

Reviews

Cervini, Fulvio and Silvano Rodi. *Il restauro dell'organo "Felice e Giacomo Bossi" (1861) nell'Oratorio di Nostra Signora della Misericordia in S. Stefano al Mare (IM)*. Quaderni d'arte organaria in Liguria. Imperia, 1994. 46 pp.

Although this is primarily a volume about the restoration of the confraternity's nineteenth-century organ, the preliminary article by Fulvio Cervini will be of interest to scholars working on early modern confraternities, for it is a brief history of the oratory of Our Lady of Mercy in Imperia, a sizeable town on the western Italian Riviera. References to confraternal devotions touching on a processional crucifix are extant from the late fifteenth century. By the sixteenth century there are references to a *casatia batutorum*, a *capella Sanctae Mariae verberatorum*, and a *eclexia seu casatia verberatorum*. Significant alterations to the oratory are then recorded in the late seventeenth century. Cervini describes the changes wrought to the oratory and follows the trail of the numerous architects, builders, and others who had a hand in the constructions, renovations, and alterations. Cervini also discusses the architectural spaces thus created, with an eye for their role in the confraternity's devotions. Stucco decorations, canvases, and other decorations are also discussed, as is the great organ placed in the oratory in the mid-nineteenth century. Cervini concludes that although the confraternity's oratory has undergone a number of alterations, it is still a valid example of Ligurian confraternal architecture.

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Confraternite, arte e devozione in Puglia dal Quattrocento al Settecento. Exhibition catalogue ed. by Clara Gelao. Napoli: Electa, 1994. 525 pp., ill.

This exquisitely assembled exhibition catalogue presents an impressive array of works of art and original documents from the confraternal collections of Puglia. Spanning the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, it is the product of the art historical component of an extensive

confraternities project begun in 1994 by the Centre for the Study of Religious History in Puglia. The main objectives of the exhibition and catalogue are to situate Puglia on the international confraternities map, and to focus attention on its rich artistic patrimony by highlighting works of art from its churches, chapels and confraternal altars.

The editor, Clara Gelao, remarks that this exhibition heralds one of the first interdisciplinary approaches to the cultural history of Puglia, with special attention on the devotional, economic, and artistic aspects of Pugliese confraternal life over a broad stretch of time. In keeping with this interdisciplinary methodology, the introductory article by Liana Bertoldi Lenoci provides an excellent background to the history of lay associations in general, prefacing her analysis of the situation in Italy with the observation that the phenomenon of “*associazionismo*” crosses all cultures. The information she provides on confraternal associations in Puglia prior to the Council of Trent is of particular importance, given the lack of documents in Southern Italy on confraternal associations in the the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. In northern Italy, instead, there is a much greater amount of materials on which to draw. Lenoci traces the history of confraternities in Puglia from the earliest twelfth-century document up to Vatican II. Her survey of the various dioceses and their respective archives is extremely useful, as are both her classification of confraternities into different cults (Culti di Dio, Culti Mariani Universali, Culti Mariani Regionali e Locali, Culti dei Santi, Culti delle Sante, Culti dei Morti) and her analysis over time of the number of confraternities belonging to each grouping.

In addition to the historical background provided both by Lenoci’s introductory account and by the several other scholarly articles included, the presentation of beautifully photographed architecture, altars, painting, sculpture, liturgical objects, tapestries and confraternal documents is accompanied by an explanatory text. The scope and quality of this volume brings the confraternal, artistic and devotional heritage of Puglia from the margins of scholarly research into the mainstream of confraternities scholarship.

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