

Reviews

Chiesa e religiosità popolare a Peschici, ed. Teresa Maria Rauzino, "Presentazione" by Liana Bertoldi Lenoci. Peschici: Centro Studi Giuseppe Martella, 1999. 287 pp., illustrations

Peschici is an enchanting medieval town perched on a rock cliff jutting into the sea from the promontory of Galgano, in Puglia. Founded in 970 by order of Emperor Otto I (912–973) as part of a defense line against Moslem penetration into the southern Adriatic, over the centuries Peschici acquired the characteristics, both physical and cultural, of a town fortified against Infidel threats. Its fortress, its look-out towers, even its location on the tip of a high rock that towers over the Adriatic bespeak of its strategic importance, while its history reflects the vicissitudes and hardships of the outpost, solitary in its existence, proud of its ability to survive, and self-reliant to an extreme.

This first volume by the newly-founded *pro loco* 'Centro Studi "Giuseppe Martella"' is a pioneering work in the ecclesiastical and religious history of this small outpost. Its eight essays, collected and edited by Liana Bertoldi Lenoci and Teresa Maria Rauzino, run the gamut from an examination of the origins and characteristics of the local cult of the prophet Elijah (Libera Iervolino), to an analysis of the 1675–78 pastoral visitation by Cardinal Vincenzo Maria Orsini (Grazia Silvestri), to the socio-demographic aspects of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Peschici (Teresa Maria Rauzino), to the connections between its religious architecture and its popular religion (Michel' Antonio Piemontese), to a detailed analysis of current scholarship on the Benedictine abbey of Santa Maria di Càlena, near Peschici (Teresa Maria Rauzino), to a study of the 1979–86 artworks by Alfredo Bortoluzzi for the church of Sant'Elia (Tiziana Luisi), to some concluding remarks on Professor Giuseppe Martella by his colleague and friend Filippo Fiorentino.

Readers of *Confraternitas* will be most interested, however, in Liana Bertoldi Lenoci's hefty contribution on the confraternities of Peschici (pp. 97–147). Lenoci contextualizes the presence of Peschici's confraternities not only within the vast European confraternal movement, but also within the small, isolated town's desperate need for mutual assistance. While the *monte frumentario* and the *monte pecuniario* provided the impoverished town folk with material help, the town's two confraternities—the 'Confraternita del SS.mo Sacramento' and the 'Confraternita del Purgatorio'—tended to their spiritual needs. Because of the vicissitudes of history, and in particular because of military incursions and destruction, no archival documentation on these confraternities survives from before 1675, the date of Cardinal Orsini's visitation, when it was noted that the Confraternity of the Sacrament housed in the church of Sant'Elia had been erected *ab immemorabilis*. Later documentation, on the other hand, becomes richer as it draws closer to the present.

While clearly a work of local history intended for a fairly local readership, this volume nonetheless reflects what we are starting to appreciate about lay religious organizations in Southern Italy: the vitality and longevity of their presence in the region and the unfortunate paucity of documentation from before the eighteenth or, in some cases, even the nineteenth century. The work of documenting their presence and analyzing their role in the spiritual, social, artistic, and even economic life of the population—spearheaded as it is by the Centro Ricerche Storia Religiosa in Puglia and, in this case, by the Centro Studi ‘Giuseppe Martella’—is continuing.

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Gli Innocenti e Firenze nei secoli. Un ospedale, un archivio, una città, ed. Lucia Sandri. Firenze: SPES Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1996. 199 pp., ill. ISBN 88-7242-2752

The Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence is one of the best-known orphanages in the world. Among the first purpose-built foundling homes in Europe, it gained its high profile as much from Brunelleschi's fine building as from the thousands of children who passed through its wheel and door from the fifteenth through to the twentieth century. Scholars like Richard Trexler, Philip Gavitt, and Lucia Sandri have written valuable articles and monographs on the strength of its well-preserved archives, finding in its operation either the institutional machinery for the gender-selective genocide of Florentine foundlings (Trexler) or the communal effort to preserve population in the face of crisis-levels of abandonment (Gavitt).

With this collection, we see more of the texture of life within the Innocenti's walls, and the impact it had on cultural and economic life in Florence and its hinterland. Though richly illustrated, it is not the kind of empty coffee-table book whose volume and weight are in inverse proportion to its scholarly contribution. The individual articles, while short, are well-documented pieces by respected historians who draw on both the Innocenti's archives and the scholarly work of the past three decades. Three articles by Richard Goldthwaite sketch the Innocenti's origins, construction, and place in local artistic culture. Two articles by Giuseppina Romby lay out both the expansion of the physical fabric and the image of the home from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Lucia Sandri describes in vivid terms the care given to children, while Allen Grieco expands with customary insight on the social, medical, and economic aspects of food purchases and institutional diet in the Quattrocento. Simona Gelli and Giuliano Pinto discuss the expansion and exploitation of the Innocenti's rural holdings, while Laura Cavazzini surveys its collection of paintings and sculpture. Bruno Dini reviews the archival materials having to do with the Innocenti's sponsor, the Silk Guild, and its economic role in the city.