

Thus, the first part discusses the confraternity's founding and places it in the context of medieval society. Here the author discusses at length the confraternity's emphasis on caring for the poor and operating hospices. The second part begins with the ascendancy of the Protestant faction in Arnhem. By 1581 Protestants constituted the majority in the city and were thus able to force the confraternity to abandon the Catholic emblem it had used since its inception. Paradoxically, the confraternity was otherwise left untouched and was able to continue its Catholic practices. The third part begins from the creation of the Dutch national state (1795) and runs to the present. During this period the 'reformed' confraternity of Saint Nicholas was engaged in a lengthy battle with both the national government and the city council of Arnhem in order to assert and maintain its role as a social agent in a modern society.

Paquay's volume, based as it is on an extensive assortment of archival material, is enriched with numerous illustrations, including several maps and illustrations of Arnhem, and a list of confraternity members.

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Ventrone, Paola. *Gli araldi della commedia. Teatro a Firenze nel Rinascimento*. Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1993. 219 pp.

The volume is divided into five chapters. The first examines the Laurentian period, and in particular the myth of the patron prince, the Medicean jousts, the revival of classical theatre, and the triumphs staged in the last few years of the regime (pp. 13-53). The second examines the manner in which theatrical events were produced in Florence, with particular emphasis on the role of groups, especially religious confraternities and secular associations (pp. 55-89). The third chapter examines the relationship between text and performance (pp. 91-135). The fourth looks at theatrical practices, and in particular the role of the town herald

(pp. 137-67). The fifth chapter considers a number of theories on theatre debated at the time, touching in part on Poliziano, the discussions of the Orti Oricellari, and the experimentation with classical comedy (pp. 169-99). An extensive index, and a rich bibliographical apparatus in the notes complement the thoroughness of the author's research and the depth of her analysis.

In examining the development of theatre in 15th-16th century Florence as outlined above, the author takes full cognizance of the role played by confraternities in its sponsorship and production in the city. Even a cursory glance at the index points to no less than 27 different confraternities mentioned by name in the volume. Many reappear under other rubrics, such as "feste e spettacoli," thus pointing to the confraternities' participation in civic life, both religious and secular. Although the book is intended primarily for historians of theatre, its many references to the role played by lay religious associations in the festive life of the city will also be invaluable to scholars of the confraternal movement.

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Maestri e botteghe. Pittura a Firenze alla fine del Quattrocento. Exhibition catalogue edited by Mina Gregori, Antonio Paolucci, Cristina Acidini Luchinat (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 1992).

La mostra, realizzata nell'ambito delle celebrazioni per commemorare il quinto centenario della morte di Lorenzo de' Medici, è importante per la sua impostazione che, rifiutando una facile e scontata presentazione di opere notissime, ha invece puntato sull'esemplificazione dell'ordinamento delle botteghe, analizzando e scomponendo l'organizzazione del mondo artistico fiorentino del tardo Quattrocento. Tali ricerche non sono state dettate dall'occasione, ma rappresentano il risultato di studi portati avanti da tempo, sia da un gruppo di studiosi coordinati