

Reviews

Aranci, Gilberto. *Formazione religiosa e santità laicale a Firenze tra Cinque e Seicento: Ippolito Galantini fondatore della Congregazione di San Francesco della Dottrina Cristiana di Firenze (1565–1620)*. Florence: Giampiero Pagnini Editore, 1997. 509 pp.

If, as Gilberto Aranci suggests, the contributions of the Blessed Ippolito Galantini have been long forgotten by most modern Florentines, then at least, with the publication of this wonderfully expansive book, they will not be lost forever to scholars. Here, in a single volume, Aranci has not only recorded the life of the sixteenth-century lay preacher, but contextualized it in such a way as to present Galantini as an emblem of confraternal activity in the wake of Tridentine reform. As a result, Galantini's career as a teacher of Catholic doctrine is firmly entrenched not only in Counter-Reformation history, but in the corpus of scholarly inquiry into confraternities.

Aranci achieves this feat through a comprehensive and precise approach to his subject. His meticulous attention to detail, to sorting and cataloguing information, is evident not only in the organization of the chapters and subsections of the book, but in the work's efforts to analyze, categorize, and collate historical facts. The political, social, and religious events of sixteenth-century Italy, and of Florence in particular, are used as indicators of a subtle, yet significant transformation in the social organizations that characterize Florentine civic and religious life. It is not surprising then to find that, for Aranci, the life of Ippolito Galantini does not start with his birth in 1565, but rather well before that, in the "new Medicean state," in the reign of duke Cosimo I and the rule of Archbishop Antonio Altoviti. In order to understand how a humble weaver became an active member of several confraternities, a revered teacher, and a contributor to religious education, Aranci insists (quite rightly, it turns out) that we must first understand the various aspects of Florentine religious life, including Altoviti's pastoral rule and the role of the Jesuits in Florence. Each of these aspects is examined in depth by the author, who further subdivides the topics into specific issues and provides helpful headings for easy reference. Only then does Aranci move forward to examine the period into which Galantini was born, looking at its socio-economic unrest and at the effects of the Tridentine reforms. Here again the author is exceptionally detailed in his examination, starting with an overview of Tuscany under Grand-duke Francesco I (r. 1564–1587) and Grand-duke Ferdinando I (r. 1587–1609), moving on to discuss the pastoral rule of Archbishop Alessandro de' Medici (r. 1574–1605), and then passing to what may be, for confraternity scholars, one of the most useful portions of the volume—an examination of Florentine lay confraternities in the sixteenth century.

In this section on confraternities, Aranci notes a marked shift in the nature and number of these organizations from the earlier to the latter part of the century. He draws on Weissman and Eisenbichler to document the shift from the "fraternally"-focused (in the sense of social equality) lay societies of the Renaissance to the more

clergy-controlled, hierarchically-based and obedience-oriented organizations of Galantini's time. It is against this backdrop that Aranci proceeds to decipher the various sources leading to the decline of the Grand Duchy, focusing on socio-economic and cultural depression in Tuscany under Grand-duke Cosimo II (r. 1609–1621) and Archbishop Alessandro Marzi Medici (r. 1605–1630).

By the time Aranci arrives at his stated goal, examining the life and work of Ippolito Galantini, he has provided such an all-encompassing review of the various influences and organizations of the time that Galantini might seem little more than yet another sub-heading in a section of a chapter. Yet, Aranci's skill as a writer is such that he manages to rescue the man from the potentially obscuring enormity of his setting. Moreover, Aranci has managed to extract the essence of Galantini from the sources which document his life. Aranci has not only put together the pieces of a documentary jigsaw puzzle, but succeeded in erasing the cracks between them. What emerges is more than a mere composite; rather, it is a unified image of a teacher, a living, breathing educator whose hospitality and generosity during the 1591 famine are described in as much detail as the jealousy and envy directed against him as he rose in the esteem of church and secular leaders alike. Aranci's painstaking detail in terms of the function and workings of the religious teaching institutes of the period, not to mention the numerous appendices that he includes in this volume, will be indispensable to scholars of Florentine and Italian religious life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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L'archivio della mensa arcivescovile di Firenze, ed. Gilberto Aranci. Pubblicazioni dell'Archivio Arcivescovile di Firenze, Inventari 1. Firenze: Pagnini Editore, 1996. 131 pp.

There is likely no one more qualified than Gilberto Aranci to produce an annotated inventory of the holdings of the *Archivio della Mensa Arcivescovile* (Archiepiscopal Treasury Archives) of Florence. As director of the city's Archiepiscopal Archive, Aranci brings to this work not only the detail and description one would expect of an archivist, but also an intimate knowledge of the archive's history. In his introduction, Aranci notes that the organizational system used in this catalogue is that put in place following a reorganization by Archbishop Monsignor Antonio Martini in 1788, when the entire archiepiscopal archive was catalogued into three sections according to its original sources: *Mensa Arcivescovile*, *Cancelleria* (Chancery), and *Tribunale Ecclesiastico* (Ecclesiastical Courts).

Although this inventory focuses on the *Mensa Arcivescovile*, the compiler has included a general index of the entire collection, enumerating the categories of documents contained in all three sections. The mention in the second section, *Cancelleria*, of a series of documents relating to *Compagnie religiose e società laicali* (Religious companies and lay societies) will be of particular interest to confraternity scholars. Similarly, an entry pertaining to *Cause civili* (Civil suits) contained in the