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Review Of "First Among Friends: George Fox And The Creation Of Quakerism" By H. L. Ingle And "Margaret Fell And The Rise Of Quakerism" By B. Y. Kunze

J. William Frost
Swarthmore College

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Recommended Citation

J. William Frost. (1995). "Review Of "First Among Friends: George Fox And The Creation Of Quakerism" By H. L. Ingle And "Margaret Fell And The Rise Of Quakerism" By B. Y. Kunze". *Church History*. Volume 64, Issue 2. 293-297. DOI: 10.2307/3167942
<https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-religion/114>

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post-Tridentine parish. Observations about Catholic catechetical progress, confraternities, and religious images are similarly well-documented and provide the reader with access to archival materials not previously discussed.

Nalle is a careful writer, and each chapter contains a brief conclusion to tie together the wealth of evidence she has amassed. Many of these conclusions will be discussed for some time in the ongoing scholarly interpretation of Counter-Reformation Spain, especially Nalle's observation that in Cuenca the Pre-Reform "fell on infertile ground" and "most of the usual accusations leveled against either the clergy or the laity in 1480 still held true in 1540" (p. 30). She suggests that the rise of Protestantism lent an urgency to the reforms which otherwise may not have touched the diocese (see p. 31). Also provocative—if perhaps overstated—are Nalle's conclusions that religious reforms of the sixteenth century, when coupled with demographic and economic problems in the seventeenth, turned Cuenca into "a vast monument for the dead" (p. 204). Scholars must at least reckon with her suggestion that "the reallocation of Cuenca's dwindling economic resources to the service of the dead may well have contributed to the decline of the city as well as to the impoverishment of its spiritual life" (p. 171).

Nalle's careful and thorough work with details—which can make the book a somewhat laborious read—culminate in a brief "epilogue" which could use more punch. In it she identifies four forces of renewal and change in the Counter-Reformation Spain: consistent pressure from the monarchy and church authorities; the tension between authority and interiority, especially the "need for a more personal God"; "national identification" with Catholicism; and social crisis. She argues that the "demographic crisis of the entire first quarter of the seventeenth century, coupled with economic hard times, reinforced both communitarian and individualistic aspects of sixteenth-century religious expression" (p. 208). After having documented so carefully the local manifestation of these forces, it is disappointing to see her understand Cuenca's failure to thrive in the seventeenth century as at least partially a result of "an earlier, resilient faith, the religion of preindustrial people dependent on the harsh and unpredictable land of Castile" (p. 210). Still, *God in La Mancha* will be a solid resource for hispanists and scholars of the Catholic Reformation for many years to come.

Xavier University
Cincinnati, Ohio

GILLIAN T. W. AHLGREN

First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism. By H. LARRY INGLE. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 407 pp. \$45.00. And *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism.* By BONNELYN YOUNG KUNZE. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994. xix + 327 pp. \$39.50.

George Fox, Margaret Fell, the origins of the Society of Friends, and the role of early Quaker women are not neglected historical topics. So the first

question to pose for these new biographies is whether there is substantial new information which significantly modifies existing scholarship. Both authors insist that previous studies of their subjects were hagiographic and needed updating in light of modern scholarship, so they set out to write biographies showing “warts and all.” And they found plenty of warts. Ingle’s Fox is normally “morose” and subject to depressions stemming from his inability for close introspection. He could not admit a mistake, had no sense of sin, and reacted imperiously to any challenge to his authority. Kunze’s Fell is more a domineering “Mother Superior” than gentle “Mother” of Quakerism, prepared to use courts in her pursuit of money from a fellow Quaker, conscious of her class superiority, and prepared to falsify history in order to exalt George Fox. Ingle agrees that Fox and Fell created a distorted history of the origins of the Friends so that they could control the present and future of the new religious movement. In spite of these character flaws, Ingle and Kunze see Fox and Fell as courageous and creative, pioneering new forms of spirituality and social life, and both authors eventually endorse an older scholarly perspective that stresses the overwhelming importance of Fox and Fell in creating, defining, and maintaining the Quaker movement.

The biographer of George Fox faces a dilemma: either to see Fox as a part of a movement and devote attention to many primary players or to focus on Fox as essential and define Quakerism through him. Ingle’s title reflects his conclusion that Fox was “First among Friends.” The book provides extensive background on Fox and his milieu—for example, there is a superb description of the *Sitz im Leben* of the towns the young Fox visited in the early 1640s after he left home searching for religious truth—but the achievements of others remain background. Although Ingle is properly skeptical of the sanitized tone of Fox’s memoirs, his chronological emphasis requires him to make his book almost a commentary on the *Journal*.

Reflecting perhaps Fox’s dismissal of formal theology, Ingle is not concerned with Fox’s originality or even with assessing his consistency over time. He dismisses earlier scholars’ seeking the source of Fox’s ideas as engaging in a “Quaker . . . parlor game.” The First Friend initially stressed an inward source of religious experience not requiring an outward priesthood, God’s judgment upon evil, and opposition to the tithe. He also preached millennialism, but Ingle wavers between interpreting the day of judgment as spiritualized, actual, present already, or soon to be realized. When pressed, Fox echoed Christian orthodoxy on the nature of Jesus, but in his preaching he downplayed the historical Jesus and the Trinity and stressed in docetic fashion the heavenly and inward Christ. Fox had insights and his epistles are a jumble of ideas reflecting his lack of higher education and preaching style, for he put down whatever came to mind with little concern for logical order. Fox originally assumed that each individual’s “private conversation with God,” the basis of his own mystical conversion experience, would harmonize

with those of other Quakers. Because Ingle did not compare Fox's ideas with those of other early Friends in order to see whether there were different emphases among early Friends, we do not ever learn if Fox's assumption was correct. During his attempt to control the threatened schism involving James Nayler in 1656, Fox learned that spiritual freedom could result in anarchy, and he then began to institutionalize group authority in monthly meetings. Ingle argues that Fox developed against Nayler an intolerant manner of handling potential rivals that he would use all his life. The First Friend loved religious controversy and believed that all who differed from him were apostate and damned. Indians he could respect, but not Presbyterians.

For Ingle, Fox's genius lay in the organizations he created to preserve individual revelation, even though those institutions disciplined or destroyed the spontaneity and creativity characteristic of early Friends. Like earlier historians of Quakerism, Ingle ends by supporting Fox's and the winning party's authoritarian tactics in the various schisms because, at a time of severe persecution, the survival of the Society of Friends was at stake. Ingle sympathizes with John Perrot, who refused to accept restraints on revelation. Yet he concludes that Fox had no alternative but to create a centralized organization with less local autonomy. The survival of the movement becomes more important to Ingle, as to Fox, than the original impulse for free revelation.

Historians have long divided the early history of Quakerism into phases, before and after 1660. Ingle argues that Fox's response to the Restoration was a gradual turning inward in religious emphasis. Before this, Friends had supported the Commonwealth and dreamed of overturning all society. Now out of disillusionment Fox stressed the internal spiritual basis of religion and personal purification. Fox, not just the second generation of aristocratic converts like Penn, Barclay, and Penington, changed Quakerism and inaugurated the age of quietism. The peace testimony was the first sign of the new emphasis. Before 1660 Quakers had allowed individual variation, and Fox approved of the magistrates' use of the sword against evil and rebellion, though he refrained from soldiering. Now Quakers renounced the sword on all occasions. Kunze makes Fell crucial in creating the new peace testimony; Ingle does not.

The book is at its best when Ingle fills in previously unknown details or recreates a scene. The previous pastor of Fox's village church had moved to become Nayler's parish priest. Fox had an independent income and so he could never be prosecuted as a sturdy beggar; the marriage between Fox and Fell was physically consummated. There are vivid descriptions of the horrendous prison conditions Fox experienced and their adverse effects on his health so that he was strangely passive by the 1680s and often seemed more an observer than an active shaper of Quakerism.

Margaret Fell Fox was the most prolific seventeenth-century Quaker woman writer, the only one whose collected writings were published. Of

Fell's forty-five tracts, thirty-nine were written in one thirteen-year period from 1655, when she was forty-one and a recent convert, until 1668, and she lived another thirty-four years. No one knows why she stopped publishing, since other activities continued. Kunze discovered a tract by Fell and utilized a newly found hostile account of a financial dispute with her steward, Quaker Thomas Rawlinson. These alone would not merit a full biography, but Kunze argued that Fell was important as a source for family and women's history because she exemplified the impact that Quakerism had on gentry life. Fell pioneered a new style of social relations.

Isabel Ross published in 1947 a well-researched but laudatory chronological biography; Kunze, by contrast, follows a topical approach, first discussing Fell's spiritual autobiography and family history and then analyzing domestic, economic, political, and religious activities with a final section entitled "Mental World." Kunze sees Quakerism as only one facet of this extraordinary woman's significance. She and other women converted to Quakerism because they had been excluded from positions of authority in the church and the new religion gave an opportunity to exhibit "gifts" outside the home. Fell's public activities for Quakerism and her later marriage to Fox cut across class lines and required a rethinking of the later meaning of friendships. Kunze argues that previous historians' use of the term "Mother" marginalized a woman who not only organized the Quaker movement, but also coordinated missionary activities, dispensed money, and wrote the most eloquent Quaker defense of women's ministry. She converted her household to Quakerism, saw that her daughters married Friends, successfully defended her legal rights to Swarthmoor Hall against her son, petitioned the king, lobbied Parliament, and ran an estate. Fell wrote the first Quaker epistle to convert the Jews, composed the first enunciation of the post-1660 Quaker peace testimony, provided the impetus to the creation of women's meetings, and helped define the tasks of women's meetings, particularly their role in charity and approving the applications for marriage of men and women. She braved the opposition of Wilkinson and Story to the establishing of women's meetings and supported George Fox in all challenges to his leadership. Long before their marriage, Fox and Fell worked in such harmony that together they shaped Quakerism.

Ingle and Kunze portray the early messages of Fell and Fox as similar and agree that both toned down their eschatological emphases in the 1660s, though differing slightly on date. They also agree that the marriage between Fox and Fell had its difficulties. Both also see Margaret Fell's crucial role in establishing Quaker women's meetings, defending Fox against schismatics, and in using her social position. Kunze argues that the patrician influence on Quaker life began with Fell, not Penn and Barclay, as she used her social rank as well as her piety to gain power. After 1680, as London became the crucial administrative center and Fox resided there, her influence waned.

Both of these books see their subjects as having an importance beyond Quakerism. They disagree as to how significant Margaret Fell was, with Ingle treating her as an important but not crucial figure. Kunze's linkage of the Fells to wider social history will enable scholars to juxtapose Margaret Fell with the Verneys and Ralph Joscelyn in assessing the evolution of the English family. Fell allegedly provides "a new paradigm of radical Protestant womanhood" not as prophetess but as minister. For Ingle, Fox carried the Protestant Reformation to its logical culmination, supported revolution and individualism, and helped inaugurate a new age of freedom and capitalism. Such puffery by both authors is difficult to take seriously.

These two biographies are more indebted to the conclusions of earlier historians than they indicate; Ingle in his footnotes unnecessarily adopts an abrasive tone to others' works. Both, while giving lip service to the collectivity of Friends, personalize Quakerism by making their subjects too important. Ingle's chronological narrative requires supplementing from intellectual historians focusing on Fox's theological consistency and millennialism and comparing these to the religious ideas of many early Friends and Puritans. These biographers, by presenting their subjects' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and failures, have added insights and have made Fox and Fell more human and, therefore, more understandable.

Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

J. WILLIAM FROST

From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto.

By DAVID GENTILCORE. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1992. xii + 292 pp. \$49.95.

In this lively and well-written monograph, David Gentilcore describes what he calls the "system of the sacred" in the Salentine peninsula of southern Apulia—the spiked heel of the Italian boot. Building on the pioneering studies of Gabriele De Rosa and Mario Rosa and the prolific work of an active school of local historians, Gentilcore constructs an ethnohistory of religious practice in this isolated corner of Catholic Europe. The world he describes is one in which "official" and "popular" religion interacted and borrowed from one another so thoroughly that it becomes impossible to distinguish them: poorly-educated local clergy employed popular rituals that were condemned by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, while the populace participated in the orthodox religion of the church and appropriated its sacraments and sacramentals in their own ritual remedies.

Early modern Terra d'Otranto was an agrarian region of clustered settlement in "agro-towns," with few cities of any size and commerce limited to the export of agricultural products. Most people lived close to the edge of poverty, and the existence of even the better-off was hardly less precarious,