

Hungary descends from royal rank to the condition of poor “lady” in order to rehabilitate the dignity of the aristocracy.

In bringing to our attention the presence of, and work carried out by women in the Compagnia dell’Umiltà in Turin, this rich volume makes a substantial contribution to our greater understanding of women’s agency in early modern confraternities, charity, and art.

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**Cantaluppi, Anna, Walter E. Crivellin and Bruno Signorelli (eds.). *Le figlie della Compagnia. Casa del soccorso, Opera del deposito, Educatorio Duchessa Isabella fra età moderna e contemporanea*.**

**2 vols. Quaderni dell’Archivio Storico. Turin: Compagnia di San Paolo, 2011. Pp. 384, 64. ISBN 978-88-88183-09-5 (paperback). No price.**

Although much of this book will not be of primary interest to our readers, touching as it does mostly on nineteenth and twentieth century matters, its various sub-sections (in different articles) that deal with women in confraternities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will certainly draw their attention, especially since so little is available on the place, role, and work of women in early modern lay religious associations.

Already shortly after its founding in 1563 the Compagnia di San Paolo in Turin gave its female members the opportunity to engage directly in the confraternity’s charitable work. It did so by placing the management of the “Casa del Soccorso” (house of assistance), which it founded in 1589 in order to educate and assist young women, completely into the hands of its *consorelle*. A century later, in 1683, the Compagnia also placed in their hands the newly-founded “Casa del Deposito” (house of deposit), a second enterprise specifically created to educate and assist young women. Over the four centuries of their existence, these institutions (or their reformulations under different names, but always in a direct line of descendancy from their original establishments) assisted more than 3700 young women in Turin and surrounding area. Unlike other early-modern institutions for women that sought either to remove them permanently from the marriage market (nunneries) or to redeem them after a life of immorality (Magdalene houses), the two “houses” established by the Compagnia di San Paolo sought, instead, to prepare women for a full and productive life in society by providing them with an education and professional training that would give them agency not only as wives, but also as contributors to the economy and to the well being of the family and the state. As a result, entrance into the “casa” was much sought after by young women and their families as an opportunity for the future (and not as a remedy for a present “ill” or problem). The impact these institutions thus had on the individual

and her family was quite positive, as it was also for the wider community and the state that benefitted from a trained and educated female work force, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (but not only).

The opening article by Anna Cantaluppi, "Le fonti: un percorso attraverso gli archivi della Casa del Soccorso all'Educatório Duchessa Isabella" (pp. 17–36), presents the rich documentation available in the archive of the Compagnia di San Paolo for the study of women in the confraternity. It opens with a short description of the administrative structures at the Compagnia and then moves to a description of the archival sources on women starting with the Soccorso and the Deposito and going all the way to the nineteenth-century "Educatório Duchessa Isabella" (Duchess Isabella School). This is followed by Sandra Cavallo's article "Assistenza ed educazione in età moderna" (pp. 37–48) which focuses on the early-modern period, differentiating, in part, the work of the *case* and *opere pie* set up by the Compagnia di San Paolo from the standard early modern "hospice or husband" (*muro o marito*) dichotomy that women had to face. Marcella Maritano's "Le case del Soccorso, del Deposito e delle Forzate dalla fondazione alla Rivoluzione Francese" (pp. 49–161) examines in depth the three institutions for women up to the French Revolution, looking at their context (Turin) as well as their practices (entry regulations and requirements, departure, daily life, etc.). From the perspective of architectural and urban history, readers will find Bruno Signorelli's article "Sotto lo stesso tetto: le sedi dal XVI al XX secolo" (pp. 283–343), on the various buildings that housed the various *case* of interest, especially the earlier subsections that touch on the location of the *case* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The other articles in the collection take us into the modern era, as does the second volume in the set, a photographic essay on the women and the activities of the school from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. These may not be of interest to early modernists, but they certainly will be to scholars of women's history, women's institutions, and women's education.

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**Crivellin, Walter E. and Bruno Signorelli (eds.).** *Per una storia della Compagnia di San Paolo (1563–1853).*

**3 vols. Quaderni dell'Archivio storico. Turin: Compagnia di San Paolo, 2004, 2005, 2007. Pp. 205, 228, 252. ISBN 88-88284-04-4, 88-88284-05-2, 88-88284-06-0 (paperback), n.p.**

This three-volume collection of articles and archival material investigates the history of the Compagnia di San Paolo, beginning with its foundation