

Jill Kraye and Maria Pia Donato, eds. *Conflicting Duties: Science, Medicine and Religion in Rome, 1550–1750*.

Warburg Institute Colloquia 15. London: The Warburg Institute, 2009. xiv + 389 pp. index. append. illus. £50. ISBN: 978-0-85481-149-6.

This impressive collection of fine-grained studies edited by Jill Kraye and Maria Pia Donato shows how new or controversial scientific ideas survived and spread in Rome's peculiar political and religious environment. It will be of interest to historians of early modern science, religion, and patronage. *Conflicting Duties* is

part of a revisionist trend in Roman history of science which also includes Antonella Romano's edited issue of *Roma moderna e contemporanea* (1999) entitled *Roma e la scienza (secoli XVI–XX)* and her 2008 edited collection, *Rome et la science moderne*. The current volume originated in a colloquium at the Warburg institute held in 2003. Many essays examine practices which have only recently appeared in narratives of the Scientific Revolution, such as natural history, engineering, cartography, and alchemy. It was in these areas where Romans found most room for innovation, while writers on astronomy and physics "were scarcely able to break free from the long-established and institutionalized disciplinary hierarchy of the scholastic tradition" (7) and instead incorporated new ideas into scholasticism. Contributors were asked to consider four factors that made the Roman context for science unique. These included "the complex dynamics of patronage due, among other factors, to the elective nature of the papacy," the presence of "numerous religious orders, all supranational," "the role of censorship," and "the interconnection of science, art and antiquarianism, which began earlier in Rome than elsewhere and remained stronger" (5). Perhaps another peculiarity of Roman science not addressed is the extreme homosocial nature of Roman patronage; other than cameo appearances by Queen Christina and the wax-modeller Anna Morandi, the figures studied are overwhelmingly male. The authors, both juniors and senior scholars, do succeed in examining all four points specified by Donato and thus produce a very cohesive volume. Competing, complementary, and rapidly changing patrons left space for smuggling in innovations, as Sabina Brevaglieri's study of Johannes Faber's simultaneous membership in the Academy of the Lincei and the Congregation of the Index shows. Intricate pathways for sensitive material were found; Paula Findlen describes how Vincenzo Viviani did not send his letters about Galileo directly to Giovanni Maria Baldigiani at the Collegio Romano but routed them circuitously via two intermediaries. A similarly subtle strategy appears in the Barberinis' allowance of a presentation of Galilean ideas during the 1625 Carnival, "when all hierarchies, privileges, rules and taboos were temporarily abolished" (155), as Federica Favino argues. Many authors point to a surprising agreement of scientific and religious authority, as Elisa Andretta did in her study of the newly independent authority granted to anatomists in their autopsies of future saints. The mix of the divine and the scientific often appears as a strategy for making controversial ideas appear to be less so, and thus institutionalizing them as normal science. For instance, Maria Conforti shows how "the founding of the Biblioteca Lancisiana, together with the publication of lost works of sixteenth-century Roman science, was a shrewd attempt to 'monumentalize' the history of disciplines — chemistry, anatomy, zootomy, natural history — which would have been difficult to promote and practice had they retained their status as 'revolutionary' and innovative sciences" (317). The effects of such a normalizing of radical ideas upon Europe as a whole would be interesting to see pursued further. In general, the very cohesion and durability of Roman strategies for innovation raises a question for me about its varying agency between 1550 and 1750. For instance, Conforti points out how Giovanni Maria Lancisi "openly asked for works by three authors, which, as he wrote,

were not easy to find in Rome. . . . The three authors were Spinoza, Hobbes and Pascal — hardly commendable reading for a pious Catholic physician” (310). While the open request presents a stark contrast with the need to smuggle Galilean ideas into a Carnival setting, Galileo in 1625 carried perhaps greater intellectual agency than did Pascal in 1714. The major question that remains is the extent to which the peculiar situation which obtained in Rome affected scientific change in the rest of Europe.

VERA A. KELLER

Clark Honors College, University of Oregon