

half of the seventeenth century and Japan's total rejection of Christianity was largely caused by the unprecedented apostolate of Kirishitan women" and as a result women's "freedom of movement, association, property ownership, participation in public discourse, and learning became severely restricted" (289). I am skeptical of this argument. There were other reasons why the Tokugawa regime adopted Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. Nonetheless, this book convincingly demonstrates the centrality of women in early modern Japanese Christianity. It is superbly done.

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*Altarpieces and Their Viewers in the Churches of Rome from Caravaggio to Guido Reni.* By **Pamela M. Jones**. Visual Culture in Early Modernity. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. xiv + 360 pp. \$99.95 cloth.

In this masterfully documented and sensitively narrated study of five early seicento Roman altarpieces, Pamela Jones has once again demonstrated her broad knowledge and comprehension of the religious culture of early modern Italy. Moving forward from her studies of Counter-Reformation religious art theory, in this monograph she expands her inquiry to the reception of officially sanctioned religious art in the Eternal City during the first quarter of the seicento. The study examines acclaimed works by Caravaggio, Guercino, and Guido Reni, but also altarpieces that no longer garner the attention and aesthetic appreciation they enjoyed immediately after their unveilings. In doing so, Jones reminds us that limiting our energies to "known" works of art impoverishes our understanding of the culture that produced them.

The book is divided into five chapters—each a case study of an altarpiece produced between 1595 and 1625. The first chapter examines Tommaso Laureti's *Martyrdom of Saint Susanna* (ca. 1595–1597) in the church of S. Susanna. This first study introduces her methodology, which draws on a wide range of documentary sources—from published sermons and pamphlets, primary documents from the monasteries and confraternities allied with these images, to *sacre rappresentazioni* and descriptions of processions, charitable activities, the physical location of the church within the urban topography of seicento Rome, and the history of the church, its devotees, and the patrons who built and embellished it.

Jones is sensitive also to the visual context of the works in situ, and how that context has been altered over time. In each of her chapters, in fact, she documents the reception of the work, not only by different sectors of Roman society, but also the changes in their reception as the century progressed. In the case of the altarpiece at S. Susanna, she not only links the altarpiece to the themes of chastity and martyrdom, but also to justice – as the martyrology of Saint Susanna forms a concordance with the Old Testament tale of Susanna and the Elders. Without examining the fresco cycle produced for the chancel and nave of the church, this point would have been lost.

Chapter 2 addresses the altarpiece of the *Madonna of Loreto*, painted by Caravaggio for the church of S. Agostino between 1605 and 1606. Here, Jones is able to confront the negative assessments of art critics later in the century with the positive reception of its patrons and the Augustinian Hermits who maintained the church. The analysis convincingly links ritual practice, published prayers associated with the veneration of the Holy House, and inexpensive broadsheets to Caravaggio's iconography, justifying his artistic choice-making within the context of the Hermits' role in the care of pilgrims to the Eternal City and the local poor.

In chapter 3, Jones returns to one of her favorite personalities—S. Carlo Borromeo. Here she presents a dense analysis of the iconography and reception of imagery associated with Borromeo's intense devotion to the Holy Nail, represented in the church of S. Carlo ai Catinari by an altarpiece painted by Andrea Comodi around 1621. By comparing this work with similar paintings by Comodi and related engravings, she gives a more specific meaning to the altarpiece than previously acknowledged. A detailed account of the importance of the cult of the Holy Nail in Lombardy and Rome further enriches an understanding of the reception of this altarpiece by early modern viewers, notwithstanding the fact that it is virtually ignored today.

Guercino's *Penitent Magdalene*, created for the church of S. Maddalena delle Convertite around 1622, forms the nexus for Jones's next study. The importance of this chapter lies in her inclusion of a broad spectrum of viewers—not only the prostitutes who chose to give up their professions to become nuns, but also the prostitutes who were forced to attend Lenten sermons in the church each year. Here Jones puts forth the observation, crucial to an appreciation of her entire book, that although reformers sought to control the reception of religious art, they were ineffective, because in viewing a religious work “each particular audience brought its own lived experiences, knowledge bases, and interests to bear” (325).

The final chapter discusses Guido Reni's *Holy Trinity* (1625–1626) in the church of SS. Trinità dei Pellegrini e Convalescenti. In a sense, this chapter ties up the many stranded argument Jones presents—for the five altarpieces are related in their functions and shifting receptions throughout the

seventeenth century. Paramount to their reception is a clear understanding of economic and politico-religious conditions in Rome and how they changed as time passed—this clearly explains the shift from initial acceptance of the works to the criticism launched against several of them in the later seicento. They are also linked by their iconography (the importance of feet for the concept of humility, the Holy Nail) that conveyed the concepts of penance, pilgrimage, charity, humility, and the cult of relics to any viewer, be he or she a member of the elite or *popolano*, nun, pilgrim, or prostitute. Although Jones includes maps of the area around each church, a map showing the relationship of the churches to each other would have been useful, especially given the close relationship she is able to create between the altarpieces.

In this book Pamela Jones has presented an exceptionally effective example of how cultural historians should be able to achieve an extremely difficult goal—the assessment of viewers' reception of, appreciation for, and use of religious imagery for contemplative purposes—by examining a far wider range of sources than simply the images and the literature written about them by contemporary conosciuti. It stands as a model for future studies of this scope, be they focused on Counter-Reformation Italy or any other period of religious art and architecture.

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***Adoration and Annihilation: The Convent Philosophy of Port-Royal.*** By **John J. Conley, S.J.** Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009. xiv + 318 pp. \$50.00 cloth.

Perhaps the alliterative title of this book may ease some readers into what is the fascinating and yet forbidding world of Port-Royal, a famously austere and controversial convent in seventeenth-century France. As the book's subtitle suggests, much of the focus is on Port-Royal's convent philosophy. But what kind of an adjective is convent? Does it mean whatever philosophy was done in the convent? Or does it mean more specifically a philosophy of convent life that was developed at Port-Royal? The author devotes his attention to both of these meanings; he insists that gender and institutional bias has blinded us to the very existence of philosophy done outside the university, even as he acknowledges that there was often little distinction between philosophy and theology in the writings of the nuns he studies.