



INTRODUCTION

Editors' Introduction: Experiencing Exclusion: Scholarship after Inquisition

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Historians around the world were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Professor Natalie Zemon Davis on 21 October 2023.

Professor Davis was a historian of the early modern world whose influence has shaped work across periods and geographies. She led the way in encouraging historians to interrogate fiction in the archives, to write microhistories which probe the agency and interiority of forgotten figures, and to think and write in creative and compelling ways. Hers was work which was interdisciplinary in the best sense, always alive to developments in anthropology, linguistics, and literary studies (among others), and working to persuade historians of the value of thinking with work from other fields. At its core was a mastery of early modern archives and a profound understanding of their fickleness and complexity.

As co-editors of *The Historical Journal*, we were honoured to be approached by Stefan Hanß of the University of Manchester, who had been in correspondence with Professor Davis about publishing the text of a lecture delivered at the University of Michigan in 2015. Professor Davis's family were enthusiastic about seeing the piece published in *The Historical Journal*, and we reproduce it here with a foreword by Stefan Hanß which sets it in context. The full text of *Operation mind: a brief documentary account of the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, written by Natalie Zemon Davis and Elizabeth Douvan (1926–2002), is available as online Supplementary Material.

Others have written obituaries and reflections which do justice to one of our most essential historians. They have recalled Professor Davis's tireless support of junior historians and her transformative mentoring of colleagues across the world, the commitment to research which saw her continuing to write and publish important work into her tenth decade, and her gifts as a speaker which are evident in the lecture we publish here. In 'Experiencing Exclusion: Scholarship after Inquisition', she reflects on the political and personal forces which shaped her scholarly career, pairing her own experiences

with those of the figures she studied, and of the historians she knew. The historian's craft she practised reflected her experience of working in the shadow of persecution and precarity, and in this final piece she offers a resonant account of courage and the choices of ordinary people.

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