

documented outcomes, the majority were restored to families and some were married. Only a handful entered religious houses.

Sandri says little about the local administration of Santa Maria della Scala, the level where one might expect to find a confraternity or guild fulfilling the charitable obligations of its concept of social kinship. It would be interesting to know more about the home's place in San Gimignano's social, political, and religious order, and how it fits into the broader struggle between Florence and Siena for control of Tuscany. That notwithstanding, this is a fine and very thoroughly researched study both of a local home and of the broader phenomenon of abandonment in Renaissance Italy.

Nicholas Terpstra
Department of History
University of Toronto

I tesori delle confraternite. Savona, Palazzo del Commissario, 2–31 luglio 1999. Exhibition catalogue. Ed. Cecilia Chilosi and Eliana Mattiauda. Savona: Comune di Savona, 1999. 167 pp., 69 illustrations

Whether or not one ascribes any genuine significance to the approaching millennium, one would be hard pressed to ignore its effect as a stimulus to cultural and civic projects. Indeed, the notion of completing projects in time for the turn of the century, as a means of bringing closure to one epoch and creating a fresh start to another, appears to have provided the impetus for a programme of restoration in the northern Italian city of Savona. Overshadowed for centuries by the power and fame of Genoa, in the last decades of this century Savona embarked on the arduous task of restoring its imposing military fortress, the Priamàr, which had fallen into decay following Genoese domination in the sixteenth century. At the same time, the Savonese began to catalogue and document the holdings and histories of the city's many confraternities. In 1999 the two projects culminated in an exhibition of confraternity treasures held in the newly restored Priamàr.

Nominally a catalogue of the items displayed as part of the exhibition, this volume is much more than a mere list and photographic record of Ligurian confraternity artifacts. In addition to the expected "Catalogo", this handsome edition contains a series of scholarly articles on the origins, activities and patrimony of the Savonese confraternities. These articles, together with Fausta Franchini Guelfi's introduction and the forewords by a number of civic officials, combine with its full colour and black and white photographic record to create a cohesive and evocative portrait of confraternity life dating back to the Middle Ages.

In the first essay, "Cenni sulla vicenda quasi millenaria delle confraternite savonesi," Giuseppe Buscaglia traces the documentable origins of Ligurian confraternities to the Penitential movement of 1260, noting that the first material evidence of confraternity activity in Savona itself is contained in a 1266 papal approval of the statutes proposed by the Confraternity of Santa Maria del Castello.

Notwithstanding the fact that the oratory of that confraternity was destroyed in 1542 by the Genoese to make room for their military fortifications, the Confraternity, along with others, survived only to find their practices under scrutiny in the years of post-Tridentine reform. Buscaglia provides a fascinating account of the effects of Church interests on the autonomy of the Savonese confraternities, outlining the gradual transformation in the focus of confraternity activities from the late sixteenth century to the present.

"La Processione del Venerdì Santo," overseen by the Priorato Generale delle Confraternite, provides a similarly expansive perspective, though it focuses on one particular aspect of confraternity activity, the Good Friday public procession. The next essay, Fulvio Cervini's "Qualche appunto sull'orizzonte sociale della scultura lignea a Savona nel tardo Medioevo," provides a gradual and appropriate segue into the specific focus of the 1999 exhibition: the actual artifacts themselves. Focusing on what is often dismissed as folk art, Cervini presents a clear and critical account of the central issues relating to the use of wooden sculptures as focal points of devotion, issues ranging from the objections of the iconoclasts to the artistic merits of the works. Alessandro Giacobbe's "Il patrimonio architettonico e artistico delle confraternite in Val Nera: un percorso di ricerca" and Marina Venturino's "Le confraternite e il Priamà" supply the relevant physical and social context to the visual record that follows. Divided into sections on sculpture, painting, silverworks, textiles, and furnishings, the catalogue portion is rich in full colour illustrations that attest to the vibrant confraternity tradition in Savona. The volume closes with an extensive bibliography that will provide scholars with plenty of reading for the next century.

Mary Alexandra Watt
Department of French, Italian & Spanish
Brock University

Verdi Webster, Susan. *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain. Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998. xxi, 292 pp. ISBN 0-691-04819-3 US.\$55.

In a richly researched study, Susan Verdi Webster examines the popular tradition of holy week processions of Golden-Age Spain, the lay religious groups that organized them, and the ritual context that surrounded them in order to gain a better understanding of the life-like sculpture created for such processions. Webster's thesis is that such sculptures cannot be separated from their function within religious processions, lest we ignore the dynamic interaction between art, spectacle, and popular religious sentiment. Thus works of art traditionally disparaged by scholars (or merely overlooked) as aesthetically inferior, are here studied within their original ritual context. Webster argues that when used in procession the sculptures become "activated": within the dynamics of the ritual, the sculptures are transformed and function to integrate the human and divine spheres through the emotional and spiritual power they evoke. Although the author claims