

inventories all come from the Archivio Braccio Fortebracci of Perugia, which houses the documents of three important local flagellant confraternities that, in 1472, joined together into a sort of federation — those of St. Augustine, of St. Domenic, and of St. Francis.

The long time span examined by Nerbano allows her to conclude that changes in society are reflected in the objects owned by confraternities. The process of “aristocratization” of confraternities noted by a number of earlier scholars in the field (Weissman, Eisenbichler, et al.) is evident, for example, in the crests of some of the most eminent noble families of Perugia that, as the centuries progress, come to decorate confraternity vestments.

Inventories can offer all sorts of information on quite a variety of objects: confraternity banners, processional standards, painted crosses, crucifixes, painted panels, all in a sea of chalices, patens, thuribles, incense boats, altar linens, chasubles, stoles, maniples, albs, vases, bowls, ampullas, candlesticks, andirons, springs, crates, boxes, tablets, of all sorts of liturgical books, and so on. Garments are generally identified by their materials — silk, damask, velvet, etc. — and often their ornamentation is described. In the cases of processional standards one can, for example, note the presence of important works, such as Pinturicchio’s painted standard for the confraternity of St. Augustine. In short, a universe of objects, an “infinite” quantity things that, without a doubt, are the “delight” of historians of material culture, but also of historians of art, language, customs, and many others, too.

The volume is enriched by a set of accurate indices compiled by Attilio Bartoli Langeli that, aside from the usual index of names, also includes an index of objects listed in the inventories — a veritable mini-encyclopedia of objects. There is also an index of materials used in the manufacturing of these objects and even of the workmanship used. As if that were not enough, there is also an index of subjects, images, and contents, as well as an index of functions and uses! In all this wealth, the only index that is missing is a lexical-thematic one, but that small lacuna is more than compensated by the wealth of information presented in the volume and the indices.

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Suau, Bernadette and Nicole Andrieu. *Les Confréries de pénitents à Toulouse. Deux études*. Toulouse: Les Amis des Archives de la Haute-Garonne, 2010. Pp. 59 + ill. ISBN 978-2-90741-634-0 (paperback) € 19.

This slim volume serves as a brief introduction to the four penitential confraternities of Toulouse, which were identified by the colours white, blue, black, and grey. It is divided into two parts, the first covering their history,

the second their artistic patrimony, and is accompanied by two dozen illustrative colour plates.

Bernadette Suau's historical overview is based on the extensive but hard-to-find secondary literature on these influential associations, which at their peak included up to 10% of Toulouse's population. The four confraternities were founded as part of the wave of penitential confraternities that swept through the south of France in response to the Wars of Religion. Established within ten years of each other in the 1570s, their varied paths make for an interesting comparison of the way each formed its own distinctive personality. The Blue Penitents became the elite association, including many of the leading citizens of Toulouse and beyond. Its most remarkable member was the king himself — beginning with Louis XIII, all kings of France were members up to Charles X. A lavish manuscript registry known as the *Livre des rois* recorded their membership, illustrated with portraits, along with that of the other brothers. Though more modest, the other confraternities also had a prosperous and influential membership. All four soon purchased land and built their own chapels in the heart of the city, a contrast with most Toulousain confraternities that simply had chapels in parish churches.

The founders were conscious of the temptation to show off, so the statutes emphasize anonymity and modesty. As Nicole Andrieu notes in her review of their patrimony, however, there was a tension between the ideal of austere practice and the eventual spectacle of their ceremonies, processions, and especially the decorations of their chapels. Although only one much-modified chapel survives, many paintings and other decorations are preserved elsewhere (a broad selection of plates provides useful examples). Andrieu provides a systematic review of these decorations: their origin, original presentation, iconography, and current location if they have survived. These four confraternities were among the greatest patrons of the arts in early modern Toulouse. As Andrieu notes, their art, militant rather than dourly penitential, provides an insight into the public opinion of the time.

This book provides a concise and systematic overview of the sources, membership, typical conflicts with the clergy and each other, artistic production, origins and endings of these influential confraternities. It will be useful not just as a key starting point for further study of these associations, but as a quick source of comparison for studies of confraternities in other cities, or to provide context for other aspects of Toulouse's early modern history.

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Sparks, Chris. *Heresy, Inquisition and Life Cycle in Medieval Languedoc. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages, 3.* York: York Medieval Press / The Boydell Press, 2014. Pp. xii, 170. ISBN 978-1-903153-52-9 (hardcover) \$99.

In this short and accessible monograph, Chris Sparks explores the beliefs and daily life of the ordinary laymen and women belonging to the Cathar sect in the Languedoc region between the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Conscious of the abundant historiography on the topic of the Cathar heresy and the Albigensian Crusade, Sparks moves away from the traditional approach focusing on the elite members of the Cathar faith, the so-called “good men and women,” turning instead to their unordained followers, great in number, yet somewhat set aside in the anonymous margins of history. The volume is organised according to a four-part life cycle structure: childhood, youth, marriage, and death. Sparks thus examines various inquisitorial records, among them the well-known register of Jacques Fournier, the material of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie’s *Montaillou*, looking for the lived experience of men and women of every social station and every life stage in thirteenth-century Languedoc.

The study’s strength lies in Spark’s both determined and sensitive approach to his sources. While each chapter provides a useful summary of the Catholic and Cathar doctrine and liturgy concerning each life cycle stage, the volume is at its best when it brings to life and interprets the memories of the deponents who testified before the inquisitors. In this sense, it reads like a work of social history more than one of religious history. The chapter on childhood offers some particularly vivid episodes. It relates, for instance, how casual the interaction between children and good men and women could be before the persecutions of the 1230s: some deponents remembered Cathar ministers giving them nuts, fruits, and bread. In general, the contact between children and Cathars would have been mediated by adult parents and relatives. The conversion of children to the Cathar faith seems to have varied greatly in the thirteenth century according to the climate of persecution. Based on the sparse details of the inquisitorial records, it appears that child converts did not receive any special treatment in the Cathar community, any age distinction having been washed away along with their sins once they had received the Cathar equivalent of baptism, the *consolamentum*.

The author is often careful to highlight the limitations of his evidence, itself defined by the diverging interests of the inquisitors, the deponents they interrogated, their Cathar ministers, and the modern historian. His section on youth, for example, is the shortest, and it is perhaps where the strain imposed on the evidence by the lifecycle structure becomes clearest. On top of familial connections, youths’ interaction with the Cathars was determined by their mobility and their occupation as squires, apprentices, servants, or farmhands. In the case of apprentices, they would be introduced to the good men through their masters and employers,