

## REVIEWS

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**ARMENTEROS MARTÍNEZ, Iván, 2012. *Cataluña en la era de las navegaciones. La participación catalana en la primera economía atlántica (c. 1470-1540)*, Vilassar de Mar-Lleida: Fundació Ernest Lluch – Editorial Milenio.**

Until recently, with the exception of remarkable historians such as Vicens Vives or other works devoted to the Majorcan presence in the evangelization of the Canary islands, the traditional image shown to us of Catalan commerce at the end of the last century of the Middle Ages presented Barcelona and other villages of the region as cities far from the economic model that was making its headway at the time, and which had Atlantic expansion and north-African markets as its major business centres. Valencia, less conditioned by the political and military events that shook the Crown of Aragon in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, escaped that image, which allowed it to sort out the problems and attract merchants, companies and products that sustained the exchanges between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

That image started to change when the works of Maria Teresa Ferrer, David Igual, María Dolores López or Antonio Ortega made evident the relevance of the relationships between the cities of the Crown of Aragon and the Atlantic world, opened to Iberians from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. But the work we are reviewing and its author have the virtue of going somewhat farther in approaching a barely studied subject, the participation of Catalonia in the so-called Age of Navigation, an expression entailing the new framework of relationships between the Old Mediterranean area and the new Atlantic world.

This contribution is doubly valuable, since besides pointing out the impact of the said process in the Principality of Catalonia, provides new documents which enrich the general knowledge on the topic.

The author, Iván Armenteros Martínez, is a young researcher related to the Institución Milà i Fontanals, CSIC, in Barcelona and the research line that Maria Teresa Ferrer, Josefina Mutgé and Roser Salicrú have conducted in order to better define the processes surrounding merchant Catalan activity by the end of the Middle Ages. His trajectory –fellow of the Fundación Ramón Areces, doctor from the Universidad de Barcelona and postdoctoral researcher at the LabexMed of the Université Aix-Marseille– shows that he is a young and qualified historian. His doctoral thesis, devoted to slavery in Barcelona at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the research award of the Fundació Ernest Lluch –which gives rise to this book- are an example of a work well done and the consolidation of a historian.

The study has two clearly defined parts. The first one, composed of the three first chapters, analyses the general transformations that took place in the geographical and economic field of study. The second part, chapters four to six, delves into the role played by Catalans in the European and American Atlantic space, open to their interests from the moment they were within the reach of the rest of the European. The work is complemented by a vast bibliographic report and something else not common nowadays in books of this kind: a useful toponymic and onomastic index easing the consultation of the work.

Besides his undoubtable work capability –the author combined the writing of his dissertation with the research that yielded this book-, this work was made possible due to the huge documentary wealth of the archives of Barcelona. Among them, the *Arxiu de Protocols* of the city was one of the most important, since it contains a vast documentary legacy. From the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, especially, from mid-14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the amount of notarial documents is so extraordinary that the difficulty lies more in the number of deeds that need consultation than in the degree of deterioration or loss undergone by documentary series. For the chronological period of this research (the reign of King Fernando II of Aragon), there are more than two thousand records corresponding to more than eighty notaries in the city. The consultation of such a huge amount of records can only be explained by a long and intense work not within the abilities of every graduate. The footnotes show that the most important are the records of the notaries Pere Triter, Andreu Mir and his son Lluís Carles Mir, custodians –as the book shows – of numerous deeds that record all kinds of instruments related to commerce (insurances, freights, purchasing contracts, etc.). The author adds his expertise in the *Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona* to these sources, where the series generated by the *Consell de Cent* allow him to analyse the influence that by-laws and other municipal regulations had on merchant regulations, which affected the Catalan Atlantic commerce.

The first section of the work is devoted to Barcelona as a major example of Catalan transformation in the Middle Ages. It overviews one of the central topics of the historiography on this period: the evolution of the ‘emporium of Catalan merchants’, from its origin in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the *redreç* of the end of the 15<sup>th</sup>. In front of the traditional image of a permanent and inexorable decline, the author notes a constant process of adaptation, and struggles to separate conjunctural phenomena from structural phenomena. In this context of permanent transformation the economic revival must be sought for not only in the recovery of the Eastern markets, but also in the opening of the Atlantic market.

The second and third chapter are devoted to the metamorphosis of the Atlantic area, which stops being a border area to become the crossroads of maritime routes. This process has two phases. The first one, with an important participation of Majorcan and Catalan marines, spans from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup>, intensifying after the closing of the accesses to Asia.

During this phase, tran-Saharan routes are explored and the *Mediterranean Atlantic* (Canary Islands, Madeira and, maybe, Azores) is rediscovered. The second phase begins in 1434, with the passing of Cabo Bojador, and finishes with the circunnavigation of Africa and the discovery of America. Its economic goals are stressed through the colonization of Atlantic archipelagos and the creation of coastal factories that obtain products without the mediation of caravan routes. In this context, a new economy emerges focused on two products: slaves and sugar. Both had a long standing tradition in the Mediterranean, but the author analyses the transformations suffered by the commercialization of these goods thanks to technological evolution, the changes related to the consumers, productive models implemented in new colonization processes and the methods of obtaining slaves.

The second part of the book –chapters four to six- is maybe the most innovative and the one which contributes a larger wealth of data and references unknown so far. Armenteros starts recalling the role of Berenguer Granell and Joan Boscà in front of the fleet sent to La Mina in 1478 and the role of Valencia in the opening of commercial contacts with the Atlantic and, especially, the relationships maintained by several companies and merchants settled in the city with Lisbon, Flanders or Madeira. He goes on showing that between the end of the Catalan Civil War and the 1480s, Barcelona resumed its merchant capability and, above all, turned into a financial centre where the operations to and from Andalusian ports were insured as a basis for the commerce with the African Atlantic. The legal reforms undertaken by the *consellers* of the city with which the Catalan initiative in the Mid Atlantic was tried to be protected and the increase of Portuguese, Basque or Andalusian presence (the company of Pedro Susán, a converse from Seville, stands particularly out) in Barcelona, only enforced the investment on Atlantic circuits. The next step was to show how numerous merchants, without abandoning their Mediterranean interests, moved to Andalusia or ensured merchandise transported from any port south to Castile to Barcelona. In order to do so, the author presents, among others, the cases of Gabriel Prats, Amador Parets and his son, Jaume Bertran, Bernat Serra, Francí Vicens and the case of the Viastrosa family, a merchant saga which, since the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century occupied an outstanding position within the Catalan merchant class.

The author devotes the fifth and sixth chapters to which he considers the consolidation of the Catalan presence in the Atlantic, relating it to the profits generated by African or Canarian slave trade and to the interests yielded by sugar plantations on the archipelagos and later, on America. He confirms his thesis with a sample of 144 maritime insurances contracted in Barcelona during the last decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in which prevail the load of slaves in ships destined to the Crown of Aragon and the progressive abandonment of routes not leading to Andalusia, Portugal or the Canary Island. However, the main contribution of the fifth chapter is probably the confirmation of the merchant activity of two great Catalan lineages established in Andalusia. The merchant Pere Benavent and the activity conducted by the Font company (especially the

brothers Miquel and Rafael Font). Both families were known by historiography, but the amount of unpublished news that comes from the Catalan documents that Iván Armenteros provides show their business success and explain the ingrainment of the Benavents and Fonts (besides that of the other Catalans at their service such as Gabriel Socarrats, Marc Robert de Montserrat, Berenguer de Rafes, Jaume Jové, etc.) in Jerez de la Frontera, Cádiz, the Canary Islands or America.

The sixth and last chapter deals with the dismantling of an old and rooted historiographic tradition. We refer to the discussion of the alleged exclusion of the naturals of the Crown of Aragon from the interests that opened up during the reign of Fernando and Isabel after the discovery of America. If the works of J. M<sup>a</sup>. Delgado, A. García Baquero and C. Martínez were not enough to show that there was no such exclusion, nor any legal or express forbiddance leaving out Catalans and Aragonese from American commerce, Iván Armenteros, on the basis of his extensive knowledge of the *Archivo de Indias*, offers a vast documentary and bibliographic collection on the Catalan presence in America. From the participation of Lluís de Santángel, Joan Coloma, Pere Margarit, etc., in the organization of Columbus's expedition, to the shipping of the religious led by the Catalan Hyeronimite Ramón Pané, the transfer to La Española of merchants such as Gabriel Forn, Francesc Gisbert, Damià Morell, Joan Serrallonga and Joan Font (nephew of the aforementioned Rafael and Miquel Font), through the participation in the expedition of the Venetian Sebastián Caboto, to the description of the adventures and misfortunes of the Catalan Lázaro Font in the quest for El Dorado, compose a panorama that evinces that the economic possibilities opened up in America also favoured a vast group of Catalans.

Unfortunately, historiographic confirmation of facts such as these take their time to spread, therefore, despite the efforts of Iván Armenteros and other authors, we fear there is still much to be done so that scientific knowledge reaches a wider audience beyond the academic world.

Finally, the values treasured by this book, which merit it a remarkable place in Spanish historiography are numerous; even if it only showed the notable Catalan presence in cities such as Cádiz, Sevilla and Jerez, unknown until now, or notably widened what we already knew about the importance of families as the Fonts, Benavents, Viastrosas, Serras, etc., in the expansion of Iberian kingdoms, or demolished the myth of the Catalan absence from the colonization of the New World showing that not only did they participate but that their contribution can be explained by the ingrainment and experience they had already acquired due to their interests in Andalusia and the Canary Islands well before Columbus departed to his discovery voyage.

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**BONFIELD, Christopher; HUGUET-TERMES, Teresa; REINARZ, Jonathan (eds.), 2013. *Hospitals and communities, 1100-1960*. Oxford [etc.]: Peter Lang.**

The *International Network for the History Hospitals* (INHH), under the patronage of the *European Association for the History of Medicine and Health*, was born in 1998 with the goal of interrelating and offering a discussion space for university and cultural researchers of different countries, united by a common interest: the historical study of hospitals. From that moment on, the network has held a biennial international scientific meeting that has become a platform to make known and promote research focused on quite varied approaches without any temporal or geographic constraints. With that same spirit, it published *The Impact of Hospitals, 300-2000* (ed. J. Henderson, P. Horden and A. Pastore) in 2007, a crucial work that included a selection of the main contributions to the first two meetings held in Norwich and Verona in 1999 and 2001, respectively.

In 2013, two more issues have been published, as the previous ones, by the prestigious publisher Peter Lang. On the one hand, *Hospital Life: Theory and Practice from the Medieval to the Modern* (ed. L. Abreu and S. Sheard), compiling the contributions to the sixth conference of the INHH, held in Lisbon in 2011. On the other, the present volume, *Hospitals and Communities, 1100-1960* edited by Jonathan Reinartz, Christopher Bonfield and Teresa Huguet, gathering the papers delivered at the fifth conference, held by the Institució Milà i Fontanals (IMF-CSIC) in Barcelona in April 2009. In this case, the focus is placed on the close link documented between hospitals and the community or communities—in the plural—surrounding them, which, as a result, conditioned their *modus vivendi* and *operandi* over the centuries. Although the topic is not original in the midst of hospital historiography, most of the studies so far had faced it partially, since they limited to the analysis of specific ensembles or geographical areas. Thus claim the editors in the preface, highlighting that their goal is to deal with the link between hospitals and communities from different perspectives, through a handful of examples from different periods and countries—which even take us overseas—, without losing sight of the significant variables that can be derived from the term ‘community’, which can go beyond the strictly historical approach, in order to fully delve into disciplines such as sociology or anthropology. Nevertheless, the reader will not only find allusions to that bidirectional relationship, but also, in parallel, an approach to several other aspects that could seem complementary but usually become leading topics. We refer, for instance, to the polyvalence accumulated by welfare institutions, independently of their location or the period in which they were operational; the crucial role played by their promoters and managers; the dialogue between the buildings and their immediate environment; the involvement of municipal, royal and/or ecclesiastical organs in their functioning and/or funding; and many other questions resulting in the open character and interdisciplinary vocation of the authors participating in this collective work.

To solve the puzzle of such a book, which, as we have mentioned, starts from a polyhedral approach covering a dilated timespan (1100-1960), seemed a hard work since, necessarily, it had to be restrictive given the impossibility of embracing it all, therefore, gaps and deficiencies cannot be avoided. However, the final result is quite coherent thanks, in part, to the distribution of articles into five well-chosen theme sections: ‘Communities and Isolation’, ‘Communities and the Poor’, ‘Hidden (or marginal) communities’, ‘Communities and War’ and finally, a separated section entitled ‘Virtual Communities: The Future’.

The leitmotif of the first section is isolation, frequently applied as a preventive measure but that can also be implicitly related to the idea of social exclusion. For instance, John Henderson, focuses on 17<sup>th</sup> century Florence to speak about the isolating character of some hospitals during epidemic periods, whereas Jane Stevens Crawshaw presents the complex network of insular leprosariums in the peripheral lagoon of Venice in the modern period. Rafaël Hyacinthe, in turn, insists on leprosy but takes us to the Middle East during the Crusades. The main issue of his research is the leprosarium of Jerusalem (c. 1099-1259), where patients lived enclosed in a closed space convinced of achieving redemption by means of patience and resignation, to the point that paradoxically, the same illness acquired the touch of sanctity. Rita Pemberton, on the other hand, examines the relationships between hospitals and communities in Trinidad and Tobago between 1876 and 1938; a country that due to historical and geographical reasons was ideal for the creation of isolated hospitals specialized in leprosy, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

The second section deals with the link between communities and their poorest members through different models of charity and institutions in different places and periods that progressively adapted to the social, economic, religious and political changes of each moment and place. Carole Rawcliffe, as usual, presents us with a brilliant lesson in which she highlights the religious dynamics of the communities dwelling in late medieval English hospitals devoted to the admission and care of lepers. As for the article by Teresa Huguet, it is basically focused on the hospital de la Santa Creu de Barcelona, founded in 1401 thanks to the impetus of a series of lay and clerical actors, cited by name and surname, who formed the urban elite of the city. She also delves into another crucial, complex and usually exaggerated aspect: the process of medicalization of health establishments of the Ancien Régime. The chapter authored by Josep M. Comelles, poses an interesting reflection on health policies in Catalonia from the middle Ages —led by the thesis of Francesc Eiximenis— to the contemporary period. Finally, Laurinda Abreu focuses on the proliferation of confraternities, *misericórdias*, in Portugal that facilitated the creation and management of hundreds of hospitals from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This phenomenon was only the natural consequence of the health and care reformation launched in the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century under the guidance of the crown.

The three chapters of the third section deal from different perspectives with the individual or communal roles and responses in outcast, punished and estigmatized environments. For instance, Debbie McCollin, reveals how throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century the white lepers of the Caribbeans usually preferred to hide at home instead of ending up in the insular colonies created to face the disease. The particular case of Chacachacare, becomes also the ideal framework to study the close links established between local communities, patients, their families and also the tourists who, especially in summertime, filled the island. The conclusions yielded by these centres are similar to those presented by Stephen Kenny regarding slave hospitals in South America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Military conflicts are, no doubt, one of the main causes of destruction and division of communities. In that regard, the fourth section of the book brings to the fore two interesting examples, far away from each other both in space and time. First, Jon Arrizabalaga, Pablo Larraz-Andía and Guillermo Sánchez-Martínez provide a valuable reading of the hospital founded in the second quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century next to the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria of Irache, near the Navarrese village of Lizarra. However, the authors focus on the role it played during the Second Carlist War (1873-1876), especially relevant not only from the practical point of view of the care of sick or wounded soldiers, but also because there was an effort to ‘sell’ it—in a positive sense—as a modelic example of campaign medical assistance, that could help neutralize or mitigate the reactionary image of Carlists spread across the continent and also overseas. A different approach, on the other hand, is provided by the work of Peter Waldron regarding the Russian hospital network during the First World War.

The book concludes with an interesting exercise-reflection authored by Christopher Bonfield, outlining the conclusions of a vast project which has allowed to reconstruct virtually, if with some nuances, the structure and different environments of the Great Hospital of Norwich, founded in 1249 by the bishop Walter of Suffield. Although this chapter is highly stimulant due to its technical, methodologic and didactic potentialities, the text only fulfills its full meaning together with the splendid and accurate 3D recreation of the building, available online or through the CD but not included in the book.

To conclude, this book shows that the study of hospitals cannot be understood without having into account the actors—active and passive—that formed their communities or without a deep knowledge of the societies to which they belonged. In other words: the histories of hospitals are not exclusively the histories of medical centres or health centres, but offer a much more varied scope of data which, for example, allows us to delve into the heart of very specific communities.

However, despite the commendable effort of the editors, this volume is merely a sprout, crucial, but a sprout of a much more vast discussion, which will serve as a stimulus and unavoidable reference for future researchers interested in this issue.

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**DIANA, Esther, 2012. *Santa Maria Nuova, ospedale dei fiorentini: Architettura ed assistenza nella Firenze tra Settecento e Novecento*, Firenze: Polistampa.**

In the last decades, the historical studies of the transformation of hospital establishments into spaces of medicalization have experienced a deep development. A clear example of this new approach is the volume authored by Esther Diana Dioniso. Dr Diana is the architect responsible for the restoration and recovery tasks of the hospital of *Santa Maria Nuova* in Florence and the scientific secretary of the *Centro di Documentazione per la Storia dell'Assistenza e della Sanità Fiorentina*, an entity whose goal is to promote initiatives of dissemination and safekeeping of the history of health institutions in the Tuscan capital. As for her research preferences, she has mainly focused on the architectural and social study of Florentine hospitals, paying special attention to the transformations experienced from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to our time. In this case, the book is centred on the aforementioned hospital of *Santa Maria Nuova*, which the author uses as an argument to put forward a suggestive analysis of the way in which welfare entities, as spaces of creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge, have modified Western medicine and which factors external to medicine, paradox intended, have contributed to turn the hospital into a mainly medical institution. The following passage, extracted from the conclusions of the book, sums up the spirit presiding over the whole work:

*Santa Maria Nuova* has the ability to make visible all those things that, due to several reasons, lie hidden behind its walls thanks to its uninterrupted leading role in the history of Florence. Therefore, it does not only reveal the cultural and scientific role that, for centuries, it has played in its relationship with the city and its inhabitants, but also makes apparent the figures, functions and relationships between patients, society, health care professionals, scientifics and politicians that took part in the different stages of its development as a health institution.

This statement is still clearer if we bear in mind that the hospital of *Santa Maria Nuova* was founded in 1288 and from early on ascertained a considerable degree of medicalization, as the studies of John Henderson have revealed. Furthermore, we cannot forget that the building, despite the numerous and aggressive modifications it has undergone over the centuries, is still today the reference hospital in the historical and urban downtown of Florence.



Regarding the book itself, for starters its formidable visual apparel is startling. The result of a tireless, rigorous, exhaustive work that has made it possible to gather in a single volume, countless images, plans and documents which, on their own, justify such a careful publication. As for the structure, it is organized in four sections. After a brief yet intense introduction, which expounds on historiographical reflections that allows us to glimpse what is to come. The first section includes a detailed synthesis of the new medical and hygienic ideas which between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries prompted the appearance of a critical discourse that would forever change the conception of a hospital. Diana describes the way in which it transformed from a focus of mortality, bad odours, miasmas and dangers and through different sanitation projects, into start being seen as an essential institute to return to the city the standards of living desired by its population. The second section approaches the genesis and development of the process of modernization through which the hospital stops being a place of reclusion or retreat to become a reference for citizens, at the architectural and welfare level, the precursor of the modern health system. The third section, one of the most interesting ones, overviews the progressive medicalization of the hospital, a phenomenon which not only entailed therapeutical or organizational changes. Therefore, through remodelings and variants in its architecture, the author details how the hospital becomes a diagnosis space taking over a practise that, up to then, had its natural place by the bed of the sick or in the office of the doctor. The book concludes with a fourth section devoted to the effects of the medicalization process that definitively elevated the hospital as an undeniable and unquestioned place for medical practise. This section approaches the way in which its health care function shaped a new reference in the collective imagination and how this notion affected the dynamics of health professionals.

To sum up, *Santa Maria Nuova, ospedale dei fiorentini* is a contribution that manifestly enriches the group of microsocial studies that help understanding, through the complexity and variety of specific social phenomena, the local differences in great historical transformations. In other words, this study is a valuable contibution to the knowledge of the European medicalization process offering from the local perspective, fundamental elements of reflection to understand the complex and dilated reformation of health structures.

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**MUTGÉ I VIVES, Josefina, SALICRÚ I LLUCH, Roser, VELA AULESA, Carles (eds.), 2013. *La Corona catalanoaragonesa, l'islam i el món mediterrani. Estudis d'història medieval en homenatge a la doctora Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol*, Barcelona: CSIC.**

This book pays homage to the work of a tireless scholar who, in the span of her career, has opened numerous research lines in the Catalan, Iberian and Mediterranean area. The scientific interests of Maria Teresa Ferrer have included many topics, and still do, but if they had to be contrained to some central topic that should certainly be the history of the Crown of Aragon and its relationship with medieval Islamic Mediterranean. Actually, the history of the Catalan-Aragonese Crown, as the title claims honouring the historiographic position defended during the long years of her career by Ferrer herself.

A disciple of Prof. Emilio Sáez, Maria Teresa Ferrer immediately began to collaborate with the CSIC, the Universitat de Barcelona and the *Arxiu Històric de Protocols* of Barcelona, and actually was one of the first scholars to be able to classify and explore the vast holdings. In 1984 she obtained her doctorate with a thesis dissertation entitled *Moros i cristians, almogàvers i collerats a la frontera d'Oriola* and afterwards, as a researcher at the CSIC, was continuously granted research projects from 1982 to 2004 on the topic of the border between Christianity and Islam in a broad sense, that is, from the political-institutional perspective as well as from a diplomatic, cultural, economic and social point of view.

This homage to the career of Maria Teresa Ferrer is organized by her lifetime studies and department colleague, Josefina Mutgé, and two of her disciples, Roser Salicrú and Carles Vela, who have developed their own work in the framework of the research projects led by Ferrer and have taken on her work after 2004. More than seventy colleagues join the homage to this scholar. The topics of the essays move virtually around the scientific lines of Maria Teresa Ferrer dealing with several issues dear to her: the frontier between Christianity and Islam, the relationship between Catalonia, Sicily and Sardinia, slavery and Mediterranean commerce and the edition of sources of the history of Catalonia and the Crown of Aragon, just to mention some of them. The essays in this volume also testify to the numerous collaborations and exchanges between Ferrer and national and international colleagues. Therefore, the articles could have been organized according to themes, so that the relationships of other scholars with the scientific trajectory of Maria Teresa Ferrer emerged clearly, instead of opting for the alphabetical order of authors. Nevertheless, besides a right and proper recognition of the task of this important scholar, this volume provides a significant contribution to the history of the Crown of Aragon and the medieval Mediterranean world.

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**PICCINNI, Gabriella, 2012. *Il banco dell'Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala e il mercato del denaro nella Siena del Trecento*, Pisa: Pacini Editore.**

It is a pleasure to review such a maturity work as the most recent book of Professor Gabriella Piccinni, which concludes —hopefully not for good— a research line begun more than a decade ago around one of the most famous and important European medieval hospitals, the Sienese *Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala*. A research which, as usually happens with well based projects, goes well beyond the specific object of study and enlightens us also on the topic of urban welfare and charity and, especially, on the world of money in 14<sup>th</sup>-century Siena.

The book is structured in four major sections preceded by a double introduction which allows the reader to orientate him- or herself in space and time. Under the epigraph *Quadri generali*, the introduction describes, on the one hand, the world of Italian late medieval hospitals and, on the other, places us in the convulse Siena of the *Trecento*, where a deep economic crisis and one of the moments of maximum cultural and artistic splendour of the city coincided. The conceptualization of Piccinni of hospitals as ‘enterprises of charity’ is especially interesting and enlightening; this is an idea she had already suggested in a previous article that connects it with the works of other authors who put forward the existence of an ‘economy of charity’ (Marina Gazzini). From that standpoint, the credit trend of some of these charitable institutions appears as a consequence, even logical, of their social function of managing public charity. In fact, the author discusses the functioning as a bank of the *Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala* in the four sections that compose the bulk of the book.

The first section describes in detail the Sienese credit market during the decades of 1330 and 1340, emphasizing the convulsions suffered by such market after the bankruptcy of several major companies and the subsequent lack of credit, which prompted an increase in the interest rates and the appearance of new credit agents that did not always follow the established game rules. This troubled historical moment brought about the proliferation of credit agents, among them an heterogeneous group of funders of the public treasury that would end up acting as a bank, although that was not their primary mission. The Sienese hospital belonged to this group.

In the second section of the book, Piccinni explains in detail the organization of the accounts of the hospital, describing the internal management and the way in which it worked as a financial institution, receiving money from individual clients and lending it to the Sienese *Comune*. In this context, it is really interesting the story of Pietro Ranieri, an agent of the Gallerani company in France who spent his last days serving as a friar in the hospital bank. Pietro Ranieri —an associate of a merchant company— and “friar Piero” —the right-hand man of the hospital rector— developed the same tasks of capital transfer and obtention; only the final purpose of the money was different. In this sense, one of the cases managed by ‘friar Pietro’ is especially

suggestive: he took care of the liquidation of the inheritance of an important Sienese banker who had ordered in his testament the compensation of all those clients from which he had profited through usury. The operation, of great accounting and diplomatic complexity —most of the affected lived in the Champagne— was successfully carried out by “friar Pietro” and masterfully described by Piccinni. However, the most interesting part is the capacity of the hospital bank to launder money, since it was capable of turning dirty money obtained through usury into money with a social function: hospital charity and loans to the *Comune*. However, in order to do so, it needed the same professionals as other financial entities, experts who knew how finances and money worked —the hospital managed to integrate them into its great family of friars and oblates— and, in the end, it used the same instruments and the same techniques as Christian and Jewish ‘private’ money changers.

The third section of the book —devoted to the clientele of the hospital bank, *La gente*— contains, besides a rich table in which most of the account books of the hospital bank are reflected, a very interesting compilation of case studies. The deep knowledge that Gabriella Piccinni has of the Sienese bibliography and documents, as well as of the history of the Siena of the *Trecento*, vastly shows in these case studies. Only in that way can be explained how from the scarce data offered by account books she manages to reconstruct the lives —and miseries— of such a varied group of bank clients. These *Microstorie di denaro e di vita* do not only show the daily life, usually difficult to glimpse from financial documents, but also convey the personal and urban consequences of the aforementioned issues on financial crisis, banking instruments or banking professionals. These case studies also evince the way in which the hospital managed, as a financial institution, to bring out capital which allowed for not only its own funding but also the funding of the public treasury of the *Comune*. Hence the capability of the hospital bank to turn money —always morally questioned— into something socially and morally acceptable and even useful.

The book concludes with the study of the difficulties the bank had to face during the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The economic crisis of the time affected the hospital bank negatively, and it suffered serious troubles to obtain cash and grant funding. Measures such as the acquisition of important relics in 1359 —especially a nail of Christ’s cross and the veil of the Virgin— or ensuring that the pilgrims in travel to Rome left their savings for safekeeping in the hospital, did not prevent the ‘safes’ from ending up empty by the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, although the hospital was by then well renowned, not only in Italy but also in Europe.

Despite this ‘sad ending’, the study of the bank of the *Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala* shows an interesting case between two key periods of Italian financial history: the period of private and family credit companies in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and the appearance of the *Monti di Pietà* of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the most perfect example of combination of public charity and private funding. In this sense, it is no surprise to discover in the foundation of the *Monte Pio* of Siena, the

involvement of the hospital. Its experience in integrating the most advanced financial practises of the time with the exercise of public charity, as it was understood at the time, had no doubt paved the way for the appearance of mounts of piety.

All in all turns the reading and consultation of the work of Gabriella Piccinni necessary for any scholar interested not only in hospital history or the history of late medieval credit, but also in European economic and social history in the Late Middle Ages. We simply hope that Piccinni's work in the hospital archives bears still more similar fruits that allow to trace even in more detail the history of the hospital, the history of credit and, in the end, European economic and social history in the Late Middle Ages.

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**SORDINI, Beatrice, 2010. *Dentro l'antico Ospedale: Santa Maria della Scala, uomini, cose e spazi di vita nella Siena medievale. Itinerari e Proposte. 16. Siena: Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena & Protagon.***

The *ospedale de Santa Maria della Scala* in Siena is one of the most fascinating hospital complexes of medieval origin that have survived to our days. On the one hand, due to its excellent architecture and the numerous artistic treasures it keeps, and on the other, we should recall that, until 1986, it worked as an actual hospital, with all its advantages and pitfalls. That is, although this fact was a key to its preservation, it is also true that it forced its adaptation to the health and welfare requirements of every period, with the subsequent modification, usually mutilation, of primitive structures. Since 1986, the transformation of the old hospital into a museum was carried out through a slow process of restoration and valorization, a not always easy enterprise, given the singularities of a city such as Siena, that has one of the richest heritages in the world; therefore the *Scala* had to rival other first-class monuments in order to be granted investments and promote rehabilitation interventions. Nevertheless, we fortunaly have abundant information: its archive contains fabulous documentary holdings; the building, despite the changes suffered, presents an optimal preservation state that facilitates architectural analyses and the study of the magnificent mural cycles decorating its walls; the data contributed by archaeology are not to be dismissed either, since they are crucial to understand the relationship of the hospital with its immediate urban environment; and, last, the interest of historians has translated into an extensive catalogue of publications, among which the book object of the present review. However, *Dentro l'antico ospedale* is not just 'another book', but a fundamental work approaching the reality of this centre during the Middle Ages and which, in words of its author, Beatrice Sordini, has 'as its leading character the *Santa Maria della Scala*, with its spaces, its functions, its objects and the people who lived, worked and was admitted there'.

The volume appears as a careful edition, with numerous images and high quality photographs that turn it *per se* into a product of great visual value. As for its contents, it is organized in two major sections. The first one analyses structural and architectural elements, as well as the constructive sequence from the mythical foundation of the hospital, dated around the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. In turn, the second part focuses on daily life, highlighting material life, the management, the welfare and, obviously, the actors who, on a daily basis, ensured the basic services by attending the patients who were admitted there.

Undoubtedly, one of the most outstanding aspects of the book is that Beatrice Sordini has been able to order the twisted internal organization of the building, a result of many factors: annexation of longitudinal and transversal halls opened over time; constant enlargements which, in most cases, were conditioned by the road network surrounding the hospital; heterogeneous vertical distribution of spaces moulding to the steep slopes of the so-called *Fosso di Sant'Ansano* in the back of the complex. Likewise, she offers a coherent explanation for the *collage* of materials, constructive apparels and blinded openings that make singular the surprising main façade, again a living testimony to the traces of time on the skin of the *ospedale*. Moreover, all the interpretations put forward are stated from a claimed interdisciplinary conviction, since Sordini's discourse is based on a meticulous critical reading of the vast wealth of economic and administrative documents, both documents already revealed through past studies —read again by the author and, sometimes, nuanced by her— and those unpublished. At the same time, the author has conducted a detailed analyses of the extant facings and structures, contrasting her conclusions with the data provided by archaeology. It is true that there are still many unresolved doubts, which could remain so forever, but as one delves into the reading of this book, it can be noted that everything it says is the result of a meditated and deep reflection, usually shared with other historians, archaeologists and architects. This open and collaborative vocation was decisive, for instance, in the materialization of the splendid illustrations that accompany the book, both those showing the progressive evolution of the urban fabric around the cathedral and the hospital, and the five large drawings, included in the central pages of the book, that aim to show hypothetically the internal articulation of the building by the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

However, we must reproach this volume for ignoring plans; none is included. In our opinion, this lack makes it difficult to understand and easily assimilate the contents —especially for those readers that have never set foot in *Santa Maria della Scala*—; although drawings and photographs are enlightening, they do not substitute the information that a plan, a section or an elevation can provide. Besides offering a complete overview they help locate with precision the place of all the spaces mentioned by the text. Thus, the researcher who wants to go beyond, will not have other option but to keep consulting the questionable monograph by Daniela Gallavotti (1985) and the special issue of the 1986 *Bollettino d'Arte* devoted to the stonework of *Santa Maria*, both of them including a wealth of planimetric elevations.

In any case, we must insist on the fact that *Dentro l'antico ospedale* is a crucial and undeniable landmark in the historiography of this almost millennial institution, and a methodologically modellic work in its way of facing the study of the building of a medieval hospital. Beatrice Sordini has made a commendable effort to read it transversally, contemplating many of the variables that enable the understanding of its meaning, its valorization and the changes it has experienced during its long history.

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