

Gleason has based her work on critical readings of texts written by Contarini as well as on substantial archival work, including studies of documents largely ignored by past historians of Contarini's life. Her study offers a useful perspective on the pre-Tridentine period in Italy, and will be invaluable to political and church historians alike.

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Lorenzo de' Medici: New Perspectives. Ed. Bernard Toscani. Studies in Italian Culture/Literature in History, 13. New York: Peter Lang, 1993. xvii, 355 pp., 5 illustrations.

The majority of this volume, which contains the proceedings of an international conference held to commemorate the quincentenary of the death of Lorenzo il Magnifico, contains little mention of confraternities, though in his article "Lorenzo il Magnifico, Savonarola, and Medicean Dynasticism," Lorenzo Polizzotto refers to the three confraternities at the monastery of San Marco which had Cosimo il Vecchio as patron. Polizzotto argues in a paragraph that these confraternities were used by the Medici as "instruments of informal political supervision and control" (337). This idea is taken up by Ronald F.E. Weissman in his article "Lorenzo de' Medici and the Confraternity of San Paolo" (315-29).

Weissman, the author of *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (1982), explores Lorenzo's participation in the Confraternity of San Paolo, to prove that Lorenzo did not cease active membership in confraternities upon his rise to power, and to discern the possible role of the confraternity in that rise, which he detects as having taken place in 1471, at which point Lorenzo managed to effect constitutional changes which put him in control of the city government. All Florentine ritual brotherhoods were viewed with suspicion during periods of political strife, as potential meeting-grounds for conspiracy; for instance, confraternal activity was suspended for two years following the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478. The period of constitutional struggle in Florence which brought Lorenzo to power was also the period when the confraternity was reconsidering its own government, and in the end, the confraternity appointed Tommaso Soderini as governor with wide-ranging, indeed almost dictatorial powers, on 9 April 1471, finding a solution to its governmental problems that (as Weissman suggests) was already a commonplace among Florentine political thinkers in the larger communal arena.

Lorenzo was elected to the confraternity on 1 June 1471, under Soderini's governorship, despite being two years below the required age of members. This special dispensation revealed his evident importance in the politics of the city. One month later, Lorenzo convinced the government of the city to accept critical electoral reforms which gave him a central position in choosing the electoral officials. Lorenzo became governor of the confraternity in November of 1472, again with special dispensation, and under his leadership the confraternity accepted new statutes, in which the minimum age of entry was lowered to eighteen, most clergy were excluded from membership, and the processes of both the election of officers and of expulsion of members were reformed. The continuing importance of the confraternity in Florentine political life is suggested by the admission of Lorenzo's notary and his friend Poliziano in 1474.

Weissman concludes that the Confraternity of San Paolo was a political hotbed which required Medici supervision and intervention, and that Lorenzo's membership in the

confraternity helped him win support among its increasingly patrician membership for his electoral reforms. The article convincingly contradicts Savonarola's dictum that "the tyrant...prohibits congregations and assemblies, so that men will not form friendships among themselves, out of fear that they will conspire against them." Lorenzo de' Medici clearly encouraged the Confraternity of San Paolo in its development as a brotherhood.

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