

Aiello, Lucia, Marco Bascapè, and Sergio Rebor, eds. *Milano. Radici e luoghi della carità*. Turin: Umberto Allemandi & C., 2008. Pp. 204 + 134 b/w and colour ill. ISBN 978-88-422-1685-8 (hard cover) € 45.

With the 2015 Universal Exposition set to be hosted by Milan for the first time since 1906, the themes of environmental sustainability and alimentary availability provide an optimum context for books like *Milano: Radici e luoghi della carità* to bring together the past and present of social awareness and *carità*. With a chronological panorama that spans almost seven hundred years, this exquisitely put together and beautifully illustrated book takes its reader on a journey through Milan and the places of charity that played such an important role in the city's storied history. Dedicated to thirty-nine historical pious places of charity, Aiello, Bascapè, and Rebor proceed systematically along Milan's *Porte* (gates) to guide the reader through the expansive network of congregations and confraternities. Organized in a manner that is both structurally sound and incredibly engaging, the book does a wonderful job of providing a succinct but informative history of these *luoghi della carità* whilst bringing to life Milan's historical quarters through a visual collage of maps, illustrations, paintings, prints, and sketches.

While *Milano: Radici e luoghi della carità* focuses primarily on the *luoghi pii* of the 14th to early 18th centuries, a section devoted to Italy's post-Unification period provides insights for Medieval, Renaissance, and Early-Modern scholars alike. Alongside a brief history of each place of charity, the book describes the moral and religious obligations that bound together and united the aristocracy, merchants, and gentry with the "poor of purse but rich of spirit." Delving into the history of these locations, the book revives the lost memories of these churches, institutions, colleges, confraternities, congregations, and historical figures that brought about solidarity amongst the people of Milan.

What sets *Milano: Radici e luoghi della carità* apart from other scholarly works on these places of charity is the comprehensive nature of the book's approach. Unlike previous studies that have tended towards the more well-known "sites", this work does a marvelous job of exploring the minutiae of Milan's network of charitable organizations, shedding light on the places that modern historiography has often overlooked and distinguishing the features that made each site unique. The two brief introductory chapters on *luoghi pii* and concluding chapter on the continuity of this tradition in Milan's post-Unification period create a framework for the book that enables the reader to follow the authors on their journey through Milan's history of *carità*. Structured and organized in a clear, effective manner, a chapter is devoted to each of the city's six major gates: *Porta Orientale*, *Porta Romana*, *Porta Ticinese*, *Porta Vercelliana*, *Porta Comasina*, and *Porta Nuova*, with several pages elaborating the history and significance of each of the thirty-nine places of charity. The panoramic

approach makes the book not only an accessible read to scholars who are new to the study of Lombard congregations and confraternities, but also provides specialists with a concise outlook on the charitable organizations of Milan's history.

Accompanying the description of each of the *luoghi pii* is a myriad of images that thoroughly enhance the reading experience. Annotated maps marking the location of the points of interest are used to introduce each chapter of the book and give the reader a brilliant perspective on both the geographical layout of these sites and how this network of congregations and confraternities spanned each sector of the city. If the maps serve to facilitate a broader geographic conceptualization of Milan, the images that accompany the text provide an engaging visual accompaniment that helps the reader focus on the local "experience" of each site. Antique printings, seals, and stamps are used alongside paintings and modern photographs to give the book an extraordinary visual appeal that allows the reader to engage with the work on both a visceral and academic level.

Milano: Radici e luoghi della carità is a beautiful book whose appeal can reach out to a wide audience. Not only does the work effectively explore an expansive network of fourteenth to nineteenth-century lay religious organizations, but it also provides a great deal of insight into each place of charity and a collection of images that greatly enhances the text. With this comprehensive history of *carità milanese* that spans over six centuries, scholars of every discipline are likely to find something of value in this exquisitely put-together book.

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Burdzy, Moninika and Beata Wojciechowska, eds. *Bractwa religijne w średniowieczu i w okresie nowożytnym (do końca XVIII wieku)* [*Religious confraternities in the Middle Ages and the Modern Era (until the end of the 18th century)*]. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2014. Pp. 420. ISBN 978-83-7133-598-3 (hard cover) n.p.

As the editors of this multi-language volume underscore in the introduction, the aim of the book is to shed light on yet unexplored areas of confraternity studies and to extend existing scholarship on those aspects of the field that have not received much attention heretofore. The contents of this volume are listed in the 'Publications Received' section of this issue of *Confraternitas*. Six of the articles are in English, twenty-three in Polish, and one in Russian. Both the table of contents and the introduction are bilingual in both Polish and English, thus making it easier for readers less