

Reviews

Little, Lester K. *Libertà Carità Fraternità. Confraternite laiche a Bergamo nell'età del Comune*. Edizione degli statuti a cura di Sandro Buzzetti. Ricerca codicologica di Giulio Orazio Bravi (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1988), 226 pp.

Professor Little's work was published simultaneously in English (Smith College Studies in History, vol. 51) and Italian (the version under review). It is the fruit of more than ten years of research on the confraternities of 12th- and 13th-century Bergamo (N-E Italy). The volume is divided into two parts: a general introduction to lay religious life in late-medieval Bergamo (pp. 11-98) and a collection of archival documents dating from 1265 to 1363 (pp. 101-219). Two indices (person and place names) complete the volume (pp. 221-227).

The first part contains a general introduction to lay spirituality in the 12th century (pp. 11-13), a brief history of Bergamo during the time of the commune (pp. 15-26), a description of the development in religious life in the 12th and 13th centuries from monastic to mendicant orders (pp. 27-47), a summary of the origin of lay confraternities within the context of 13th mendicant spirituality (pp. 49-54), a description of late medieval confraternities in Bergamo (pp. 55-65), a discussion of their statutes (pp. 67-82) and activities (pp. 83-92), and a conclusion (pp. 93-98). Although there is no collected bibliography of cited works, a wealth of footnotes directs the reader towards a variety of primary and secondary sources.

The second part contains the transcription of eight confraternity statutes from the 13th and 14th century, a 1305 document relating to a confraternity that had been active since 1159, and a notary's minutes of five confraternity general meetings held in 1292. Each document is preceded by a detailed description of the manuscript and some brief information on the confraternity. All ten documents are in Latin. They are: the notarial act dated 1305 relating to the Ospedale di San Sepolcro di Astino, 1159 (pp. 101-106), the statutes of the Congregazione della Misericordia di Bergamo, 1265 (pp. 107-121), those of the Consorzio di San Michele del Pozzo Bianco, 1266 (pp. 123-137), those of the Consorzio di Sant'Alessandro della Croce, 1272 (pp. 139-149), those of the Consorzio di Santa Caterina, 1279 (pp. 151-155), the minutes the five meetings held in 1272 by the Consorzio di San Pancrazio in order to discuss the riorganization of the confraternity (pp. 157-172), the statutes of the Consorzio per l'Assistenza ai Carcerati, 1320 (pp. 173-179), those of the Consorzio della Misericordia di Nembro e di Alzano Superiore, 1326 (pp. 181-190), those of the Congregazione dei Disciplinati della Città e del Distretto di Bergamo, 1336 (pp. 191-205), and those of the Consorzio di Sant'Alessandro in Colonna, 1363 (pp. 207-219).

Many factors make this volume an important publication, not the least of which are the scholarly apparatus and the depth of perception it possesses, as well as the careful transcription of documents relating to the early years of lay confraternities. The focus on a geographical area not usually studied (as is the case for the following book), enriches our understanding of lay spirituality in late-medieval Italy.

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