

La Parrocchiale dei Santi Rocco e Sebastiano di Parodi Ligure tra medioevo ed età contemporanea. Ed. Claudio Paolocci. Genova: Associazione Amici Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1995. 131 pp., 35 ill.

This volume is a special publication celebrating the 150th anniversary of the constitution of the parish of St. Rocco and St. Sebastian in Parodi Ligure, a small town in northern Italy at the border of Piedmont and Liguria. It collects six essays on several topics related to the parish.

The first article is a survey of archival and diplomatic sources on the ancient Benedictine settlement of St. Remigio, a complex located near Parodi, which was founded in the twelfth century as a monastic community of the monastery of S. Maria Castiglione in Parma. This complex grew to become the first parish church for the villages of the area. The author, Simonetta Rossi, makes use of extensive historical literature and several notary charts from the Archivio di Stato di Genova to illustrate the historical development of the ancient monastery and the succession of the priors. We learn that in the fifteenth century St. Remigio ceased to host a monastic community and was given as a benefice to clerks and priests from distinguished families of the neighbourhood. From that point, this benefice was held *in commendam*. In the sixteenth century a chapel dedicated to St. Rocco was built in Parodi, probably on the occasion of an outburst of plague, and it soon became the place of worship for the community of the small village, although St. Remigio retained the statutes of parish until 1845.

The second article, on the artistic wealth in the possession of the complex of S. Remigio and S. Rocco, was written by Fausta Franchini Guelfi. Particularly interesting are some references to the parish archive of St. Remigio, which still contains complete documentation on parish life from 1625; it mentions the presence of the three confraternities of SS. Annunziata, SS. Sacramento, and of Nostra Signora del Rosario (Our Lady of the Rosary). SS. Annunziata's confraternity has left many documents witnessing its life and the expenses it incurred in decorating the church with paintings and liturgical and processional furniture. This artistic heritage is today almost completely lost. The confraternity of N.S. del Rosario was dedicated to Marian worship and represented the most illustrious families of Parodi.

The other articles deal with paintings, sculptures and marble ornaments related to St. Remigio and St. Rocco. A useful bibliography is provided at the end of the volume for those interested in research on the area's local history.

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Presenza clariana nella storia di Assisi, ed. Francesco Santucci. Assisi: Accademia Properziana del Subasio, 1994. 246 pp.

From the early seventies, female monasticism has been the subject of increasing attention from scholars interested in the history of the religious orders. The rise of religious communities for women was particularly significant in Central Italy, where

the Franciscan movement brought about a vast renewal of religious life, and where a specific model of female sainthood emerged. Thirteenth-century central Italy witnessed the presence of exceptional women, such as Clare of Assisi, Angela of Foligno, and Chiara of Montefalco, who carried out St. Francis' legacy of poverty.

In particular, St. Clare of Assisi received the habit from Francis himself; she later established the highly successful order of the Poor Clares and had her own rule approved by the Pope. She was canonised in 1255, two years after her death.

This volume deals with the presence of the order of St. Clare in Assisi, and its significance. It collects several essays on different topics. The first part is devoted to the study of the order's houses in Assisi; it does not focus on St. Clare's basilica and first monastery (*Protomonastero*), since they were the subject of an extensive work by F. Casolini in 1950, but rather on the other, secondary Clarian monasteries. Their history is documented through accurate archival research, which covers seven hundred years. The second part examines the particular legal and jurisdictional problems the monasteries faced in the nineteenth century with the end of the state Church. The third part is a survey of iconographical and liturgical material related to the saint's figure.

Giovanna Casagrande, a specialist on the history of religious life in central Italy, and Sonia Merli have written an essay of particular interest about secondary Clarian monasteries in Assisi between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. We learn that in this period, in addition to the *Protomonastero*, there were four monasteries of the order; none of these religious communities survived the fifteenth century. The authors provide documents on their foundation, economic resources, transactions and endowments, together with lists of abbesses and nuns. We find evidence of the social and economic relevance of the Poor Clares in medieval Assisi, and of their success in establishing religious communities. We also get a glance at some legal conflicts between these communities and the local ecclesiastical authorities, usually a result of the latter's uncertain jurisdictional power over the monasteries.

This volume provides useful reading for any researcher in Italian ecclesiastical history and religious life. Unfortunately, the editor has not provided a bibliography, nor an index of names and places.

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Rubino, Antonio. *Le confraternite laicali a Taranto dal XVI al XIX secolo*. Puglia storica, 6. Fasano (BR): Schena Editore, 1995. 404 pp., ill.

This book is a detailed analysis of the history of confraternities in the city of Taranto between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, namely between the Council of Trent and the unification of Italy. Taranto and its province were part of the Kingdom of Naples at the time, a very conservative and centralised state. In the immediate aftermath of the Council the main concern of the Church was to cleanse the community. It strove to ensure that heresy did not penetrate the Catholic world and excommunicated those who did not follow the new rules imposed by the Counter-