

nities and the history of religious art, but also on economic and cultural ties between Genoa and Cadiz.

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Barnes, Andrew E. *The Social Dimension of Piety. Associative Life and Devotional Change in the Penitent Confraternities of Marseilles (1499-1792)*. New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994. x, 285 pp. ISBN 0-8091-3395-4. US \$12.95 (paperback).

This book examines the penitential confraternities of Marseilles from the foundation of the first in 1499 right up to their dissolution during the Revolution. Marseilles had more such confraternities (13 that lasted any length of time) than any other French city, so it is a rich source for their study. However, the book concentrates mainly on a small number of well-documented confraternities and focuses particularly on the 18th century. Within this limitation, the book provides a wealth of material on the subject, enhanced by various case studies illuminating particular themes. Successive chapters detail: the social composition of the various confraternities and the role of different sub-groups within them; their government, structure and operations; the way they handled internal conflicts; their devotional life, both material and ritual; and their relationship with the clergy, both the regular orders who sponsored them and the increasingly active bishops.

The lengthy time period enables the author to discover developments in all these subjects. The confraternities began as small groups, but expanded considerably during the Wars of Religion, in the process changing their nature. With the advent of the Counter-Reformation, new "reformed" confraternities were formed that remained smaller and more exclusive. All of the confraternities participated fully in the "Baroque" piety of the 17th century. However, Barnes takes issue with the conventional view that the confraternities declined in the 18th century, showing rather that this was a period of retrenchment that preserved their vigour.

The author refers extensively to sociological theory in order to understand the dynamics involved in the operation of these societies. The main theme of the interpretation, on which the title is based, is the link between sociability and piety. Barnes emphasizes that the sociability of the confraternities was as important as their pious nature in

attracting members. Furthermore, he argues that this fraternity was itself part of the piety—that engaging in "brotherly love" by being part of a confraternity was itself perceived as a good work that would help towards salvation. He also shows, however, that brotherly love was not always an ideal that was put into practice. The confraternities relied on their priors to cover their yearly deficits, and this meant that the highest positions were dominated by the wealthiest brothers. In addition, the confraternities themselves contained sub-groups, "cliques," which competed for power within the larger group. However, the author argues that this could be a source of vitality as well as of dissention and conflict.

This book provides a great deal of information and detail about, and many interesting interpretations of, the operation of penitential confraternities in Marseilles through the entire Early Modern era.

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Bornstein, Daniel E. *The Bianchi of 1399. Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993. x, 232 pp. ISBN 0-8014-2910-2. US \$32.50.

In this volume Bornstein examines the phenomenon of the Bianchi, white-robed penitents who joined "orderly but enthusiastic" processions to promote peace in rural and urban Italy in the summer of 1399. Bornstein argues that the contemporary perception of the Bianchi as exhibiting ordinary, orthodox devotional behaviour makes the group an ideal source for a study of mass belief in this period. Examining the members of the 1399 processions, he suggests that the conventional argument that clerical, orthodox views always exist in conflict with the naturally heterodox beliefs of the masses is inaccurate, and that clerical and lay beliefs can exist in harmony at times when the pressures of secular society act on both groups and religion meets the social and spiritual needs of the people (pp. 5-7). The Bianchi, for instance, encompassed "rich and poor, learned and unlettered, laity, mendicants, and priests" (p. 6), all united by one goal: to work for peace and harmony in their plague-ridden, violent communities.

Throughout his work Bornstein is careful to note that while contemporaries asserted the spiritual unity of the members of the Bianchi, a study of the mass of documents concerning the group reveals that it