

Romero Samper, Milagrosa. *Las cofradías en el reformismo de Carlos III*. Madrid: Fragua, 1991. 146 pp.

In her prologue, Romero Samper explains how Spanish confraternities provided a means for individual members of society to belong to a larger corporative group approved by the higher authority of church or state. In eighteenth-century Spain, however, the modern state was growing in power and, regardless of the religious orthodoxy of any Spanish monarch, royalism often came into conflict with the Catholic church. The new secularism, influenced by French Jansenism, produced a political concept of the religious, which in turn led the educated leaders of the country to believe that confraternities were an obstacle to progress. They believed that guilds impeded industrial development and that the expenses of the brotherhoods took capital away from the national economy. After hearing many critiques of confraternities, King Charles III passed a royal resolution on 9 July 1783 to reform these institutions. The reform began as a way of reaffirming national unity and, although it illustrated the conflict between church and state, the church was generally in agreement with the new measures censuring excess in the brotherhoods.

Romero Samper's main argument, therefore, is that the reform of confraternities was part of a wider reformist project enacted by the Spanish government, a project with economic, social, political, cultural, and religious ramifications.

Romero Samper's work reviews studies to date on Spanish confraternities, brotherhoods, and congregations. She then divides her argument into two sections, the first on brotherhoods within the general politics of reform, the second on learned rulers' opposition to confraternities and brotherhoods. Each section discusses economic, political, sociocultural, and religious aspects of the issue. Romero Samper then closes with an epilogue and a list of ten general conclusions. Her citation of manuscript sources and her lengthy bibliography indicate that her research is wide ranging and thorough. Although slim, this volume will certainly be of interest to specialists of the Spanish enlightenment and of Spanish confraternities in general.

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Sebregondi, Ludovica. *Santa Croce sotterranea: trasformazioni e restauri*. Florence: Città di Vita, 1997. 70 pp., illustrations.

This is a slim but very thought-provoking volume on the different functions to which the underground spaces of the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence were put over the course of several centuries. Now empty, except for a small area housing a permanent exhibition of the woodcuts of the artist Pietro Parigi (1892–1990), the subterranean space of Santa Croce had previously been used by such disparate groups as early-modern confraternities and the twentieth-century Italian fascist movement. In this work, dott. Sebregondi, with her customary solid foundation in Florentine archival sources, recounts the history and gives physical descriptions of eight such subterranean areas in the basilica.