

The World of Renaissance Italy: A Daily Life Encyclopedia. By Joseph P. Byrne. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2017. 2 vols. Acid-free \$198 (ISBN 978-1-4408-2959-8). E-book available (978-1-4408-2960-4), call for pricing.

This latest two-volume set from Greenwood's Daily Life Encyclopedia series provides an overview of everyday life and society in Italy during the Renaissance period. After the preface, a brief introductory essay, and chronology, volume 1 contains thematic sections spanning "Arts" to "Food and Drink." The second volume picks up at "Housing and Community" and concludes with "Science and Technology." Sections begin with a broad overview ("Introduction") and are then broken down into alphabetical sub-topical entries offering more nuanced explorations of each. The section "Family and Gender," for example, contains entries such as "Childhood," "Espousal and Wedding," "Old Age," and "Siblings." Further readings suggestions, most of which are books, accompany each entry.

Toward the end of volume 2, about forty pages are given to "Primary Documents." These include a variety of primary-source materials and are organized under the same section headings as the main entries (e.g., "Recreational and Social Customs," "Science and Technology," and so on). Each is set up with a brief paragraph providing context and author or creator info where relevant. Lastly, the appendix contains a chronological list of popes and other European

rulers (1350–1600), and the "General Bibliography" offers a more complete list of related works, some of which are also included in the aforementioned "Further Readings."

Not surprisingly, there are several significant broader-scope reference works on the Renaissance, such as *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (Scribner's, 1999), *The Hutchinson Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (Helicon Publishing, 2005), and *The Renaissance: An Encyclopedia for Students* (Scribner's, 2004), as well as numerous titles dealing with more specific aspects of this period (e.g., art, science, literature). *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance: A Sourcebook* (University of Toronto Press, 2011) might be the closest counterpart to this set; however, it does not get down to the "everyday" level of society.

This set (and other Daily Life Encyclopedias) helps fill a niche of the reference landscape by exploring the commonplace societal features of a specific time and location in history. In the preface, Byrne writes that it is written "on a level appropriate to an entry-level student of the era" (xv), and overall, that is accurate. It would make for a helpful early stop in the topic investigation process for any student researching the Renaissance for the first time. With students often being required to include primary sources into their work, the documents included here would be great for high school or undergraduate history classes.—*Todd J. Wiebe, Head of Research and Instruction, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*