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Project Proposal

Historians have shed much ink trying to account for the rise and nature of the so-called “persecuting society” in the Late Middle Ages, at its zenith with the Early Modern Spanish Inquisition. This scholarship has attributed this rise to a variety of elements, which range from broad social changes to the inquisitorial mentality among the religious Orders active in this persecution, while social historians document the place of inquisition within the broader trajectory of relations between Christians and religious others. Missing from these varied studies is the role played by one fundamental psycho-social aspect structuring religious ideology and social behavior: ideals of gendered behavior, particularly perceptions of masculine behavior. Gender theorists, anthropologists, and historians, however, have highlighted the foundational nature of gendered identity and demonstrated the extent to which late medieval and Early Modern men harbored deeply rooted ideas of what it meant to be a man, ideas which structured medieval social relations and individual actions. My research, which investigates the link between masculine identity and inquisitorial action, thus provides a new perspective on the scholarly debate surrounding the causes of religious persecution in late medieval and Early Modern Europe.

At the forefront of these debates about religious persecution lurks the sinister figure of the Dominican inquisitor. Indeed, anti-heretical preaching was a central component of the larger Dominican vocational dedication to preaching and the care of souls and was pursued by the Order’s earliest members. Boosted by the canonization of the Dominican preacher Peter of Verona, who was killed by heretics in response to his inquisitorial responsibilities, the Order’s mission became increasingly enmeshed with developing inquisitorial structures, eventually placing Dominicans at the helm of inquisitorial operations throughout Europe. Famed Early Modern Dominicans such as Tomás de Torquemada worked diligently to prosecute heretics and Judaizing Christians, while Vincent Ferrer engaged in preaching campaigns that produced anti-Jewish legislation and violence. In short, Dominican preachers and inquisitors pursued anti-heretical activity with a zeal that far surpassed efforts made by any of their monastic predecessors. The historical arguments accounting for this unprecedented dedication to inquisitorial activity among Dominican friars are variegated and complex, ranging from a desire for power to the fundamental nature of the Christian worldview. Through investigation of masculine models found in a wide variety of late medieval and Early Modern Dominican texts, archival documentation of Dominican activities, and lay sources on gendered models, my monograph, *Zeal for Souls: Masculinity and Inquisition in the Dominican Vocation, 1200-1500*, argues that the nature and intensity of Dominican anti-heretical behavior was a direct product of the increasing alignment between the Order’s male religious vocation and lay models of masculine behavior.

The first section of the monograph deals with the gendered nature of the fundamental tenets of Dominican vocation within the context of prior monastic models. Specifically, it analyzes the writings of the earliest Dominican leaders active in constructing the Order’s religious vocation. Chapter one traces the transition from “love for God” as the central

vocational prerogative of previous monastic models to the “zeal for souls” undergirding Dominican pastoral and the close association of the Dominican model with ideas of masculinity. The second chapter looks at the basic behavioral model presented to Dominican friars through the literary, historical, and pastoral representations of the Order’s founding saint. Together, they argue that these fundamental ideological and behavioral constructs closely aligned the Dominican vocation with secular models of male behavior and, in doing so, reoriented earlier vocational models that revolved around the self-conscious rejection of lay culture. The result of this process was an order of active preachers whose vocation involved applying masculine behavioral models, including governance, public performance, and violent action, to the eradication sin.

The second section of the book turns to the development of specific aspects of the Dominican behavioral models and their impact on the concrete actions taken by individual friars as indicated by legal, narrative, and judicial records from 1200-1500. Chapter three explores the subjugation of “feminized” conventual practice to more active vocational prerogatives such as preaching and inquisitorial work in relation to evidence of “misbehaving” friars in local communities. Chapter four looks at the conversion of intellectual achievement into a masculinized vocational model expressed through anti-heretical debate, while chapter five turns to the Dominican model of the preacher as a Christian patriarch in relation to Dominican interactions with municipal governments in the regulation of sin. The final chapter compares Dominican representations of inquisitorial work to literary models of heroic masculinity as actualized in Dominican anti-Jewish activities. Through these relatively discrete studies of individual aspects of Dominican vocation, the book explores the structuring role played by masculinity in the construction of religious vocation and justification of corporate religious persecution in late medieval and Early Modern Europe.

Expanding upon research conducted for my 2015 dissertation, which focused on ideological representations of masculinity in Dominican vocational texts, the monograph reorients this material toward the influence of these ideological models on the lived behaviors of friars engaged in pastoral work. This revision includes additional archival and manuscript research documenting Dominican activities in European communities, which was completed with funding from the Medieval Academy of America and the American Historical Association, documentation which has also provided the basis for an article about Vincent Ferrer published in *Speculum* and an article currently under review about love in the early Dominican Order. I have also completed a draft of the book’s introduction and first chapter, completed research and initial edits of subsequent chapters, and will have fully completed drafts of the second and third chapters by August 2018. I am currently in consultation with Cornell University Press regarding submission of the entire manuscript for publication by April 2019.

The final three chapters, to be completed during the tenure of the Dan David Post-Doctoral Fellowship, would benefit greatly from the academic environment at Tel Aviv University. These chapters, which focus on Dominican activities in the late medieval and Early Modern period as an extension of monastic identity, would be enriched by Professor Tamar Herzig’s expertise on the social context of Dominican inquisitorial activities, preaching, and gender, and Professor Aviad Kleinberg’s focus on the relationship between sanctity and audience. In addition, chapter four’s discussion on the scholarly *habitus* of Dominican friars engages with

the work of Professor Gadi Algazi, while Professor Ron Barkai's research on the image and treatment of religious minorities in Iberia and Professor Benjamin Arbel's work on Jewish-Venetian interaction would provide insight into the nature of Dominican involvement in these interaction, the subject of the monograph's sixth chapter. I would likewise be prepared to participate in the School of History's interdisciplinary workshop on "Contextualizing the Self" from the perspective of the intersections between gender and religious identity construction in late medieval and Early Modern Europe, discussion which would contribute to the book's methodological focus on gendered religious identity formation. Thus, engagement with the scholarly community at Tel Aviv University would contribute greatly to the completion of this monograph which will, upon completion, bridge scholarly conversations about the process of religious identity formation and social understandings of masculinity so as to provide a critical vantage point from which to view medieval European religious persecution.