

peace-making mission, these nine-day processions of devotion captured many imaginations during the summer of 1399 in northern Italy.

In 1993 Daniel Bornstein introduced the Bianchi to English readers in *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy* (reviewed in *Confraternitas*, Fall 1994). Bornstein argued that the inclusive nature of these processions, both in terms of rich and poor as well as lay and clerical, should underscore for the historian that popular religiosity was not necessarily in conflict with orthodox teachings. In fact, while the Bianchi remained an independent movement, many clerics sanctioned the numerous processions through their territory. His argument is also verified, as shown in *Il passaggio dei Bianchi in Assisi*, by the existence of frescoes in churches that praise the miracles and work of the Bianchi.

Inspired by recent restorations of images in churches throughout Italy, Francesco Santucci connects the material objects, paintings and *laude*, commemorating the Bianchi to their passage through Assisi. Santucci describes the four frescoes in the churches of San Francesco a Leonessa in the province of Rieti, Santa Maria del Monumento in Terni, San Pietro ai Muricento, and Sant'Eusanio in Rieti in Montebuono that represent the various miracles of the Bianchi. The first three frescoes portray one of the miracles that occurred during this passage—the apparition of the Madonna and Child in the Olive Grove. The fresco in Sant'Eusanio is titled “Miracolo dei tre pani” and illustrates the origin myth of the Bianchi. Further miracles, like the apparition of the Virgin in Santa Chiara, demonstrate the effects the Bianchi had on those they encountered as they processed towards Rome.

This slender volume, forty-one pages with an appendix of *laude* and facsimiles of the images discussed, adds to the multitude of work that has been done on the Bianchi in the last decade. Microstudies like this one further highlight the significant and unique role each town played in the movement, since the enthusiasm and participation of the townspeople determined the shape of the processions. These discussions elucidate both the importance of the Bianchi themselves and the environment which produced them.

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Simiz, Stefano. *Confréries urbaines et dévotion en Champagne (1450–1830)*. Villeneuve-d'Ascq (Nord): Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2002. 402 pp., maps and charts. ISBN 2-85939-715-9

This book discusses the influence of urban confraternities on religious life in the region of Champagne from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. A microhistory of Champagne reflected through the lens of confraternal activity, it is also a valuable contribution to the study of changing religious sensibilities over the *longue durée* in an important region of France.

From the days of St. Louis, Champagne had played an important role in the economic life of the realm. Situated on medieval trade and pilgrimage routes, both

its fairs and its agriculture remained vibrant throughout the early modern period. This book looks particularly at religious life in the region's three major cities: Troyes, Reims, and Châlons-sur-Marne. Though their fortunes would change throughout the nearly four centuries studied in this book, as each vied for economic or spiritual leadership, all three cities were Episcopal sees, and as the author argues, "spiritual centers."

The author identifies three stages in the development of devotional confraternities in Champagne. The first, growing out of the religious reform movement of the fifteenth century, blossomed, only to be stopped in its tracks around 1520 with the onset of the Reformation. For the ensuing period of religious wars confraternities experienced a period of latency and caution, only to flower again by the middle of the seventeenth century. But that flowering would be challenged by the changing religious sensibilities of the Enlightenment, and ultimately by the Revolution.

Though the book chronicles the changing fates of confraternal life over almost four centuries, one thing that remains constant is the pervasive influence of confraternities on the religious life of the region. Whether reflecting the religious aspirations of the *préréforme* or the *siècle de lumières*, confraternities were flexible enough meet contemporary challenges and malleable enough to be shaped to meet the needs of contemporary circumstances. Confraternities, which grew out of journeymen guilds in the fifteenth century, would by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries open themselves up to a wider membership of the bourgeoisie.

The book includes a number of helpful charts giving lists of confraternities and data concerning their membership and activities. As well, the author includes three charters, one from 1510, one from 1659, and one from 1821, which are helpful for tracing the long-term development of confraternal organization. A series of twenty maps also help the reader to understand the religious topography of the cities under discussion.

Any book which attempts to cover such a broad time period will undoubtedly leave itself open to the criticism of sacrificing detail in favour of a broad historical sweep. But this book, by concentrating on three important cities of Champagne, has the advantage of being able to provide a great deal of detail while at the same time tracing the contours of urban religious life over the long term.

This book will be useful not only to scholars and students who are interested in French confraternities, but also as a model for tracing the evolution of religious devotion over the modern period. At once broad in terms of chronology but specific in detail, it strikes a balance that is valuable for scholars of confraternities and religion alike.

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