

the involvement of religious orders in profit-making. Tara Alberts unpacks Jacques de Bourges's (ca. 1634–1714) *Relation du voyage de Monseigneur l'Evêque de Beryte* (1666) as an investment prospectus. She contends that Bourges sought to provide guidance for commercial activity by stressing the spiritual discipline incumbent upon missionaries engaged in these practices. Fabian Fechner turns to correspondence and memoirs among Jesuits in the Paraguay Reductions to make sense of how Jesuits negotiated the parameters of licit financial activity. He emphasizes the fluidity of perspectives and the mediation involved in sorting out financial calculations on the ground.

The essays provide fascinating glimpses into the contortions, compromises, and consequences of efforts to fund Catholic missions in the early modern period. As a whole, the volume outlines fruitful lines of inquiry and useful ways of approaching commerce and conversion that will be of interest to scholars of capitalism, missionary endeavor, and empire building from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries.

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Describing the City, Describing the State: Representations of Venice and the Venetian Terraferma in the Renaissance. Sandra Toffolo.

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Imagine you are waiting to board a ship to Jerusalem. Imagine you are a pilgrim, embarking on a journey that could leave an indelible mark on your life. As a regular and safe provider of maritime transport services to the Holy Land, the city of Venice would have offered travelers from any part of Italy and Europe a convenient starting point, and an international and well-furnished marketplace where you could buy everything you needed for crossing the sea and arriving in Jerusalem. And imagine you are a learned person. You might decide to put some of your thoughts, impressions, memories in writing, or—later—in print. How would you describe the city that lies on water, Venice? Late fourteenth-century travelers, such as the Florentine Lionardo Frescobaldi, or the French Ogier VIII d'Anglure, still concentrate their attention mostly on Venetian churches and their precious, praiseworthy relics, but as the fifteenth century moves forward and the power of Venice grows into the mainland, which falls under Venetian rule (arriving to the Lombard cities of Brescia and Bergamo, to Ravenna and Cervia, and to Trento, before being downsized after the defeat at the Ghiara d'Adda by the French in 1509), travelers, poets, and historiographers increasingly represent the lagoon city as a wealthy, virtue-clad, well-governed place.

Descriptions of the city of Venice and its mainland state form the bulk of Toffolo's analysis. They are considered as perceptions. Any description contains multilevel

meanings and speaks to different audiences, sometimes simultaneously, according to the geographic origin, education, and political sensibility of its writer. Focusing on chronological changes in representations of Venice and its mainland territories from both foreigners (such as the late medieval pilgrims) and citizens (such as the star of all Venetian historiographers, Marino Sanudo) or naturalized citizens (such as Marcantonio Sabellico), the book brings together several geographic descriptions. Poems, travel diaries, visual depictions, chronicles, and official histories are all considered as narratives, as descriptions which are influenced by the myriad factors that people were susceptible to in any representation of the reality. Toffolo's analysis is built on an impressive number of manuscripts and printed sources from the late fourteenth to the early fifteenth centuries: about a hundred, their variety stretching from relatively short texts to works numbering hundreds of pages, and pertaining to different genres (e.g., simple descriptions, prefaces to statutes, poems written on the long Italian wars, political treatises).

Part 1 is devoted to the urban setting of Venice. Toffolo recognizes four predominant narratives shaping Venice: a religious city, a center of material culture, a seat of an ideal government, and a morally admirable place. Interestingly, the multifaceted layers of description are not to be found for other cities in this form: when "viewing the city, different spectators saw different cities," "multiple Venices" created by multiple narratives that existed alongside each other (30). Toffolo questions the fortunate idea of a myth—and of an anti-myth—with its more or less fixed traditions in describing the city and its state. Instead, the considerable variety of narratives and their development over time is greater than previously acknowledged and asks for a critical revision of historiographic paradigms.

Part 2 is devoted to the descriptions of the increasing mainland state, which travelers and chronicles could no longer ignore when, in the course of the long fifteenth century, Venice played as a powerful actor among the Italian states. Here Toffolo distinguishes Venetians writing about the mainland as a state (which was relatively new), mainland writers describing their own territories under the new rule, and foreign writers—again, with multiple approaches and with no unique and fixed perception of the growing state, consciously choosing to depict mainland cities as self-contained entities or not, and not necessarily taking into account the impact the construction of the Venetian state had. As Toffolo underlines, also in the case of Venetian mainland the composition of narratives "was a complex process, influenced by a large variety of factors" (268), countless factors. Writers relied, obviously, on previous texts and narratives; however, that such preexisting, traditional representations were simply not the only, and sometimes not even the predominant factor affecting how geographic representations were created, is the surprising conclusion of this precious and refined book.

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