



Editor's Farewell

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Editor's Farewell

After more than thirty years at the helm of *Confraternitas*, the time has come for me to step aside and let a new generation steer the journal into the future. As I welcome Edwin Bezzina on deck as the journal's incoming editor, I look back at all the fellow mariners who have journeyed with me on this wonderful enterprise, assisting, advising, and encouraging me.

First among them, my friend and colleague William R. Bowen, who co-organized with me the conference "Ritual and Recreation in Renaissance Confraternities" (28–30 April 1989) that gave rise to the journal and then co-founded and co-edited *Confraternitas* with me for the journal's first six volumes (1990–1995). In the years that followed, Bill remained part of the *Confraternitas* crew in his role as Director of *Iter*, Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance, which publishes the electronic version of the journal, and then, in 2000–2005, as Director of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, which publishes the print copy of the journal. In all these positions, Bill was instrumental in the growth of the journal, and will continue to be so as *Confraternitas* sails into the brave new world of being a digital-only publication. I am confident in Bill's vision for the future and already pleased by the recent increase in library subscriptions thanks to *Iter's* hard work and its cooperation with *Érudit*, a Canadian platform for the distribution of e-journals (<https://www.erudit.org/en/>).

I am also grateful for the support I received over the years from the presidents of the Society for Confraternity Studies, which sponsors the journal – first Kathleen C. Falvey, and then Nicholas Terpstra. In her gentle manner, Kathleen supported and encouraged the founding of the journal; with his scholarly acumen and professional contacts, Nick helped to develop the journal and bring new and established scholars into its roster of contributors.

During all of my years as the journal's sole editor (1996 to the present) I was fortunate to have Dylan Reid at my side as Assistant Editor. His knowledge of confraternities in northern Europe, and especially in the French/Netherlandish area, dovetailed well with my own Italian side and provided much needed balance. Dylan also served as web master, setting up and managing the journal's and the Society's web pages housed at the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies.

My editorship and the journal itself have also benefited tremendously from the material and practical support we have received, since the very beginning, from the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies (now renamed the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies). For over thirty years its directors have welcomed *Confraternitas* among the Centre's publications and its staff have looked after the nitty-gritty of producing and mailing the print copies, not to mention managing the journal's finances and print subscriptions. Their work, and the generous support we have received from

Victoria University (in the University of Toronto), have made my life as editor that much easier and the journal's success that much more assured.

On the technical side, it was also a pleasure to work seamlessly with the staff at Iter, Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance (<http://www.Iter-Gateway.org>): Marian Cosic, Margaret English-Haskin, and Anabela Piersol. I am especially grateful to Anabela for her professionalism in typesetting the journal and her immense patience with all the last-minute revisions I sent her way.

And then there are all the scholars who have contributed articles and book reviews. Without them, there would be no journal. Over the years, some have come and gone, others have remained firmly there. They have all had an impact and they have all made their mark in this new field of Confraternity Studies.

Back in 1989/90, when the conference was held, the Society formed, and the journal launched, confraternities were the great unknown or, more correctly, the great ignored. That is no longer the case. Back then, articles on confraternities were difficult to place, publishers rarely considered studies on confraternities, and meetings of scholarly associations hardly ever included papers on the contributions of lay religious associations to their fields of interest. Now, instead, many journals welcome such articles, publishers are eager to accept monographs and collections dealing with confraternities, and many associations, especially the two largest ones in early modern studies – the Renaissance Society of America and the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference – regularly include papers and even sessions on confraternities in their annual meetings. The field and, dare I say, the discipline has grown and blossomed.

As I step aside to let Edwin take the helm of the journal, I look back with pleasure on the journey taken, with gratitude for the friends and colleagues who have come along, and with satisfaction for the growth in knowledge that this journey has produced.

KONRAD EISENBICHLER
EDITOR