

of incarceration. I conclude by emphasizing my enthusiasm for Maifreda's accomplishment. This is a profound and sophisticated study, and I have been enlightened by his provocative thinking.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.519

Tuscany in the Age of Empire. Brian Brege.

I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021. xii + 492 pp. \$59.

Tuscany in the Age of Empire is a detailed political and diplomatic history of the Tuscan state's and Medici dynasty's extra-European ambitions and policies between about 1550 and 1610. It complements recent work in global history, exploring the relationship between the Tuscan state and the wider world during a period in which Tuscany was neither fully integrated into nor independent of the imperial dominions of Spain and Portugal. It argues for a maximalist interpretation of the Tuscan state's engagement with and access to the wider world, despite the supposedly exclusive nature of Iberian imperial formations.

The first section, "Parasitism and Symbiosis," covers Medici engagement with the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. Across three chapters, it shows how the Grand Dukes leveraged financial capital and expatriate Florentines' social networks to try and get direct access to Portuguese and Spanish oceanic empires, whether as regional governors or purchasers of monopoly rights to valuable commodities. Although the Grand Dukes succeeded at garnering influence, Brege argues that geopolitics predetermined Tuscany's failure in direct colonial activity, despite Tuscan flirtations with Dutch and English imperial ventures as an alternative or counterweight to Iberian networks.

The second section, "A Global Tuscany," discusses areas in which the Grand Dukes had the greatest success at global engagement: the collection of knowledge, plants, and animals from distant corners of the globe. The lack of direct imperial possessions did not prevent Tuscany from becoming a hub for the collection and study of items from the global world. Both through Iberian empires but also independently of them, the Medici intensively pursued intellectual inquiry and diplomatic gift exchange. This, Brege argues, turned Florence into a cultural capital of the Iberian empire. Here, Brege adapts the concept of the "shadow empire," a secondary cultural nexus created at the margins of a primary imperial formation, drawing an interesting analogy to the creation of Central Asian nomadic empires in the shadow of imperial China (322n16). The creation of the *Guardaroba Nuova*—a room encompassing the whole world in miniature by combining a mappa mundi and cabinet of curiosities (199–200)—epitomized

the Grand Dukes' ability to demonstrate their power and prestige by collecting, comprehending, and displaying the world to visitors.

The final section, "The Tail Wags the Dog," covers Tuscany's engagement with the Islamic world in North Africa, the Near East, and Persia. Here, Brege reconstructs an ambitious series of Tuscan attempts to achieve regime change or strategic alliances in the Muslim world. The crusading order of Santo Stefano notwithstanding, Tuscany engaged with Muslim powers in opportunistic and flexible ways in a shifting international diplomatic context. That these plans' ambitions were unrealized should not, Brege argues, prevent scholars from taking them seriously.

This work is detailed, precise, and well worth consideration on all points. Brege is an expert in navigating Medici-related archives from Florence to Goa. However, the Medici-centric nature of the evidence raises questions about the degree to which parts of reconstruction reflect Tuscan ambitions and aspirational self-presentation, as opposed to reality. As the book acknowledges, many of the projects and negotiations discussed ended in failure. For example, the last section aims to show how Tuscany sought to be "the tail that wagged imperial Spain into military adventures" (7). Yet in the central events of chapter 7, the rebellion of Ali Pasha of 1606–07, the Tuscan tail failed to wag the Iberian dog. The Grand Dukes' prestige gifts to Ali Pasha were ineffective at transforming Ottoman regional elites' disaffection into the breakup of the empire.

Brege argues that unrealized Tuscan hopes in these matters were "other facets of the possible." However, there may also be a viable interpretation of Tuscany's engagement with empire generally, in which the Grand Dukes' imperial political and economic projects were, in fact, a set of self-aggrandizing "chimeras," "illusions and unrealized hopes" (322). Yet even in this alternative reading, political failures only throw Tuscan intellectual and cultural achievements into higher relief by contrast. *Tuscany in the Age of Empire* is a thorough study whose political and diplomatic perspective is a useful complement to the more cultural, economic, and intellectual histories of emerging global modernity with which it is in dialogue.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.450

Tudor Children. Nicholas Orme.

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2023. xiv + 265 pp. \$30.

As a boy, I felt adults didn't understand children; I promised myself I would remember what it was like. For whatever reasons, Nicholas Orme, a prolific emeritus professor of history at Exeter University, has a strong interest in reconstructing childhood in past eras. He previously wrote a book titled *Medieval Children* and another about medieval