

Fehler's study is a welcome addition to the scholarship on sixteenth-century social welfare, particularly because of its attention to Emden, a fruitful but under-studied centre, and because of its thoughtful approach to the multiplicity of individuals and organizations involved in assisting the poor.

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Guilds, Markets and Work Regulations in Italy, 16th–19th Centuries. Eds. Alberto Guenzi, Paola Massa and Fausto Piola Caselli. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998. vii, 520 pp.

This volume arises out of the growing interest demonstrated by many European academics in particular in understanding the forms and impacts of corporate groups in early modern Europe. Some conferences of the early 1990s stimulated a major Italian collaborative research project in 1994, whose findings were delivered at a conference in Rome in 1997 and are now made more widely available through this collection. In contrast to some recent work that looks at diverse kinds of corporate groups, this collection focuses more narrowly on economic history and deals almost exclusively with guilds and their adaptation to a new order where merchants and governments held the powers that guilds had once exercised.

Guilds and confraternities were long thought to have retreated, by the early modern period, into mere shadows of their medieval selves: empty ritual bodies at best, and resisting necessary economic and social change at worst. Certainly most were stripped of the central political and economic roles that they had earlier played, but in many instances the expansion of the mercantile economy and regulatory state was done as much with the co-operation of the guilds as in opposition to them. This process is considered in the first two parts of the collection: "The Guild System in Some Urban Realities" and "Profession, Monopoly, and Conflict". In Genoa, regulations governing foodstuffs were adopted by civic governments, but then implemented through the guilds that had formerly held total control. In Milan, guilds adapted as merchant companies began expanding to take control of industries such as silk; while the latter organized production and trade, they could only do so because the former continued to govern contracts, quality standards, and training. The same was true of guilds generally in Sardinia and Sicily, where guild control of standards and training fit well with merchant control of marketing, and where guild control of social life and welfare ensured a continuing social influence even after political power had waned.

The guild activity closest to confraternal realities is mutual aid and charity, and this is discussed in Part Three: "Assistance and Mutual Aid." Welfare was almost always given on the grounds of Christian charity and kin obligation, but we see evolving in this period a growing practice of linking benefit levels for the sick, the poor or the old to the years they had worked and contributions they had offered, that is, a form of modern insurance. The same was true of aid to

dependents (e.g., dowries or apprenticeship fees for the children of sick or deceased craftsmen). Guilds as institutions could adapt to changes in the pre-industrial economy, but not to the rise of factory production. Yet their legacy continued in the form of concern for working conditions and the length of the work day, and in this form made a transition to such new forms as the union and the political party.

This adaptability and metamorphosis of corporate groups is the greatest lesson for confraternity scholars from a book which barely mentions confraternities at all. Symbolic kinship was a fundamental part of medieval, early modern, and even modern social expectations. Our historical studies ought as much as possible to understand how kinship groups, whether guilds or confraternities, mediate the political, economic, and religious changes of a very dynamic period, and metamorphose through them.

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The Politics of Ritual Kinship. Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy. Ed. Nicholas Terpstra. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. xi, 317 pp.

This collection of fifteen essays features work by some of the most prominent scholars of confraternities from North America, the U.K., and Italy, covering a broad temporal sweep from the High Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century.

The editor's introduction unequivocally places confraternity studies on the leading edge of social historical research in general and Italian Studies in particular. Terpstra credits social history for taking confraternity studies out of a "local-institutional mind set" (p. 2) and highlights the role of confraternities "as groups which define social and political roles and mediate changes to a more hierarchical society" (p. 3). The conceptual thread tying these essays together is well grounded in the tradition of social history, expanding on the themes of family and ritual, and also analyzing the structures of community and social control in late medieval and early modern Italy. Arguing that confraternities played more than a "purely" devotional role in early modern society and pointing to the common themes in the articles, he argues that "their activity offers insights into the organization and distribution of charity, gender and class relations, the character and uses of civic religion, the shifting dynamics of lay and clerical relations at all levels, and the means by which social elites used religious and charitable institutions to maintain political authority" (p. 4).

The first essay by Christopher Black gives a retrospective of confraternity studies – landmark studies, conferences, and interpretations – as they have developed over the last thirty years, and presents much the same conclusion as the editor's introduction. The rest of the essays proceed roughly chronologically from the foundation of late medieval confraternities in the thirteenth century to