

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.

The first sections of her volume recount the use to which Santa Croce was put by Italian fascists in the 1930s. There is a fascinating description of the planning, building, and later dismantling of the *Sacrario dei Caduti* ("Chapel of the Fallen") and two other chapels completed in the late 1930s to honour men who had died for the fascist regime. The following chapter describes the *Famedio*, a monument to Florentine soldiers in World War I erected under the sacristy, in a large space previously used by the Confraternity of San Francesco del Martello as its oratory.

Although *Santa Croce Sotterranea* is perhaps of primary interest to architectural historians or to historians of the Italian fascist movement, the work is also of interest to confraternity scholars because of dott. Sebreghondi's meticulously-detailed history of these underground spaces. Links between various Florentine confraternities and the Franciscan basilica of Santa Croce were first forged in the thirteenth century and remained strong until the suppression of confraternities in 1785. Sebreghondi often refers in her text to the many lay religious associations that used these spaces in Santa Croce during the course of five or more centuries. Particular attention is paid to the history of the spaces which were previously used as the oratories of the Compagnia della Natività della Vergine detta de' Librai (p. 44–47), the Confraternity "della Maddalena" (51–55), and the Confraternity "del Bernardino" (56–60). The volume would thus interest confraternity scholars if only for the information it offers on these three groups.

In this volume, a special publication of the Franciscan journal *Città di Vita*, Sebreghondi has also included an impressive array of photographs and illustrations that demonstrate quite well the various stages of renovation and alteration undergone by the religious spaces she discusses. Most helpful is the diagram on page 19 showing the physical layout of the underground areas of Santa Croce and the use of the various underground areas over the course of time.

Sebreghondi has done Florentine scholars a superb service with her *Santa Croce Sotterranea*. Anyone interested in the more distant or very recent history of the city will find her latest effort absorbing.

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Winston-Allen, Anne. *Stories of the Rose. The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages*. University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997. xiv, 210 pp., ill.

This study is an engaging scholarly treatment of a complex issue. As the author points out, "the rosary is more than a prayer in the conventional sense. It is also a literary text, a ritual and social practice, as well as an object of religious art" (p. xii). This book endeavors to explore the sources and practices surrounding devotion to the rosary in the Middle Ages, treating mainly the Latin literature surrounding its development, but considering also its vernacular manifestations.

Confraternity scholars will find much of interest in this work. Winston-Allen considers the emotive, inner experience of rosary devotion along with its social and