

eight essays on Bolognese confraternities that were published between 1969 and 1998. It is a little misleading to call these 'essays' since three are approximately 100 pages long and a fourth is over 60 pages; one was itself originally published as a book. They are weighty pieces. This collection is particularly welcome because, as is frequently the case with local historical work, a number of the essays originally appeared in small volumes with even smaller circulation published by local banks, parishes, or institutions, and are difficult to get hold of outside of Bologna.

That said, not all of Fanti's work has had a purely local circulation. This collection opens with two essays that were published by the Centro di documentazione sul Movimento dei Disciplinati in Perugia when it was most active in the 1960s and 1970s. Two brotherhoods vied for primacy at the top of Bologna's confraternal pecking order, S. Maria della Vita, and S. Maria della Morte, and Fanti wrote an extended essay on each. They are undoubtedly his most famous articles, and they demonstrate clearly his careful archival scholarship as he works to sort through centuries of pious legend, hopeful fraud, and parochial loyalty in order to set the early history of both groups on a firm and documentary footing. There follow studies of the Compagnia dei Poveri (an early mutual aid brotherhood), S. Maria della Carità (an offshoot of the 1399 movement of the Bianchi), S. Maria dei Guarini (a laudesi confraternity which ran the syphilitics' hospital of S. Giobbe), S. Maria degli Angeli (administrators of the foundling home of the Bastardini), and S. Maria del Baraccano (operators of an shrine closely associated with the city's de facto Quattrocento rulers, the Bentivoglio). In some of these studies, Fanti carries the story up to the late eighteenth century, and the collection's final essay deals with the crises that gripped Bologna's confraternally run hospitals at that time.

Fanti declines to offer analytical overviews of Bolognese confraternal development or to engage in interpretive discussions on this theme. His focus is on intensely researched and tightly focused archival studies of individual confraternities. These essays are presented as they were originally published, with only minor errata corrected. It is a valuable collection, and one that demonstrates the great potential for further comparative work on a very rich subject.

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Francesco Santucci, *Il passaggio dei Bianchi in Assisi (1399)*. Assisi: Accademia Properziana del Subasio, 1999.

The lay religious movements that punctuated the late fourteenth century left their mark on contemporaries in numerous ways. Chroniclers noted with amazement and occasional incredulity the sight and effect of these apparently spontaneous outbursts of faith. Those caught in the moment composed *laude* and prayers, erected monuments, and painted images to commemorate their experience. The phenomenon of the Bianchi highlights this state of popular piety. Known for their

peace-making mission, these nine-day processions of devotion captured many imaginations during the summer of 1399 in northern Italy.

In 1993 Daniel Bornstein introduced the Bianchi to English readers in *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy* (reviewed in *Confraternitas*, Fall 1994). Bornstein argued that the inclusive nature of these processions, both in terms of rich and poor as well as lay and clerical, should underscore for the historian that popular religiosity was not necessarily in conflict with orthodox teachings. In fact, while the Bianchi remained an independent movement, many clerics sanctioned the numerous processions through their territory. His argument is also verified, as shown in *Il passaggio dei Bianchi in Assisi*, by the existence of frescoes in churches that praise the miracles and work of the Bianchi.

Inspired by recent restorations of images in churches throughout Italy, Francesco Santucci connects the material objects, paintings and *laude*, commemorating the Bianchi to their passage through Assisi. Santucci describes the four frescoes in the churches of San Francesco a Leonessa in the province of Rieti, Santa Maria del Monumento in Terni, San Pietro ai Muricento, and Sant'Eusanio in Rieti in Montebuono that represent the various miracles of the Bianchi. The first three frescoes portray one of the miracles that occurred during this passage—the apparition of the Madonna and Child in the Olive Grove. The fresco in Sant'Eusanio is titled “Miracolo dei tre pani” and illustrates the origin myth of the Bianchi. Further miracles, like the apparition of the Virgin in Santa Chiara, demonstrate the effects the Bianchi had on those they encountered as they processed towards Rome.

This slender volume, forty-one pages with an appendix of *laude* and facsimiles of the images discussed, adds to the multitude of work that has been done on the Bianchi in the last decade. Microstudies like this one further highlight the significant and unique role each town played in the movement, since the enthusiasm and participation of the townspeople determined the shape of the processions. These discussions elucidate both the importance of the Bianchi themselves and the environment which produced them.

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Simiz, Stefano. *Confréries urbaines et dévotion en Champagne (1450–1830)*. Villeneuve-d'Ascq (Nord): Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2002. 402 pp., maps and charts. ISBN 2-85939-715-9

This book discusses the influence of urban confraternities on religious life in the region of Champagne from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. A microhistory of Champagne reflected through the lens of confraternal activity, it is also a valuable contribution to the study of changing religious sensibilities over the *longue durée* in an important region of France.

From the days of St. Louis, Champagne had played an important role in the economic life of the realm. Situated on medieval trade and pilgrimage routes, both