

processions, rituals, confraternal events, etc., from the late nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. There is also a CD with Adamoli's doctoral thesis (855 pp.) and many more charts and photographs.

This two-volume work on confraternities in the Ticino is not only a monumental contribution to the study of lay religious life in the Italian canton of Switzerland, but also a fundamental starting point for further research by future scholars.

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Desmette, Philippe. *Dans le sillage de la Réforme catholique: les confréries religieuses dans le nord du diocèse de Cambrai (1559–1786)*. Bruxelles: Académie royale de Belgique, 2010. Pp. 423. ISBN 978-2-8031-0266-2 (paperback) € 30.

Philippe Desmette's book explores the evolution and influence of rural and urban confraternities in the north of the Diocese of Cambrai between 1559, the year that Philip II began reforming Franco-Netherlandish dioceses in response to the Reformation, and 1786, the year marked by Joseph II's suppression and disbanding of confraternities. The book consists of nine chapters gathered into two parts. In the first half of the text, Desmette uncovers the foundations, day-to-day organisation, and administration of the diocese's northern confraternal network.

The period 1660–1679 saw a great number of confraternal foundations. However, a decline in interest in confraternal culture occurred shortly thereafter and very few confraternities were established in the eighteenth century, especially after 1750. Although previous scholarship has attributed the decline to the reforms of Joseph II, Desmette argues here that it came about with the rise of individualism and the development of personal piety.

The eighteenth century's emphasis on personal devotion over collectively piety negatively affected the creation of new confraternities and damaged already established confraternities. Participation was episodic throughout the century and many general assemblies were plagued with low attendance rates. Some confraternities even experienced high rates of absenteeism. A study of confraternal finances underlines how this issue posed a serious threat to the stability of confraternal institutions. It was the responsibility of the general assembly to finance a confraternity's day-to-day activities, either through the collection of membership fees or annuities. Without support from the general assembly, a confraternity ceased to function and its future became uncertain.

In the north of the diocese, 446 of 519 confraternities were organised and operated out of local parishes. Even though general assemblies financed and largely controlled congregational activity, they worked in cooperation with local parish ecclesiastical authorities, who were responsible for applying episcopal policy and overseeing confraternal legislation. Directing the organisation and operation of a confraternity was therefore largely an internal affair. However, a confraternity's location determined whether it was also subject to external administration. In urban settings, municipal authorities possessed the power to intervene in confraternal business and civic officials often involved themselves in the planning of confraternal processions and festivities. Such was not the case for rural confraternities since secular authorities generally remained uninvolved in their confraternal matters.

In the second half of the book, Desmette provides a comprehensive overview of life within confraternities. Here, he covers a range of topics including confraternal patronage and congregational celebrations and festivals.

A variety of confraternal groups existed in the north of the diocese between 1559–1786. One could find Marian confraternities, saint confraternities, and confraternities dedicated to Christ and God. Some of these groups maintained fixed membership numbers, but the majority did not and so openly promoted themselves among the public through written and printed advertisements that were displayed in their parish headquarters.

Although confraternities shared a dedication to the practice of piety and charitable causes, they also celebrated a variety of festivals, such as patron saint feast days and memorials for deceased members. Confraternities that were long established often organised jubilee celebrations to mark the anniversaries of their founding. In organising celebratory events, confraternities reinforced their religious traditions and strengthened bonds between members.

Desmette's book highlights the transformative capacities of confraternities in the north of the Diocese of Cambrai and illustrates how these institutions combined religious tradition and contemporary influence to serve the spiritual and social needs of their members. Scholars interested in confraternal studies will find this meticulously researched text to be a particularly useful sourcebook of information. A wealth of archival material is referenced throughout the volume and points to fertile ground for future research on the early modern network of confraternities on the Franco-Netherlandish border.

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