



Frank, Thomas. Religione, diritto, economia in confraternite e ospedali medievali

Konrad Eisenbichler

Volume 32, numéro 1, printemps 2021

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1100114ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/confrat.v32i1.38922>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

1180-0682 (imprimé)

2293-7579 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Eisenbichler, K. (2021). Compte rendu de [Frank, Thomas. Religione, diritto, economia in confraternite e ospedali medievali]. *Confraternitas*, 32(1), 94–96. <https://doi.org/10.33137/confrat.v32i1.38922>

others, each contribution presents material or notions that will prove useful to scholars and students who are participating in, or looking to embark upon, qualitative investigations of an holistic nature.

SAMANTHA J.C. HUGHES-JOHNSON
STOKE-ON-TRENT, UK

Frank, Thomas. *Religione, diritto, economia in confraternite e ospedali medievali*. Trans. Simona Clodiani and Giovanna Targia. Pavia: Pavia University Press, 2019. Pp. xvi, 287. ISBN 978-88-6952-099-0 (paperback) €30.

This volume is, in many ways, a *summa* of Thomas Frank's several decades of research on late medieval Italian and German confraternities. It brings together ten of his previously published articles (most of them originally in German) and re-presents them for an English (articles 1 and 10) or Italian (articles 2–9) reading public. Given the extensive growth of scholarship on confraternities over the last three decades, Frank has slightly revised his articles, updated the bibliography, and taken into consideration both his many conversations with colleagues in the field and the new questions that scholarship on confraternities has raised. Not surprisingly, one of these questions is the relationship between the religious and secular sphere in the world of late medieval confraternities; no longer a clear-cut separation, especially when one looks at the work carried out by confraternities in the health-care system of the time (the managing of hospitals in particular), or when one looks at clerical confraternities (which, the author suggests perhaps teasingly, could be seen as “guilds”).

The various chapters are arranged into three general sections: confraternities (chs. 1–4), associations of clerics (chs. 5–6), and hospitals (chs. 6–10). The first chapter on the construction of *memoria* in confraternities (pp. 3–20)—originally published in this journal in 2006—starts off with a look at how confraternities themselves created *memoria*, and then moves on to examine how this construction lined up with the legal world of statutes, regulations, and canonists' opinions. The main case study in this chapter is centred on the city of Assisi. The chapter ends with some considerations on the impact of these legal considerations on our modern understanding of confraternities. The second chapter (pp. 21–45) looks at the material aid confraternities offered to members and non-members by way of alms or hospital care. The four case studies in this chapter come from Cologne, Strasbourg, Viterbo, and Lodi. The third chapter (pp. 47–63) looks at how the statutes of German and Italian confraternities related to their own institutions and the legal world beyond. It groups statutes into

three basic categories: statutes that consist of (i) a short and simple set of rules set up by the confraternity, (ii) a long and very detailed set of rules, again set up by the confraternity, and (iii) a revised set of rules approved by an external body, be that the local civic government or ecclesiastical authority. Looking at confraternity statutes in this way allows for a better understanding of the process of rules creation and application. Chapter four (65–83) looks at the relationship of confraternities and hospitals in Germany and Italy; the three case studies come from Assisi, Rome, and Strasbourg.

Chapter five (87–114) looks at the role of canons in associations that, from the late thirteenth century, aggregated all clergy in Viterbo into an *universitas cleri*. The article includes a prosopographical appendix (105–112) detailing the canons who can be identified. Chapter six (115–134) examines the canons and canonries in Corneto/Tarquina in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The town had an association of clerics that included (unlike Viterbo) both canons and regular clergy; alongside its liturgical functions, the association also served to defend the interests of the local clergy against the local bishop.

Chapter seven (137–170) looks at the hospitals in Viterbo in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; some were owned and managed by a particular religious order, some by collegiate churches or houses, and some by confraternities. Among the latter, Frank looks at the successful attempt by the guild of *speziali* to take over the Ospedale di San Sisto. Chapter eight (171–213) studies the reform of hospitals from the perspective of late medieval canon law and points out that the opinions of canonists elaborated the conditions that allowed reforms to be possible. Chapter nine (215–233) considers the reforms of hospitals carried out by Cardinal Nicholas Cusanus in Orvieto in 1463 in relation both to the city's communal government and Cusanus's other reform initiatives. Chapter 10 (235–266) brings the book to a close with an examination of the land holdings of the very wealthy confraternity of Santa Maria dei Battuti in Treviso in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It highlights the relationships between the hospital and the tenants who rented its lands, and the remarkable flexibility the hospital had in converting its rental income into other goods or services so as to create an extensive system of interrelated markets that included products, labour, capital, and lands.

Chapters 1 and 10 are in English, the rest in Italian. Brief summaries in English of all the articles are included at the end (285–287), as well as an index of names (269–277) and places (279–283).

Written in a clear, concise prose (whether Italian or English), and enriched by extensive bibliographies at the end of each chapter, this volume brings together several decades of scholarly research and (re)opens new

perspectives into the complex world of late medieval and early modern confraternities both north and south of the Alps.

KONRAD EISENBICHLER
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Lirosi, Alessia. *La confraternita di Sant'Anna. La Compagnia di Sant'Anna nella chiesa di S. Pantaleo tra XVII e XVIII secolo*. Preface by Blythe Alice Raviola. *Biblioteca di storia sociale*, 41. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2019.

Alessia Lirosi's book focuses on the women's confraternity of St Anne in Rome, established in 1640 by José de Calasanz (1557–1648) within the Church of San Pantaleo in Rome. The research question that opens Lirosi's work is about the existence in the *ancient regime* of spaces of female power and autonomy of decision, which finds a partially affirmative answer in the women's religious world. Lirosi points out how nuns, unlike secular women, had the power to vote on matters that involved them, but what about secular women? To answer this questions Lirosi turns to women's confraternities and finds a rich field of study to explore spaces of lay women's autonomy from male control (xi). While there were similar women's sodalities across Italy, as Lirosi highlights, the women of St Anne were not only involved in charitable, social, and cultural practices common to such confraternities, but they also had important roles, oversaw the organisation of the confraternity's activities, and even had the right to vote (xvi).

The book begins with a survey on the confraternities active and established after the Council of Trent (1–10) and then focuses on the sodalities in Rome starting from the first recorded confraternity, that of the Gonfalone founded in Santa Maria Maggiore in the mid-thirteenth century (10–15). The final section of the first chapter introduces the role of women within these sodalities, addressing both mixed confraternities and those for women only (16–26), thus offering a solid introduction to the core of Lirosi's research on St Anne.

Chapter two (27–54) retraces the history of the women's confraternity of St Anne, starting from its founding and the role of José de Calasanz, a Spanish priest who moved to Rome in 1592 and was involved in educational activities for the orphans of the Eternal City. Researching the origins of St Anne, Lirosi discusses how the documents reveal the cultural scope of the organisation, which did not include charitable work, and how in the seventeenth century the autonomy of its members (all women) was a cause for concern. Lirosi examines who were these women involved with the confraternity and highlights how they came mainly from the Roman