

Taddei, Ilaria. *Fête, jeunesse et pouvoirs. L'Abbaye des Nobles Enfants de Lausanne*. Cahiers Lausannois d'Histoire Médiévale, 5. Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1991. 218 pp.

This short book described the "Abbaye des Nobles Enfants" of Lausanne, a festive society that flourished in the first half of the 16th century. The book opens with a brief overview of the current understanding of these groups and their role elsewhere in Switzerland, before moving on to Lausanne itself. As is often the case, there are no sources from the society itself, and thus the author has had to rely on accounts of its activities written by others. As a result, the main focus is on the society's political role in municipal politics, rather than on its festive activities.

The Abbey's main festival was at Epiphany and appears to have evolved from the Feast of Fools. This festival had long been subsidized by the town council; the Abbey itself made an appearance only in 1521. It soon became involved in the council's conflict with the bishop, who was lord of the town. It took part in a series of humiliating and unpunished actions against the canons of the cathedral chapter, and was a major cause of complaint on the part of the bishop. The author analyzes these actions as a new use of traditional rituals. These provided the ritual side of the town's attack on the bishop's temporal power, though at times the author's attempt to find symbolic language in every action becomes a little tenuous.

The link between the Abbey and the council becomes clear with the Abbey's structure is analyzed. Its members turn out to have been from the families that formed the political elite of Lausanne. They were possibly the younger or unmarried members, though some were already town councillors. The Abbey also owned property, lent money to its members, and took over from the cathedral chapter the running of one of the town's hospitals. Although in some ways it resembled a confraternity, there is no evidence that it ever included the religious aspects normally associated with one, such as masses or funeral duties.

The Abbey's situation became difficult when the city of Berne took over Lausanne in 1536 and introduced the Reformation. It is clear that the Abbey's anticlericalism had been political rather than religious, for it opposed the power of Berne and the puritanism of the Protestant pastor as vigorously as it had the temporal power and loose morals of the Catholic clergy. However, it had lost the moral high ground and faced a more powerful temporal opponent. Around 1544, it was fined heavily by Berne as a result of an attack on the pastor. It was forced to give its property to the (sympathetic) town council of Lausanne as

payment. It is not clear if it was actually dissolved, but it reappeared a few years later in a purely charitable guise, running the hospital. The second half of the book is taken up with reproductions of the documents relating to the Abbey. The analysis and the documents together provide a very useful addition to the body of knowledge of festive societies in a French-speaking area.

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Wilson, Blake. *Music and Merchants. The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. xv, 298 pp., 12 b/w plates, 7 figures, 11 musical examples.

As Wilson points out in the introduction to this insightful book, "merchants" is used in a general sense to indicate the merchant culture which emerged from feudalism in the late Middle Ages. Accordingly, it is his purpose to examine the constitution and activities of laudesi companies, that is, confraternities with musical devotions, as reflections of social, political, and economic change. Specifically, he sees their advent and development as a result of the confrontation of an inherited mendicant spirituality with a new mercantile society. Archival research on Florentine laudesi companies which flourished between ca. 1270 and 1494 constitutes the foundation for the investigation but, quite reasonably, Wilson moves beyond these temporal and geographical limits to make his point.

Wilson develops the argument for his thesis in a straightforward structure which moves from the general to the specific, with a slight tendency to repeat basic ideas. He begins with the social context and presents a far ranging analysis of trends in both secular and sacred spheres which fostered the use of laude in confraternities. Then he looks at laudesi companies in general, sketching a historical overview of their formation and of the development of the lauda, before surveying their institutional structures and activities. This is followed immediately by an extensive account of each of the companies in Florence with particular emphasis on documentary records pertaining to musical life. Finally, he focuses on the singers and on matters of musical repertoire and performance practice. The rough periodization which Wilson suggests here (and elsewhere) is to the point in so far as it reflects changes in musical practices beginning with the genesis of