

The volume is lavishly enriched with photographs (many of which are full page) and diagrams that illustrate the recovery work and the treasures that are now back on site at the confraternity.

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Tanfulli, Maurizio (ed.). *La Fraternita del Buon Gesù nella Terra di Cantiano. Libro "B" (1576–1617) (storie e testimonianze)*. Special issue of *Quaderni del Consiglio Regionale delle Marche* vol. 23, n. 245 (March 2018). Ancona: Associazione Culturale "La Turba", 2018. Pp. 329. ISBN 978-88-3280-0371 (paperback) n.p.

Cantiano, a municipality on the Apennines in the region of Marche (central Italy), is home to a spectacular Good Friday processional staging of the Passion of Christ. The procession, known as *La Turba*, involves the entire town and constitutes a strong element of group identity for the town and its confraternities. Cantiano is not unusual in this — in Italy even small towns are rich in history and confraternities.

Like so many other towns all across medieval and Renaissance Italy, Cantiano had a number of confraternities. Tanfulli lists nine of them, including a confraternity of the Sacrament, one of the Rosary, one the Seven Sorrows of Mary, another of the Good Death, and so on (43). The most important one, however, was the *fraternita del Buon Gesù* (the brotherhood of the Good [Lord] Jesus) in the church of Sant'Ubaldo. Although there is no documentation to confirm it, tradition has it that the Buon Gesù was founded in the mid thirteenth century at the time of the flagellant movement that spread across Italy; in June 1427 it underwent a reform at the hands of none other than Saint Bernardine of Siena (48). The sodality's reputation was such that in 1514 it was placed in charge of the local hospital that assisted both the town's poor and passing pilgrims who travelled on the near-by via Flaminia to and from Rome (57).

In his volume on the Buon Gesù, Maurizio Tanfulli offers a selection, with commentary, of texts transcribed from the only surviving volume from the confraternity's ancient archive (now lost), the *Liber Societatis Boni Jesu Terre Cant.ni – B*, that is, Book "B" of the Society of the Good Jesus in the land of Cantiano. The "book" is a register of administrative and accounting notes for the years 1576 to 1617 that record, for the most part, the confraternity's income and expenses. Tanfulli uses the various notes in the register as points of entry into the life of the confraternity and, by extension, into the places where it operated, the properties it owned, and the

influence it could exercise in the region. From the entries we learn that this was a “mixed” confraternity, that is, it welcomed both men and women as members (73). As was the case with most confraternities, its major administrative and managerial positions were filled by members of prominent local families (33, 73). We also notice how, over time, the confraternity’s associative life became increasingly institutionalized and regulated in all its aspects.

The confraternity’s major source of income derived from the mills, lands, and houses it owned. Its extensive holdings offer a glimpse into the sort of relationships that connected the confraternity as owner with the labourers on the lands, into the variety of agricultural goods produced on these lands, and into the consumption and sale of these goods. In so doing, the entries provide new perspectives on the crops present in the region around Cantiano at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of seventeenth centuries, on the history of agriculture, and on the history of food. The confraternity’s income also came from alms which the Buon Gesù received and then distributed either in kind or in cash to the sick, to prisoners, and to other people in need.

The sodality’s major charitable efforts and energy were spent, however, in the maintenance and management of the local hospital, which consumed a lot of the group’s energy and resources. There were significant expenses associated with the services the hospital provided, such as the preparation of meals, the transportation of foreigners and/or the sick from one location to another, but also with the care of hospital furnishings and linens, as well as expenses associated with the upkeep and maintenance of the hospital building itself. To oversee all this work, the confraternity appointed one of its members, occasionally a woman, to be the *ospedaliere* (136).

What Tanfulli offers us in this volume is a view “in the round” of a charitable confraternity in a small town of central Italy in the late Renaissance. He considers all aspects of the life of the Buon Gesù, down to the smallest details — from the works of art it owned to the festivities it celebrated; from the *palio* (standard) with the confraternity’s emblem that it kept in a large armoire on site to the penitential garments (robes and scourges) its members used in their various rituals and ceremonies; from its practice of escorting the deceased to burial to that of comforting the condemned to death; from hiring preachers for the Lenten season to participating in the Good Friday procession. This procession was the central moment in the confraternity’s associative life “when not only the preparations, but also the emotional involvement of members reached its peak” (273). Not surprisingly, *La Turba* was and remains Cantiano’s most iconic public event.