

**Presciutti, Diana Bullen, ed. *Space, Place, and Motion: Locating Confraternities in the Late Medieval and Early Modern City. Art and Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, 8. Leiden: Brill, 2017. Pp. xx, 450 + 117 ill. ISBN 978-90-04-29297-0 (hardcover) €180 / US\$ 207.**

This volume is the first to examine in a comprehensive and comparative manner the relationship between confraternal life and the public spaces of late medieval and early modern urban centres. More specifically, it examines the unique, multilayered dynamic between individual bodies and city spaces, a relationship that encompasses both the ways in which cities define bodies that move within them and the ways in which those same bodies construct the spaces in which they function.

While the opening pages of Presciutti's rich, absorbing introduction emphasize the political space of Venice through its examination of Bellini's *Procession in St. Mark's Square*, the connection between urban settings and confraternities transports the reader to cities as geographically diverse as Tallinn, Norwich, Aalst, Mexico City, Florence, Palermo and Dublin. The common thread linking these seemingly disparate cities is the common activity in which members of the *scuola grande* took part: namely, practices of piety and charity; performative acts of ritual; and the development of a corporate identity. While these activities took place in a variety of settings, the authors featured in Presciutti's collection focus on buildings, including chapels and oratories, and the spaces between physical structures, such as city streets. Rich photography accompanying the articles highlights frescoes, maps, terracotta friezes, sketches, sculptures, and inscriptions.

The first section of the book, "Spaces of Piety and Charity," analyzes the similarity and variance of confraternal activities related to Christian virtues in different urban contexts. The second section, "Spaces of Ritual and Theatre," focuses on the Italian peninsula and examines the relationship between confraternal ritual (including theatre) and the spaces in which it was performed. The third section, "Spaces of Identity and Rivalry," examines the dynamics between individual interests and collective well-being within confraternities as well as the darker underbelly of the confraternities, rivalry. This third section also shifts the setting from the street to the oratory, where confraternity members assembled to pray, flagellate, administer, and socialize.

A particularly noteworthy example of the tension between individual and collective is explored in Douglas N. Dow's article on Giovanbattista Mossi's *Flagellation of Christ* and the Compagnia di San Giovanni Battista detta dello Scalzo in Florence. Dow's contribution draws upon the theories of entanglement discussed by archaeologist Ian Hodder. In so doing, Dow sheds light on the mental attitudes and social connections central to Mossi's altarpiece and the relationship between people and things within the confraternity. Dow's "tanglegram" is a clever and aptly-named

illustration that helps to flesh out the intricate relationship between people, places, organizations, finances, rituals, families, charity, art and architecture. Dow's study is significant because it redefines the patronage of art in Renaissance Florence as an instrument through which confraternity members fashioned themselves as benefactors. Ultimately, Dow's study reinforces the enduring entanglement between people, places, and things.

Another particularly remarkable article is Barbara Wisch's study of the Arciconfraternita della SS. Trinità dei Pellegrini e Convalescenti and its relationship with the Cappella della Separazione in Rome. It centres on a little-known chapel that commemorates the martyrdoms of Saints Peter and Paul. Built on via Ostiense, the chapel was the first independent religious edifice commissioned by the SS. Trinità confraternity and marked a critical point in both the history of the confraternity and in Rome. Wisch examines how, by re-glorifying a site that they believed to verify Peter and Paul's missions and martyrdoms, the *confratelli* responded persuasively to Protestant denials of fundamental tenets of the Catholic Church. Subsequent renovations to the church fostered Catholic reformers' desire for both physical and spiritual renewal of Rome's Paleo-Christian past. Wisch's article thus provides fresh insights into the exponential growth of confraternities in early modern society and the intersection of faith, audience, and urban space in the eternal city.

By examining the malleability of urban space and its relationship to distinct confraternity activities and practices, Presciutti's collection is sure to enrich the dialogue on art and material culture. The breadth of this thoughtfully-compiled volume offers a much-appreciated geographical and cultural diversity that will interest a wide range of scholars and students of medieval and early modern society.

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**Sennis, Antonio, ed. *Cathars in Question*. York: York Medieval Press / The Boydell Press, 2016. Pp. vii, 332. ISBN 978-1-903153-68-0 (hardcover) \$99 USA.**

This collection of articles, originally from papers presented at a 2013 conference held jointly at University College London and the Warburg Institute, addresses the question of Catharism as a construct: did a distinct heretical movement, historically connected to other dualistic heresies such as Bogomilism and recognizable to contemporaries as Catharism, truly exist or are historians actually seeing a series of localized, unconnected unorthodoxies distorted by the medieval record and modern historiography? This question stems from scholarship following on R. I. Moore's