

Reviews

Atlante degli ordini, delle congregazioni religiose e degli istituti secolari in Puglia, ed. Antonio Ciaula and Francesco Sportelli, with an introduction by Cosimo Damiano Fonseca. Modugno (Bari): Edizioni Litopress, 1999. 749 pp.

This hefty, folio-sized tome is a meticulously researched index of all the religious orders, congregations, and secular institutes in Puglia, the south-eastern region of Italy. The first part (pp. 9–65) contains several articles that contextualise both the project and this volume. The second part is the actual index (pp. 69–749) divided into two major subsections. The first (pp. 69–438) lists and describes “Orders, Congregations, Secular Institutes, Federations, Cultural Institutes”, each subdivided further as appropriate. The second subsection (pp. 439–482) examines the ecclesiastical region of Puglia, its metropolitical provinces, and its dioceses (Bari, Foggia, Lecce, and Taranto), giving the reader not only a diagnostic view of each institution in each area, but also a synthesis of all these data. Four indexes complete the volume and further facilitate investigation.

Both the scope of this volume and the amount of information it contains are impressive. Though much of it deals with the last two centuries, scholars of premodern religious life (lay, secular, and monastic) will find plenty to satisfy their inquiring mind. This includes maps of religious institutions in Puglia over the centuries (Byzantine monasteries in the 11–12th centuries, Benedictine monasteries in the 11th century, Franciscan sites 1220–1420, Augustinian convents 1650–1750, Cistercian monasteries up to the 17th century, Dominican convents from the 13th to the 20th century); historical information on the various convents and institutions described, as well as current data and address (if they institutions are still extant), etc. The range of organizations covered by this volume is truly impressive: from monastic orders such as the Benedictines or the Cistercians, to military orders such as the Knights of Malta, to the Mendicant orders, the canons regulars, and so forth. Each is described historically and precise information is then given on its current situation in Puglia, its organization, administration, address, and so forth. Each entry is accompanied by maps of Italy and of Puglia with the relevant sub-areas (area of origin of the order and area of current location in Puglia) highlighted in colour.

Functioning like a dictionary for religious institutions in Puglia, this volume is an indispensable item for any reference library with an interest in organized religion in Italy. It is also an excellent starting point for young scholars looking around for thesis topics in areas that might be a little further away from the well trodden paths of Venice-Florence-Rome-Naples.

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