

The second part of the book contains statistics of the number of people registered in a parish, the number of marriages, baptisms, communions, confessions, income collected per parish, and even the quantity of livestock and harvest. Given the difficulty of the material and its detailed nature the statistical method was necessary. The author also used other sources, which were equally vital to his research: the *Liber Beneficiorum Diocesis Cracoviensis*, the *Liber Retaxationum Diocesis Cracoviensis*, registers, poll tax rolls and inspection records.

Even though the statistical study is not the most appreciated by the reader because of its highly detailed and numeric nature, this book puts it to proper use. This work is a path-breaking study, which assesses the economic situation of the clergy as well as the lay people. Still, the question that should be developed is whether the tithes were given out of the people's free will, or requested by the church. Moreover, the interesting findings on the conflict over tithes and the vicar's family benefits from his income, mentioned only in passing by the author, should be discussed in more detail. Despite these limitations, this study sheds a new light on ecclesiastical institutions in the Sandomierz archdeaconry and, as the author suggests, it opens the way to further research on other institutions in different parts of Poland.

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Ospedali e città. L'Italia del Centro-Nord, XIII–XVI secolo, ed. Allen J. Grieco and Lucia Sandri. Firenze: Le Lettere, 1997. 283 pp. 25 illustrations in colour and b/w. ISBN 88-7166-325-X

This collection of nine articles originates from the April 1995 conference organized by the Istituto degli Innocenti and the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies-Villa I Tatti on the 550th anniversary of the Innocenti's first admission of an abandoned child from the streets of Florence (1445–1995). It examines the various aspects of the growth, management, and specialization of hospitals from the 13th to the 16th centuries in northern and central Italy, with an emphasis on the major urban centres of Florence, Venice, Milan, Bologna, and Rome. Each article provides a considerable amount of additional information on topics such as the architectural development of hospitals, the various (and sometimes surprising) societal motivations for establishing and maintaining such shelters, and governmental practices and policies toward charitable institutions.

John Henderson's contribution deals with 14th-century Florentine hospitals, in particular with the oldest ones of Santa Maria Nuova and San Paolo. He first examines a number of comments and descriptions of the medical capabilities of the staff in several Italian hospitals made by local and foreign travellers in the 15th and 16th centuries (in particular, Leon Battista Alberti and Martin Luther). Henderson then looks back to the early 14th century, when the medical profession began to affirm a new 'corporate' identity of itself, to show how these much

lauded conditions had actually been in place for as long as two hundred years before the visitors' comments.

Giuliana Albinì examines four significant moments in the evolution of Milanese hospitals: the internal administrative corruption of the late 14th century; the pursuit, in the early 15th century, of various tentative solutions to these problems; the reform in the mid 15th century that brought about an administrative unification of nearly all urban and suburban hospitals; and the development, in the late 15th century, of a restructured hospital system.

Casimira Grande's article focuses on the founding and history of Venice's Santa Maria della Pietà, its means of survival through difficult times, and its internal organization. She then provides details of the historical changes in that hospital's administration and leadership, the expansion of its property and services, and its periods of hardship, particularly those associated with the periodic 15th-century plagues that produced high rates of sick adults and abandoned, or orphaned, children.

While the collection provides an excellent overview of hospitals in northern Italy in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, it also offers readers a vast amount of detailed and, sometimes, unexpected information that dramatically alters traditional views on the situation. For example, we discover that among poor families with more than three or four children, a relatively high percentage of newborns were placed into orphanages and hospitals in order to allow the parents to continue working and the children to survive (Henderson); in Venice the major contributing factor to the problem of abandoned children was not the high number of prostitutes working in the city, as was often claimed, but employers' illicit sexual relations with servants and slaves whose household 'chores' went far beyond cooking and cleaning (Grande).

With articles on the hospitals of Tuscany (John Henderson), Florence (Lucia Sandri), the Veneto (Gian Maria Varanini), Venice (Casimira Grandi), Milan (Giuliana Albinì and Marina Gazzini), Bologna (Nicholas Terpstra), Rome (Anna Esposito) and with a final analysis drawn by Charles Marie de la Roncière, this volume is a rich source of detailed information and in-depth investigation into the medical and social role of hospices and hospitals in pre-modern Italy.

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