

(*avvocato fiscale*) and finally his nominated agent (*mandatario*) who represented the Inquisitor in discussions with other bodies. The second section of the book widens the focus to include also the inquisitors' legal experts (*consultori*) who defended him with their quills and then those licensed members of his household (*familiaries*) permitted to bear arms so they could defend and enforce the inquisitor's will. The final section steps back to consider the 'inquisitorial society' referred to in the book's title as a whole: namely the frequently disruptive impact of these privileged associates of the local inquisitors, identified not only by their distinctive livery based on the sign of the cross (hence the term *crocesignati*), but also by their right to bear arms as well as the privilege or licence (*patente*, hence their name *patentati*) of being excused various local taxes as well as being exempt from trial by civil courts, though significantly the ecclesiastical jurisdiction they were subject to excluded the local bishop. Collectively, these privileges draw attention to the paradox that even as the tribunals of the inquisition have come to be associated with the imposition of a suffocating social discipline, the very instrument used was a law unto itself. This comprehensive, finely granulated study of the officials who assisted the judges of the faith and made their authority real even as their not infrequently disruptive behaviour compromised their effectiveness takes our understanding of the Roman Inquisition to another level. Therefore I sincerely hope that such an important study will soon be translated into English.

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*Reforms of Christian life in sixteenth-century Italy.* By Mazzonis Querciolo. Pp. viii + 272.

London–New York: Routledge, 2022. £34.99 (paper). 978 0 367 76347 3

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Querciolo Mazzoni's latest book represents the culmination of a research journey which started in 2007 with the publication of *Spirituality, gender and the self in Renaissance Italy: Angela Merici and the Company of St Ursula (1474–1540)*. Yet *Reforms of Christian life* offers a wider spectrum of research, as it provides a new investigation of the activities and role played by the Angelics, the Barnabites, the Somascans and the Ursulines in the Italian Peninsula of the sixteenth century. The author has decided to focus on these orders as they promoted a different perception and view of Christianity which was diametrically opposed to Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism. By doing so Querciolo illustrates how and to which extent these orders promoted a widespread reforming programme which aimed to renew not only the ecclesiastical structures but the entire society.

Based on an impressive range of primary sources and secondary literature, the book is structured in five chapters which bring the reader into the Italian Peninsula of the sixteenth century. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the intellectual *milieu* which influenced and shaped the mind of Battista Carioni da Crema, Angela Merici and Girolamo Miani, three crucial reforming figures during the sixteenth century. The second chapter and the third are connected to each other as they investigate the ideas as well as the writings of these figures and how they sought to elaborate and develop a model of perfection and relationship with God. Furthermore, these two chapters provide an avenue for understanding and comparing the affinities that Carioni, Merici and Miani had on the role of

the Church within a society which was experiencing dramatic and constant political and religious changes. The fourth chapter examines the activities of the Angelics, the Barnabites, the Somascans and the Ursulines within the thorny context of Italian reformism, and how, in some cases, they sought to converge on the ideas proposed by the most prominent figures within the circles of Evangelism and Spiritualism. The fifth chapter examines how, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the reforming orders underwent a series of seminal changes which would alter their physiognomy. At the same time the chapter explores how the ideas of Battista da Crema, and in part those of Merici and Miani, managed to survive in the years following the Council of Trent.

Mazzonis's book offers a vivid and well-researched investigation of the intellectual and religious ferment which characterised the reforming orders of the Italian Peninsula during a period which was polarised by the spread of Lutheranism and the orthodoxy of the Catholic Reformation. By focusing on the key – but hard to decode – concepts of devotion, salvation and spiritualism, the author sheds lights on the inner mechanisms which regulated the life of the reforming orders and how their agenda was much freer and more inclusive than that elaborated by the traditional Tridentine orders like the Jesuits or the Oratorians. Overall, Mazzonis's book is a welcome and much awaited analysis. It will finally explain to both established and young scholars how the concept and practice of reforms of Christian life in the sixteenth-century Italian peninsula was more extremely articulated and fluid than the traditional historiography on the Catholic Reformation had previously taught.

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MATTEO BINASCO

*Catholic spectacle and Rome's Jews. Early modern conversion and resistance.*

By Emily Michelson. Pp. xvi + 333 incl. 11 ills. Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2022. £30. 978 0 691 21133 6

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Emily Michelson has produced a timely and important intervention on the subject of the Catholic Church's efforts to convert Jews in early modern Rome. Jews, perhaps surprisingly to some, were one of Rome's oldest constituencies: the eternal city was Europe's only site where they had remained in continuous residence since antiquity. Popes had often protected the Jewish communities under their rule, implicitly accepting Augustine's 'doctrine of Jewish witness'. However, both the numbers of Jews in Rome and the apparent importance attached to converting them changed during the course of the sixteenth century. Jews expelled from Iberia began to resettle on Italian shores, sometimes to the chagrin of others whose residence there had been longstanding. At the same time, the Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe and the discovery of new lands and peoples far beyond it radicalised the Catholic Church in profound ways. Preaching and proselytising were in – and church careers were built around the success with which ambitious individuals mastered their techniques. They could also be built around narratives of miraculous success at achieving conversions. Rome, as the self-styled *caput mundi* at the Church's centre, naturally became – in Michelson's own useful term – a 'clearinghouse' for all this (p. 34). The city's Jews