

Three bibliographies, one general, one regional, and one local, plus an index complete the volume.

Most of the material is post-tridentine, much of it as late as the 19th-20th centuries, and the historical sections are rather brief and narrative in tone. As the subtitle to the volume clearly indicates, these are simply a series of "first inquiries into the lay association movement" of Fasano. As such they constitute an introduction to the background and contemporary reality of the confraternities of a mid-sized town in southern Italy and attest to the continued vitality of lay religious associations in the area.

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Paquay, Valentijn. *De geschiedenis van de Stichting Sint Nicolai Broederschap te Arnham. 1351-1993: Gasthuis, Preuven en Hulpbetoon*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1993. 374 pp., illustrations.

Valentijn Paquay's history of the Saint Nicholas confraternity of Arnhem in the province of Gelders, Holland, runs from the group's founding to the present day. Established in 1351 in response to the social upheaval caused by the Black Death, the association sought to promote a communal life based on equality and brotherhood among the members. To strengthen these ties, members placed special emphasis on common meals.

In discussing the group's ethos, Paquay lingers on the internal workings of the confraternity, its communal life, its statutes, its holdings and its financial status. He also concentrates on the outer workings of the confraternity and its relation with the larger community of Arnhem and surroundings through the work of its members. This emphasis on external dealings leads the author to use of the political history of Holland, and specifically of Arnhem, to divide his study of the confraternity into three general parts.

Thus, the first part discusses the confraternity's founding and places it in the context of medieval society. Here the author discusses at length the confraternity's emphasis on caring for the poor and operating hospices. The second part begins with the ascendancy of the Protestant faction in Arnhem. By 1581 Protestants constituted the majority in the city and were thus able to force the confraternity to abandon the Catholic emblem it had used since its inception. Paradoxically, the confraternity was otherwise left untouched and was able to continue its Catholic practices. The third part begins from the creation of the Dutch national state (1795) and runs to the present. During this period the 'reformed' confraternity of Saint Nicholas was engaged in a lengthy battle with both the national government and the city council of Arnhem in order to assert and maintain its role as a social agent in a modern society.

Paquay's volume, based as it is on an extensive assortment of archival material, is enriched with numerous illustrations, including several maps and illustrations of Arnhem, and a list of confraternity members.

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Ventrone, Paola. *Gli araldi della commedia. Teatro a Firenze nel Rinascimento*. Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1993. 219 pp.

The volume is divided into five chapters. The first examines the Laurentian period, and in particular the myth of the patron prince, the Medicean jousts, the revival of classical theatre, and the triumphs staged in the last few years of the regime (pp. 13-53). The second examines the manner in which theatrical events were produced in Florence, with particular emphasis on the role of groups, especially religious confraternities and secular associations (pp. 55-89). The third chapter examines the relationship between text and performance (pp. 91-135). The fourth looks at theatrical practices, and in particular the role of the town herald