

Peace and Penance in Late Medieval Italy, by Katherine Ludwig Jansen. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018. 280 pp. 6 × 9¼. 34 half-tones. ISBN 978-0691177748.

Katherine Jansen's *Peace and Penance in Late Medieval Italy* adds to a growing collection of recent articles and monographs addressing peacemaking in the medieval Mediterranean, particularly Glenn Kumhera's 2016 monograph and shorter pieces by Yvonne Friedman and James A. Palmer. It also engages with scholarship on the conjunction of religion and politics in Italy recently explored by Roisin Cossar and Neslihan Şenocak. The rising interest in peacemaking in the Italian peninsula is a result of a revisionist historical trend that seeks to problematize the narrative of the vendetta during the late medieval Guelph-Ghibelline context by looking at the varied ways in which peacemaking was promoted, conducted, and viewed both institutionally and symbolically. The sources on this topic, which include notarial records of Italian towns, hagiography, and sermons, provide a rich corpus that is only beginning to be mined.

Peace and Penance in Late Medieval Italy offers a sweeping overview of conflict resolution in Italy, weaving together sources from all of these categories. Jansen's aim is to examine the theoretical and symbolic ideas about peacemaking rather than provide a close tracing of the specifics of the peacemaking process. As a result, Jansen's book uses the contemporary religious framework to deliver a nuanced view of what peacemaking meant rather than just how peacemaking occurred or who engaged in it. This goal alone makes it a valuable addition to current scholarship on the subject. Since so many of the textual sources are from male friars and preachers intended for a male literate audience, while the notarial documents outline men engaging in peace practices (since women had no legal standing), her book is less directly relevant for those interested in feminist theory or concepts of masculinity or femininity in the Middle Ages. The work does provide some evidence that would allow for expanded discussions of the role of women in peacemaking. Thus, I will briefly provide an overview of the book and then address this aspect that is of most interest to the readership of *Medieval Feminist Forum*.

The religious lens through which Jansen looks at peacemaking is stated clearly in the introduction, in which she argues for a close association between peace and penance. Both are a form of reconciliation "predicated on internal tranquility" (3). This approach informs the structure of the five main chapters. Chapter 1 delves into the religious context of peace as penance, tracing it back to the early thirteenth century and the development of the mendicant orders and

the internecine violence of Guelph-Ghibelline factionalism. Jansen examines St. Francis's ideology and subsequent legends about him, as well as the history of lay penitential movements in Italy, through hagiographical and chronicle sources. She directly connects both to the growing development of the desire for political peace in conjunction with personal spiritual peace, ending with analyses of sermons from the fifteenth-century preachers Bernardino of Siena and James of the March. Chapter 2 explores the idea of *concordia* through sources that, she argues, tried "to formulate a civic ethic of peace" (64). The treatises chosen are the civic official's manual called the *Oculus pastoralis*, Brunetto Latini's *Tresor*, and the sermons and treatises of the preacher Remigio dei Girolami. While these sources are diverse in terms of type and chronology, they set the stage for the third chapter that focuses on *pactum*. It is in this chapter that Jansen's argument is most clearly delineated: that there was a parallel between the process of penance that leads to inner peace and thus concord with God and the process of the civic peace agreement that leads to concord and thus to the maintenance of the social order (92). Chapter 3, looking at personal motives for ending discord (e.g., theft, marital discord, etc.), and chapter 4, which examines the larger theoretical motives for peacemaking (the end of the feud, vendetta, and exile) utilize primarily notarial sources from Florence, 1257-1343. The final chapter provides a real contribution to the scholarship by examining artistic depictions of the ritual peacemaking process, sources that to date may be said to be underutilized. The discussion relies heavily on Paul Connerton's ideas of embodied and inscribed ritual rather than the many scholars who have worked on medieval rituals, however, and could perhaps benefit from some of these more specific studies.

Chapter 1's discussion of penitents contains the largest section in which women appear. Jansen references Catherine of Siena's, Suor Sara's, and Margaret of Cortona's efforts at peacemaking. These examples are downplayed in comparison to her male penitents, Alberto of Mantua and Raimondo Palmario (the latter variously spelled in the scholarship). Jansen claims that Margaret, for instance, "seems to have stayed behind the scenes" (36) even when God called her his *clamatrice pacis*. In fact, her hagiographer, Giunta Bevignati, describes her in his *vita* as quite aggressive in her peacemaking role. She reconciled the town of Cortona with the bishop of Arezzo, mediated between the same bishop and the rector of S. Basilio, between the same rector and the Franciscans, between the citizens of Cortona and the Rossi family, within branches of the Reccabeni family, and even between the French and the people of Forlì through her prayers to Pope Nicholas III. There is a missed opportunity to examine deeper female

intercessors like Margaret, or perhaps Rose of Viterbo (who would also work as an example within the theme of exile) in this section.

There are a few other places in the book where discussions of women appear: as victims of assault in chapter 2; as a symbolic wife-negotiator for peace in a treatise in chapter 4; and as iconic Game of Thrones-esque “peacemakers” through marriage alliances, with their children serving as “living memorials” of peace (187). Jansen notes the latter occurred for families of varying social status and not just the nobility, an interesting point that could be expanded. All of these discussions are short and could use some more analysis on the basis of gender. Particularly when examining late medieval Italy, the varied and complex evidence Jansen marshals could be examined in terms of the concept of masculinity in the religious and political spheres and how that concept impacted women’s legal rights (or lack of them) and both the symbolism of marriage and marriage practices in that place and time. Considering the scope of the work, however, one could say that Jansen’s monograph provides the foundation of sources for other scholars to further investigate these topics.

Overall, *Peace and Penance in Late Medieval Italy* is a deeply researched history of peacemaking in late medieval Italy. It will be a welcome addition to the libraries of many scholars working on cultural history, religious history, and Italian history. For those working on gender history and theory or sexuality, the volume offers less that could be applied to other places and times and the sections that discuss women in particular may be the least persuasive in a well-conceived and thorough examination of a wide range of sources.

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