

Neri church, Santa Maria della Croce al Tempio, and then continue to offer comfort until he reached the scaffold. Fineschi has meticulously examined the documents of the confraternity of Neri and gives a clear account of its significant and varied role in public execution in Florence.

Maps and illustrations enrich this work considerably, most notably the map illustrating the procession of the condemned through Florence to the gallows outside the city walls (p. 45). There is also a comprehensive bibliography of both printed and manuscript sources, all of which reflect the author's exhaustive research in Florentine archives and libraries.

Fineschi has written an engaging and well-researched book which is of interest to criminologists and social historians as well as to confraternity and Renaissance scholars. The only weakness perhaps is the relatively minimal comparison the author makes between Florence and other major contemporary European urban centres; in spite of this mild criticism, Fineschi has made a significant and thoughtful contribution to Florentine social and confraternity history.

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*Genova: il sestiere di Portoria. Una storia della città.* Exhibition catalogue. Biblioteca Franzoniana, 27 Nov. – 19 Dec. 1996. Genova: Comune di Genova / Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1996. 94 pp.

This volume was originally published as the catalogue to an historical exhibit devoted to the district of Portoria in Genoa. From late antiquity until the urban redevelopment of this century, Portoria was the site of a rich popular culture nurtured by the craftsmen and merchants that flourished in the area. The fifty entries included in the catalogue describe frescoes, sculptures, oil paintings, reliquaries, engravings, woodcuts, and a variety of devotional and liturgical objects dating from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. These entries are grouped thematically into nine sections, each prefaced by an introductory essay.

Piera Melli's essay on the archaeological finds made in the area in the last 30 years (section 1) provides a vivid historical overview of the district from the fifth century BC, when Genoa was already a commercial emporium and an important sea-port, to the sixteenth century. Cassiano da Langasco relates the history of two important local institutions, the civic hospital of Santa Maria di Misericordia di Pammatone, founded in 1423 (section 2), and the Church of the Santissima Annunziata, which holds the shrine of Saint Caterina Fieschi Adorno (d. 1510), a Genoese mystic (section 5). The variegated activity of craftsmen in the quarter, in particular weavers and dyers, is discussed in section 3 by Francesca Fabbri, and in section 4, P. G. Piana examines the military presence in Portoria from the Renaissance to the Risorgimento. Piero Gambacciani and Claudio Paolucci trace the architectural vicissitudes of the archiepiscopal seminary, founded in 1574 and currently the site of the Biblioteca Franzoniana (section 6). In section 8 Ennio Poleggi gives a detailed topographical description of Portoria since the Renaissance and describes the gradual

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.

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*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,