

Prière et charité sous l'Ancien Regime. Actes du Colloque de Nancy-Epinal, 6-7 octobre 1990. Special issue of the journal *Histoire, Economie et Société*, 10:3 (1991) 279-435. [For contents, see below under Publications Received]

The Nancy-Epinal colloquium was dedicated to the memory of Alphonse Dupont, author of *Du Sacré. Croisades et pèlerinages. Images et Langages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987). Dupont had been fascinated by the outward as well as the inward demonstrations of piety. The eight articles presented in this collection clearly reflect his influence.

Four of the articles are specifically concerned with confraternities, while four reflect more generalized interpretations of the role of private devotion in early modern Europe. Of the latter studies, Martin Dinges' work on Bordeaux, Bernard Vogler's on Lutheran Germany and Alsace, and Jean-Pierre Gutton's survey of France examine changing attitudes regarding poverty that directly affected the practice of charity. These historians suggest that, in the early modern period, charity was increasingly considered to be an important component of private as well as public spiritual devotion. Mireille Bouvet, an archivist by profession, presents a brief article on the value of the Archives Hospitaliers at the Vosges as a source of information on religious sentiment.

The studies on confraternities concentrate instead on the role played by the sodalities in the devotional practices of their members. Marc Venard's study "Les formes de piété des confréries dévotes de Rouen à l'époque moderne" argues that, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Rouen confraternities placed increasing emphasis on the practice of private devotion in the home. It was not uncommon, he argues, to find regulations that encouraged private charity and the holding of prayer meetings twice a day. Some confraternities even provided funds for members embarking on pilgrimages.

Highlighting a similar concern with personal piety, Marie-Hélène Froeschlé-Chopard's linguistic analysis of Rosary devotional texts suggest that they were designed by the Rosary

confraternities to provide their members with a blueprint for private devotional practice. She notes that special emphasis was placed upon frequent communion with God via prayer.

Somewhat different in focus is Georges Viard's article "Bureaux des pauvres et confréries de charité en Champagne méridionale", offering an intriguing glimpse into the complex relationship between municipal charity organizations and charitable confraternities in Champagne between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The two at times conflicted and at times co-operated in their endeavours to manage poverty in their region. Like Venard and Froeschlé-Chopard, Viard clearly sees a marked emphasis on the importance of lay piety, particularly in the sphere of charity as an extension of private as well as public religious devotion.

The fourth article on confraternities, André Tallon's work on the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement (1629-1667), argues that the demise of the sodality was in part the result of its inability to resolve the tension between its two roles of public charity and private devotion. Charity came increasingly to be viewed by its members as a distraction from the life of contemplation.

This issue of *HES* offers an interesting perspective on the relationship between private and public concerns in the confraternities of early modern France.

Megan Armstrong
University of Toronto

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Ludovica Sebregondi, *Tre confraternite fiorentine. Santa Maria della Pietà, detta 'Buca' di San Girolamo. San Filippo Benizi. San Francesco Poverino*. Firenze: Salimbeni, 1991. 214 pp., 45 ill. [The item was listed in Publications Received in vol. 3:1, Spring 1992, p. 27]

Most scholars examining confraternal art, music, or history deal with brotherhoods long since reduced to the status of historical