

Caffaro of Genoa

Caffaro di Rustico da Caschifellone

DATE OF BIRTH About 1080

PLACE OF BIRTH Genoa

DATE OF DEATH About 1166

PLACE OF DEATH Genoa

BIOGRAPHY

Caffaro, from Rustico da Caschifellone (near Genoa in the Val Polcevera), was born around 1080. A member of an aristocratic family descending from Ido, a 10th-century vice-count of Genoa who belonged to the 'Compagna' of the Porta (in the area of the San Pietro in Banchi church), Caffaro was the eldest of three brothers (the others being Oberto and Guiscardo), all of whom were active in public life. A typical member of the Genoese elite of merchant-warriors, Caffaro was among the 'founding fathers' of the Commune of Genoa, and worked in a broad international area. He was consul, ambassador and historian of the Commune on several occasions, with his name first appearing on a document of 20 July 1100. In 1101, just after the First Crusade, he took part in the expedition that led to the conquest of Caesarea, led by another eminent character, Guglielmo Embriaco, whom Caffaro was to celebrate, together with the townspeople, as the founding hero of the new Genoese history. Except for a document dating from 1111, there are no notices on Caffaro's life until 1121, when he reappeared on the scene as a protagonist in the role of ambassador to Pope Calixtus II during the Genoese clash with Pisa over the status of Corsica and its dioceses, and for which he was to return to Rome in 1123. In 1122 he became the consul of the Commune and the *Placiti*, taking part in military operations against the Pisans. He was again to be alternatively consul of the *Placiti* or of the Commune in 1127, 1130 – the year in which the position was split – 1141, 1144, 1146 and 1149. In 1127 he went to Barcelona for the Genoese alliance with Count Raymond Berengarius III; in 1146 he led an expedition against Almería; in 1154 and 1158 he was ambassador to Frederick I Barbarossa.

In addition to the *Annals* of his home city, Caffaro wrote two important shorter works: *Liberatio civitatum Orientis* and *Yistoria captionis Almerie et Tortuose*, composed in the same years. The former, an account of the Genoese part in the First Crusade, starts from the conquest of Antioch (1097) and ends with the conquest of Tripoli in Syria (1109). The latter, which concerns the conquest of Almería and Tortosa (1147-49), marks contemporary Genoese presence in the western Mediterranean.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

Annali Genovesi (for editions see below)

Caffaro, *Yistoria captionis Almarie et Tortuose (1147-1149)* (for editions see below)

Caffaro, *Liberatio civitatum Orientis* (for editions see below)

Secondary

G. Airdi, *Blu come il mare. Guglielmo e la saga degli Embriaci*, Genoa, 2006

E. Bellomo, *A servizio di Dio e del Santo Sepolcro. Caffaro e l'Oriente latino*, Padua, 2005

G. Airdi, *Guerrieri e mercanti. Storie del medioevo genovese*, Turin, 2004

G. Airdi, 'Memoria e memorie di un cavaliere. Caffaro di Genova', *Cru-sades* 2 (2003) 25-40

E. Bellomo, 'La componente spirituale negli scritti di Caffaro', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* n.s. 37 (1997) 65-92

A. Placanica, 'L'opera storiografica di Caffaro', *Studi Medievali* series 3, 36 (1995) 1-62

R.D. Face, 'Secular history in the twelfth century. Caffaro of Genoa', *Journal of Medieval History* 6 (1980) 169-85

G. Airdi, 'Caffaro, storia di Genova, storia economica', in *Studi in onore di Gino Barbieri*, 3 vols, Salerno, 1983, i, pp. 53-74

G. Petti Balbi, *Caffaro e la cronachistica Genovese*, Genoa, 1982

G. Petti Balbi, art. 'Caffaro', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Rome, 1973

D. Puncuh, art. 'Caffaro di Rustico', in *Dizionario critico della Letteratura Italiana*, Milan, 1973

G. Arnaldi, 'Uno sguardo sugli Annali Genovesi', in G. Arnaldi, *Studi sui cronisti della Marca Trevigiana nell'età di Ezzelino da Romano*, Rome, 1963, 225-45

C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, *Caffaro e i suoi tempi*, Turin, 1894

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Ystoria captionis Almarie et Turtuose,
'History of the capture of Almería and Tortosa'

DATE Late 1140s – early 1150s

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

DESCRIPTION

This relatively short chronicle (27 pages in the latest Italian translation) details a series of Genoese attacks on the Muslim territories of the Balearic islands, together with the cities of Almería and Tortosa on mainland Iberia. In the first of these, which captured Minorca and besieged Almería, Caffaro himself was the commander, so from a historical point of view this is a particularly useful account. During later stages of the assaults, both Almería and Tortosa were captured by the Genoese. While these episodes brought great renown to the city of Genoa, they also severely strained their resources. Like his other chronicles, Caffaro's account underlines his sense of pride both in his city and, as leader, in himself, as well as highlighting his beliefs about the crusading movement. The Muslims, who appear as an indistinct mass, are again seen as the enemies of God, and fighting them as a religious act that leads to both remission of sins for the individual and the regaining of land for Christendom.

SIGNIFICANCE

This short, secular account demonstrates how deeply embedded in the Latin psyche crusading had become by the mid-12th century, and how important crusading was to both individual and civic prestige. It also underlines how the ideals of fighting against the Muslims to secure Jerusalem (the basis of the First Crusade) had been expanded to become a battle on all fronts, which was to reach its zenith at this time, during the Second Crusade.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Paris, BNF – Latin 10136 (late 13th century)MS Paris, Ministère des affaires étrangères – Genes no. 3 (14th century)MS London, BL – Add. 12031 (15th century)

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Storia della presa di Almeria Tortosa (1147-1149), ed. and Italian trans. M. Montesano, Genova, 2002

L.T. Belgrano *Annali Genovesi, di Caffaro e de suoi continuation del MXCIX al MCCXCIII*, 14 vols, Rome, 1890-1929, i, pp. 79-89

STUDIES

J. Dotson, 'The Genoese civic annals. Caffaro and his continuators', in S. Dale, A.W. Lewin and D.J. Osheim (eds), *Chronicling history. Chroniclers and historians in medieval and Renaissance Italy*, University Park PA, 2007, 55-85

C.W. Marshall, 'The crusading motivation of the Italian city republics in the Latin East, 1096-1104', in M. Bull and N. Housley (eds), *The experience of crusading. 1. Western approaches*, Cambridge, 2003, 60-79

Face, 'Secular history', p. 172

De liberatione civitatum Orientis,

'The liberation of the cities of the East'

DATE Mid-1150s

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

DESCRIPTION

This chronicle describes the participation of the Genoese in the First Crusade, and the privileges and holdings granted to the city-state in the Holy Land following their success. Caffaro, who participated in the campaign, wrote the chronicle in the mid-1150s, around 50 years after the events themselves and his similar, though much shorter, account in his *Annals*.

The chronicle seems to have been written as a legal document to be presented to Pope Hadrian IV, in order to remind him of Genoa's earlier heroics in the Holy Land at a time when their privileges were being threatened by the rulers of the crusader states.

Contrary to the beliefs of some historians, the chronicle suggests that Genoese motivation to go on crusade was not pure greed for the trading privileges that would be available, but was religious. Sermons delivered by bishops persuading people to go on the First Crusade underlined remission of sins rather than material gains, and those who died at Antioch and elsewhere are described as martyrs. As in the *Annals*, the theme of civic pride is at the forefront, but so is the crusading movement. The crusade is seen as a holy war, performed

for the spiritual purpose of serving God through crusading, which was an act of love. One major difference between this and more ecclesiastical accounts is the separation between pilgrimage and military activity; for example, the Genoese go to take part in the siege of Tarsus after completing their journey to Jerusalem.

Despite being a continual presence, Muslims are not at the forefront of the chronicle.

SIGNIFICANCE

This account demonstrates the importance attached to the events of the First Crusade and a city's involvement, over 50 years after the event. It suggests that the ideals on which the First Crusade was based were still relevant, and that struggling against Muslims gave political credit.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Paris, BNF – Latin 10136

MS London, BL – Add. 12031

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Caffaro, *La liberazione delle città d'Oriente*, ed. and Italian trans. M. Montanari, Genoa, 2001

La presa di Gerusalemme, Italian trans. N. Guido, Genoa, 1992

Belgrano, *Annali Genovesi*, i, pp. 99-124

Cafari Genuensis, *De liberatione civitatum Orientis (RHC Occ. 5)*, Paris, 1885, p. 47-73

De liberatione civitatum Orientis, ed. F. Ansaldo (I, fasc.2), Genoa, 1859

STUDIES

Dotson, 'The Genoese civic annals'

Face, 'Secular history', p. 172

Annales Ianuenses, MXCIX-MCLXIII,
'Annals of Genoa, 1099-1163'

DATE Before 1166

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Latin

DESCRIPTION

In 1152, towards the end of his life, Caffaro presented to the consuls of Genoa his *Annals*, an account of the life of a commune that in the years it covers, 1100-63, had become an international power. His work was placed in the Public Archives, and, together with continuations, it became Genoa's public version of its own history. It is an achievement of some innovation, in which Caffaro takes and revitalizes the year-by-year chronicle, which had principally been a monastic genre (although previously employed by Lombard historians), and links it to the new political regime, the commercial economy and an urban culture of international character. Writing from a Mediterranean perspective, in which Muslims are among the main protagonists, in his narrative of political, military and economic events he describes places, institutions, cultures and religions with the eye of a warrior and the mentality of a businessman. He accomplishes a survey of a global panorama – as might be expected of someone from a city that fronts the open horizons of the sea.

The *Annals* are secular in perspective, moral and didactic in purpose; they reflect civic patriotism and show a bias in favor of the city's ruling party. Thus, they do not start with Creation or the Incarnation, but with the Genoese participation in the First Crusade in year the city was established as a commune. It is 'civil-service' history, celebrating the accomplishments of Genoa and its citizens throughout the early and mid-12th century, although at the end of the *Annals*, in about 1163, communal strife and the loss of civic sentiment are strong.

The main thrust of the *Annals* concerns war, against Muslims, other maritime cities or rural lords. The attacks on Muslim cities during the First Crusade and the following years are painted in purely spiritual terms, and the Crusades are seen as a battle on behalf of God, waged in order to regain the land of Christ for Christianity. However, this is only part of the story. For in the years following the initial period of crusading, the *Annals* highlight the commercial and political relations between the Genoese and Muslim powers, in which religious rhetoric is put aside in the quest for treaties and trade privileges.

SIGNIFICANCE

The *Annals* are written according to the official dogma that war against the Muslim enemy was rightful and holy. Nevertheless, they allow a

glimpse of the true relationship between the Genoese and Muslims, which was based more on the market than on war, in accordance with a business approach typical of the political bosses of the new communal political system. The commune, controlled by the great families, intended to make Genoa the leading port in the Mediterranean and the center of a network through which to control the international market. Like all members of the Genoese politico-economic classes, Caffaro had direct knowledge of the world of Islam in both the West and the East, and consequently Islam is a dominant theme in his work.

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Paris, BNF – Latin 10136

MS Paris, Ministère des affaires étrangères – Genes no. 3

MS London, BL – Add. 12031

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Gli Annali di Caffaro (1099-1163), ed. and (Italian) trans. M. Montesano, Genoa, 2002

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Belgrano, *Annali Genovesi*, i, pp. 1-75

W. Arndt and G. Grandor, *Jahrbücher von Genua*, Berlin, 1866 (German trans.)

Caffari et continuatorum Annales Ianuenses ed. G.H. Pertz (MGH, *Scriptores* 18), Hannover, 1862

Caffari eiusque continuatorum, Annales Genuenses ab anno MC ad annum usque MCCXCIII, ed. L.A. Muratori (*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 6), Milan, 1725, cols 247-610

STUDIES

Dotson, 'The Genoese civic annals', 2007, 55-85

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Placanica, 'L'opera storiografica di Caffaro'

C. Wickham, 'The sense of the past in Italian communal narratives', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *The perception of the past in twelfth-century Europe*, London, 1992, 173-89

R. Vaughan, 'The past in the Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1986) 1-14

- D. Puncuh, 'Caffaro e le cronache cittadine. Per una rilettura degli Annali', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 22 (1982) 63-73
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