

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Guidotti, Fabrizio. Chiese e musica a Lucca. Dalle dotazioni rinascimentali alle soppressioni napoleoniche. Una ricerca documentaria

Marc Vanscheeuwijck

Volume 45, Number 1, Winter 2022

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1094235ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i1.39130>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Vanscheeuwijck, M. (2022). Review of [Guidotti, Fabrizio. Chiese e musica a Lucca. Dalle dotazioni rinascimentali alle soppressioni napoleoniche. Una ricerca documentaria]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 45(1), 219–221. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i1.39130>



Guidotti, Fabrizio.

Chiese e musica a Lucca. Dalle dotazioni rinascimentali alle soppressioni napoleoniche. Una ricerca documentaria.

Historiae Musicae Cultores 139. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2021. 3 vols. Pp. xx, 1344. ISBN 978-88-222-6722-1 (paperback) €130.

Over the past few decades, Italian musicology has made great strides in exploring its own musical past, by moving away from the model of the grand narrative towards an awareness that the way to really understand musical life in the early modern period is to investigate each individual locale through comprehensive archival research. Exploring the most important centres one by one has naturally yielded a plethora of new information and recontextualization, and has forced us to reconsider many established ideas and concepts. The growing number of theses and dissertations that have investigated the “minor” centres of musical practice has contributed to a still growing and more nuanced general picture of extremely variegated musical realities in the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

This massive study by Fabrizio Guidotti on sacred music in virtually all the churches—regular, secular, and those connected to confraternities and oratorios—in Lucca from the mid-fifteenth through the early nineteenth centuries exemplifies how such a comprehensive in-depth study can be conducted. Not only the fact that the author has studied the archival evidence of virtually all religious institutions in Lucca—including suppressed and no-longer-existing churches and monasteries—but also his methodology and interpretative and comparative chapters on the primary materials have shown how fundamentally important and useful such a study can be for the musical and musicological communities for a profound understanding of musical practices in a “smaller” centre. Indeed, as is the case for so many smaller-scale cities in Italy, music history in Lucca has largely fallen through the cracks in music history textbooks, except for a few famous composers who were born in the city or who were active there, such as Giuseppe Guami, Luigi Boccherini, or Giacomo Puccini (senior). Through Guidotti’s primarily archival investigation we now finally have a much more complete understanding, including some salient new discoveries and rectifications, of sacred musical life in Lucca. The great richness of Guidotti’s study, compared to so many other volumes that mainly offer transcriptions of archival documents, lies in its interpretative and comparative

chapters, which situate the findings within a fascinating cultural and social context. Having already published a wide variety of articles and books particularly on the rich eighteenth century in Lucca, Guidotti here drastically expands his research chronologically to the previous two-and-a-half centuries, and goes all the way to the Napoleonic suppressions in the early nineteenth.

The bulk of Guidotti's work is represented in the vast number of *schede*—a term for which the English language offers no adequate translation—or “catalogue entries” (as we can find them in visual art exhibition catalogues) that offer transcriptions and commentaries on all the musically relevant archival documents found primarily in the Archivio Storico Diocesano but also in other archives. Some of these *schede* are just a page long, but others, such as the entry on the San Martino cathedral, cover 110 pages. The documents, transcribed and discussed in chronological order, are organized alphabetically by type of institution: first twenty-nine secular churches (in volume 1), then twenty regular churches (the whole of volume 2), and finally twenty-one oratorios and the churches connected to confraternities. Of these seventy institutions, twenty-five no longer exist, but often have great historical importance. These seventy highly informative *schede* are preceded by a fifty-page introduction that explains in great detail the research procedures and methodology, as well as giving an illustration of the contents (institutions, financial resources, human resources, and uses of the music) and a description of the excellent transversal study that appears in volume 3 (927–1244). It is in this transversal study that the author offers an in-depth discussion and interpretation of the primary sources he consulted.

For example, under the rubric of financial resources, Guidotti discusses at length the building of organs and organ lofts. After a complete census of all the organs in Lucca, he explores the construction of, alterations to, and maintenance of the instruments; the presence of small moveable *Positiv* organs; the placement of the instruments in the lofts; the donors and builders; and eventually the additional platforms and lofts that were built and then dismantled for specific festivities and occasions. This section is followed by a large consideration of human resources, dealing with musical personnel (male, *and* female in the convents), the organists (their role, recruitment, admission procedures, salaries, and obligations, and the presence of amateurs and priest performers), the chapel masters, and the regular ensembles, as opposed to the bands assembled for specific one-time occasions. Finally, a very instructive section

on the uses of music details the liturgical (and para-liturgical) calendars, the Advent services, and the devotional practices. Volume 3 concludes with four appendices that provide a list of all places of worship in Lucca, a list of all organ builders, a chronology of endowments for the organs, and finally a list of all organists and chapel masters of the period under investigation. An extensive bibliography of archival documents and secondary literature and a few name indexes crown this massive study.

In conclusion, Guidotti's work on the churches and their music in Lucca is not only something every library should own for consultation but also to provide a superb methodological reference to serve as an exemplar for anyone interested in embarking upon a systematic study of the musical realities in both specific sacred and secular musical institutions, and in all the local musical centres that still need such exploration, and there are plenty of them left in Italy! In the end, these three volumes are a major contribution, probably the most important, to our knowledge of early modern sacred music and its contexts in Lucca.

MARC VANSCHEEUWIJCK

University of Oregon

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i1.39130>