

# Costruire Cattedrali



For centuries, the construction of Milan's cathedral was attributed to the Prince Gian Galeazzo Visconti. A new, detailed analysis of unedited medieval documents turns this classic interpretation upside down. The author demonstrates how the almost totality of the incomes for the constructions came not from the Prince, but from the Milanese people. The majority of these donations were thousands of small offerings from poor people – an egg, a piece of cheese, a little coin. From the long lists of donations, stories of moving charity come out: the prostitute Marta who, converted, abandoned the brothel, Marco, the rich merchant who bequeathed everything and then lived as a poor man until his death, the commander Alessio, only to name a few. On the background of these lives, late fourteenth-century socio-political events are sketched, revealing how the construction of Milan's cathedral became a place of freedom and autonomy for the Milanese people under the despotic Viscontean dukedom.

## Milano. Un Popolo e il suo Duomo



Who built Milan's cathedral? What resources financed such an ambitious construction, started in 1386 and concluded definitively only in the 20th century? Through the study of precious unedited documents (especially the Registers of Donations), Martina Saltamacchia analyzes the donors who contributed to the financing of the cathedral. Surprisingly, the numerical data reveal that the vast majority of the revenue came in the form of small offerings, individually of negligible value but collectively sufficient to build what was in its time the largest cathedral in the world. From the lists of donations, incredible stories of simple men and women peer out – people often in situations of economic or social distress - inspired by faith to moving acts of charity. The book gives justice to the real "builders" of the cathedral, recounting their small acts, mostly anonymous but sometimes precisely identifiable. A series of historical images of the cathedral enrich the text, depicting the construction's phases and giving witness to the active participation of the people over many centuries to this majestic work.