

in *mentalité* sweeping across Europe and the innovative efforts to cope with increased poverty and illness. Focusing this research on institutions for prostitutes, young girls, and Jews and Muslims also helps to recover women's roles in Catholic reform, and to measure attitudes toward sub-cultures perceived as threatening in an age of European expansion. It is often by examining the treatment of its outcasts that a society's primary values come into sharpest relief. Thus, the story of the birth, growth, and influence of these first organizations provides us with a clearer picture of the Jesuits themselves, popular reform movements, and popular culture in the formative decades of the sixteenth century.

Sella, Barbara Anna. *Piety and Poor Relief: Confraternities in Medieval Cremona, c. 1334-1499*. PhD Thesis, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 1996.

This dissertation focuses on confraternal piety and poor relief in the northern Italian city of Cremona between the mid-fourteenth century and the end of the fifteenth century.

It draws upon previously unedited archival documents (Latin and Italian statutes, contracts, letters, and account books) housed in Cremona's Archivio di Stato. The records of the Consortium of the Donna (f. 1334) and the Consortium of St. Omobono (f. 1357) were examined to show the origin, character, and activities of these two confraternities.

One result of this research concerns the reasons for and the methods by which the cult of the Virgin's conception spread throughout northern Italy in the mid-fourteenth century. The cult spread both because Franciscan friars sponsored lay confraternities in honour of the Virgin's conception, and because the feast so closely resembled other well-established Marian feasts. More importantly, although these new confraternities were founded a generation after Duns Scotus had presented his defense for the Virgin's "immaculate" conception, confraternal statutes suggest that the Franciscans were not openly publicizing the immaculist position of their Order.

A second conclusion is that the Consortium of St. Omobono was founded not just to promote charity and combat heresy, but also to restore some of the civic pride of a city that in 1334 had been conquered and incorporated into the Duchy of Milan. The establishment of a confraternity in honour of Cremona's patron saint gave the Cremonese a renewed sense of their own unique identity. Furthermore, it gave the confraternity's administrators a sense of purpose and autonomy in relation to the Milanese authorities.

A third result pertains to the transformation and rationalization of confraternal charity in northern Italy. Here the work of the Cremonese confraternities is compared with that of charities in neighbouring Milan (particularly the Scuola delle Quattro Marie). Innovations included the adoption of city-wide distributions, double entry accounts, and identifying tokens. These innovations permitted the confraternities to assist the poor on a larger scale than previously recognized.