

privileging hieratic, frontal figures. This aesthetic choice imposed itself through a process of emulation and conformity among confraternities, a *modo et forma* requirement that confraternities had already adopted for their statutes. Dehmer's analysis of banners' dimensions also shows this tendency to uniformity.

A catalogue of 120 banners is appended, providing proof of their widespread presence not just in Umbria, as often believed, but in all of Italy. Unfortunately, the tiny, black & white reproductions do not do justice to these visually stunning paintings, often executed in vivid and expensive colour.

Other avenues of extended research could include discussing the origin of banners within a context of civic and military symbols of authority. Further, examining other marks of identity or praiseworthy confraternal possessions (relics, icons, statues, frescoes, buildings) could help recreate their visual environment. In the case of public rituals, one could analyse the specificity of confraternity banners among signs of membership, both civic and religious, such as ecclesiastical, city, or *rioni* (districts) *vexilla*, coats-of-arms of patrician families, or guild emblems. One could ask in what respect the power of a textile image is different from that of a fresco, an altarpiece, or a statue in a devotional context.

All confraternity scholars should consult Dehmer's overview of the significance of banners as artistic products and functional objects. His truly informative footnotes and exhaustive bibliography help to make this book the most salient reference work to date for Italy. Other European banners still await their historian.

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*Donne tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna in Italia. Ricerche*, ed. Giovanna Casagrande. Perugia: Morlacchi, 2004. xiii, 216 pp., ill., ISBN 88-88778-66-7 [Contains: Giovanna Casagrande "Presentazione" pp. i–xiii; Patricia Skinner "Donne nel commercio amalfitano (secoli X–XII)" pp. 1–22; Maria Teresa Guerra Medici "'City Air'. Women in the Medieval City" pp. 23–51; Claudio Regni "Le donne nell'*appassu* eugubino del 1301" pp. 53–71; Maria Teresa Brolis "Il valore di un presenza. Le donne nelle confraternite medievali di Bergamo" pp. 73–100; Katherine L. Jansen "Mary Magdalen as Model for Uncloistered Religious Women of Late Medieval Italy" pp. 101–152; Maria Grazia Nico Ottaviani "'Nobile sorella mia honoranda'. Società e scritture femminili: alcuni esempi perugini" pp. 153–216.]

This volume originates from a project of the Università degli Studi di Perugia, *La condizione della donna dal Medioevo all'Età Moderna in Italia—con particolare riferimento all'Italia centrale—attraverso fonti giuridiche, legislative, fiscali, giudiziarie e narrative*, coordinated by Giovanna Casagrande, whose introduction situates these six essays in the context of the now vast historiography on women

in the past. The contributors use legislative and juridical sources as well as narrative ones to illuminate the plight of women in the medieval and early modern periods. The methodologies vary with the sources, as do their conclusions. A tension exists in the essays that well reflects the experience of women in the past. In some places, there were certain opportunities open to women to exercise their legal personhood. Patricia Skinner notes that women in Amalfi were freer than their counterparts under Lombard law to participate in legal contracts. She shows women active in commerce either by themselves or with their husbands, a space that was opened to them during the commercial expansion from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. A woman's right to her dowry provided her with the capital necessary for investment. Nor were their roles always secondary; some women would fit the definition of entrepreneur. On the other hand, Maria Teresa Guerra Medici's article reminds the reader of how women were viewed as evil and the lesser partner to their husbands. Medici employs the language of Gratian and the great medieval jurists who remarked on the avarice of women. They argued that since women had little property (their dowries), they viciously protect it. But, it was not theirs to manage. The jurists accorded all the power in marriage to the husband.

Using financial records to determine how much women did control, Claudio Regni examines the *appassus*—the catasto of Gubbio—to see if these sources can also be used to relate the situation for women. Finding more than just numbers, Regni argues that *Libri summarum* of 1301 shows women in a less marginal position with respect to their economic worth than that of other places like Perugia around the same time. He further finds that not all women listed were widows, as might be expected. Married women held property in their own right during their husband's lifetime.

In sermons and *vitae* of uncloistered women Katherine L. Jansen finds that at the end of the Middle Ages uncloistered religious women often venerated Mary Magdalen. Since standard Catholic theology held that only virgins would attain the hundredfold blessing of heaven, theologian and priests taught that women who were sexually experienced were less welcomed into heaven. The well-known exception to this, of course, was the Magdalen. Jansen argues that uncloistered women would identify with Mary Magdalen because she held the promise that even a woman who knew a man would have a chance at God's full grace. Moving from the celestial sphere to the earthly one, Maria Grazia Nico Ottaviani encourages historians to look beyond letters to identify female perspectives. While letters are the most obvious and perhaps best places to find "voices", not only are the pitfalls of letters well known, but other sources such as testaments and books of account also show women consciously leaving traces of themselves (as men do), as well as reveal how they dealt with daily life.

*Confraternitas* readers will be particularly interested in Maria Teresa Brolis' contribution "Il valore di una presenza. Le donne nelle confraternite medievali di

Bergamo.” Using the records from Bergamo’s Misericordia Maggiore (MIA), the largest of Bergamo’s six confraternities, Brolis finds a number of indicators that suggest women were more than peripheral to the confraternal movement and its survival. Founded in 1264, the MIA admitted over 1,000 women between 1265 and 1274, consisting of 58% of the total admissions. Not only were these women from diverse social classes, but also from rival families. The promised peace appealed to women as did the active role in charity. Taking on the question of valour, Brolis asserts that the high number of women at the confraternity’s beginning indicates that the collaboration of women was necessary. Similarly, the rules of the confraternity were clear that men and women enjoyed the same spiritual fruits. As they did in the domestic sphere, some women held administrative roles in the MIA. They also contributed to the continued existence of the organization with their bequeathals. The archive has preserved testaments of some female members, again attesting to the female proclivity for donating to hospitals and other charitable groups. But more than just women, all members of the family appear to play a role, at least in the beginning of the confraternity. The matriculation register shows that a number of families entered en masse—grandparents, parents, children, and other relatives including in-laws, thus highlighting the importance of the family in shaping and providing the model for confraternities.

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Glixon, Jonathan. *Honoring God and the City. Music at the Venetian Confraternities, 1260-1807*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. xxvi, 372 pp. ISBN 0-1951-3489-3

Jonathan Glixon’s study of music patronage by Venetian confraternities has grown out of a doctoral dissertation originally limited to music making at the *scuole grandi* (the six, at the time, large confraternities of Venice) during the Renaissance. Drawing on succeeding years of systematic archival research, he has expanded that initial study into a more detailed examination of music patronage at *all* the Venetian confraternities (the *scuole grandi* and the smaller, shorter-lived *scuole piccole*) from their origins in the mid-thirteenth century to their dissolution in 1807.

The book is divided into two main sections. The first (and much larger) portion recounts the history of the *scuole grandi*, while the *scuole piccole* are treated in the latter part. With their greater financial resources, longevity, and spirit of competitive tradition, the *scuole grandi* contributed substantially more over time to the Venetian musical scene than the *scuole piccole*. Thus although