

Lucantoni, Francesco. *L'Abruzzo delle Confraternite*. Palermo: Aisthesis – Centro Internazionale di Etnostoria, 2004. 119 pp., b/w and colour illustrations, maps. No ISBN.

Francesco Lucantoni's *L'Abruzzo delle Confraternite* not only presents a history and census of the confraternal world in the Italian region of Abruzzo, but it also highlights the importance of such research in preserving an integral aspect of history. In his *Presentazione* to the book, Francesco Sicilia reminds us that in studying confraternities we can better understand both the civil and spiritual evolution of the Western World. He explains how Lucantoni's study is one that provides the first fundamental instrument that allows us to delineate history by way of an innovative method, one that takes into consideration those complex religious, social, and civil aspects that often get overlooked by 'official' history books, namely, ethnohistory. It is fitting, then, that *L'Abruzzo delle Confraternite* inaugurates the series *Sodalitates* that seeks to bear witness to the research carried out by the *Centro Internazionale di Etnostoria* on the subject of confraternities.

In his introduction, Lucantoni further explains this concept when he laments the fact that, of the thousands of confraternities that existed in the Abruzzo region, only a few have survived to the present. They are, he says, an historical, artistic and architectural legacy that has been too easily relegated to a minor rank. In this same introduction, he explains that while confraternal studies have increased over the years, those concentrating on the region of Abruzzo have been marginal, at best. Even though the confraternal phenomenon was not strongest here (as it was in Tuscany and Umbria where some of the first associations were formed), the complexities and true historical importance of the Abruzzo confraternities have been largely ignored.

Lucantoni provides a history of the confraternal development in the region, highlighting in particular the seventeenth-century – during which time there was at least one *Compagnia* in every town. As the confraternal movement in the Abruzzo gained stability and strength, confraternities began to participate in local artistic and architectural endeavours, a participation that reached its peak in the intense eighteenth-century reconstruction that followed a series of disastrous earthquakes. According to Lucantoni, the value of their artistic and architectural contributions to the region is beyond measure, for they are often the only surviving voices of the vast and complex confraternal world that was active in Abruzzo.

The analysis of this vastness and complexity is, in fact, Lucantoni's object of study, as he pays particular attention to the confraternities of the Good Death (*della Morte*) and of Intercession (*del Suffragio*). The author claims that his study is far from being exhaustive and that he intends, instead, to establish the methodological base upon which future research might be conducted, concentrating on those salient aspects one needs to consider in the study of confraternities. Lucantoni begins by discussing the importance of the Roman archconfraternities.

Section I of the book is entitled *Le Arciconfraternite di S. Maria dell'Orazione e Morte e di S. Maria del Suffragio di Roma* and examines the documents found in the archives of these two Roman archconfraternities. In this section Lucantoni discusses the history of their respective foundations, their principal duties, as well as the factors that eventually led to their demise. The Arciconfraternita di S. Maria dell'Orazione e Morte, for example, was not only responsible for the burial of the dead, but in the second-half of the eighteenth century it also mounted productions of Biblical episodes alluding to the punishments of Purgatory. The prestige that both of these archconfraternities garnered is very evident. The Arciconfraternita di S. Maria del Suffragio became so rich that in the seventeenth century it was able to move to a new church (S. Maria del Suffragio) designed by architect Carlo Rainaldi. Its members included illustrious ecclesiastical figures such as the cardinal and saint Charles Borromeo, the priest and saint José Calasanz, the theologian, doctor of the Church, and saint Roberto Bellarmino, and the prelate and ecclesiastical historian Cesare Baronio. Two black-and-white images of the coat of arms of these two Roman archconfraternities can be found at the end of the section (a series of colour photographs is located on pp. 104–108 and includes depictions of various coat of arms, rituals, and oratories of several confraternities).

Section II, entitled *Le Confraternite dell'Orazione e Morte in S. Maria del Suffragio in Abruzzo*, details the importance of the aggregative link between the Roman archconfraternities and their homonymous counterparts in the Abruzzo region. Here Lucantoni again provides a pertinent history of these counterparts, as well as revealing the importance of their relationship with their mother churches (*chiese madri*). Their principal contact involved invitations from the Roman archconfraternity on the occasion of the Holy Years, when pilgrims arriving in Rome would be given room and board during their stay. A manuscript in the Archivio di S. Maria del Suffragio Roma (ASMS) details the expenses incurred during the Jubilee Year of 1700 when numerous brothers went on a pilgrimage to Rome. Of particular interest to Lucantoni are the sources relating to aggregate confraternities, for they provide information on foundation dates and statutes of the confraternities in the Abruzzo region. A select few have been transcribed in their entirety and are placed in the appendix (*Appendice documentaria*). Section II also contains a series of maps that outlines the steady increase of these two confraternities in the region between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Section III is far from being (as the title would suggest) a simple census of the archconfraternities of the Orazione e Morte and di S. Maria del Suffragio in the region. Listed according to the various dioceses and archdioceses, each entry identifies the date and location of foundation and aggregation, any mention of the confraternity in the documentation, as well as any other relevant information found by the author. With this section, as with the rest of the book, Lucantoni

goes well beyond the goal he set out for himself of providing the framework necessary for an in-depth study of the confraternal world in the Abruzzo region, for he also captures the intricacies of the topic, and its significance in the study of the historical impact of confraternities.

Adriana Grimaldi  
Department of Italian Studies  
University of Toronto

Polizzotto, Lorenzo. *Children of the Promise: The Confraternity of the Purification and the Socialization of Youths in Florence, 1427–1785*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. xiii, 381 pp., 12 ill. ISBN 0-19-926332-9

At the end of his monograph *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael* (1998) Konrad Eisenbichler asks a question of Lorenzo Polizzotto. Eisenbichler wonders whether Polizzotto's discovery of the Savonarolan infiltration of confraternities in 1530s Florence was restricted to adult sodalities only, or whether youth groups – the focus of Eisenbichler's study – were equally susceptible. In his new book, *Children of the Promise*, Polizzotto offers an answer. It comes as part of a study of the Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin, another youth brotherhood that flourished in Florence from 1427 until its suppression in the late eighteenth century. The Purification was the confraternity most closely aligned with San Marco, Savonarola's Dominican convent, and so affords Polizzotto the opportunity specifically to examine the reception of Savonarolism among Florentine youths. The answer to Eisenbichler's query, as it turns out, is complex, showing how Savonarolism did indeed succeed in infiltrating the Purification despite what Polizzotto calls "the confraternity's indifference to Savonarola's reform" (127). That Polizzotto is able deftly to investigate such complexities in this superb study is a testament to his sharp analytical skills and his wide perspective on the varieties of confraternal life.

This new monograph is, in many ways, a sister study to Eisenbichler's book on the Archangel Raphael. After all, it was the popularity of the Archangel sodality that forced it to split in two, thereby creating the Purification. During these early years both confraternities were overseen by the same adult confraternity, and Polizzotto considers the possibility that both youth groups employed the same statute book during the Purification's first dozen years or so. But by the mid-1440s, the Purification had hitched itself to the Medici wagon and soon enjoyed a meeting place on the grounds of San Marco built for them by Cosimo the Elder himself. It was because of this legacy of Medici support that the confraternity found itself at odds with the anti-Medicean sentiment at San Marco during Savonarola's heyday. Nonetheless, the Savonarolan rhetoric of children's purity pushed the Purification into an unexpected prominence and – despite the