

Reviews

Barzman, Karen-Edis. *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State. The Discipline of Disegno*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. xii, 377 pp., 24 illustrations

Karen-Edis Barzman's fascinating study of the first formal academy of art, the *Accademia del Disegno* in Florence, makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of art institutions and their role in the emergence of the modern state. By considering the tripartite function of the Academy as lay confraternity, school, and guild, Barzman shows that within the cultural politics of the Grand Ducal state of the Medici the disciplinary practices of *disegno* contributed to the formation of a new social order.

The *Accademia del Disegno* was founded on the guiding principle of *disegno*. As Barzman points out, the term *disegno* had multiple meanings in the early modern period. Although today we might translate *disegno* as "drawing" or "design," during the sixteenth century the concept of *disegno* was part of complex debates over the nature and status of art. Barzman's characterisation of *disegno* in Foucauldian terms as a disciplinary discourse allows her to consider the socio-political consequences of the Academy's institutionalisation of the principle of *disegno*. Inspired by Foucault's interpretation of power in the modern era as producing individuals through practices that are codified within institutions, she explains how the varied activities of the Academy "constituted a discipline or form of social and intellectual management."

The text is divided into two parts. The first section discusses the history of the institution from its inception in 1563 through the end of the Medici regime in 1737. The second part focuses on the disciplinary practices of the academy. The intellectual foundations for the pedagogical programme of the Academy school and the course of study followed by artists are examined in the fifth chapter. Here Barzman draws on extensive archival research to counter the belief perpetuated in previous studies of the Academy that there was no consistent curriculum. In the sixth chapter, which examines the Academy's role as confraternity and guild, her desire to dispel the myth of the Academy's "failure as a formal institution of training" is also evident in her insistence on the centrality of the guild and confraternal activities to the discipline of *disegno*. Indeed, Barzman argues that although the *Accademia del Disegno* was first and foremost a school, its tripartite nature meant that the Florentine Academy's "operations as a disciplinary apparatus nonetheless exceeded those of a teaching institution."

Barzman's emphasis on the importance of the confraternal and guild functions of the Academy will be of particular interest to scholars working on the role of confraternities in the formation of the early modern state. As Barzman contends, "although many of the activities discussed here constituted traditional forms of practice in confraternal and guild settings, they appeared in late sixteenth-century Florence within an unprecedented tripartite organ of state, the

Guild, Confraternity, and Academy of *Disegno*." She demonstrates that public spectacles such as confraternal processions, celebrations, funerals, the public dispensation of charity and the public administration of guild protocols performed a disciplinary function and served to articulate the place of artists in the evolving social order of the Grand Duchy.

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Confraternity of the Buonomini di San Martino. Historical Archive. Preface by Fr. Lorenzo Fatichi O.P. Texts by M. Raffaella De Gramatica and Ludovica Sebreghondi. Firenze: Edizioni della Meridiana, 2001. 24 pp.

This *volumetto* was published to commemorate the reorganization of the historical archive of the confraternity of the Buonomini di San Martino, one of the most important (and still functioning) lay confraternities of Florence. The group was founded in 1442 by Antonino Pierozzi (later St. Antoninus) while he was still prior of the Dominican convent of San Marco, an institution of enormous importance in the cultural and religious life of Florence. As its name suggests, the Buonomini consisted of a group of men who were to carry out the good will work of financially assisting those Florentines who had unexpectedly fallen into economic difficulties.

After a short preface by Fr. Lorenzo Fatichi, the current prior of San Marco, the pamphlet offers two short, but fine essays by M. Raffaella de Grammatica and Ludovica Sebreghondi. De Grammatica provides the reader with an overview of the confraternity's archive, one of the richest in the city. Its documents span over five centuries of activity on behalf of the "shame-faced poor" (those who were ashamed of being poor because unaccustomed to their sudden poverty). They are richly varied and extremely well detailed. De Grammatica lists the various types of ledgers and books kept by the confraternity, points out the different sub-collections in the archive, and brings to our attention the fact that over the centuries a number of families and individuals donated their own archives to the Buonomini: the Gianfigliuzzi, Minerbetti-Squarcialupi, Capponi, Mazzinghi, Baroncini, Guadagni, Del Campana-Guazzesi families, and then Francesco Marucelli, Angelo Barbieri, Andrea Ghidetti, Bernardo Folchi – clearly the archive of the Buonomini is an unexpected source for a variety of historical research. Ludovica Sebreghondi follows with an examination of the images of charity used to embellish the Buonomini's oratory, the confraternity's only piece of real estate. Following one by one the nine lunettes in the confraternity's meeting room, Sebreghondi points out the major features of the fresco cycle and connects them with the Buonomini's charitable activities: distributing food and clothing to the needy, giving dowries to poor girls, freeing debtors from jail, assisting pilgrims in finding accommodations, and burying the poor.