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Giannini, Massimo Carlo (ed.). Papacy, Religious Orders, and International Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Jennifer Mara Desilva

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Giannini, Massimo Carlo (ed.).

Papacy, Religious Orders, and International Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.

I libri di Viella 159. Rome: Viella, 2013. Pp. 250. ISBN 978-88-6728-98-8 (paperback) €28.

In his introduction to this volume, Massimo Carlo Giannini notes that the historiography of the post-Tridentine religious orders has focused largely on the activities pursued by the new orders, namely missions, preaching, teaching, and other charitable efforts. In contrast, historians have neglected older monastic and mendicant orders, considering their influence and activities to have peaked in the Middle Ages. This volume seeks to rectify that neglect and go beyond the critical, apologetic, or overly nationalistic monastic histories

that characterized much of the historiography (both external and internal) of the period from the Enlightenment through the twentieth century. Moreover, Giannini hopes that this volume will establish the monastic orders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the “true laboratories of the politics and Catholicism of old regime society” (13): in effect, showing through nine richly detailed essays how monastic orders negotiated relationships with the papacy, national political authorities, and their own local and institutional needs.

The first essay by Boris Jeanne investigates three periods in which the papacy established relationships with Iberian crowns to facilitate the settlement and conversion of newly discovered territories. From 1454 to 1568 the papacy allowed the Iberian monarchs freedom to build colonies and found churches with little interference. From 1568 to 1594 the papacy sought to redeploy an international policy and strengthen its role in the American colonies. Finally, from 1594 to 1622 the Holy See developed an international network, supported by religious orders, which culminated in founding the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*. In the second essay Benoist Pierre follows the strategies pursued by the religious orders of France through the Wars of Religion in order to reveal how these orders balanced loyalty to the king and pope, and maintained autonomy amid instability. Fortunately, Pierre is keenly aware of the difficulty in separating the acts of select monks from the publicized opinions of their orders and generalizing the “political instrumentalisation of religion” (45).

The third essay by Esther Jiménez Pablo investigates the character of the Jesuit Order and its institutional loyalty between the Spanish crown and the papacy. This essay cites a division in Spanish society at the end of the fifteenth century that allowed two groups to coalesce: one that had roots in the financial and administrative posts of urban centres and that favoured the radical renewal promised by the Jesuit Order, and one that encouraged reforms prompted by the re-conquest and the foundation of the Spanish Inquisition. While the former group entrenched its ties to the pope through the sixteenth century, the latter group was more politicized and played a central role in the reigns of Emperor Charles V and King Philip II. In the fourth essay, Aurélian Girard explores how the presence of the Franciscans, as curators of pilgrimage sites like the Holy Sepulchre, prompted tension with other monastic orders, newly arrived in the Holy Land, that sought to minister to the small colonies of resident European merchants. As Girard indicates, through the early 1600s the Franciscans were happy to balance competing European states, one against the other, in order

to ensure their own monopoly on alms revenue. They proved to be successful. Ironically, one of the chief reasons for the foundation of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* was to avoid the monastic missions' involvement in such political affairs.

The fifth essay, by the volume's editor Massimo Carlo Giannini, uses archival records to revise the simplistic interpretation of the Dominican Order's leadership schism (1642–44). Instead of a disagreement among friars, Giannini places the rupture in context amid the changing phases of political counsel in France and Spain, while showing the role that the papacy of Urban VIII Barberini played in both initiating and concluding the episode. This reconstruction of how information was disseminated, and how it prompted moves and counter-moves, reveals the limits of papal intervention and the interconnectedness of issues, families, and orders within European-papal relations. In the sixth essay Ignasi Fernández Terricabras uses the rebellion in Catalonia of 1640–59 as a case study to determine how monastic orders sought to protect their “transnational” identity and the extent of their successes. In the long war between France and Spain the papacy pursued a studied neutrality, resulting in the monastic orders' involvement in the war in ways that sometimes altered “their geographic location, their political relations, and even their [institutional] unity” (146).

The final three contributions shift the volume's focus to the experiences of monastic orders in Central Europe and the Balkans. In the seventh essay, Tomás Parma presents two case studies from Bohemia and Moravia in order to show the complexity of upholding episcopal authority, tensions between Jesuit houses and the bishop, and also the mechanics and struggle of implementing the Counter-Reformation in Czech lands. In the eighth essay, Gaetano Platania follows the difficulties encountered by Polish monarchs that sought to introduce the Capuchin Order into Poland through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Notably, this effort has a consistently Italian focus, which failed repeatedly when Italian friars abandoned their new fledgling churches. Only after repeated tries and failures did King John Vasa III consider importing friars from Bohemia or Silesia, instead of Italy. Finally, in the ninth and last essay, Antal Molnár offers an introduction to Catholic ecclesiastical structures in medieval and early modern Bosnia. After describing the religious and territorial complexity of early medieval Bosnia, Molnár identifies the Franciscan Order as the proud and embattled backbone of Bosnian Catholicism that protected

its members from Ottoman financial and religious pressure while preserving a Bosnian national identity. Only in the post-Tridentine period did Bosnian Franciscans partially abandon their medieval missionary structure and adapt to the reformed Roman ecclesiastical model. Molnár argues that this flexibility preserved Bosnian Catholicism and made the seventeenth century its golden age.

In sum, Giannini has curated an interesting and valuable volume that reveals aspects and areas of the early modern mendicant orders that are often overlooked. An equal measure of praise should go to the translators, who have crafted a readable yet authentic collection.

JENNIFER MARA DESILVA

Ball State University