

Gastone, Vio. *Le Scuole Piccole nella Venezia dei Dogi. Note d'archivio per la storia delle confraternite veneziane.* Costabissara (Vicenza): Angelo Colla Editore, 2004. Pp. 972 + 33 ill. in colour and b/w. n.p. ISBN 8-8900-9903-8.

Gastone Vio's volume on the statutes (*mariegole*) of 925 Venetian confraternities that fell under the category of *scuole piccole* is not only an example of exhaustive archival research, which took the author thirty years to complete, but also a testament to the proliferation and influence of lay religious associations in Venice from the thirteenth century to the fall of the Republic (1797). The *scuole*, either *piccole* or *grandi*, were devotional and charitable associations administered by lay persons, but ultimately controlled by the Consiglio dei Dieci, that played an integral role in the social system characterizing and sustaining Venetian society. Quite appropriately, then, this volume belongs in the greater series devoted to the history of popular Venetian culture, the *Collana di studi e ricerche sulla cultura popolare veneta*.

Vio's findings are a welcome and much-needed contribution to current scholarship on confraternities and on lay religious movements, shifting the emphasis from the *scuole grandi*, which were far fewer in number and yet have prompted far more studies, to the *scuole piccole*, which were widespread throughout Venetian territory. This volume gives due recognition to the *scuole piccole* of Venice and, in so doing, closes a lacuna in current scholarship on Venetian confraternities. More generally, Vio's thorough archival research has provided the groundwork for further research on Venetian confraternities and on popular devotional customs.

Before his main presentation of archival notes, Vio summarily describes Venetian confraternities, outlining their structural and ideological thrust, as well as their relationship with the State and their commitment to providing multiple social services and assistance to both their members and the general population. The author is to be credited for his impressive archival findings, which he has organized according to neighbourhoods (*sestieri*) and then sub-categorized by the name of the parish hosting the *scuole piccole*. The record of data presented within these larger categories is ordered chronologically, beginning with founding dates for each school, and offers quite a range of information: approval of decisions by the Consiglio dei Dieci or the Provveditori di Comun, devotional practices and religious celebrations, repair and decoration of altars, privileges granted to schools by Venetian magistrates, infractions (a prevalent occurrence in the eighteenth century), the election or appointment of a school director (*gastaldo*), funeral provisions, humanitarian intervention, support for the arts, inventories, and loan and expense records. Among this collection of data, the author also includes information for approximately seventy schools that had more artistic and professional interests and those that oversaw the business and activity of the city's ferries.

This information is followed by a useful glossary of Venetian terms and an index of names. The latter is an attractive feature for a scholar wishing

to inquire about the involvement that a particular artist, sculptor, architect, or musician might have had with a school. The volume is further enriched by thirty-three coloured illustrations rendering the incipit and miniatures of statutes, bound volumes and/or cases containing them, processional signs used by various schools, and the customary capes (*cappe*) worn by members of the schools.

Vio's hefty volume is thus a rich source of information touching on the key events characterizing the life, activity, and institutional role of Venetian confraternities from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries. It also provides invaluable insight into the religious life of the Venetian laity over nearly five centuries of history.

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Zbožných duší úl. Náboženská bratrstva v kultuře raněnovověké Moravy [A Hive of Devout Souls. Religious Fraternities in the Culture of Early Modern Moravia], eds. Vladimír Maňas, Zdeněk Orlita, Martina Potůčková. [Catalogue for the exhibition of paintings, documents, and artifacts from the Archdiocesan Museum in Olomouc, Moravia, 28 January — 25 April 2010] Olomouc: Muzeum umění Olomouc and Arcidiecézní muzeum Olomouc, 2010. Pp. 167, colour illustrations, CD with songs. ISBN 978-80-87149-36-2.

This richly presented exhibition catalogue offers various studies dedicated to the religious confraternities in Moravia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The catalogue is published in conjunction with an exhibition on Baroque art and Baroque religious confraternities in Moravia mounted at the Olomouc Museum of Art in 2010. The aim of both the exhibition and the catalogue was to highlight the presence and work of religious confraternities in Moravia. Although religious confraternities formed a vital part of Christian culture from the Middle Ages up to the Enlightenment, they are not a well known phenomenon because of their dissolution and confiscation of their possessions in the wake of the Josephine reforms (1783). During the Baroque period, confraternities existed as voluntary communities of lay persons who met to worship certain saints and thus re-enforce their religious belief. Such confraternities were perfectly organized communities which offered a locus for engagement in the social, liturgical or personal life of an individual. The exhibition catalogue draws upon the recently initiated research into the phenomenon of religious confraternities in Moravia and its influential role in the development of Moravian culture. The catalogue contains eight articles on these confraternities and is enriched by excellent colour illustrations and a detailed catalogue of eighty pieces of art from the exhibition (processional