

to know his meant-to-be mentor Ferruccio Lupis, who also dedicated a monograph to him in 1922. Scardino also comments upon some of the artist's paintings and family pictures. Though limited in space, this chapter offers us an engaging biography which sets this bohemian artist in both a local and a cosmopolitan scene.

Not only is this book able to relate the history of a small village in a stimulating way, but, whenever possible, it also connects it with other Italian cities; this emphasizes the necessity of remembering one's own origins in order to better comprehend and appreciate our present world, characterized by variegated cultures, costumes, languages and local identities, which, more than ever before, are strictly intertwined.

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*La Veneranda Compagnia di Misericordia dal Medioevo al terzo millennio*, ed. Claudio Paolocci. Genova: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 2003. Special issue of *Quaderni franzoniani*, 14.2 (July–Dec. 2001). 223 pp., illustrations. ISSN 1594–7505 [Contains: Francesca Fabbri “L'opera della Compagnia di Misericordia dal 1464 ad oggi” pp. 7–176; Fausta Franchini Guelfi “Dalla Compagnia di Misericordia alla Compagnia della morte di S. Donato; l'arredo liturgico e le immagini di devozione nella storia del patrimonio artistico” pp. 177–202; Giovanni B. Varnier “Dalla carità nascosta al volontariato; la Veneranda Compagnia di Misericordia di Genova nel XIX secolo” pp. 203–214; Nicla Buonasorte “La Compagnia di Misericordia nel Novecento” pp. 215–223.]

The four contributors of this volume trace the activities of the Compagnia di Misericordia in Genoa from its inception in the fifteenth century to today. Francesca Fabbri provides the majority of the work with an overview of the history of the confraternity and eleven appendices (pp. 38–176). Not only was the fifteenth century a “century of confraternities,” but also one of confraternities that arose to address specific social concerns. She cites the *Conservatorio di San Giuseppe per gli organi*, *Ridotto per l'Ospedale degli Incurabili*, and *Mandillette per l'aiuto domiciliare agli infermi* as examples. Founded in 1464, the Compagnia di Misericordia provided comfort for those condemned to death, as well as to those sentenced before the court and imprisoned.

The statutes from its origin to 1797 hold similar tenets for its members, instructing them in all matters pertaining to the confraternity. While there were some modifications, like the mitigated role of the prior in the sixteenth century, real change would not occur until the nineteenth century. Fabbri quotes liberally from these statutes while discussing the emendations throughout the first three centuries.

As is the case with early institutions, many documents have been preserved not in their original form, but in a later copy. One of the oldest documents from 1492, the *Confortatorio*, provides instructions that appear to facilitate confession in a judicial setting. It also lays out the ritual of two members of the confraternity to comfort those behind the bars of the *Malapaga*, the prison. The confraternity, in theory, saw that all prisoners had the necessities of life—food and coverings; it also provided for their spiritual needs. Fabbri reminds the reader that while the confraternity shared common characteristics with most comforting confraternities in northern Italy, and particularly with the archconfraternity in Rome, it was also formed in response to a particular need of the community. Furthermore, since the confraternity was an organization of individuals, it can also be used to describe more than just the confraternity.

The appendices offer the characteristics of the texts that Fabbri used as well as a transcription of nine of the eleven sources. One had already been published by E. Spina in 1991 in *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*; the other exists in such a decrepit state that consultation must be minimal and is not very revealing. While most appendices contain the various rules for the confraternity, Fabbri also includes a letter from the archbishop of Genoa and another incomplete letter from the sixteenth century; the privileges given by Pope Pius V and Clement VIII, and the text of the fusion of the confraternity with that of the *Arciconfraternita della Morte e Sepoltura di Cristo* that took place at the end of the nineteenth century.

Fausta Franchini Guelfi's contribution discusses the confraternity's possessions. In 1798, when the Republic of Genoa purchased some of the confraternity's furnishings, the members commissioned an inventory of the confraternity's wealth. The inventory has been transcribed in a footnote. Guelfi publishes an image of one of the paintings mentioned, though not by name, in the inventory—a simple and moving severed head of John the Baptist on a plate. The remaining twenty-two figures illustrate the liturgical furnishings, paintings, and frescos that once adorned the oratory. Guelfi discusses their probable origins and functions in the confraternity. The article finishes with an appendix containing a description of a painting by Giovanni Andrea Carlone.

The last two contributors, Giovanni Varnier and Nicla Buonasorte, briefly describe changes of the confraternity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the confraternity's relation both to the Genoese community and to the Catholic world.

This volume proves useful for many discussions in the field of confraternities: the longevity of charitable institutions, piety and society, the interaction with other confraternities and churches, as well as art and decoration. While this *Compagnia* is specific to Genoa, confraternities that offered comfort were not. Comparing different comforting confraternities would illuminate the various foci of individual communities, providing further insight into the spiritual

and charitable world of the laity. Works such as this one, that offer a tremendous amount of transcribed text, help pave the way to such comparative work.

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