

Zilong 王子龍, which explain the documents of the *Hua Yi yiyu* 華夷譯語 (Sino-foreign vocabularies). Then, the reader is taken on a time travel into the Qing Dynasty, analyzing Manchu language studies through different actors: the Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–88) with the Manchu-Latin grammar *Elementa Linguae Tartaricae*; the Manchu *Uge* (Wuge 舞格) and the Chinese *Cheng Mingyuan* 程明遠 with the 1730 Manchu manual *Qingwen qimeng* 清文啓蒙; and finally, in 1848, the Manchu-Chinese translator Bujilgen Jakdan and his poems, read with the help of his collaborator Hai Yu 海玉.

As implied by the book's subtitle—and also stated by the author herself—the inspiration behind the structuring of the text comes from the 1972 Italian novel *Le città invisibili* (Invisible cities) written by Italo Calvino (1923–85), a book whose reading can make many of the author's choices more understandable. First, because Nappi takes inspiration from it for the structuring of the chapters, and because Calvino himself staged a fictional dialogue in China between Marco Polo and Qubilai Khan, and finally, because Calvino said that his book was something like a last love poem to cities in an increasingly unlivable world. And just like Calvino, Nappi also composes a love poem for translation, bringing to light the processes of dialogue and understanding between languages and cultures, reconstructing those invisible cities made of words, which are almost like a message to overcome differences, remembering the cities made of encounters and conversations in multiple languages, beyond incommunicability and separation which today seem to rage. As the author writes in her preface, this book is a “work with primary sources to tell a story about the past that aims to inform how we think about the present and how we might make possible futures” (vii).

The author's goal is to strike and open up the debate, leaving much food for thought to the reader. In fact, if cities are a set of many things—memories, desires, signs of culture—so are translations, cities made up of many different elements but often analyzed only in the light of their finished aspect, while the complex structure and efforts behind them remain invisible. This book attempts to bring these aspects back to our attention.

Arianna Magnani, *Kore University of Enna*
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Accogliere e curare: Ospedali e culture delle nazioni nella Monarchia ispanica (secc. XVI–XVII). Elisa Novi Chavarria.

I libri di Viella 366. Rome: Viella, 2020. 210 pp. €25.

Over the last fifty years scholars have intensely studied medieval and early modern charity, healthcare, and social protection in the main urban centers of Southern Europe. Even the charitable institutions and confraternities of Naples and Palermo,

cities traditionally less investigated than the centers of Northern and Central Italy, have been the subject of recent in-depth studies, filling a serious historiographical gap. With all of the recent scholarship on Southern Europe, one might expect yet another study to add little to the historical dialogue, yet this book by Novi Chavarría contributes not one but at least two groundbreaking approaches and subjects.

The first original aspect lies in the choice of theme, reflected in the volume's subtitle: "Hospitals and Cultures of Nations in the Hispanic Monarchy." The focus of the investigation is the "constellation" (17) of hospitals, convents, and confraternities of "nations" that were established in the different dominions of the Hispanic monarchy between the 1650s and the first half of the seventeenth century. These welfare spaces provided medical care, legal assistance, and economic support to members of the "Nazione" who for various reasons found themselves in unfamiliar territory. In addition, these welfare institutions were places of socialization, of consolidation of devotions and cults, of building political, diplomatic and matrimonial alliances and, above all, of promoting the integration of the different communities within the Habsburg Empire (chapter 1).

The second original contribution of this volume lies in the author's comparative methodology approach. Novi Chavarría reads and uses a great variety of written sources (charters, diaries, letters, chronicles, notarial registers, and *relaciones de sucesos*), produced in both institutional and informal contexts, and across a wide geopolitical scope (Brussels, Genoa, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Rome). It is precisely this comparative reading of the sources (preserved in twenty European archives) that gives the author the opportunity to explore new perspectives of analysis that revolve around the concept not only of nations but also identities, borders, networks of power and relationships, diplomatic activities, circulation of information, and medical cultures. In the able hands of the author these sources speak of spaces and actors that current studies have not always seen in a dynamic dialogue: sick people and scenes of healing, sailors and refugees, nuns and clandestine travel, businessmen and diplomatic agents, medical plants and therapeutic practices, and the interweaving of languages, food, and knowledge.

In the central chapters of the book, the author shows that not only the poor but also soldiers were placed at the center of the welfare policies of the monarchy, through an initiative that, although reaching its maximum momentum and planning in the age of Philip II (1556–98), also characterized the preceding decades and would continue into the seventeenth century. The investment in healthcare and social assistance passed through the financing of those general urban hospitals that cared for Spanish soldiers (Genoa and Savona), through the foundation or reform of national hospitals (normally dedicated to San Giacomo) for Spaniards, generally the military (Alexandria, Asti, Licata, Messina, Milan, Naples, Palermo) or the Portuguese (Madrid, Rome, Valladolid) and Flemish (Madrid).

In the fifth chapter, the author focuses on the institution of the Italian Nation in Spain: the Hospital of Saint Peter of the Italians in Madrid, which also had a later

similar institution in Valladolid when Philip III moved the court there (1601–06). Founded in 1579, the Italian Nation was governed by a council of ten governors and, from 1627, six members, representing Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Rome, and Sicily. For bankers (who were mostly from Genoa), businessmen, nobles, bureaucrats, and clergy, the administration of St. Peter's hospital was an excellent way to develop a career in the Italian domains of the Crown, in Madrid, as well as the Roman Curia.

There is much to admire in this innovative study that examines a broad array of welfare spaces: hospitals, confraternities, monasteries, and convents. Rather than focus on one type of charitable institution, as most studies have done, Novi Chavarria looks at the many disparate histories and historiographies through one lens, and this comparative perspective reveals a common objective: the reception, care, and integration of the subjects of the Hispanic monarchy. In this sense, the book presents a groundbreaking approach to the history of charity and healthcare. In the last chapter, the author articulates these original perspectives and new areas of research, raising more questions than answers, proposing new stimulating fields of study rather than conclusions.

Salvatore Marino, *Universitat de Barcelona*
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Artisans, Objects, and Everyday Life in Renaissance Italy: The Material Culture of the Middling Class. Paula Hohti Erichsen.

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One of the most fascinating aspects of material culture history is its potential to bring the Italian Renaissance world alive through the evocative power of objects. Objects can tell stories of how people lived, interacted with each other, celebrated events, demonstrated their faith, and built their identities. For the most part, Renaissance material culture studies have focused their attention on the consumption practices of the wealthy elite, while the middling classes of artisans and shopkeepers were neglected. Their disregard was based on the simple assumption that members of the lower classes did not possess the financial means necessary to participate in the consumption of those luxury objects that defined the Renaissance world.

Hohti Erichsen's book challenges this assumption and proves with abundant evidence that the middling classes engaged in Renaissance culture not only as makers but also as consumers of luxury material objects. Her study of archival and visual evidence suggests that their world was complex and dynamic, and it brings the reader to a much deeper understanding of how ordinary men and women of Renaissance Italy lived, worked, and engaged with their culture. Most importantly, Hohti Erichsen argues