the place of consumption and display in the history of the early modern self. And her claim that seventeenth-century women “created autonomous selves through the purchase, bequest, and display of luxury goods” cries out for some consideration of the assumptions about autonomy and the self that undergird it (353).

The book’s teleological thrust and rhetoric also close off opportunities to explore in greater detail the areas of ambiguity, tension, and conflict in the material she studies. To sustain Peck’s boldest claims about the degree to which the early seventeenth century anticipates mentalities and practices usually associated with the eighteenth, we need more synchronic analysis of the earlier period. Peck may be right to emphasize the forces working towards a de-moralization of luxury consumption in the early seventeenth century, but hostility, anxiety, and ambivalence remained. A more complete picture would have to explore in far greater detail than she does here the dialectic between these countervailing forces, in, for example, controversies over male and female sartorial fashions, or in the dilemmas of Puritan gentry attempting to balance the dictates of religious conscience and the social compulsion to consume and display.

Nor does Peck explore the real costs of early modern luxury consumption, a practice whose material basis lay in the economic, social and political exploitation of others, both in England and abroad. To read this book, you would think, not just that Marxism is dead, but that it never happened.

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Lance Gabriel Lazar

Working in the Vineyard of the Lord: Jesuit Confraternities in Early Modern Italy
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Pp. xv, 377.

Considerable attention has been paid to the Marian congregations inaugurated during the 1560s by the Belgian Jesuit Jan Leunis. Earlier Jesuit initiatives have suffered from relative neglect. Lazar redresses this imbalance through a study of three of the Jesuits’ earliest Roman confraternities and the charitable institutions they oversaw. The Casa di S. Marta was a house for reformed prostitutes administered by the Compagnia della Grazia; the Conservatorio di S. Caterina was a house for the daughters of prostitutes and those thought to be at risk of joining the profession, run by the Compagnia delle Vergini Miserabili; and the Casa dei Catecumeni was an institution for new Jewish and Muslim converts to Christianity administered by the Arciconfraternita di S. Giuseppe.

All three institutions shared habitual Jesuit characteristics: a belief that moral reform was achievable through the exercise of the individual's will, and a commitment to reaching those on the margins of society by recruiting the support of urban elites. These institutions (founded in the 1540s) were unusual, however, in the amount of initiative they granted to their lay overseers: a result, Lazar explains, of the itinerant nature of the early Jesuit ministry. Lazar offers detailed analyses of life inside these places and the patronage networks that supported them. This book adds considerable weight to the notion that charity in this period took on a more redemptive mission rather than primarily being an exercise in social control.

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Michelle O'Malley

The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005. Pp. x, 358.

It was Michael Baxandall who said that economic agreements between painters and patrons were situated within the social nexus, thus paving the way for such books as O'Malley's. This volume is a welcome addition to studies of the "material Renaissance": it not only gives us insights into the economic context, but also offers hugely valuable readings of such ideas as contract, value, and subject matter, all of which, as it shows, informed the commissioning process. Organised into three main sections, "Materials and Production," "Estimation of Worth," and "Pictorial Matters," this book surveys economic trends using methods familiar to and remote from art historical approaches, so that iconographic analysis sits alongside statistical evaluation of prices, artistic materials, and demographic factors, all presented in tables. Using raw economic data such as the price paid for gold leaf and other materials in altarpieces from the 1350s to the mid 1520s, O'Malley tentatively constructs an economic model that allows us to gain insight into this culture of negotiation. If there is a weakness in this study of economic lives of painters, it is that the evidence is incomplete, having been lost to the accidents of history. O'Malley is aware of this, and of course such a project as this can always be updated if fresh facts about paintings, prices, and contracts come to light. An extremely valuable and welcome study that brings the economic life of Renaissance Italy into sharp focus.

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