

disappearance of many of its historical buildings in the wake of the urban renewal projects carried out during the course of this century; he also explains that the term *sestiere* derives from Genoa's reorganization in the 1630s into six main districts. Paolocci, the exhibit organizer and editor of the catalogue, closes the volume with an account of the career of Paolo Gerolamo Franzoni, the Genoese abbot and educational reformer who in 1749 founded the first public library in Genoa; the Franzoniana, presently under the direction of Paolocci himself, continues to serve the city as a research centre and a facility for public exhibits.

Historians of confraternities will be interested in Fausta Franchini Guelfi's essay on Portoria's *casacce* (section 7). An institution whose roots can be traced back to the thirteenth century, the *casaccia* was an association of a number of lay confraternities that joined together to build and administer a common oratory, separate from the churches or convents where the individual confraternities had been born. The *casacce* attained their peak membership in the Settecento, when eleven of the twenty-one operating in Genoa were located in Portoria; each "house" consisted of between four and six confraternities, which were also called *compagnie* and were invariably affiliated to particular guilds. These institutions of popular devotion drew men and women from all social strata except aristocrats, who were limited to the role of patrons. As a result of their financial autonomy and the intense competition between them, the *casacce* became important supporters of local craftsmen and artists, and through their commissions contributed significantly to Genoa's rich cultural patrimony. Franchini Guelfi describes in detail the confraternal procession held annually on Holy Thursday, the key event in the life of the *casacce*; the catalogue entries describe several objects used in this procession, the most impressive being a wooden sculpture depicting the stigmatization of Saint Francis, carved in 1708-9 by Anton Maria Maragliano for the *casaccia* of San Francesco in Piccapietra.

The volume contains superb illustrations, several in colour, and an excellent bibliography. It provides a valuable introduction to the history of confraternities in Genoa, and to the role they played in the social and cultural life of the city.

Antonio Ricci

Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies

University of Toronto

*Santa Croce nel solco della storia*. Ed. Massimiliano G. Rosito. Firenze: Edizioni Città di Vita, 1996. 357 pp.

In the introduction to this study of the Franciscan church of Santa Croce in Florence, Massimiliano Rosito notes that although the art and architecture of the church have been studied extensively by scholars, the history of the development of the church itself as an institution and the various devotional groups which arose from within it has been neglected over the past century and a half (p. 11). The volume he presents, therefore, is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the institutional history of Santa Croce, and the second examining its art and architecture.

The articles which will primarily interest scholars of confraternities are found in the first section. Ippolita Morgese has studied the musical tradition of the church,

including that of the *laudesi* confraternities which made the church their base. She argues that with the development of *laudesi* confraternities the church enjoyed a period of heightened artistic and cultural activity (p. 117). She examines the various confraternities which met at Santa Croce, including La Compagnia della Vergine Maria delle Laudi and the confraternity of St. Bonaventure (p. 119). The article includes a transcription of the first chapter of the statutes (1495) of the Company of the Virgin, and some chapters from the statutes of St. Bonaventure (a manuscript found in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence), giving details of requirements for membership and norms for banquets, etc. (p. 121/122). Morgese notes that although the ideal was that confraternity members would sing the lauds themselves, from about 1365 on they seem to have relied more and more frequently on professional singers (p. 124).

Like Morgese, Arnaldo D'Addario provides some information about specific confraternities which met in Santa Croce. His article on the confraternities of Santa Croce and their social background, "Le Confraternite di Santa Croce nel Tessuto della Città", seeks to demonstrate that confraternities helped Florentines move beyond daily concerns to focus on a higher set of principles. He suggests that charitable activity through these confraternities was the

first and most important moral duty which influenced citizens to move beyond the restrictions of clans, guilds, political associations, inviting them to discover the values of a life lived in a more meaningful community... (p. 137, reviewer's translation)

D'Addario emphasizes the importance of the study of the statutes of these organizations, as they demonstrate the extent of the activity of laypeople in the establishment of the confraternities and related charitable institutions such as hospitals (p. 138/139). He records the names of several confraternities which were tied to the church between the 13th and 16th centuries, and gives information about their establishment and their activities.

Finally, Ludovica Sebreghondi's article on the 1785 suppression of the confraternities of Santa Croce, "Il Calvario delle Soppressioni", describes the dispersal of the works of art belonging to these groups which occurred as a result of the suppression, and the "devastating" effects of their loss by the church.

Each article is furnished with an annotated bibliography providing suggestions for further reading, including archival information and references to 18th and 19th century texts on the history of the church.

As historians of confraternities seek to establish outside contexts—either social or ecclesiastical—for the activities of the institutions they study, they will turn more frequently to volumes such as this one, which provides a useful introduction to a specific institution and the confraternities which developed within it.

Roisin Cossar  
University of Toronto