

Reviews

Dickstein-Bernard, Claire. *Le livre de la Confrérie de Saint-Jacques d'Overmolen à Bruxelles (1357-1419)*. Fontes Bruxellae, 1. Bruxelles: Archives de la ville de Bruxelles / Archief van de stad Brussel, 2005. Pp. xxxix, 186 + ill. ISBN 2-9600373-2-4 (paperback) n.p.

In the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries the Brussels confraternity of Saint-Jacques d'Overmolen founded and managed an eponymous hospital for the shelter of poor pilgrims.

The confraternity's most striking surviving legacy is a register, written in Flemish, of 2,365 members from 1357 to 1419. In 55% of cases the list includes the member's occupation, thereby providing us with a remarkable list of trades and offices in the period. This handsome publication is dedicated to making the register more accessible and useful to scholars. It provides a complete transcription, including marginal notes and marks, and a reference number for each entry. The list was written in alphabetical order by first name (blank pages were originally included in the manuscript where new members could be added), so the appendices include an index of surnames, as well as a list of modern French translations of the Flemish first names.

The richest potential for research in this document lies in the list of occupations. To make it accessible to a wider number of researchers, the editor has provided a list of French translations for each of these terms, as well as an index of where each trade can be found in the register.

A brief introduction outlines what little is known from other sources about the foundation, structure, and history of the confraternity and its hospital, outlines the method used in the transcription, and points to some of the potential uses of this material in historical scholarship.

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Lennon, Colm (ed.) *Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland. Charity, Devotion and Sociability*. Blackrock, Ireland: The Columba Press / Dufour Editions, 2012. Pp. 216 + 25 ill. ISBN 978-1-85607-792-7 (paperback) \$26.95.

The ten essays in this collection are the product of a major research project on confraternities in Ireland undertaken in 2005–08 by Colm Lennon with funds from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, and a conference held in September 2007 at the National University of Ireland in Maynooth on the theme “Honouring God and Community: Confraternities and Sodalities in Modern Ireland” (see the report on the conference published

in *Confraternitas* 18:2 (Fall 2007), pp. 32–34). The first phase of the research project included an extensive series of visits to Irish archives and libraries carried out by Dr. Louise Fuller so as to locate all available materials touching on Irish confraternities. Some of the results of Fuller's visits are now in part noted and described in her contribution to this volume, "Confraternities, Their Decline and the Problem of Sources: Background, Analysis and Review" (pp. 148–168), an article that is a pleasure to read not only for the invaluable information it provides, but also for the personal touch and recollections it offers to the reader. The second part of the project consisted in the organization and cataloguing of all the information and materials brought to light by the series of visits; this was done by Dr. Robin Kavanagh in 2007–08. A website has now been created to help disseminate the findings and assist future researchers. It can be consulted at www.irishconfraternities.ie. The conference that formed the basis for the current collection of essays thus stood at the critical midpoint of the project and provided both a moment of reflection and a stimulus for further research — something that the collection now offers to attentive readers and enthusiasts of lay religious history.

The articles in the collection range from Colm Lennon's "long view" of confraternities on the Emerald Isle from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century to Nicholas Terpstra's wide ranging considerations on confraternities, social capital, and civil society. Sandwiched between these two thought-provoking essays, we find eight articles much more focused on specific situations and contexts, all of them dealing with Irish confraternities in the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries (see the complete listing in the "Publications Received" rubric on p. 49 below). They point to the important role played by confraternities in supporting the Irish Catholic Church at the time of the Penal Laws, which had been imposed already by the Stuart monarchs in order to force Irish Catholics and Protestant dissenters to accept the reformed faith of the Church of Ireland (the Irish version of the Church of England). The last of the Penal Laws were repealed only in 1920. Not surprisingly, in Ireland confraternities served not only to maintain the faith and its devotions, but also to provide the energy necessary for the flowering of Catholicism in a time of oppression. Cormac Begadon thus examines the role of confraternities in the renewal of Catholicism in Dublin in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while Colm Lennon and Robin Kavanagh together examine the flowering of confraternities from about 1860 to 1960.

In the 1960s, however, the world changed dramatically and suddenly confraternities seemed irrelevant to the Irish population. As Louise Fuller notes, "Confraternities in Ireland were already in decline in the 1950s. While the records show that sodalities and confraternities limped on until the 1960s and even the 1970s, the radically new thinking which emerged from the Second Vatican Council, 1962–1965, was to spell [sic!] the death knell of Irish Catholic devotional life, as it had been experienced since the latter half of the nineteenth century." (148) Not surprisingly, she notes that "When approaches were made to clergy who had been active in confraternity groups in the 1950s,

reactions to the proposed research were mixed. On the one hand, there was bemusement at the fact that anybody was interested at all in the study of a phenomenon that had well and truly disappeared. On the other hand, a feeling of sadness was expressed by many — a kind of sentimental yearning for a different, simpler faith and devotional life, a way of life that was all-embracing; a similar response was echoed by many to the effect that confraternal activity finished after the Vatican Council.” (148) One of the recurring themes, if not the dominant one in the collection, is thus the realization of the passage of an era and the consequent importance of retrieving the documentation still extant, of analysing it in a scrupulous, scholarly fashion, and then connecting all the dots so as to begin to form a clearer picture that might provide a fuller understanding of the role played by lay religious organizations in the maintenance not only of the faith, but also of the identity of a people. The corollary to this is, of course, the need to gain a better understanding of why, suddenly, such organizations should lose their validity and disappear from the screen. This book makes a significant contribution to exactly this purpose and is required reading for anyone interested in Irish Catholic history and culture from the Renaissance to the present day.

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Terpstra, Nicholas, Adriano Prosperi, and Stefania Pastore, eds. *Faith's Boundaries. Laity and Clergy in Early Modern Confraternities*. Europa sacra, 6. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012. Pp. xxxii, 374 + 14 ill., 1 graph, 6 maps, 2 tables. ISBN 978-2-503-53893-8 (hardcover) € 100

This volume gathers some of the papers presented at the conference on “Brotherhood and Boundaries — Fraternity and Barriers” held in Pisa in 2008, along with some articles written specifically for this book. Edited by Nicholas Terpstra, Adriano Prosperi and Stefania Pastore, the collection focuses on the role of secular and ecclesiastical associations in the early modern period in different cities in Italy and Europe, though it also contains some very interesting articles that open our perspectives unto broader horizons, from the Middle East to Latin America and the Philippines, and illustrate how the spread of brotherhoods was an element of union / conflict / social control transmitted to these new areas through the imposition of European culture and the Catholic religion.

Grouped into six sections, the various articles analyze in detail the different local and social realities and show how “the history of religious institutions is often written around lay-clerical antagonisms, and the historiography can get as heated as the original disputes” (p. xi), and yet the purpose of the