

photographs by Francesco Turio Böhm, which publicize lesser-known parts of the monastery.

The individual authors present rigorous research but rarely pause to reflect on the wealth of information. Two brief essays by Giorgio Tagliaferro and Deborah Howard, which are conceived as responses to Gott dang and Guidarelli, respectively, offer tantalizing hints of larger arguments to be made about the convent's significance. But this reader would have wished for a greater effort at synthetic interpretation, either by the editors in the introduction or in a separate essay. The nuns of San Zaccaria used art and architecture to make an argument about their place in Venetian culture and society. Such an addition would do the same for the authors' important but still somewhat cloistered scholarship.

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*Un monastero di famiglia: Il Diario delle barberine della SS. Incarnazione (secc. XVII–XVIII).* Valentina Abbatelli, Alessia Liroi, and Irene Palombo, eds.

With Gabriella Zarri. *La memoria restituita* 12. Florence: Viella, 2016. 464 pp. €46.

Founded in 1639 by Urban VIII for nuns and other women of the Barberini family as part of papal nepotistic strategies, the Roman convent of SS. Incarnazione was established by his two nieces and other nuns drawn from the Observant Carmelite convent of S. Maria degli Angeli in Florence, where famed mystic Saint Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi (1566–1607, canonized 1669) had resided. As a center for Carmelite spirituality associated with this saint, SS. Incarnazione was regarded as one of the most prestigious convents favored by the aristocracy in Baroque Rome. This volume publishes the chronicle of SS. Incarnazione in Rome as part of the series *La memoria restituita*, which aims to bring to light little-known writings of women buried in Italian archives and make them readily available to scholars.

Two essays, by Gabriella Zarri and Valentina Abbatelli, respectively, introduce the book, which is primarily devoted to Abbatelli's transcription of the two-volume *diario* of SS. Incarnazione (1639–1781) located in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. She faithfully maintains the original character of the Italian manuscript with only minor adjustments for readability, which she carefully explains in her essay. Zarri's essay usefully reviews the origins and historical development of monastic chronicles, noting that while chronicles of female convents exist from the fifteenth century following Observant reforms, these manuscripts became more common in the late sixteenth century after the prescriptions of the Council of Trent to keep records of nun's professions and deaths and administrative journals. Zarri relates the family dynastic character and ecclesiastical privileges of the Barberini foundation to that of medieval *eigenklösters*, yet SS. Incarnazione's revised constitutions written by suor Innocenza Barberini (1657)

are also reflective of post-Tridentine religious ideology, and the convent enjoyed a reputation for both nobility and strict observance. It is this image of an elite noble convent populated with devout, Observant nuns dedicated to religious virtue that is crafted in the chronicle.

Abbatelli gives a brief overview of the linguistic character of the chronicle assembled in 1697 on the initiative of the convent's *padre visitatore* Fra Giovan Giacomo da S. Agostino, unifying earlier records of the nuns and history of the community written by *suor* Anna Geltruda della SS. Incarnazione, whose work was carried on into the late eighteenth century by several other anonymous nun authors. The chronicle combines a chronological history of the convent and noteworthy events combined with a necrology of the nuns, noteworthy for its lengthy biographies. Abbatelli identifies differences between the chronicle's first volume, covering the seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries, and the second, devoted to the eighteenth century, in which accounts tend to become briefer and less detailed. Narrations of miraculous or ecstatic experiences also become rarer in the second volume.

The transcription of the chronicle is accompanied by notes by Irene Palombo, which help to provide context for the social, historical, and religious ambience and figures of Baroque Rome. The primary purpose of the chronicle was didactic: to construct the identity of the community of SS. Incarnazione and through the biographies of deceased nuns to furnish exemplars of virtue for present and future nuns. While all convent chronicles tend to have a hagiographic tone and present the institution in a favorable light, this is particularly evident in the biographies of SS. Incarnazione's nuns, which exemplify virtues of obedience, humility, strength of vocation, devotion, patient suffering through graphically described physical maladies, and resignation to divine will. But this insistently ideal picture of nuns behaving devoutly tends to flatten out individual personalities to create homogeneous stereotypes of monastic profession to an even greater extent than is evident in chronicles of other Roman convents, such as S. Cecilia, S. Cosimato, or SS. Domenico e Sisto.

Nonetheless, the chronicle of SS. Incarnazione offers a distinct portrait of this elite and devout Baroque convent. Its prestigious reputation attracted visits from European nobility and aristocratic women in Rome. Patronage from the Barberini, as well as other noble families and church officials, endowed the convent with a rich patrimony of relics and sacred images that played a significant role in the nuns' spiritual lives. Publication of its chronicle makes available a valuable resource for scholars interested in the social and religious history of Baroque Rome, female convents, and women's writing.

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