

framework; civic projects like the hospitals were profoundly inflected by the core Christian values she sees as central to Londoners' identities. Indeed this section of the argument could be strengthened with more attention to funerary practices, where company hearse cloths continued to be commissioned and attendance by one's fellow guildsmen eagerly sought, and to the sermon culture of the city in which the liverymen were active participants at Paul's Cross and the Spital.

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Jesuit Foundations and Medici Power, 1532–1621. Kathleen M. Comerford. *Jesuit Studies: Modernity through the Prism of Jesuit History* 7. Leiden: Brill, 2017. xvi + 316 pp. \$170.

In her new book, Kathleen M. Comerford studies three Tuscan Jesuit institutions and their relationship to the newly established Medici rulers: the colleges of Florence, Siena, and Montepulciano. Next to an introduction and a concluding discussion (1–16, 210–15), this book consists of six chapters. The first two introduce the Medici princes (and their spouses) who ruled between 1531 and 1621, from Cosimo I to Cosimo II. These sections establish that the Medici, as new rulers, were particularly keen on reforming their territories by centering society around orthodox Catholicism and a firm Medici-oriented ideology and by centralizing administration and power in Florence at the Medici court. Chapter 3 turns to the very first Jesuits in Tuscany and their initial attempts to get established there. Chapters 4 and 5 follow, in great detail, the difficult developments that led eventually to the establishment of three more or less thriving institutions. Chapter 6 contains all kinds of information about daily life and work done by the Jesuits attached to these institutions. Chapter 7, “Was the Enterprise a Success?,” brings all the evidence together and concludes with a qualified affirmative answer. Two appendixes (217–38) present biographical information about well over five hundred Tuscan Jesuits and discuss the inventories of the three colleges' book holdings.

There can be no doubt that the book is deeply researched. Comerford is well read in secondary literature and original sources, both printed and unprinted. Chapter 6 and the appendixes, in particular, are based on an impressive long-lasting project of collecting all information available about the Tuscan Society of Jesus. Yet this is where the problems start. The chapters on the Jesuits in Tuscany and the three colleges, on the one hand, are exhaustive reconstructions of the many steps forward and backward that had to be taken by the Jesuits before they finally got their colleges established. At times they read as surveys of sources. The details are occasionally fascinating, but the overall picture seems to follow what we know already: the Jesuits were plagued by a dearth of money and manpower, had to undergo complex social negotiations with local

power brokers, and were greeted with mixed reactions from the population. Not least, their difficulties were sometimes enhanced by internal conflicts among leading Jesuits. What Comerford does bring out is that the Medici, especially the men, were rather lukewarm supporters—they did contribute to the establishing of the Jesuits, but not always in a particularly efficient or enthusiastic way.

Chapter 6, finally, really is a mixed bag of data and information. This section reads almost like notebooks of archival research transformed, if only lightly, into historiographic narrative. There are some highly interesting things to be found—for instance, the data on the geographic origin of the Jesuits who served in Tuscany. A little over 40 percent came from Tuscany, as Comerford shows. In her view, this demonstrates the “international” character of the order (183); yet, if one were to include the Papal States, almost two-thirds of the Jesuits came from Central Italy, thus putting the international character in a somewhat different perspective. Instructive, though, is Comerford’s comparison with the secular clergy of the region who came, to a much higher degree, from the immediate environs. This is an interesting comparative approach to the social history of the Jesuits, and one would have liked to learn more. The sections on the Medici, on the other hand, though erudite and very well written, are less research oriented, but rather of a general and introductory kind. In fact, they could be used as great introductions into sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Medici history. We get, in a little over seventy pages, a helpful survey of basic developments in Florence and the region—this would not be a bad choice for uninitiated students, for instance, who seek access to the history of early modern Central Italy.

The book, then, it must be said, is a hybrid work. There is, in fact, little coherence in terms of analytical perspective other than the well-established basic idea that political intensification in early modern Europe presupposed or at least frequently included religious renewal and intensification, too. It is surely true, as Comerford says, that “the Society of Jesus and the Medici needed each other” (215; cf. 212). This is, however, hardly anything new, given the surge in recent historiography about the society and Catholicism. It would have been interesting to learn more about, say, a specific Tuscan form of cooperation, one that distinguishes itself, for instance, from Mantua or Naples. Yet no such broader assessments occur in this book.

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