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Pezzola, Rita. *Et in arca posui. Scritture della confraternita della Beata Vergine Assunta di Morbegno. Diocesi di Como*. 1ˢᵗ ed., Morbegno: Confraternita della Beata Vergine Assunta della Parrocchia di San Giovanni Battista di Morbegno, 2003; 2ⁿᵈ ed, Morbegno: Ad Fontes Associazione Culturale, 2012. ISBN 978-88-97664-06-2. Also available in open-access at https://www.adfontes.it/biblioteca/scaffale/arca/arca.html and https://istitutolombardo.academia.edu/RitaPezzola.

In 1725, the notary, archivist, local historian, and *confratello* Carlo Giacinto Fontana (1699–1776), completed his inventory and reordering of the papers of the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin of the Assumption in Morbegno, a town in the Valtellina region, north-east of Milan and near the Italian border with Switzerland. He then placed the lot in a chest (*arca*) and locked it with three different keys, thereby underlining the value of those documents and preserving the confraternity's rich documentation for posterity. With the current volume, Rita Pezzola (herself an archivist and a *consorella*) publishes the inventory and many of the documents preserved in that *arca*, thus bringing them to the attention of, and easy access for, modern scholars interested in religious, social, and cultural history.

Situated on one of the most important cross-roads between Italy and northern Europe, the Valtellina has had a long and turbulent history from Antiquity to the Second World War. In the early modern period, it was a member of the "Three Leagues", a confederacy that eventually became (without the Valtellina, however) the modern Swiss canton of Grisons. A multilingual area (with German, Romansch, Lombard, and Italian), it was also home to religious diversity, until, in 1618–20, religious tensions, legal discrimination, a rebellion, and massacres drove Protestants away and firmly established Catholic hegemony over the valley.

The founding date of the confraternity of the Virgin of the Assumption is unknown, but a document from 1421 attests to the existence of an "ordo disciplinorum seu batutorum de Morbegno" active already in 1416. The confraternity's oral history attributes the sodality's founding to the preaching of St Bernardine of Siena (1380–1444). In its early years, the sodality consisted of about twenty laymen who met in the church of St Lawrence (erected in 1425). It received papal approval from Leo X in August 1521.

The Virgin of the Assumption was not the only game in town. Already in 1443 there was a confraternity of St Peter Martyr in the Dominican church of St Anthony the Abbot; along with its usual devotions, it also assisted that order in the fight against heresy (47). In the same century the Poor of Christ (*Poveri di Cristo*) were meeting in the church of St Martin. The confraternity of St Sebastian (founded in 1518) met in the church of St John the Baptist, and that of the Most Holy Sacrament (f. 1541) in the church of St Peter and Paul. After Trent, many new confraternities were founded in Morbegno: the Rosary, the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Carmel, St John, the School of Christian

Doctrine, and more. The explosion of lay religious organizations in the area was such that in his 1633 report to the curia, the local bishop, Lazzaro Carafino, declared that there were 652 confraternities active in his diocese, of which 255 were dedicated to the Most Holy Sacrament, 225 were *scuole di dottrina*, and 172 were confraternities of *disciplini* (49). Among this numerous array of sodalities, the Virgin of the Assumption is, however, the only confraternity in Morbegno to have retained its rich archive of documents spanning seven centuries, now rendered more accessible by Pezzola's own archival and editorial work.

The current volume is divided into in four general sections: an introduction to the confraternity, its history, documents, and activities (1–39), the inventory of the confraternity's archive (41–109), the transcription of the confraternity's parchments (111–202) and various diocesan regulations touching on confraternities (203–254), and an appendix (255–288). These are followed by a bibliography of cited works (289–313) and four indexes (persons, institutions, places, and images; 315–338).

As a resource for future research and researchers, Pezzola's work is an invaluable addition to the growing body of scholarly sources that document the extensive and active reality of pre- and post-Tridentine lay religious organizations throughout the Italian peninsula. What makes this volume especially important is not only the confraternity's uninterrupted and well preserved archive, or the town's crucial geographical and socio-political location at the cross-road between four different cultural areas (Lombard, Romansch, German, and French), but also the author/editor's high level of scholarly professionalism in bringing this inventory and a rich array of documents into print and circulation. The fact, then, that the book is available both in print and as an e-book in open-access makes this contribution especially helpful and accessible.

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