

Corrado Viola examines the status and the progress of the projects advanced by the C.R.E.S. (Centro di ricerca sugli epistolari nel Settecento, Center for research on the eighteenth-century epistolary of the University of Verona), and the Centro studi muratoriano di Modena. One of the most interesting essays is by Angelo Colombo: he reconstructs the dispute over the presumed mortal remains of Saint Augustine, discussed by Giusto Fontanini, Muratori, and other scholars between 1728 and 1730. Francesca Maria Crasta looks at the diverse philosophical aspects of the Christian reflection, presented by the volumes *Forze dell'intendimento umano* and *Forza della fantasia umana*, both printed in 1745, ten years before the *Filosofia morale*. The need for reformation was discussed by Muratori in the context of a strong bond with tradition, making Catholicism a reasonable religion, and stressing its “ragionevolezza.” The exchange of letters between Muratori and Corrado Janning, constituting twenty-five letters written between 1698 and 1707, is studied by Maria Lieber and Valentina Cuomo (it will be printed as the twenty-fifth volume of the edition). Daniela Gianaroli investigates the relation of M. with the Jesuits: with the *De ingeniorum moderatione*, the *vignolese* wounded the pride of the Sicilian Jesuits for their attachment at the “voto sanguinario,” the bloody vow.

The volume has a fresh approach to the Muratori's works and thought: this is its most important positive aspect and the limit of this collection. With few exceptions, most of the essays collected are internal to the analysis of the manuscript and the works of the *vignolese*; only a few of them are aware of the complexity of the research conducted in the last decades by the academic world, i.e., on the subject of superstition. However, the freshness of the volume's approach is a demonstration of the liveliness and importance of Muratori's theology and thought, whose works should be studied and still require scholarly study. The goal of urging adequate funding for the national edition is recalled in the conclusions signed by Marri.

*Humboldt University of Berlin*

MARIA TERESA FATTORI

*Un'illusione di femminile semplicità. Gli Annali delle Orsoline di Bellinzona (1730–1848)*. By Miriam Nicoli and Franca Cleis. [La memoria restituita. Fonti per la storia delle donne, 15.] (Rome: Viella, 2021. Pp. 368. € 30,40. ISBN: 978-8-833-13780-3.)

Recent scholarship has shown that despite the Tridentine Catholic Church's official preference for the enclosed life for religious women, the lived experience of women in religious communities encompassed a diverse array of lifestyles and spirituality. Even within a single community, varied visions of the female consecrated life could come into conflict with one another. This highly learned and useful book offers an incisive analysis, with documents, of one such conflict in eighteenth-century Bellinzona, a small subalpine city in the archdiocese of Milan, now in Switzerland's Ticino canton. The work thus sheds light on Swiss Catholic history of the age as well as on the history of female religiosity.

The Ursuline community of Bellinzona was founded in 1730 by local patri-cians the Molo brothers, one of whom had eight daughters to settle. The founding

documents and rule established that the women of the community would take simple vows, not solemn, and would provide education for girls. Two Ursulines from a neighboring institute were brought in to lead; the house was soon well populated with the daughters of the local patriciate. The sisters enjoyed some liberty: not subject to enclosure nor to a vow of poverty, they had their own rooms, furnishings, and incomes, and could inherit. Collective income came from invested spiritual dowries, pupils' fees, needlework, and making sweets.

Internal conflict came, as it so often did, over enclosure. The conflict brewed during the 1740s, and erupted in 1751 when one faction of women, led by Maria Gertruda Maderni, favored transforming the community into a fully enclosed convent, while another group, led by the daughter of the founder Fulgenzia Maria Molo, wished to remain unenclosed. A conflict over occupancy of a private cell fueled the dispute. Molo and her followers lost their battle and left the community, taking important legal documents with them; a subsequent lawsuit over dowries was ultimately resolved in 1781.

The unedited documents published here support the case and present rich opportunities for researchers. The most substantial of them, the *Annali*, furnishes a fascinating example of the genre of convent chronicle. It merits further study and inclusion in the growing literature on this subgenre of historical writing. Begun in 1751 by the convent's supervising cleric, as part of the effort to control the narrative of the factional conflict, the *Annali* was continued by the sisters and maintained serially until the house dissolved in 1846. Also reproduced are several documents from the 1752 investigation, conducted at the request of the bishop of Como. A whole other book could be written, too, based on the chronicle's account of the women's resistance to forced dissolution during the Napoleonic years, their house's reconstitution, the establishment of the nineteen Swiss cantons in 1803, and their subsequent mandate to teach in a public school. In short, the full range of the Age of Revolutions plays out, as seen from the modest doors of a ladies' pious redoubt.

Querciolo Mazzonis's preface sets the story in the Ursuline context, linking it to the order's origins in nearby Milan in the early 1500s. As Mazzonis notes, the Swiss Ursulines manifested a French-style spirituality where charity and serving others became the primary vehicle of devotion, with little reference to the mystical, physical penance so important to the founder Angela Merici. All in all, the work provides an excellent contextualization for a valuable set of little-known primary sources, of interest to scholars of early modern spirituality, women's history, and the history of historical writing.

Copyright of Catholic Historical Review is the property of Catholic University of America Press and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.