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Book Review of Everyday Renaissances: The Quest for Cultural Legitimacy in Venice

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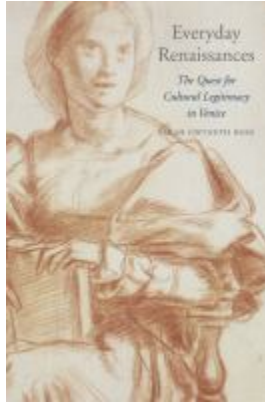
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Book Review of *Everyday Renaissances: The Quest for Cultural Legitimacy in Venice*

[Everyday Renaissances : the quest for cultural legitimacy in Venice , I Tatti studies in Italian Renaissance history, 18](#)



[Ross, Sarah Gwyneth](#). Harvard, 2016

235p index afp, 9780674659834 \$49.95

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Ross (Boston College) has investigated over 3,000 testaments and 1,200 household inventories to examine the learned pursuits of ordinary people in late Renaissance Venice. She argues that Venetians from all walks of life were invested in learned culture and attributes their interests to their respective quests for "cultural legitimacy," a concept similar to Bourdieu's cultural capital but without the tangible social or economic rewards tied to Bourdieu's term. Ross arranges her book around five chapters in addition to a full historiographic introduction and conclusion. Two chapters look at evidence of learned pursuits in household inventories and wills, respectively, and three chapters provide case studies of learned physicians. Her findings reinforce the work of other recent scholars of Renaissance humanism, the history of the book, and education, even as she adds new evidence to the breadth of learned pursuits among 16th-century Venetians, particularly physicians, and a surprising array of men and women. Ross's insights into the broad range of reasons that inspired early modern people to pursue and apply learned interests are especially noteworthy.

Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.

Reviewer: [B. J. Maxson](#), East Tennessee State University

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

Subject: [Social & Behavioral Sciences - History, Geography & Area Studies - Western Europe](#)

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