

Reviews

Aiello, Lucia, Marco Bascapè, and Danilo Zardin (eds.). *Milano e le sue associazioni. Cinque secoli di storia cittadina (XVI–XX secolo)*. Milan: Scalpendi Editore, 2014. Pp. 179 + 81 b/w and colour illustrations. ISBN 978-8-8895-4661-1 (paperback) € 25.

This volume on Milan and its associations over the course of five centuries gathers the work of a research project carried out at the Department of Economic History, Society, and Science at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan with funds from the Cariplo Foundation. It thus brings to our attention the innovative work of some of the most qualified scholars working on Milanese history today.

The articles are firmly based on archival sources and enriched by a repertoire of images and photographs that provide a very clear-cut picture of the dense network of associations, “companies,” consortia, *scholae*, confraternities, and various other groups established for economic or political reasons without which it would have been impossible to produce such works as the stained glass windows of the cathedral of Milan or commission works of the calibre of the “Virgin of the Rocks” by Leonardo.

The volume is divided chronologically into three parts. In the first part, Marina Gazzini discusses the medieval roots of these various associations, reminding us that medieval society was, by its very nature, “an ensemble of various *societates*, separate bodies that, given the pervasiveness of Christian values, were seen to be part of that great metaphor that is the mystical body of Christ.” (8) She is followed by Danilo Zardin who presents sixteenth-century Milan, governed by Spain and deeply influenced by the reforming Archbishop Carlo Borromeo, an essential figure in the history of Milan. He, in turn, is followed by Paola Vismara, who describes Milanese associations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a very active period for lay and religious brotherhoods orbiting around the Catholic Church. Vismara also mentions the suppression of confraternities and religious orders, particularly the suppression of the Jesuits, that began in 1767. A few years later, in 1786, Emperor Joseph II abolished many confraternities in an attempt to reduce and bring a sense of order to the very diverse world of religious associations. Paolo Valvo concludes the first part of the book with a description of Milanese associations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the foundation, among others, of such non-religious associations as the Touring Club Italiano (f. 1894), “one of the most important and glorious associations of Milan, founded on the initiative of a representative major local sports clubs [including the] Club Alpino Italiano.” (47)

The second part of the book, edited by Stefania Buganza, Francesco Frangi and Paolo Vanoli, consists of a series of fascinating images with captions that depict moments of confraternal life or works commissioned by various companies, such as the “Madonna della Misericordia” (1534) by the

Cremonese painter Giulio Campi that served as a processional standard for a Marian brotherhood. There then follows a list and brief description of a range of Milanese associations from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Giorgio Sassi concludes this section with a description of contemporary Milanese associations.

In the third and final part of the book Roberta Madoi provides a description of the web portal that was the intended goal of this research project, a web-based database of all the images and records gathered by the project over the years to be made available to the general public. Madoi explains the structure of the database and the materials in it. She is followed by Daniela Bellettati, Vesna Cunjá and Paul Valvo who describe the most useful archival, print, and iconographic sources available for the research on Milanese associations. The articles by Lucia and Marco Aiello Bascapè bring the volume to a close with a joint contribution on Milanese associations of mutual assistance and charitable associations in the Middle Ages and the modern era. At the end of the book a general bibliography provides yet another starting point for further research.

Thanks to its articles and rich array of images, this volume is a rich source of information for the study of lay religious (and other) associations in Milan over the course of the last five centuries and will provide scholar with a firm foundation for further innovative research on early modern and modern piety, charity, and Italian economic and cultural history in general.

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Les confréries dans la ville de Rouen à l'époque moderne, XVIe-XVIIIe siècles. Documents présentés par Marc Venard. Rouen: Société de l'Histoire de Normandie, 2010. Pp. 476 + 32 b/w images. ISBN 2-85351-0015-8 (paperback) € 25.

In this book, historian Marc Venard brings together documents related to confraternities in the French city of Rouen that he has gathered over the course of his career. The book is intended in some ways as a complement to Catherine Vincent's study of medieval Norman confraternities, *Des charités bien ordonnées*, picking up chronologically where that book left off, around 1540, and continuing on to the Revolution. Venard begins with a useful overview of what can be learned from the 86 documents, which in addition to statutes include lawsuits, financial documents, church records, external descriptions, and even a poem. The overview looks at the standard categories of analysis for confraternities, such as type of devotion and patron, membership, activities, relations with Church authorities, etc. These provide a useful continuation to Vincent's work, showing what continued and what changed between the medieval and early modern periods for Rouen's confraternities.