Winter 2008

Review of Il Capitolo di San Lorenzo nel Quattrocento

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Frederick's scientific, dietetic, and gastronomic interests, which would lead one to accept the possibility that such a text may have been prepared at his court under the guidance and authority of Theodore of Antioch, the Arab philosopher and expert of Arab medical science who had studied at Mossul and Baghdad. Theodore of Antioch had succeeded Michael Scott at Frederick's court in Palermo and traveled with the emperor during the years 1238–40 when the emperor consolidated his political power. Theodore indeed in 1240 wrote the emperor an Epistle, *Epistula Philosophi ad Imperatorem Fridericum*, which represents a treatise on hygiene and advises the emperor on dietetic and gastronomic matters. It is also true that during this period Frederick spent much time between Palermo and Apulia, the Capitanata being his favorite hunting grounds, and documents show that he requested enormous amounts of food supplies, provisions, animal stock, agricultural products, and specialties such as 200 *prosciutti* from Abruzzi and huge quantities of wine from Sicily (99–140). In 1248 Frederick suffers major defeats at Parma and Fossalta, his own son Enzo is captured and never released by the Bolognesi, and there begins his rapid decline and eventual death by dysentery two years later in Castel Fiorentino, Apulia.

It is significant that the recipe on how to cook green cabbage both in the Parisian and Vatican versions, *A 1 2 De calibus* and *V 2 Itemaltercaules*, states is "ad usum imperatoris" (201–2), which the Tuscan version leaves out. Indeed the author is correct in stating that the Vatican version has the closest affinity with the Parisian and that this is the main link with the Italian vernacular versions (18). In conclusion, Martellotti's volume provides a philological and historical reconstruction that leaves the reader quite fascinated, interested, and satisfied that Frederick's imperial court provided an extraordinary contribution to the history of gastronomic and dietary practices. This reviewer would like to call attention to the important documentation and analysis provided in chapters 5 and 6 concerning the culture and the history of medical, dietetic, and gastronomic practices at the court of Frederick II which seem to validate the author's thesis. The volume, regrettably, lacks an index which is absolutely necessary in such texts.

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Paolo Viti's edited collection *Il Capitolo di San Lorenzo nel Quattrocento* offers twenty-one meticulously researched articles focused on biographical and cultural studies of the fifteenth-century canons at San Lorenzo in Florence. According to the book's introduction, the goal of the studies is to make a "new contribution to the knowledge of the history of the Laurenzian Basilica and of its canons of the fifteenth century in the fuller and more complex panoramic of the history of the Florentine Church" (ix). The book achieves this goal by offering a wealth of new information about individuals prominent in the chapter of San Lorenzo and their relationship to the politics, culture, and religion of the rest of the city of Florence. The articles were originally offered at a conference held at San Lorenzo in 2003.

The collection begins with a handful of studies that look at the chapter of San Lorenzo in general. William Bowsky examines the kinds of documents that survive for the study of the Laurenzian canons in the medieval period and the kinds of information that these sources can offer. Paolo Viti focuses on the connections between San Lorenzo and the Medici family. Laura de Angelis offers a fascinating study of the relationship between the
chapter of the cathedral in Florence and the chapter of San Lorenzo. Elena Giannarelli looks at the place of the church fathers in the writings of fifteenth-century canons.

The remaining contributions consist of either short biographies or additions to biographies of figures that were associated with the chapter of San Lorenzo. Humanists and canons are especially prominent. Ulisse Tramonti investigates the canon Matteo Dolfini and his pre-Brunelleschi architectural plans for San Lorenzo. Sondra dall'Oco examines Antonio Casini, a man who appears in the correspondence of Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini. Antonio Manfredi traces the humanist connections of the canon Antonio Ferrantini through the evidence of book ownership and the letters of Ambrogio Traversari. Giuliano Tanturli investigates the attribution of works and offices to the puzzling figure Ser Lorenzo, priest of San Michele at Castello. Three scholars—Francesco Bausi, Carlo Nardi, and Ida Giovanna Rao—look at different aspects of the life and learning of Francesco Castiglione, with special emphasis on humanism. Enrico Spagnesi examines Andrea Fiocchi's hugely successful Fenestella, a work that went through ninety-one editions between 1474 and 1646. Veronica Vestri and Gabriella Battista look at fifteenth-century canons from the Befani and Maringhi families, respectively. Leonardo Giorgetti provides detailed information about the career and learning of the canon and prior Lorenzo Guiducci. Mariagrazia d'Angeli focuses on identifying the extant works of the learned canon Antonio degli Agli and creating a census of his letters. Cristina Cecchi investigates the political and religious positions held by the Schiattesi, a family outside of the core Florentine patriciate. Gian Carlo Garfagnini offers an analysis of the ideas in several writings by the Savonarolan Domenico Benivieni. Ludovica Sebregondi looks at a series of seventeenth-century busts in San Lorenzo that depict earlier canons. Letizia Pagliai examines an early nineteenth-century work by the canon and historian Domenico Moreni. Claudio Leonardis concludes to the book summarizes the articles and raises further questions concerning the history of religion in fifteenth-century Florence.

Taken together, this collection offers a wealth of new information about the relationship between San Lorenzo and the churches, government, and culture of Florence. Without exception, each article offers a detailed and well-documented study of its subject. One topic consistent throughout the book involves the connections between the secular clergy of San Lorenzo and the humanist movement, a relationship that Antonio Manfredi rightly points out is “little known” (65). This book provides fertile ground for related further studies. Blunt statements regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the surviving primary source material are another common theme in the studies. For an American reader, such statements provide valuable information about the surviving archival material and the kinds of future projects that it can support, before a costly trip to the archives. At times, the research and studies in this book are so detailed and so meticulous that the reader risks losing sight of the broader themes raised in the book's introduction and conclusion. The biographical studies of this book certainly illuminate the relationship between the chapter of San Lorenzo and the political, religious, and intellectual world of fifteenth-century Florence; yet, the extrapolation of these larger themes from these impeccably researched biographical studies is left largely to the reader. However, the quantity of new information, new documents, and potential areas for further research offered by this book eclipses this minor quibble. I would recommend this book to scholars of Renaissance Florence, humanism, and church institutions.