

tation. This is followed by the same author, tracing the Oratory's travails from its suppression in 1888 through to the present (including a tragic period in the 1930s as a street-cleaners' depot).

The remaining essays are of a technical nature: Rita Randolfi, "Gli interventi di restauro effettuati nell'Oratorio del Gonfalone nei secoli XVII-XIX dai documenti dell'Arciconfraternita"; Anna Maria Brignardello, Pietro Moioli and Claudio Seccaroni, "Osservazioni sulla tecnica di esecuzione del ciclo dell'Oratorio del Gonfalone: Giornate, incisioni e pigmenti"; Brignardello, "Il restauro degli affreschi"; and finally, Elisabetta Zatti, "Il restauro della *Crocifissione* di Pietro Roviale Spagnolo," an important articles which resolves the issue of the foreground figures, already raised by Wisch in 2000, revealing that they are a later addition by another hand. A selection of documents and a bibliography conclude the volume.

Much research remains to be done on the way in which the Gonfalone Confraternity related to the intimate space of its Oratory, and to the other churches, chapels and spaces for which it was responsible both inside and outside the walls of Rome. In the meantime, this splendid volume, with its colour reproductions and its scholarly essays, is an indispensable – and highly desirable – contribution to our understanding of an extraordinary confraternal commission.

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Petite Anthologie Palinodique (1485–1550), ed. Denis Hüe, Textes de la Renaissance 59 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002). 458 pp.

In the fifteenth century, north-western France witnessed the development of a kind of confraternity, usually devoted to some aspect of the Virgin Mary, that sponsored annual poetry contests known as *Puys*. These contests attracted dozens of local poets vying to claim prizes for the best poems in praise of the confraternity's patroness. Related to the Chambers of Rhetoric movement developing just over the border in the Low Countries, these confraternities were usually among the most prestigious in their city.

While the history and poetry of these confraternities has been studied sporadically over the years, until now there has been no edited, easily accessible volume that brought together a significant body of this poetry. To some extent, this absence has been understandable, because as a rule Puy poetry (which was often called "palinodic") is of mediocre quality, written by provincial poets on fixed subjects and in very standardized verse forms. Yet in its very mediocrity, this poetry provides a valuable resource for cultural and religious history. These verses reflect the rarely-seen and hard to reach tastes and values of an important part of the French cultural audience – literate, middling provincials. At the same

time, this verse provides a useful insight into the devotional expression of laymen, in their own voice. In terms of confraternity studies, this verse is the fruit of a significant form of confraternal patronage, and so provides material that contributes to revealing the impact of confraternal activity on French cultural and religious life. Without an edition of this work, however, this material has been difficult to access, dispersed in a wide range of manuscript collections in Paris and elsewhere containing an undifferentiated mass of fairly repetitive poetry, whose authors and dates are often not identified, and which is often difficult to read (even in this edition, there are a few places where the handwriting has defeated the editor).

Denis Hüe has therefore provided scholars of literature, religion, culture and confraternities with a huge service in collecting together over a hundred pieces of palinodic poetry from the Puy of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of Rouen (out of a total of about two thousand surviving puy poems [p. 11]). Probably the most famous of the Puys, the Rouen contest attracted prominent poets of the time such as André de la Vigne and Jean Marot (who appeared with his soon-to-be famous son Clément). It also enjoys the largest remaining store of archival material and identifiable poetry collections of any Puy. Ranging over the period of the confraternity's greatest influence, from its foundation in 1486 to around 1550, the poems have been drawn from the five surviving yearly registers of poems and gleaned from other miscellaneous collections. A very useful discussion of all of these manuscripts appears at the end of the anthology. The vast majority of the poems in the anthology are in the *chant royal* format, a fairly long poem that was considered the most prestigious, but there are also a few examples of the shorter verse forms used by the Puy, *ballades* and *rondeaux*. The book is part of an ongoing project which also includes a literary study and a collection of essays on puy poetry, so its introduction is brief and not especially illuminating.

Since the subject and form of poetry were fixed, Rouen's Puy poets differentiated their poems and gave them interest through the use of varied themes and ingenious allegories. Hüe has cleverly taken advantage of this habit to divide the poems thematically, according to the kind of allegory used by the poet (natural world, biblical, trades, etc). This thematic division is an effective way of breaking up the monotony of the format. It also assists with one of the potential uses of these poems – providing insight into specific aspects of sixteenth century life and thought. Those poems relating to Rouen are particularly rich in potential. The section of poems about the Puy itself provides insight into the workings of the contest and reveals a real *esprit de corps* among the poets. The section of poems that discuss the cloth trade, central to Rouen's economy, includes a poem that reveals the importance of trade in brazil wood with the New World (p. 296), and others which describe the cloth-making process in familiar detail (pp. 294, 309) – in all cases, of course, using this imagery as an allegory for the immaculate

nature of the Virgin Mary. In addition to these traditional Puy poems, Hüe adds a section of related poetry at the end, including a selection of the slightly salacious poems from the *puy d'amour* [puy of love], the comic poetry contest held at the post-contest banquet in 1511, and also an utterly charming poem in praise of Rouen, extracted from a little-known printed book of the period (p. 367).

The poems are accompanied by an editorial apparatus indicating the manuscripts in which they appear, variations between versions, their date, and notes explaining references and difficult vocabulary. Unfortunately, the unevenness of the notes suggests that the editor lost interest in the project at some point, or that the volume was pushed into print before the editorial process was complete. While some poems are annotated in impressive detail, others are almost completely lacking in notes, although they could just as easily benefit from them. The most obvious instance is the poem where the date of composition (1517) is explicitly stated in the last stanzas of the poem, but the notes say that the date is “uncertain” (328). The notes would also have benefitted from more consultation with scholars familiar with Rouen’s history. For instance, in one poem rich in Rouen references, the poet imagines “Faisant sonner part tout George d’Amboyse” (“making Georges d’Amboise ring everywhere”) [p. 309]. The editor supposes the reference refers to the then Archbishop of Rouen, Cardinal George II d’Amboise, whereas in fact the reference is to the great bell of Rouen cathedral named after the cardinal’s uncle of the same name, an earlier archbishop.

Such flaws in details are regrettable, since there is not likely to be another edition of these works for many years, but they do not detract significantly from what is, overall, a very useful contribution to scholarship. Hüe has brought to light an entire school of poetry that was popular and influential in its heyday, but has been greatly neglected ever since. The anthology highlights the important role of confraternities in early sixteenth-century French literature, and makes this poetry far more accessible to confraternity scholars who are interested in this patronage role, or in the spiritual expression it engendered. Finally, the anthology provides charming vignettes of French provincial life and literary invention which, if taken in small doses, will delight the curious scholar.

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