

tych complements Ahl's. His iconographic reading is informed by theological studies, and is set in contrast to his investigation of works for private and monastic devotion. Verdon notes, "these works...are typical of three related but distinct 'environments' of Quattrocento religious and cultural experience: private piety, corporate or confraternal devotion, and the more traditional context of monastic prayer" (32). Verdon's discussion may be of interest to scholars concerned with how confraternal altarpieces are distinctive from altarpieces in other religious settings.

Although the other essays in this volume do not discuss confraternal commissions, they may still be of interest to scholars of confraternity studies. They are written by eminent scholars and yield a rich picture of Piero's life and art, and a sense of the context in which his confraternal altarpieces were painted.

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Cosma e Damiano dall'Oriente a Firenze, ed. Elena Giannarelli. Firenze: Edizioni della Meridiana, 2002. 205 pp., 22 colour illustrations. ISBN 88-87478-31-7.

This collection of essays edited by Elena Giannarelli offers a valuable investigation into the lives, legends, and representations of saints Cosmas and Damian, the holy twins whose cult flourished under the Medici in fifteenth-century Florence. *Cosma e Damiano: Dall'Oriente a Firenze* treats topics both big and small, from the history of the saints' cult to illuminated Florentine manuscripts, and reflects a welcome trend in cultural history toward a multidisciplinary understanding of the sacred in the early modern period. It is good to see scholars treating Cosmas and Damian, saints so ubiquitous in Renaissance Florence, as important subjects of inquiry in their own right.

Giannarelli's own article is a useful history of the saints that treats the legend of their martyrdom and the florescence of their cult in Constantinople in the fifth century. She examines some interconnections of the three most ancient hagiographic narratives as well as the steady development of the healing cult of Cosmas and Damian in Western Europe. More engaging still is Giannarelli's discussion of the tension in early Christianity between medical healing and divine thaumaturgy. She traces a consistent antagonism toward medicine in the writings of the Church Fathers, a disapproval of any healing other than from Christ's own hand, and a valorization of the ill whose suffering recalled Christ's Passion. Giannarelli sees a consonance between the gradual acceptance of the medical arts and the growth of Cosmas and Damian's cult; in Constantinople a healing rite known as the *incubatio* required the ill to spend a night in the saints' church during which Cosmas and Damian performed surgery on the sufferer.

In Ludovica Sebregondi's article on the iconography and representation of the saints, we learn more about Cosmas and Damian's surgical skills. One of the scenes in the predella panel of Fra Angelico's famous San Marco Altarpiece depicts the 'miracolo della gamba nera,' wherein the couple amputates the cancerous leg of a

devotee and replaces it with a leg from an Ethiopian man buried in the cemetery of San Pietro in Vincoli. Sebreghondi notes the consistent identification of the saints with medical iconography; rather than instruments of martyrdom they are routinely depicted with medical tools and instruments.

Since scholars so often link them to the Medici, Valeria Novembri examines the only Latin manuscript in Florentine libraries treating the lives of Cosmas and Damian (Biblioteca Laurenziana di Firenze, Laurenziano Pluteo 20.8); it is thought that this manuscript is the same "*Vita Beatorum Cosme et Damiani*" listed in the inventory of Cosimo de' Medici's books of March 1417/18. Though Novembri avers that Laur. Plut. 20.8 may not be a codex of the highest quality or import, its narrative nonetheless differs from other near-contemporary accounts, most notably Jacopo da Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, and its provenance makes it important to understanding Medici conceptions of their patron saints. Happily, Novembri has edited the text of Laur. Plut. 20.8 and offers it as an appendix to the volume along with an Italian translation.

Angela Dillon Bussi's article examines three illustrated manuscripts dating between 1494 and 1520, all of which can be connected to the Medici. Bussi argues that although Cosmas and Damian found a home among the Medici, depictions of the saints are conspicuously absent in manuscript sources.

None of these essays deals with confraternities in great detail, but Novembri and Sebreghondi make reference to a couple Florentine brotherhoods involved in the veneration of the saints, namely the congregazione dei Buonomini di San Martino (p. 67) and the compagnia della Purificazione della Vergine e di San Zanobi of San Marco (p. 82). This collection offers fine scholarship as well as a variety of methodologies for approaching this worthy topic. Art historians and historians of medicine will find much to enjoy here, and Florentinists will welcome the contribution to the historiography of Medici mythology.

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Mario Fanti, *Confraternite e città a Bologna nel medioevo e nell'età moderna*. Italia Sacra: Studi e documenti di storia ecclesiastica, vol. 65. Rome: Herder Editrice, 2001. xvii + 645 pp. ISBN 88-85876-49-8.

Much of Italian scholarship on confraternities has been the work of local historians who have devoted a lifetime of research and writing to the brotherhoods of their cities or towns. In Bologna, Mario Fanti has been the scholar most dedicated to this particular labour of love, and a productive contributor to local medieval and early modern historiography generally. As an archivist at both the civic library of the Archiginnasio, and also the Archdiocesan archive, Fanti has had access to scores of hitherto inaccessible manuscripts and has brought out dozens of editions and studies on various aspects of Bologna's religious, political, and cultural history as a result. Yet while he has written on a broad variety of themes, he is most identified with the history of confraternities. This collection brings together