

course due to its problematic asymmetries. Nonetheless, Thurlkill's analysis of parallel yet different constructions of Mary and Fatima illuminates some fundamental aspects of medieval Christianity and Islam that will be of interest to many.

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END NOTE

1. Lourdes Ortiz, "Fátima de los naufragios," *Fátima de los naufragios* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1998), pp. 7-22.



David Michael D'Andrea,
Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy: The Hospital of Treviso, 1400-1530. University of Rochester Press, 2007. Pp. **xiii + 214**

In this study of the Scuola di Santa Maria dei Battuti in the Venetian subject town of Treviso, David D'Andrea makes the provocative argument that the subjugation of a city to a regional power could engender the transformation of a local confraternity into a "rallying place for civic pride" (6). The confraternity in question, Santa Maria dei Battuti, traced its

origins to a thirteenth-century devotional movement that spawned numerous flagellant sodalities throughout the Italian peninsula. In addition to Treviso, confraternities dedicated to Santa Maria dei Battuti (literally St. Mary of the Beaten, in reference to the members' practice of flagellating themselves) dominated the confraternal life of other Venetian subject towns, like Conegliano and Pordenone. These confraternities absorbed competing brotherhoods and eventually became the center of the subject towns' spiritual and civic life.

D'Andrea organizes his account of the Battuti of Treviso, which covers the period between 1400 and 1530, into an introduction and six chapters. The opening chapters describe the history of the confraternity and the development of its hospital. D'Andrea draws a parallel between, on the one hand, the social, ritual, and political importance of the Battuti to Treviso and, on the other, the tactical and economic value of the city to the mainland empire of Venice. He persuasively demonstrates how Venice aided the Battuti in its rise to dominance by suppressing rival sodalities and how the confraternity itself functioned as a surrogate for the political autonomy denied

Trevisans by the subordinate position of their city. Much of the book focuses on the social services administered by the Battuti. D'Andrea ably situates the activities of the confraternity and its hospital within wider discourses on poor relief and institutional charity, placing particular emphasis on the accommodation of two categories of "deserving poor": pilgrims and foundlings. Building upon the recent work of Katherine Park and Nancy Siraisi on early modern hospitals and medical care, D'Andrea traces the movement of hospital consolidation that transformed the Battuti into Treviso's equivalent of an "ospedale maggiore." He investigates the practitioners of medicine and their care of patients, as well as the responses of the confraternity and its hospital to the plague and other epidemic diseases. The Battuti's sponsorship of various educational programs—including local grammar schools, theological instruction, and university scholarships—is also examined. The final chapter of the book focuses more narrowly on the early sixteenth century and devotes equal attention to developments in Venice and Treviso, suggesting that the renewal and reorganization of the Battuti in the late 1520s had its origins in the reformist movement

that swept Venice after the Battle of Agnadello in 1509.

In this valuable study, D'Andrea crafts a legible and comprehensive narrative of the confraternity and the numerous functions it performed, situating local practices and developments within larger historiographic discourses. The concentration on the subject city also allows the book to address a lacuna in confraternity studies, which have long focused on major centers at the expense of dependent communes. D'Andrea demonstrates the complexity of the subject-dominant relationship, with a particular eye to the workings of institutions. This dynamic, he argues convincingly, was not simply one of subjugation on the part of the dependent *comune*, but also involved cooperation and collusion. In addition, he makes important contributions to the study of early modern charity by elucidating several types of charity that have not received much attention in the literature, particularly the Battuti's investment in the promotion of education. His archival work, conducted in both Treviso and Venice, is extensive and painstaking, yielding a profusion of case studies that give his inquiry tremendous richness and texture. In particular, the section in chapter 5 on the

university scholarships provided by the Battuti to needy students is fascinating and replete with insightful anecdotal detail. D'Andrea's use of the surviving diocesan baptism books to elucidate the numbers of foundlings accepted by the Battuti also contributes significantly to our knowledge of the demographics of child abandonment in the Veneto.

The strongest and most persuasive argumentation in the book comes in the sections that directly address the complex and often contradictory interactions between the confraternity, the subject town, and Venice. In the chapters on the devotional life and the numerous charitable activities of the Battuti, D'Andrea takes great pains to shape a comprehensive picture of the confraternity. Perhaps as an unavoidable consequence of the wide-ranging scope of his inquiry, in some sections he concentrates more on the description of practices and the synthesis of comparative material than on in-depth critical analysis. For example, D'Andrea portrays the confraternity rather optimistically as an inclusive "spiritual family" comprised of a "vibrant mix of husbands and wives, parents and children." While he does acknowledge the limited participation of female members in confraternal life

in a section entitled "Brothers and Sisters," he does not fully explore the practical meaning of "membership" for women. Similarly, he characterizes the *confratelli* as being "always sensitive to the needs of families and children" and concludes that they "made every effort to provide the patients with the best medications available," but does not thoroughly investigate the motivations beyond "good intentions" that might have spurred their actions. The book would have been even more compelling if D'Andrea had given the internal dynamics of the Battuti and the political ramifications of its charitable mission the same level of critical interrogation that he applies elsewhere to the relations between the confraternity, Treviso, and Venice.

On occasion, D'Andrea also presents redactions of rules and statutes, sources that are particularly prescriptive, as unproblematic reflections of actual historical practice. In the section on the stewardship of the young women housed by the confraternity, for instance, he describes the mechanisms through which "those in the care of Treviso's foundling hospital found themselves strictly supervised by the Battuti, who

succeeded in creating a cloistered environment for their wards” (p. 113). D’Andrea argues that this account, which is based on a set of regulations drafted in 1574, “finally institutionalized what must long have been an informal process” (p. 112) and can thus characterize practices during the period 1400 to 1530. His reading of the regulations assumes not only that the source can be taken at face value, but also that these conditions did not change during the period under examination. However, recent work on institutionalized women has demonstrated that the sixteenth century witnessed significant shifts in conceptions of what was considered to be “appropriate” housing for nubile girls, brought about by religious transformations associated with the period of Catholic reform. These changes were also manifested in the architecture of wards for female foundlings, which became markedly more cloistered in the second half of the sixteenth century. Although the loss of documentation cannot be helped, the book would have benefited from greater transparency concerning source materials and, in some instances, more critical treatment of surviving records.

D’Andrea’s book makes a significant contribution to the

field of confraternity studies. He raises numerous thought-provoking questions and suggests many new avenues of inquiry into the manifold intersections between charitable institutions, subject cities, state formation, and local religion.

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Elizabeth Allen, *False Fables and Exemplary Truth in Later Middle English Literature.* (The New Middle Ages.) Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Pp. viii + 225.

We typically see the moral exemplum (found in Latin and vernacular sermons, confessional manuals, and devotional works) as naive, simple, and transparent. Elizabeth Allen shows how these short narratives, seemingly simple in form, are anything but simplistic. They produce their moral generalizations, Allen argues, by opening themselves up to the threat of an alternate reception. Reading “exemplarity” beyond the literary form of the exemplum per se and into the genres of