MCCLURE, George W. — *The Culture of Profession in Late Renaissance Italy.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Pp. xv, 373.

George W. McClure's *The Culture of Profession in Late Renaissance Italy* is an engaging, wide-ranging, and subtle examination of literary discussions of profession and vocation between the mid-fifteenth and late sixteenth centuries. The Italian Renaissance witnessed major strides, and arguably the first and most important steps, towards recognizing the legitimacy and inherent worth of mundane secular professions. In one sense, the discourse of profession at the heart of McClure's study — the varieties of literature surrounding the myriad specializations and skills required for urban life to function — was simply one strand in a more ambitious and multi-faceted embracing of the virtues of the active life, celebrated by humanists and the self-governing elite of the city-states, as against the medieval monastic ideals of withdrawal and contemplation. The role of the humanists in deploying the idea of "vocation", with all the noble valences of its medieval spiritual application, to the formerly uncelebrated professions of civic life is relatively well known, but McClure's study reveals that the elite discourse of profession is merely the tip of the iceberg.

For McClure, the elite debate about profession and vocation is a point of departure into popular manifestations of this genre that have received considerably less scholarly attention; though, as McClure's study clearly demonstrates, the debate about profession seems only to have gotten richer and more complex as it descended down the social ladder. Through his discussion of the popular commentary on profession, McClure illuminates broader social and intellectual trends that reveal the displacement of high culture by low, such as the appropriation of new literary genres by the vernacular and the increasing status of the mechanical arts. His analysis overall makes a compelling argument for the democratization of sixteenth-century culture more broadly conceived, a notable argument given the widespread perception of the sixteenth century as an era of aristocratic entrenchment and ascendant court culture.

Chapter 1 ("The Humanist and Theological Backgrounds") surveys secular and religious high culture's discussions of vocational choice, occupational status, and professional practice. Here Petrarch's confessional autobiographical meditations played a critical role, transforming the debate from "purely academic squabbles" (p. 4) — largely the vying for supremacy among medicine, law, and theology — into a broader question of the individual's responsibility to dedicate life to the right pursuits. Petrarch appears in his standard image as a watershed figure, one foot in the Middle Ages and the other in the Renaissance. He raised the question of professional vocation in a fundamental and broad way, but ultimately remained true to the older contemplative ideal. One might raise the possibility, though, that the passage McClure quotes (p. 203) from the *De vita solitaria*, in which Petrarch urges the wise to abandon the city, might be more revealing of Petrarch's fascination with, rather than disdain for, the urban life, having deconstructed it with remarkable perspicacity into its 31 constituent professions.

Chapter 2 ("Professions at Play: Jokes, *Carnevale* Songs, and Parlour Games") shifts the focus to what McClure calls "middlebrow culture" (p. 27), a new market and readership caused by the convergence of the spread of printing and the vernacu-

lar as a legitimate literary medium. McClure moves confidently through a wide variety of sources, demonstrating convincingly the degree to which major themes of professional identity, status, and experience permeated literate popular culture.

In Chapters 3 ("Shuffling the Deck: Tomaso Garzoni's *Universal Piazza of All the Professions of the World*") and 4 ("Learned Cooks and Culinary Lawyers: High, Middle, and Low Profession in the *Universal Piazza*"), McClure turns to his central protagonist, Tomaso Garzoni, and Garzoni's 1,000-page *magnum opus*, a comprehensive encyclopedia and commentary on the definition, nature, and significance of the professions. An erudite monk with an exceptionally sensitive ear and fascination for street culture, Garzoni in his sprawling compendium injected the high and middlebrow debates on profession with a substantial lowbrow cultural component. Garzoni was as willing to subvert the social hierarchy as to reinforce it, McClure demonstrates in a sensitive and learned contextualization of the *Universal Piazza*'s creative achievements within the tropes and conventions of comic and festive culture.

Chapter 5 ("Professions on Display: Dress and Ritual in Late Sixteenth-Century Venice") adds a broader comparative dimension, considering Garzoni's arguments in light of parallel developments in Venetian print and ritual culture. McClure looks in particular at the efflorescence of literature devoted to the conventions surrounding public dress, both in its regulation and ritual underpinnings, and advances two arguments. First, Venetian discussions of dress and ritual further reveal the ways in which public life and its representation were frequently expressed in terms of professional identity and symbolism. Secondly, representations of public life were no longer confined to elite military, political, and religious professions, but underwent a broad social expansion, including shopkeepers, servants, porters, gondoliers, and prostitutes, a variation on a larger theme of cultural democratization central to McClure's study.

Chapter 6 ("The Arts and the 'Art of Dying' in Venice: Vocation in a Renaissance Death Book") analyses Fabio Glissenti's manual on the art of living and dying well, the most substantial and sustained treatise on a subject to which many Renaissance treatises were devoted. It reveals not only the clear influence of Garzoni's *Universal Piazza*, McClure suggests, but also the numerous ways in which habits and modes of thinking and expression had become permeated with the rhetoric and conceptual vocabulary of professionalization. In Glissenti's treatise in particular, and in the *ars moriendi* tradition more generally, literature on spiritual preparation for the afterlife placed considerable emphasis on performance, practice, and preparation, a perspective advocated with parallels from the mechanical professions that also required the repetition of performance and practice.

Well-written, engaging, and lucid, McClure's study of the culture of profession directs our attention to a little-studied but clearly rewarding area of analysis. His study successfully bridges high, middle, and low culture, demonstrating the close and detailed interactions among the three, an achievement all too rare in Renaissance historiography. The intelligent readings of major and minor Renaissance texts make his study relevant for all scholars working on the cultural history of Renaissance — elite, popular, and everything in between. The larger argument about the democratization of cultural life more generally and McClure's demonstration of the process by

which high culture was levelled should also make the study especially interesting to scholars of European early modern popular culture.

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MCDUFFEE, Michael B. — *Small-Town Protestantism in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Living Lost Faith*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003. Pp. 151.

Centring his study on the small town of Butzbach in the Oberhesse region of Hesse-Darmstadt between 1830 and 1872, Michael McDuffee traces the growing de-Christianization of the municipality, emphasizing the narrowing of Christian teaching to children, the loss of catechetical instruction, the decline of meaning in the rite of confirmation, and "the changing Protestant mind" of the village generally. Of the extensive town and church archives, McDuffee owes much to the visitation preparation records of three pastors from the period: Steinberger, Englebach, and Klingelhöffer.

McDuffee makes no clear distinction between secularization and de-Christianization and in his general introduction links both with the rise of Deism and the French *philosophes* and materialists, among others. A very brief introduction to the town of Butzbach, its character and setting, is followed by a longer chapter focused on the way in which Butzbach Lutheranism attended primarily to socializing the children and thus "transform[ed] Christianity into a juvenile-based religion" (p. 16), which offered little to post-pubescent adults and was concerned primarily with using Christian principles as a means to moral duty. Some brief background to the differing views between naturalists and supernaturalists in the post-Kantian world is offered, as are brief reflections on the rise of an interest in religious "feeling" after Schleiermacher. In all, however, Christian teaching, we are told, reflects fewer and fewer specifically theological factors, and "emotional investment" in the Christian heritage is increasingly that of "the young, women, the aged and ministers" (p. 23).

The largest section of the study concerns the de-Christianization of clergy and laity, emphasizing the "civil-based" ethic of the town. As fitting the growing professionalization of clergy at the time, the Butzbach pastors appear to have been primarily involved with the administration of local charitable funds and preparing for superintendary visitations, spending relatively little time on biblical and other theological study. According to McDuffee, the cultural Protestantism so prevalent in the town did, however, result in a sharp division between the "sacred and profane", although it is not made clear exactly how this occurred. Struggles with catechetical and confirmation instruction are then outlined as the town shifted from the use of Snell's *Catechism* (after 1842) to the "less liberal" Baden Union Catechism, a shift understood by McDuffee as that from a Kantian to the Schleiermachian world view. It seems as if the *Erweckungsbewegung* had little impact in the town.

An interesting volume on the whole and useful for students of the Western "social imaginary", the book unfortunately falls between good social history and closely argued intellectual history. The author's strength appears to be in the former, but he