

This book represents an important contribution to knowledge about Lawrence of Brindisi in the Holy Roman Empire and his activity as a preacher and polemicist. He is a figure who certainly warrants further study.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.181

*Jerusalem in the Alps: The Sacro Monte of Varallo and the Sanctuaries of North-Western Italy.* Geoffrey Symcox.

Cursor Mundi 37. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019. xii + 310 pp. €85.

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The subject of this book is the New Jerusalem of Varallo, a sanctuary located in the sub-alpine region of Valsesia (Piedmont, Italy). Professor Symcox explores the history of the site from its foundation (1486) to the eighteenth century and briefly attends to the related phenomenon of the Holy Mountains (Sacri Monti), which were modeled on the Varallo project and spread throughout the Alpine region during the Counter-Reformation. The New Jerusalem was founded by the Observant Franciscan Bernardino Caimi as a replica of the major Christian sites in the Holy Land. Intended as a substitute pilgrimage destination for those who could not travel to Jerusalem, the site initially reproduced with topomimetic accuracy the interiors of the most important *loci sancti* in historical Palestine. Since the outset, the chapels at Varallo contained paintings and polychrome sculptural tableaux illustrating the evangelical events associated with the original locales.

Caimi's project rapidly grew in size and popularity: nearly thirty chapels were built in the first four decades of its existence under the direction of the founder and his immediate followers. Countless known and unknown artists from the region decorated the chapels: the most prominent was Gaudenzio Ferrari, a local artist who trained in Milan and who devised the complex polymateric environments that became the representational standards for the New Jerusalem and beyond. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the construction and decoration of the New Jerusalem fluctuated between intervals of stasis and periods of vigorous activity. The alternate fortunes are attributable to decades of strife between the Franciscans, the local secular authorities, and the lay church vying to impose their theological and political imprint on the project and to reap the financial benefits of the popular sanctuary. Eventually, new devotional and artistic guidelines were implemented by the archbishop of Novara, Carlo Bascapè, who took over the administration of the New Jerusalem and began transforming it into a powerful tool of Counter-Reformist propaganda.

Although the Italian (mostly local) literature on the subject is quite vast, the New Jerusalem has long been ignored by international scholarship. Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, the few contributions that acknowledged its existence treated it as a picturesque and somewhat gaudy deviation from Renaissance aesthetic standards. As

confirmed by Symcox's volume, the critical fortune of the site has changed radically in the last two decades. Symcox's book is a first, much-needed attempt to untangle the complex past of the site for English-language audiences. The author's long engagement with the history of Piedmont allows him to trace with clarity and insight the history of the Valsesia (of which Varallo is the capital) and navigate with ease the numerous changes that affected the physical and conceptual features of the New Jerusalem.

After an introduction to the site through the observations of nineteenth-century British writer Samuel Butler, Symcox delves into the social and political history of the Valsesia, the patterns of migrations of its inhabitants and their trading practices and social makeup. It is a vivid and captivating account of a remote (but not marginal, as Symcox accurately claims) area of Italy that is usually excluded from mainstream scholarship. Symcox dedicates the bulk of his book to the New Jerusalem, from the investigation of Bernardino Caimi and the Observant Franciscans to the foundation of the site, the creation of the first chapels, and the artistic intervention of Gaudenzio Ferrari. The volume continues tracing the vicissitudes of the New Jerusalem through the eighteenth century, stressing the role of Carlo Borromeo and Carlo Bascapè in the transformation of the chapels at the height of the Tridentine reforms. The concluding chapters are dedicated to the completion of the New Jerusalem after the house of Savoy got control of the Valsesia, followed by a primer of the Italian Sacri Monti modeled after Varallo.

This volume is a most valuable tool for those approaching the New Jerusalem for the first time: it takes the reader from its nebulous beginnings through two and a half centuries of vicissitudes. Specialists will appreciate the expert historical analyses and archival depth. Most worthy of notice is the exploration of the financial and political controversies that beleaguered the project, a theme that had yet to be considered in the literature of the New Jerusalem. In spite of the art historical shortcomings—the omission, for example, of recent crucial literature on Gaudenzio Ferrari's intervention at the site—Symcox delivers a lucid, concise, and necessary first look at a site that is as amazing as it is unknown to most.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.182

*A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities.*

Konrad Eisenbichler, ed.

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 83. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xvi + 476 pp. \$234.

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The collection begins with the statement: "After the State and the Church, the most well organized membership system of medieval and early modern Europe was the