

**Renaissance and Reformation**  
**Renaissance et Réforme**



**Rihouet, Pascale. Art Moves: The Material Culture of Procession  
in Renaissance Perugia**

Minou Schraven

Volume 42, numéro 4, automne 2019

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533): Faith, Antiquity,  
and the Witch Hunt

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) : Foi, Antiquité et  
chasse aux sorcières

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1068615ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1068615ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Schraven, M. (2019). Compte rendu de [Rihouet, Pascale. Art Moves: The  
Material Culture of Procession in Renaissance Perugia]. *Renaissance and  
Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 42(4), 260–262.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1068615ar>

concerned with Jewel's career as well as his long-term impact. The volume includes an extremely helpful appendix detailing all of the publications of the Jewel–Harding controversy up to 1640. The choice to provide notes at the end of each chapter as well as a wide-ranging selected bibliography for the overall work makes it simple to follow the many references available. Historians, literary scholars, and researchers in religious studies will treasure this publication for how clearly it shows Jewel's connections to diverse thinkers of his time and the generations following, all concerned with articulating the truth of Christianity even when much was in dispute.

JANICE LIEDL

Laurentian University

**Rihouet, Pascale.**

***Art Moves: The Material Culture of Procession in Renaissance Perugia.***

London: Harvey Miller Publishers / Turnhout: Brepols, 2017. Pp. 321 + 93 colour ill. ISBN 978-1-909400-83-2 (hardcover) €110.

A valuable contribution to scholarship about late medieval and early modern festival culture, this book is about the way that processions, by definition highly ritualized and formalized events, shape communities and identities. Seen from a distance, processions may all seem alike, offering blueprints of a disciplined and harmonious civic and religious body in which each individual and institution has its assigned place and rank. But zooming in, one quickly discovers the bitter conflicts and disputes that were at their very core. Contemporary diary entries and accounts reveal the complex negotiating processes to solve issues of precedence among confraternities and religious communities, or the risk of indecorous fights over canopies and candles during their distribution at the end of heraldic funerals. In this light, each procession offers us a snapshot of the precarious balance of power at a given historical moment.

With its focus on the processions of a single city, Renaissance Perugia, Pascale Rihouet's book offers new and valuable insights about the variety of occasions for which a city dressed up to proceed "collegialiter" around town. This focus is all the more welcome given that Perugia remains largely uncharted

territory for non-Italian scholars, especially when compared to neighbouring Rome and Florence.

Structured chronologically from the late Middle Ages up to the early seventeenth century, the book invites us to look for similarities and differences in the spatial and social elements of processions, whether they are organized to honour protector saints (chapters 1 and 2), a heraldic funeral (chapter 3), or the festive entry of the pope (chapter 4), or to ban pestilence from the community (chapter 5).

Based on a wealth of archival sources and material objects, the book reveals the burden and expenses that this overflowing processional agenda have placed both on the organizers and on the participants. In a chapter on beeswax candles, we learn that in the sixteenth century Perugians were summoned to walk the *luminarie*, a procession in honour of a saint, as often as twenty-two times a year. During each of these processions, participants would carry tapers paid for by the commune. Besides pointing out the economic implications of the (re)distribution of vast amounts of beeswax, Rihouet keenly observes how the very act of walking with a burning candle helped to keep large groups of participants focused for hours on end, countering looming boredom and fatigue (96).

But most of all, this book stands out for its focus on the way that processions were key in producing relations between people and all kinds of processional paraphernalia, ranging from large and colourful banners and flags, canopies, statues, candles, and maces, to colourful costumes. Rihouet makes a convincing case for studying this amalgam of items in a comprehensive manner as exponents of material culture, explicitly bridging traditional art history with anthropology and social and religious history. In that sense, the book is a welcome addition to previous scholarship, such as Andreas Dehmer's excellent book (2004) on confraternal procession banners in central and northern Italy. Rihouet's book also inscribes itself in recent research about how itineraries of processions have been instrumental in establishing meaningful relations between urban sites.

Studying how processions in Perugia developed over a longer stretch of time, Rihouet is also able to demonstrate how they reflect dramatic changes in political realities. The rather autonomously operating commune found itself stripped from its independence by Pope Paul III Farnese (d. 1549), determined to centralize the papal states. As Perugia came to be ruled by aristocrats

appointed in Rome, the days when the council of ten priors had taken pride of place in Perugia's processions (and in the way they were organized) were relegated to the past. With post-Tridentine reforms in full swing across Italy, Perugia would face the impact of a reform-minded bishop, Napoleone Comitoli (d. 1624). Following Carlo Borromeo's (d. 1584) example in Milan and that of Gabriele Paleotti (d. 1597) in Bologna, Comitoli avidly promoted the cult of Perugia's first bishop, St. Ercolano, restoring the medieval church that had been destroyed to make way for the Rocca Paolina, symbol of Paul III's power over the city. Rihouet's final chapter analyzes the triple *translatio*-ceremony that this bishop organized on 17 May 1609, the largest processional tour de force Perugia has ever witnessed. Publicized on large canvases and in about ten festival booklets, the event attracted seventy thousand people for a day-long procession that transferred the relics of three local saints, bishop Ercolano (d. 540), Pietro Abbate (d. 1022), and Bevignate of Perugia (d. 1250 ca), from the cathedral to three local churches. Adapting the ritual format of the *translatio*-ceremonies, by then a staple in post-Tridentine festival culture, and working under the direction of the city's bishop, Perugia showed that its institutions were now part of a new post-Tridentine order.

Based on a dissertation about a similar topic, *Art Moves* is aimed at scholars and students working on late medieval and early modern festival and material culture. Containing an overview of extant Umbria procession banners and a rich bibliography, the book is beautifully produced with large colour reproductions and maps of early modern Perugia that visualize the itineraries of the various processions. The text contains some Frenchisms that a more rigorous editing could perhaps have weeded out. But otherwise, the book is a true achievement and invites comparisons between Perugia and other ritual cities, both in and outside of early modern Italy.

MINOU SCHRAVEN

Amsterdam University College