on the twin discourses of theology and music as complementary ways of knowing. A generous sprinkling of maps, diagrams, figures, tables, poem examples, and music examples richly support Cashner's stimulating discussion.

Cashner combines forensic musical and textual analysis to reveal the villancico as an unexpected site for theological discourse and in doing so opens the way for the much more comprehensive study of music as theology in the vast Spanish empire that his title invites. One is left wondering if a similar methodology applied to the unstudied repertories of music composed in and for Jesuit colleges and missions might reveal further insights into the multiple relationships between music and theology.

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Barbara Fuchs and Mercedes García-Arenal, eds.

The Quest for Certainty in Early Modern Europe: From Inquisition to Inquiry, 1550–1700. Toronto/ Los Angeles: University of Toronto Press/ UCLA, 2020. Pp. 294. Hb, CA$ 56.25.

Pandemics typically produce uncertainty and generate fake news: as we men and women of the twenty-first century know only too well in the difficult times we are going through. But what was the situation in Spain when the plague of 1596 arrived? Ruth Mackay gives us the answer in one essay in this volume (105–31), allowing us to feel at first hand the panic that overwhelmed the authorities and the doctors, who often lied about the real number of victims and the cause of their deaths, in order to safeguard the economies of cities like Burgos and Bilbao, while having to grapple with faked safe-conducts and unreliable tax returns. Theologians like the Jesuit Pedro Ribadeneyra would talk of a "useful lie" (*mendacium officiosum*), when justifying the choices made by authorities in circumstances where true and false were easily confused, notwithstanding the claims to veracity of numerous documents signed in the presence of the ubiquitous notaries. As García-Arenal explains in her introduction to this collection that originated in a seminar held in Los Angeles in 2016, you can study the history of scepticism by examining the arguments of the philosophers, as Richard Popkin has done elsewhere (*The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*, 1st ed. [Assen: Van Gorcum,

1960]), adopting a traditional research approach. Alternatively, you can try to describe the climate of uncertainty that followed forced baptisms, the discovery of new worlds, and the religious crisis that gripped the sixteenth century through a series of contemporary texts and exemplary cases, eschewing a teleological vision of modernity. How were the growing doubts provoked by the rapid changes with which the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dealt? How could the truth be discerned and authenticated in an era of controversies? And, more specifically, what was occurring in the world of Iberian Catholicism, a world that has hitherto remained unexplored as historians investigate the European crisis of conscience in the early modern age? How did theology, medicine, law, natural science, exegesis and literature respond to the rising demand for credibility and truth? All nine essays in this volume—which in part follows up an earlier book also edited by García-Arenal, with Stefania Pastore (*From Doubt to Unbelief: Forms of Scepticism in the Iberian World* [Cambridge: Legenda, 2019]—adopt an approach we could call case-based, a choice that renders the individual articles particularly intriguing, even if the theme is not always developed in a coherent manner. Some of these papers, in fact, focus on the problem of truth and falsity, rather than the demand for certainty and the birth of probabilism.

Some contributions focus on specific texts. For example, Barbara Fuchs studies Mateo Alemán's picaresque novella *Guzmán de Alfarache*, which satirically deconstructs the trust mechanisms that supposedly underwrote the financial markets of the time, and the genealogical inquiries that investigated *limpieza de sangre* (27–49). Fernando Rodríguez Mediano concentrates on the Dominican Melchor Cano's *De locis theologicis*, which tried to ground the truth of the Catholic faith not only in sacred but also in profane history (221–41). A third example is Carlos Cañete's study of Isaac La Peyrère and the Pre-Adamites, which demonstrates the ambiguity of an "evolutionist" reading of the Scriptures and of human history intended both to include minorities and to incorporate ethnic/religious differences under the aegis of a single Christian political order (specifically a French one, 242–72).

Other contributors instead address specific contexts and questions on the border between certainty and probability. Paul M. Johnson, following in the footsteps of Richard Kagan and Abigal Dyer (*Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and other Heretics* [Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004]) or James Amelang (*The Flight of Icarus: Artisan Autobiography in Early Modern Europe* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998]), reflects on the gestures (and not only on the words) of those accused by the Spanish Inquisition that demanded that they supply details of their lives at the beginning of their trials. Thus the so-called Faith Tribunals, which condemned

theatrical spectacles while dramatizing public trials in the city squares, appeared themselves a form of theatre in which sincerity of the accused and the truth itself could be reached by studying emotions and movements of the body, as prescribed in the inquisitors' manuals (50–79). María L. López Terrada tackles the history of popular healers, showing how the truth about the origins of non-natural diseases and the efficacy of "unofficial" remedies could be multiform: the truth of learned physicians and that of theologians, that of healers, that of the wider community looking for answers to its anxieties about physical wellbeing (80–104). Stefania Tutino describes the medical/theological problems arising out of a section of the clergy's determination to baptise foetuses, and the doubts that continued to trouble the Roman Church regarding the moment when the soul was injected into the unborn child, highlighting how debates over ensoulment and abortion constituted a field apart in which the probabilism of the seventeenth through to the nineteenth century was able to flex its muscles to the extent of shifting the traditional stances of theologians and canon lawyers (198–220). Katie Stirling-Harris, in the most appealing essay (159–197), taking her cue from the story of the theft of the neglected bones of St. John of Matha, founder of the Trinitarian Order, spirited from Rome to Madrid in 1665, and subsequently confiscated by the papal nuncio who was conducting an inquiry into the case, analyzes the challenge of authenticating relics in the baroque period. In the wake of Protestant mockery of Catholic "superstitions" and the discovery of the supposed remains of the early martyrs in the catacombs of Rome, the issue of the authenticity of relics, especially of ancient ones, became as pressing as the need to recognize new saints, to authenticate miracles, and to rewrite ecclesiastical history, traditional hagiography, and martyrologies. In fact, as with the processes of beatification and canonization, the church was responding to the need to possess irrefutable proofs and to control devotion by refining the legal procedures adopted by the congregations of the curia. Nonetheless, in their investigation of the removal of John of Matha's remains, the experts called upon to deliver an opinion—unanimous in favor of recognizing their authenticity—appealed to theology rather than to law and to historical proofs, reaffirming the legitimacy of basing a not wholly substantiated devotion on mere "moral certainty": a category tracing back to writings of Jean Gerson that the Jesuit Jean Ferrand had deployed in his authoritative 1647 disquisition on relics. A human truth, in short, founded on probability, different from metaphysical or historical truth, could stand in for absolute certainty even in the worship of martyrs, saints, and relics: an area in which the need of discernment had become, by the seventeenth century, increasingly urgent.

The Jesuits also make an appearance in Javier Patiño Loira's essay (132–56), which shows how the Society of Jesus embraced the teaching of Huarte de San Juan, whose *Examen de ingenios* was adapted by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino. In selecting candidates to welcome into their colleges, Jesuits, like Huarte, were content to assess the talents of candidates on the basis of external indicators, on physiognomy, and presumed propensities, as being a sound basis for pointing a potential recruit towards the tasks for which they were best suited. Unlike Huarte, however, they abjured the natural determinism that caused the censoring of the Spaniard's treatise, and—as can be seen from the three inaugural speeches for the Roman College's courses between 1596 and 1617 as analyzed by Patiño Loira—over time they increasingly concentrated on directing the talents of future members of the Society to specialized areas because they feared the aspiration to a knowledge without circumscribed limits, which had been so much a part of the humanist project, to which indeed Huarte was an heir. In the eyes of the young Jesuits' spiritual guides, "know thyself" meant accepting limits and the authority of the superiors; renouncing doubt and the unchecked thirst for knowledge in exchange for security of finding their right place in the Society and in an outside world beset with much greater uncertainty.

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Carlo Ginzburg with Lucio Biasiori, eds.
A Historical Approach to Casuistry: Norms and Exceptions in a Comparative Perspective. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Pp. xx + 353. Pb, £20.29.

In Florence during December 2014, an international conference was held entitled, "Norms and Exceptions. A Comparative Approach to Casuistry" that was coordinated by Carlo Ginzburg. The conference addressed the question "To what extent is a comparative approach to casuistry – in the broad sense of the term – possible?" To answer the question the papers focused on specific cases. These isolated cases would present what Ginzburg calls the "*mise en abîme*" (xvi), the setting in an abyss, wherein the case would not be generalized but treated in its own specificity. Ginzburg provides exactly that inasmuch as each of the fourteen cases are so unique that one cannot but feel one is in *Alice in Wonderland* curiously going down the rabbit hole in each instance. Having