

Reviews

Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento, eds. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1990), xx, 611 pp. [for a list of contents see below under "Publications Received".]

This collection of 23 essays grew out of a 1985 symposium on "Christianity and the Renaissance" held in Florida and Florence. The aims of the collection are twofold: to reaffirm the social vitality in the Italian Renaissance of traditional Christian belief, and to recapture as broadly as possible the actual experience of that belief. From primarily historical and art-historical perspectives, the individual essays explore what the editors call the "symbolic environments" of Renaissance Christianity—the various institutional and personal settings through which believers were enabled to touch sacred reality. The essays share a desire to establish historical contact, to recreate these environments of belief so that they would remain recognizable to the people who acted within them. In his introductory essay, Timothy Verdon points out the influence on the arts of St Francis of Assisi's efforts to encourage involvement in the human dynamics of sacred history. Underlying this collection is a similar desire to engage in the human dynamics of Renaissance Italian belief.

Essays are grouped into four sections: "The Monastic World", "The Religious World of the Laity", "The World of the Christian Humanist", and "Coda on Method". The seven essays in "The Monastic World" survey the social realities of cloistered life in the Renaissance (Brucker, Rubinstein); the role of images in the expression of Franciscan, Dominican, and Carmelite spiritual ideals (Hood, Hatfield, Gilbert); the use of antiquarian inquiry into the roots of monastic practice (Elm); and the influ-

ence on the Florentine laity of the classical humanist ideals of Dominican mendicant preaching (Lesnick).

The ten essays in "The Religious World of the Laity" are, according to the editors, at the heart of the collection. Drawing from a wide range of disciplines, these essays collectively argue that confraternities provided a principal environment for lay religious experience. Confraternal life emphasized the social dimension of belief—a corporate, civic emphasis that the editors offer as a defining characteristic of Renaissance Christianity. The section begins with an historical overview of the growth, composition, and function of lay fraternities in Florence, with illustrations taken from a case study of the *Compagnia di San Girolamo* (Henderson). Other essays look at the role of humanist ideals in confraternal liturgical practice (Weissman); the devotional and philanthropic activities of Venetian confraternities (Pullan); the attitudes toward mortality demonstrated by the funerary and charitable activities of the Fraternity of San Bartolomeo in San Sepolcro (Banker); the current status of surviving Florentine confraternities (Capponi); art patronage and the cult objects of the Florentine flagellant confraternity of *Gesù Pellegrino* (Arthur); confraternal public theatrical displays and their elaborate physical properties (Newbigin); and the interplay between music and spectacle in confraternal drama (Barr). The section ends with a brief survey of other organizations that produced theatre (Ventrone), and an examination of the social functions of the "sacred mountain" genre across three centuries (Kubler).

The essays in "The World of the Christian Humanist" offer case studies of the troubles which followed the attempt to wed classical, humanist learning with medieval Christian beliefs. They examine the challenges offered to traditional monastic ideas (Camporeale); the changing ideas and role of patronage (Bullard, Hall); and Pico della Mirandola and Savonarola's rejection of humanist learning (Garin). The concluding "Coda on Method" contains a caution on the extent to which altarpieces can sustain the often complex theological and devotional roles

accorded them (Hope), and a methodological inquiry into icon-theology (Marino).

The essays in this volume are particularly strong on the interrelation of the arts, lay devotion, and civic religion, and should be of interest to anyone doing interdisciplinary work on confraternities. The collection includes a comprehensive index.

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Le Mouvement Confraternel Au Moyen Age, intro. by Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1987), 405 pp. [for a list of contents see below under "Publications Received".]

This collection is culled from a 1985 conference on confraternities held in Lausanne, Switzerland, entitled "L'institution ecclésiastique à la fin du Moyen Age". The conference was organized by the Unité associée 1011 du CNRS in conjunction with the Ecole Française de Rome and the University of Lausanne in order to facilitate the exchange of information among historians of different geographical regions and of differing historiographical traditions. Three countries participated in the round table discussion—France, Switzerland and Italy. In order to provide a common base for discussion, the organizers proposed the following fields for examination: demographic analyses of the confraternity movement; regional approaches to the study of the confraternities; the relationship between confraternities and ecclesiastical power during the 14th and 15th centuries.

The fourteen essays included in this collection reflect to varying degrees the objectives of the conference. For example, Jacques Chiffolleau's article on Provençale confraternities examines the complex relations between religion and politics at the end of the Middle Ages (9-40). Demographic analyses of