Cossar Roisin. *The Transformation of the Laity in Bergamo, 1265-c.1400*. Leiden: Brill, 2006. Pp. xvi + 228. ISBN 978-90-04-15222-9.

In her research and writing, Roisin Cossar has aimed to recover the full range of activity undertaken by lay people in the religious life and culture of late medieval Bergamo. This is not as straightforward as it may sound, nor is it simply a species of church history. In the past decade more historians have turned to looking at civic religion as a key to understanding the legitimizing ideology that structured many Italian communes and that created functioning civic societies. Cossar's work is framed by that socio-political approach to lay civic religion, and her approach deliberately aims to capture the lay presence in a number of different dimensions—certainly the institutional framework of confraternities and hospitals, the ecclesiastical dimension of the parish, but also the personal account as traced through wills. Most of the work in this field has tended to treat only one of these sources, because each has its own particular difficulties and problems. Cossar is rare in her determination to locate the traces of lay activity wherever they can be found, even though—as in the case of wills—the Bergamasque sources are difficult to locate and interpret. Her efforts in this regard arise out of the awareness that only by tracking materials across these various genres can we move beyond the voices of the powerful—frequently male and often rich—and recover the voices and activities of middle and lower-class men, and of women of all classes.

The result of this approach, in *The Transformation of the Laity in Bergamo, 1265-c.1400*, is a richly textured account that peels back the layers on a number of areas of lay activity, and so reveals how various groups accumulated social capital through their work with these civic religious and charitable institutions. Cossar divides her study into three parts, beginning with a ground-setting discussion of 'Confraternities and Hospitals' that considers first the range of confraternities operating in medieval Bergamo and then the range of hospitals. The chapter shows how confraternity and hospital developed into the powerful institution of the Misericordia Maggiore (MIA), where civic power and civic religion merged. So potent a merger was inevitably a merger of the powerful and, notwithstanding the pious rhetoric of spiritual equality, the MIA became a critical vehicle for informal and formal power exercised by the city's male elite to the detriment of its women and poor men. Cossar then moves from the institutional structures of lay religion to Part Two on "Charity and the Church." She looks in particular at two dimensions of its activity: first, charitable almsgiving through the MIA, and then the unfolding dynamic of relations between laity and clergy in such public *fora* as the ecclesiastical courts. Here, too, the structures of lay civic religion gave stronger voice and agency to elite males, though Cossar does find examples of how marginal characters managed against great odds to make the system work for them. Finally, Part Three considers "Written Religion", and in particular the manner in which men and women were able to express their commitments through the rhetoric and the disposition of property in their wills. Cossar finds that men and women made wills in roughly equal numbers and according to largely conventional models, but that women had to find novel forms to achieve their particular spiritual goals.

Cossar skillfully gives both gender and class to the sometimes undifferentiated mass of the 'popolo', and shows how the rhetoric of equality becomes the pious façade behind which serious and concerted efforts are being made to shape a civic-religious social and political structure that expands the power of a male elite. Her account in Chapter Two of women working in charitable hospitals is particularly valuable because she is able to sift through the individual strands of charity, work, and vocation that we have known about but whose inter-action we have never quite probed. It is significant material, because the hospital as a place for widows to retire to, work in, and eventually find shelter in was one of the prime public spaces where one finds women acting as independent legal agents. Cossar has found that this activity was seen by some as disruptive of accepted gender norms, and that it triggered responses aimed at curbing the widow's latitude. One might have found some of this by looking at minute books or shifting statutes but, by adding wills and notarial records, Cossar has moved to a far more sophisticated level of analysis. This analysis shows again that any efforts to locate the roots of civil society in medieval Italian communes must deal not only with those empowered by communal politics, but perhaps even more with those who were marginalized and silenced by them.

Cossar's fascinating study of confraternities, hospitals, and civic religion in medieval Bergamo has significance far beyond its subject city. Deeply rooted in archival sources, and written with an eye to recent scholarship on a broader range of Italian cities, it sets a model for understanding the complex interplay of religion, class, and gender in the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.

NICHOLAS TERPSTRA
University of Toronto

Jonathan Unglaub. *Poussin and the Poetics of Painting. Pictorial Narrative and the Legacy of Tasso*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xv, 282, 8 colour plates, 72 figures. US \$95. ISBN 0-5218-3367-1

Establishing the nature of the relationship between the "sister arts" with any precision has been a particular challenge in the history of art historiography for some solid historical reasons. The intellectual movement responsible for isolating art history as a discipline worthy of "scientific" study in the nineteenth century is the intellectual movement that imposed a formulation of the aesthetic committed to the idea that the various arts are not just distinct, but discrete. It is not simply then that art historiography has not been around long enough to do justice to the Western "humanistic theory of painting", as it was called by Renssealer Lee, but that art historiography's very *raison d'être* has tended to impede attempts to accomplish that justice. As if this weren't enough, art historical investigations of *ut pictura poesis* have also been dogged by not unrelated preconceptions about the relationship between theory and practice. Access to the ideas that might reveal the functional relationship between painting and poetry at the time when *ut pictura poesis* reigned as an art theoretical concept is only possible via a highly sophisti-