enriches our knowledge of witchcraft experience in early modern Germany. Sobiech has also opened up an area of scholarship that should be extended to the Jesuits' Upper German province and, in keeping with Sobiech's multidisciplinary approach, will reinvigorate the history of the Jesuits in their German provinces, the intellectual history of witchcraft in Germany and, potentially, the history of incarceration in the early modern period.

Thomas Festa and David Ainsworth, eds. *Locating Milton: Places and Perspectives*. Clemson, SC: Clemson University Press, 2021. x + 231 pp. + 8 illus. \$120. Review by JASON A. KERR, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.

The essays in this book emerge (in expanded form) from the 2017 Conference on John Milton held in Birmingham, Alabama—the first time that the conference was held at a site other than its birthplace