

Sulle orme dei Bianchi (1399) dalla Liguria all'Italia Centrale. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale, Assisi-Vallo di Nera-Terni-Rieti-Leonessa (18-19-20 giugno 1999). Ed. Francesco Santucci. Assisi: Accademia Properziana del Subasio, 2001. 508, x pp., b/w and colour illustrations. No ISBN. E. 42.

The volume gathers the proceedings of a congress organized by the Accademia Properziana del Subasio (Assisi, Italy) on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the movement of the “Whites” (18–20 June 1999) plus five articles not originally part of the congress. Among the participants at the congress there was a fine group of local historians from Umbria (Giovanna Casagrande from Perugia, Paolo Renzi from Terni), a strong representation of scholars from other parts of Italy (Amleto Spicciani from Pisa, Mario Sensi from Rome), and three foreign scholars (Elisabeth Bliersbach and Thomas Frank from Germany, Daniel Bornstein from the USA). The national and international aspect of the congress has thus produced a collection of essays that is both rich in information and varied in methodology.

The movement of the Whites was a mass penitential groundswell first recorded in Liguria in the summer of 1399 when a crowd of about 5,000 men, women, and children, all wearing white garments, arrived at the western gates of the city from the mountainous hinterland to the north and the west of the city (5 July). They walked in an orderly fashion, carrying processional crosses and singing Jacopone da Todi's famous hymn, the *Stabat mater*. They crossed the city from west to east, reached the basilica of Santa Maria del Monte about a kilometre east of the city, heard mass, and dispersed. Two days later, on 7 July, the Whites moved from the periphery to the centre of Genoa's cultic life when the city's elderly archbishop, Iacopo Fieschi, celebrated mass in the cathedral and encouraged both his clergy and his flock to adopt the new devotion. In the days that followed, thousands of individuals gathered together to sing laude (especially the *Stabat mater*), confess their sins, and reconcile themselves publicly with their enemies, thus highlighting the movement's three major characteristics: devotional, penitential, reconciliatory. While many of the Whites moved from church to church within the city, many other gathered together and processed in their white garments out of the city towards nearby towns and villages, singing lauds, calling out to God for “Peace and Mercy”, and every day visiting three churches. From Genoa the movement spread out in two general directions: one headed north across the Appennines and reached Piacenza, in the fertile valley of the Po, the other moved along the eastern shores of Liguria till it entered Tuscany and reached Lucca (6 August). At Piacenza the northern arm of the movement split in three directions: one north-west towards Milan, another due north towards Bergamo, and one south-east towards Parma. The north-west and north arms were soon stopped when the Visconti and the Republic of Venice firmly prohibited the pilgrims entry into Milan and into Venetian territory respectively (the first for fear of the plague infesting the Milanese territories, the second for its innate distrust of popular movements of this sort). The south-eastern and southern branches of the movement enjoyed

greater success and, eventually, even reached Rome (7–15 September), where the entire movement finally petered out.

There are many unanswered questions about the origins of the movement of the Whites, its progress through the northern half of the peninsula, and its long-term effect on popular piety in Italy. This volume seeks to approach some of these questions and to offer some tentative answers by pursuing a careful, region by region examination of the records extant in various areas touched by the movement (a process reflected in the very title of the volume). For scholars of early modern confraternities and popular piety, the process and the volume are of great interest because, as Daniel Bornstein points out in his concluding remarks to the congress, they bring to light further examples of confraternities that were established, re-established, or invigorated by the movement of the Whites (p. 442). Another noteworthy observation arising from this careful, town by town, archive by archive study, is that a lot of information on the Whites and on popular piety in north and central Italy is to be found not only in the written documents, but also in the visual records and the iconography of the movement. By combining the visual and the written records, several of the contributors to the volume were able to catch the distant echo of the passage of the Whites through the small towns of Umbria and northern Latium. Some of these visual records are now reproduced in this volume in black and white and in colour illustrations.

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Ilaria Taddei, *Fanciulli e giovani: Crescere a Firenze nel rinascimento*. Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2001. vi + 370 pp. ISBN: 88 222 4986 0

Ilaria Taddei's monograph is an excellent addition both to the literature on youth and childhood, and to scholarship on Florentine confraternities. She engages with the scholarship of recent decades, particularly the works of Aries, Trexler, Weissman, and Eisenbichler, and offers some clear analysis of her own based on extensive researches in various Florentine archives.

Following a number of authors, Taddei argues that youth took on a special significance for fifteenth century Florentines. Youths held both promise and threat in their natural innocence and in their equally natural tendency to stray from straight and narrow paths. To value them was to be concerned with their moral development and socialization, and these concerns pushed republican Florentines to create a number of youth confraternities through the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Here youths could be sheltered, indoctrinated, socialized, and prepared for re-entry into Florentine society as balanced citizens prepared to advance the public good.

Taddei divides her study into two parts. The first sets the broadest terms of the discussion by looking at youth as an intellectual, political, and legal category. Here Taddei reviews Renaissance notions of the stages of early life, from *infanzia* and