

verbalized, and the criteria judges used in determining their credibility. The latter was based on gender, class, age, and geographic provenance and evidenced the implicit social and gendered hierarchy of society. The second section of the book (chapters 4 and 5) highlights the dialogue between the judges and clients of the tribunal. In the fourth chapter we learn about the role of the judge, in this case the Patriarch of Venice. Here Cristellon explains his functions as an inquisitor and investigator but also as a mediator between the spouses and their families and as a confessor focused on the control primarily of women's consciences in order to ascertain whether they acted with free consent. Cristellon emphasizes that the "assumption of one role or another implied different conceptions of truth" (20). The fifth chapter concentrates on the important theory of consent to marry, which in canon law was an essential key to a marriage's validity. She outlines the conceptions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as those of the laity. Finally, the sixth and last chapter offers a quantitative analysis of the 706 cases of marital conflict. Of interest here is the gendered breakdown of the petitions. Of the 133 annulment cases, 85 women were plaintiffs, as opposed to 47 men, while for the 118 separation petitions 72 were from men who primarily wanted to reinstate cohabitation, while 46 were from women for various reasons. The cases for alleged marriage broke slightly more evenly, with 145 male plaintiffs and 125 females.

Scholars of marital litigation in Europe for the pre-Tridentine period will find this attentive study to be an essential road map to understanding the institutional and legal framework of judicial records. It is an excellent complement to Charles Donahue's work for England and that of Richard Helmholz and other scholars for the tribunals of the German Empire. It also includes a very useful comprehensive bibliography of secondary works.

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*Florentine Patricians and Their Networks: Structures behind the Cultural Success and the Political Representation of the Medici Court (1600–1660).* Elisa Goudriaan.

Rulers and Elites 14. Leiden: Brill, 2018. xx + 480 pp. \$206.

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With this study, Elisa Goudriaan brings together a number of themes developed separately in scholarship of the past few decades: the operation of social networks, the negotiations characterizing successful absolutist regimes, artistic patronage and cultural brokerage, and Florence in what Eric Cochrane memorably called "the forgotten centuries." Drawing on a wide range of archival sources that detail extensive cultural production and familial activity, she puts these into conversation with a select body of

secondary literature to create a more nuanced picture of how one of early modern Europe's most successful absolutist regimes actually functioned.

Goudriaan opens with some background to the sixteenth-century struggles and negotiations by which the Medici gained, consolidated, and extended their power after first acquiring the ducal title, in 1531. Within four decades, thanks largely to Cosimo I (r. 1537–74), the Duchy of Florence had doubled its territory through the conquest and absorption of the Republic of Siena, and raised its profile and status from imperial fief, through a contested papal title, to become the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Medici opportunism and maneuvering characterized it from the beginning, and the first grand dukes succeeded largely through skillful navigation of an awkward constitution that mixed continuing republican institutions with new ducal administrative forms, and an intermediate position between larger continental players like the Holy Roman Empire, France, and the papacy. Cosimo I set a decades-long pattern of sidelining the Florentine families who had once dominated republican politics and raised regional elite families in their place, both to frame a broader governing class and to curb the powers of local patricians, who had little or no loyalty to the new regime and rulers. His grandson Cosimo II (r. 1609–21), inheriting a more stable regime, with fewer internal and external enemies, could draw these same Florentine patrician families back into the governing circle as administrators, diplomats, and counselors. More loyal and more trusted, they developed into a class of allies of the regime, filling roles as bureaucrats, artistic patrons, and cultural brokers because they could see that collaborating to burnish the Florentine brand was to the mutual benefit of all concerned.

Focusing on a series of individual patricians and families, Goudriaan sketches the outworking of this new collaborative strategy through vignettes and examples that demonstrate patricians working as diplomats and influencers in Rome and Spain; as patrons and collectors of painting, sculpture, music, and architecture; as the creative choreographers behind ritual events and dynastic celebrations such as marriages, births, and public ceremonies; and as the sponsors and animateurs of cultural academies. She highlights patricians like the Corsi, Niccolini, Guicciardini, and Strozzi in particular chapters, and devotes an entire chapter to Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger as a cultural broker. In a chapter on the shared cultural world of the Medici and the patricians, she draws in Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici (1617–75), whose network extended out from Rome to draw in literary, musical, and academic connections across Italy and Europe.

The focus on individuals within these networks underscores what made Florentine patricians distinct within the evolving cultural world of the early modern European nobility. This was a court society without a true court, and the individual players within these networks retained greater individual agency while still being accomplished performers in a theater culture. They maintained a continuing investment in business and trade, and, unlike their counterparts in France and elsewhere, they actually paid

their taxes. Goudriaan notes these distinctive Florentine characteristics as critical to the patricians' notion of mutual benefit.

The book functions more as a series of linked individual studies than as a coherent study. In this it remains more like a dissertation than a monograph. Basic theoretical points sometimes get more abundant explanation than they need; episodic detail frequently overwhelms narrative structure; and there is generous citation of lectures or workshops attended during the dissertation-writing period, while some basic historical literature is missing. There are many citations to obscure sources on cultural production, but odd gaps in recent literature on familial networks, Medici politics, and Florentine and Tuscan historical development. These drawbacks are more unfortunate than they are fatal, no doubt driven by the need to publish quickly, and this work remains an impressive scholarly achievement.

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*Promiscuous Power: An Unorthodox History of New Spain.* Martin Austin Nesvig. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018. xvi + 252 pp. \$45.

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In this study of the imposition of secular and ecclesiastical authority and what the author calls “the banality of local imperial rule” (4) in the province of Michoacán, in New Spain, in the sixteenth century, Martin Nesvig’s choice of title inevitably raises questions about the nature of his project. Is the history, or the people who take center stage in it, unorthodox, or does the adjective refer to the historian’s approach? Nesvig writes that “power in Michoacán was promiscuous precisely because claims to competence and authority constantly overlapped” (181); according to that definition, promiscuity prevailed throughout Spanish America. He introduces his book with an interesting although sometimes contradictory discussion of his conceptual framework—within a few sentences, for example, asserting that “overall, one sees a deeply quotidian enforcement of imperial theory” but then noting that the book’s “chapters portray the extent to which local interests pursued their own powers with few overarching political-legal theories of empire or colonialism” (4).

Notwithstanding Nesvig’s possibly iconoclastic intentions and his embrace of a “Rabelaisian style,” (5), he offers a well-researched study that sheds a good deal of light on how officials dealt with the challenges of imposing authority in a mostly rural setting, located at some distance from the center of Spanish institutions in Mexico City, while pursuing their own interests. Michoacán’s situation may not be exceptional. Similar flouting of imperial (or viceregal) and ecclesiastical aims and control can be found in other parts of early New Spain and the rest of Spanish America. In many places the introduction of Christianity among the Indians was slow, fragmented,