

confraternities to provide their members with a blueprint for private devotional practice. She notes that special emphasis was placed upon frequent communion with God via prayer.

Somewhat different in focus is Georges Viard's article "Bureaux des pauvres et confréries de charité en Champagne méridionale", offering an intriguing glimpse into the complex relationship between municipal charity organizations and charitable confraternities in Champagne between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The two at times conflicted and at times co-operated in their endeavours to manage poverty in their region. Like Venard and Froeschlé-Chopard, Viard clearly sees a marked emphasis on the importance of lay piety, particularly in the sphere of charity as an extension of private as well as public religious devotion.

The fourth article on confraternities, André Tallon's work on the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement (1629-1667), argues that the demise of the sodality was in part the result of its inability to resolve the tension between its two roles of public charity and private devotion. Charity came increasingly to be viewed by its members as a distraction from the life of contemplation.

This issue of *HES* offers an interesting perspective on the relationship between private and public concerns in the confraternities of early modern France.

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Ludovica Sebregondi, *Tre confraternite fiorentine. Santa Maria della Pietà, detta 'Buca' di San Girolamo. San Filippo Benizi. San Francesco Poverino*. Firenze: Salimbeni, 1991. 214 pp., 45 ill. [The item was listed in Publications Received in vol. 3:1, Spring 1992, p. 27]

Most scholars examining confraternal art, music, or history deal with brotherhoods long since reduced to the status of historical

fossils. Some of the confraternities we study suffered a hardening of the devotional arteries, while others were snuffed out in the late Enlightenment and the Napoleonic period. As a result, such groups live only in the artworks and archival folios that have survived, and in our learned reconstructions of their lives and times. Ludovica Sebregondi, instead, offers us a scholarly study of three early modern confraternities whose histories became intertwined in the more recent past and whose members still gather today.

The Compagnia di Santa Maria della Pietà, detta Buca di San Girolamo, was established around a Geronimite hermitage in the later 14th century, and moved into Florence in 1410. A patrician company which supervised childrens' and other brotherhoods, it was one of the handful of confraternities exempted from the 1785 suppression by Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo. It was, nonetheless required to cede its premises to the Accademia di Belle Arti and to move to the vacated quarters of one of the suppressed confraternities. It chose the nearby quarters of San Filippo Benizi, a confraternity established in 1587 with quarters constructed in 1599 in the loggia of the Servites in the piazza of Santissima Annunziata. San Girolamo's membership declined and financial difficulties grew through the 19th century, leading one official to sell valuable artworks without consulting the brothers. In 1912 the confraternity merged with the Compagnia di San Francesco Poverino, a group composed, as far back as the mid-15th century, of poor local people. Suppressed in 1785, San Francesco was re-established in 1790. It survived eviction in the 1840s and two subsequent relocations before the desire for a permanent home led it to approach San Girolamo in 1912. The amalgamated confraternity was renamed—and is still called—the Compagnia di San Girolamo e San Francesco Poverino in San Filippo Benizi, thus clearly identifying the three groups that constitute it. After World War II, at the Archbishop's request, part of its quarters were transformed into a university *mensa*. More recently, the confraternity has obtained permission to use, in its own worship, the Tridentine Mass in Latin.

Sebregondi provides brief histories of each company. These are supplemented by a chronological listing and summary description of key documents from all three confraternities. More than half of this exhaustively researched and thoroughly-documented study consists of descriptions of the artworks commissioned by the three confraternities over the past five centuries, and biographies of some of the artists who produced these works.

When they exist, histories of still-functioning confraternities are often little more than celebratory tracts characterized more by glossy pictures and reverential texts than by any critical scholarship. Sebregondi's work, instead, is a scholarly study that establishes a thorough documentary and descriptive art history of the three groups and serves as a point of departure for literary or social historians interested in pursuing interdisciplinary questions. As such, it joins with her first book, *La Compagnia e l'Oratorio di San Niccolò del Ceppo* (Firenze, Salimbeni, 1985) as an important contribution to scholarship on long-living and still-extant Florentine confraternities.

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Christopher F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. xiv, 321 pp.

This study is a near-rarity in modern confraternity studies: an attempt at a synthetic, comprehensive treatment with fairly broad geographical and chronological boundaries. The first half of the monograph amounts to an extended survey of the research on both pre- and post-Tridentine confraternities on the Italian peninsula. Black devotes the second half to his core arguments, which