

Reviews

Confraternite genovesi all'alba del terzo millennio, ed. Luciano Venzano. Genova: Erga Edizioni, 2004. 183 pp., colour illustrations. ISBN 88-8163-389-2 [Contains: Stella Ghersina Arnulfo "I manufatti tessili delle confraternite e la loro manutenzione" pp. 17–21; Mauro Balma "Fede, arte e tradizione popolare nei canti delle confraternite liguri" pp. 22–33; Fulvio Cervini "Il Sacro Monte nell'oratorio. Scultura lignea nella Maddalena di Novi Ligure" pp. 34–47; Fausta Franchini Guelfi "San Bartolomeo di Viganego. Un oratorio rurale nell'entroterra genovese" pp. 48–57; Daniele Sanguineti "Le sculture da processione di Anton Maria Maragliano per le confraternite di Genova" pp. 58–69; Gianluca Zanelli "Il patrimonio artistico degli oratori del ponente genovese: ritrovamenti e restauri" pp. 70–87; Sebastiano Corsanego "Le confraternite tra storia e proposta" pp. 88–93; Giovanni Farris "Linee di spiritualità penitenziale nel rapporto confraternale tra Genova e Savona" pp. 94–107; Pierluigi Gardella "Il Priorato Confraternite dell'arcidiocesi di Genova dalle sue origini ad oggi" pp. 108–121; Mario Lastretti "L'Arciconfraternita dei Genovesi a Cagliari, 1587 ..." pp. 122–129; Giuseppino Roberto "Le confraternite liguri in Argentina" pp. 130–138; Alfredo Preste "Storia delle confraternite della città di Genova" pp. 139–146; Luciano Venzano "Le confraternite di Sant'Erasmo nel ponente genovese" pp. 147–179; Antonio Balletto "Conclusioni" pp. 180–181.]

Luciano Venzano's volume gathers together a number of presentations from a conference held in Genoa on 14 October 2004 as part of that city's year-long celebrations as "European City of Culture" and, consequently, of the diffusion of "genovesità" throughout the world. This veritable sampler of the city's celebrations has something to offer everyone: from discussions of the medieval roots of particular confraternities to the plight of the present-day brotherhoods. Many articles offer a trip around Liguria, while a few other travel the world to explore the peregrinatory Ligurians. With stunning pictures to accompany several discussions, the art, music, and history of Ligurian confraternities, both past and present, come alive for the reader.

Many contributions highlight the products of the confraternities. Stella Ghersina Arnulfo's article on the delicate textiles manufactured by the confraternities discusses the use, maintenance, and conservation of these important and artistic works, concluding with a list of "do not ever" to help others with conservation efforts. On the topic of restoration, Gianluca Zanelli draws the reader's attention to the Ponente where restoration has also led to the ability to date more accurately and ascribe many paintings that have thankfully been preserved. Mauro Balma researched the songs of the Ligurian confraternities. Fulvio Cervini uses the brilliant photographs taken during the 1989 restoration of the oratory of the Magdalene and of the Crucifix in Novi Ligure to reinforce his point that the oratory should be seen in terms of its function in the cultural crossroad between Liguria and Lombardy and

as a testament to the Counter Reformation spirit that affected all of Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The collection forms a unified whole because of its recurring themes: some are common to all confraternities while other seem to display a certain *genovesità*. Fausta Franchini Guelfi discusses the confraternity of San Bartolomeo di Viganego, noting its conformity with so many histories of rural confraternities in Liguria, sharing the vicissitudes of life, as well as the disputes between the laity and clergy. Giovanni Farris traces the medieval roots of the *disciplinati*, the importance of asceticism, and the Bianchi. Alfredo Prete explores the history of confraternities in Genoa itself, starting from the first recorded evidence in 1232. Pierluigi Gardella follows the meetings of the many Genoese confraternities. Gardella includes two appendices: a letter from Giuseppe Casareto in 1946 discussing the first meeting of the Genoese confraternities and excerpts from the 1947 statutes.

A theme that pervades many articles is the interconnectivity of the Ligurian confraternities. This is sometimes seen through art, other times it is expressed through the support offered. All confraternities faced similar problems: from wars to waning popular support and to governmental suspicion. A subject of particular affection to Sebastiano Corsanego is how much the Ligurian confraternities found throughout the world communicated with each other and with confraternities “back home.” His contribution, however, is more of a call to arms not only to save the confraternities but also to preserve the Catholic way of life.

Sometimes the confraternities shared tangible elements, such as the sculptures by Anton Maria Maragliano. Daniele Sanguineti takes the reader to the many confraternities in and around Genoa (Varazze, Albissola) that employed the popular artist who produced for them stunning examples of baroque art. From the representation of St Francis receiving the stigmata to the martyrdom of St Bartholomew, or in his several crucifixes, Maragliano produced emotionally provocative sculptures. Following the trail of the Maragliano sculptures provides the reader with a virtual tour of some of the lesser known, though locally important Ligurian churches, highlighting the interconnectivity of the Ligurian confraternities and the oratories they sponsored. Dedication to Saint Erasmus, the patron saint of navigators, sailors, and mariners is another shared trait. Not surprisingly, for Ligurians Saint Erasmus received not a little attention along the coastline with an archconfraternity in Voltri, confraternities in Pegli and Sestri Ponente, and societies in Voltri and Pra. Luciano Venzano provides an useful description of evidence found from Arenzano to Sestri Ponente that highlight the importance of Saint Erasmus.

Ligurians abroad occupy the attention of Mario Lastretti and Giuseppino Roberto. Lastretti examines the Genoese confraternity SS.MM. Giorgio and Caterina, located in Cagliari (Sardinia). Established in 1587, the confraternity was soon elevated to an archconfraternity by Pope Gregory XIV in 1591 and confirmed by Pope Clement VIII in 1592. Unique to the area, the confraternity’s statutes were written in Italian at a time when the whole of Sardinia was dominated by the Spanish. After a brief history, he discusses the sculptures, paintings, fabrics, and

other treasures of the confraternity. Roberto investigates the Ligurian confraternities in Argentina, following what Mario Carlo Nascimbene described elsewhere as a particular “Ligurian phase” (*fase ligure*) in Italian emigration to Argentina between 1835–1850.

This collection shows the exciting work still to be done on the interconnectivity of the confraternities, both in Liguria and in the world. One question that this reviewer would like to see explored in more depth is what made a confraternity “Ligurian.” There is a sense that it was more than Ligurian members, a sentiment attested to by many contributors. Perhaps more studies that examine the interaction between the Ligurians and their “hosts” would further illuminate their unique (or perhaps not so) offering, as would a further sense of the connections and communications among Ligurian confraternities, as Crosanego suggested.

Italian confraternities have enjoyed a glorious and distinct past. Yet, it was with the recognition that confraternities are living and breathing organisms—still alive today despite the trials of modern-day life—that this conference found its dynamic. Celebrating the past, many contributors also looked to a bright future for Ligurian confraternities. In this way, they truly captured the European Community’s goal in establishing the “European Cities of Culture” program back in 1985.

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Henares Paque, Vicente. *La hermandad de la Soledad de Marchena en el siglo XVII*. Marchena: n.p., 2004.

The early seventeenth century has been characterized as a time of greatness and splendor for the confraternities of Spain. Reforms first discussed at the Council of Trent and then implemented as part of the Counter-Reformation made the baroque period of the first third of the seventeenth century the high point for many Spanish confraternities. This was certainly the case for the penitential brotherhood of la Soledad de Nuestra Señora (the Solitude of Our Lady) in the town of Marchena, located sixty kilometers south of Seville. As described through a “veritable waterfall of facts” (10) by Vicente Henares Paque in *La Hermandad de la Soledad de Marchena en el siglo XVII*, this confraternity experienced growth in popularity and wealth during the first thirty years of the seventeenth century, only to fall into decline in the following seventy years. In great detail and with the support of many images, Henares provides a clear picture of this confraternity, with specific focus on its great involvement in the Holy Week celebrations in Marchena.

Because the archive for the brotherhood of la Soledad de Nuestra Señora does not survive, Henares has turned to two sources as the basis for his study. The first is a copy of the confraternity’s statutes dating from 23 March 1567. Although this is thought to be the original edition for the confraternity, Henares actually works