

Gazzini, Marina. "*Dare et habere*". *Il mondo di un mercante milanese del Quattrocento (con l'edizione del libro di conti di Donato Ferrario da Pantigliate)*. Milano: Camera di Commercio Industria Artigianato e Agricoltura di Milano, 1997. xxiv, 432 pp., frontispiece.

This volume is an in-depth examination of the life and commercial activities of the Milanese merchant Donato Ferrario da Pantigliate, founder of the *Scuola della Divinità*, complemented by a critical edition of his account books, the *Liber rationum Donati de Ferrariis anni 1413 usque ad annum 1426*. Marina Gazzini, who had earlier written a doctoral thesis on the confraternity founded by Ferrario and shorter articles on devotion and social assistance in fifteenth-century Milan, expands on this earlier work in order to provide the reader with a fuller, more detailed, and quite far-reaching analysis not only of Ferrario but also of the world in which he lived. Biographical information on Ferrario is thus contextualized within the larger spheres of the commercial, economic, cultural, literary and religious world of fifteenth-century Milan. This examination thus becomes an important text for the study of lay religious and confraternal life in Milan and, more generally, in Lombardy during the Quattrocento.

A well-focused introductory essay on the world of Milanese merchants in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries sets the stage for the examination to follow (pp. xiii-xxiv). It provides an intriguing look into the life of a typical Milanese merchant, including not only a merchant's commercial activities, but also his charitable works and his place in the local society. The study then proceeds with a closer view of one such merchant, Donato Ferrario da Pantigliate. The examination is divided into three major sections, each subdivided into chapters. The first deals with Ferrario's life (pp. 1-58), the second with his commercial activities (pp. 59-111), and the third with his account books (pp. 113-121).

In the biographical section, the first chapter deals with the period from 1397 (the date of the first document dealing with Ferrario's commercial activities) to 1429. Details describing his family and social life are juxtaposed, in this section, to the wider spectrum of the civic and social life of Milan at the turn of the fifteenth century. The second chapter, covering the years 1429-1441, contains a thorough description of the founding of the *Scuola della Divinità*, which will be of great interest to confraternity scholars. The second and central portion of the volume is an analysis of Ferrario's commercial undertakings and investments. In particular, there are discussions of his involvement in real estate, trade, agriculture, livestock, and even the textile industry. The third and final section of this volume is an analysis of Ferrario's account books, the *Liber rationum* (pp. 113-121), followed by an edition of the same (pp. 123-356). Several appendices, charts, maps, and an index complete and enrich the volume.

Gazzini's study and edition provides a wealth of information not only for economic and social historians, but also for scholars working on confraternities and lay religion in late-medieval/early-modern times. Her work helps to illustrate the place, role, and power of a profoundly religious merchant in fifteenth-century

Milan whose involvement in the life of his society reached out across a very wide spectrum of activities.

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L'Oratorio di Santa Maria della Vita, ed. Marco Poli. Bologna: Costa Editore, 1997. 127 pp., ill.

One suspects that the modern reader will never quite know or appreciate the impression made by the arrival of the *penitenti* in the towns and cities of medieval Italy. There is no way for us to feel the emotional or spiritual response to the human columns wending their way through the narrow streets, entranced in song and self-flagellation. Yet the impact was clearly enormous and immediate. On 10 October 1260 the first of these processions passed through Bologna then, a mere nine days later, the Bolognesi emulated them and embarked on a similar trek to Modena. The proliferation of societies of *disciplinati*, *flagellanti*, or *battuti*, and the establishment of their many churches, oratories and social institutions began shortly thereafter. The passage of time and the evolution of the goals and activities of these lay brotherhoods have succeeded in erasing all but a few traces of the humble yet fervent, almost fanatical devotion which spawned the confraternity.

The Oratory of Santa Maria della Vita may provide a small window into the early origins of the movement in Bologna. Its location on Via Pescherie ("Fishmongers Street") dates at least as far back as 1502 and speaks to the less than noble standing of early confraternity members. (The Confraternity of Santa Maria della Vita itself can be traced back to 1261.) The massive renovations undertaken in the seventeenth century reflect the evolution in confraternity focus from penitence and self-flagellation in darkened rooms to civic consciousness and collegiality in brilliantly decorated oratories. The recently completed renovations, and the much lauded installation of an elevator, have transformed the oratory into a museum piece.

Nonetheless, even if the spiritual or emotional experience of the confraternity are no longer accessible to us, Marco Poli's superb edition chronicling the renovations carried out in the oratory provides a more than adequate scholarly view of the movement and its evolution. It recounts the early activities of the confraternity, its places of worship and the steps in its formalisation. As a record of the restorations of the oratory, it is invaluable. The book contains many full colour illustrations of the paintings, the sculpture, the flooring and the architecture of the oratory. Photographs of the restoration work in progress give a good indication of the state of disrepair into which the Oratory had fallen, as well as the extent and the difficulty of the restorations.

Starting with Mario Fanti's introductory essay describing the origins of the Confraternity and its historical context, the book is organized into a series of essays devoted to a variety of related topics. Silvia D'Altri's piece on the daily life of the *oratoriani*, and in particular on their musical and theatrical activities,