



Early Modern Jesuits between Obedience and Conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581-1615)

Silvia, Professor Mostaccio

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The Society of Jesus was founded by Ignatius Loyola on a principal of strict obedience to papal and superiors' authorities, yet the nature of the Jesuits's work and the turbulent political circumstances in which they operated, inevitably brought them into conflict with the Catholic hierarchy. In order to better understand and contextualise the debates concerning obedience, this book examines the Jesuits of south-western Europe during the generalate of Claudio Acquaviva.

Acquaviva's thirty year generalate (1581–1615) marked a challenging time for the Jesuits, during which their very system of government was called into doubt. The need for obedience and the limits of that obedience posed a question of fundamental importance both to debates taking place within the Society, and to the definition of a collective Jesuit identity. At the same time, struggles for jurisdiction between political states and the papacy, as well as the difficulties raised by the Protestant Reformation, all called for matters to be rethought.

Divided into four chapters, the book begins with an analysis of the texts and contexts in which Jesuits reflected on obedience at the turn of the seventeenth century. The three following chapters then explore the various Ignatian sources that discussed obedience, placing them within their specific contexts. In so doing the book provides fascinating insights into how the Jesuits under Acquaviva approached the concept of obedience from theological and practical standpoints.

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