

a hospice for pilgrims and mendicants to be staffed twenty-four hours a day by members of a new congregation associated with the Purification. But despite claims at the time that the Purification was losing its members and its direction, Polizzotto points out that membership lists in fact show a thriving constituency, and that the confraternity's oratorio performances were so well attended that the audience most likely spilled out from the main hall into the foyer and even onto the lawn of the Purification complex. What lends further credence to Polizzotto's adaptation thesis is the brotherhood's commitment to serve social needs as much as it had done in the fifteenth century, albeit in new ways. In one staggering example of the Florentine thirst for institutional charity in the early eighteenth century, we hear of a bequest left to the confraternity to dower young women; 554 women of all ages applied for just 10 dowries. Whatever the nature of its reorientation, the Purification was clearly still engaged in the social and religious challenges facing Florentines at the dawn of the modern age. Only during the years immediately preceding its suppression by the government in 1785 did the Purification seem finally to have come unmoored from its distant origins, deciding to break its association with the convent of San Marco and to refuse admission to children altogether.

Particularly striking in *Children of the Promise* is the ease with which Polizzotto navigates a wide variety of texts, turning an experienced paleographer's eye to the Purification's statutes, and making confident use of iconographical, theatrical, musical, narrative, and quantitative sources. The author also enjoys a deep familiarity with the world of confraternal scholarship, a knowledge that he marshals to great effect throughout the book's pages. Referring to the research of such scholars as Richard Trexler, Christopher Black, and particularly Nerida Newbigin in Chapter 2, Polizzotto manages to weave their work on specific aspects of confraternal life (such as Newbigin's treatments of theatrical *rappresentazione*) into the broader narrative of the confraternity's entire history. Polizzotto has a felicitous skill for drawing new questions and perspectives from these juxtapositions. One hopes, in the end, that *longue durée* studies like Polizzotto's will elicit even further reflections on confraternal continuity and change over the centuries.

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Sánchez Herrero, José. *La Semana Santa de Sevilla*. Biblioteca de Sevilla. Madrid: Silex, 2003. 355 pp., 9 b/w illustrations. ISBN 84-7737-120-2

"When we say 'Holy Week of Seville,' we normally refer to the typically Sevillian celebration of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ according to the confraternities and brotherhoods that, during the days of Holy Week, celebrate their processions, or 'stations of penitence' in the Holy Church Cathedral." (13)

Thus states José Sánchez Herrero in the introduction of his monograph, *La Semana Santa de Sevilla*, clearly demonstrating to the reader that this work is not focussed on Holy Week per se, as its title would suggest, but rather on the confraternal associations that developed around its celebration. Having widely published on other Sevillian confraternities, Sánchez Herrero turns his eye to those of Holy Week, examining these associations from their first appearance in the second half of the fifteenth century to their continued importance in Sevillian popular religion today. By looking at these confraternities through their involvement in Holy Week celebrations, Sánchez Herrero is able to explore much broader themes, providing the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious context of Seville, Andalucía, Spain and the Catholic Church during this period. In doing so, this author makes an important contribution to the growing history of confraternal associations in Spain and the rest of Europe.

Because Sánchez Herrero's aim is to explore the appearance and development of confraternities associated with Holy Week in Seville, he divides *La Semana Santa de Sevilla* into six sections, tracing these institutions chronologically and highlighting their times of popularity and crisis. While Chapter One lays the groundwork for Sánchez Herrero's analysis by discussing the creation of confraternal associations, the celebration of Holy Week, and the cult of the True Cross and Passion of Christ throughout Europe and Spain, Chapter Two focuses more specifically on the Sevillian confraternities beginning with their first stage as groups of penitence and austerity from 1500–1575. The author describes these early confraternities as spontaneous, austere, simple and lacking in pomp. (111) Their Holy Week processions had no music, flowers or any other accompaniment; the brothers and sisters who participated were dressed sombrely and only carried a small crucifix, if anything at all.

This contrasts sharply with the baroque confraternities of 1575 to 1700, described as the height of these organizations by Sánchez Herrero in Chapter Two. Characterized by splendour and brilliance, representing the triumph of the Counter-Reformation and the reaffirmation of the Catholic Church as the only instrument of salvation, the baroque period saw the number of Sevillian confraternities associated with Holy Week grow enormously. Sánchez Herrero rightly attributes this growth to Tridentine reforms such as the assertion that man could collaborate with God for his own salvation by mortifying the flesh, obeying the orders of God and the Church, and by doing good works. (127) In direct contrast to those of the sixteenth century, the confraternal processions of the baroque period used numerous images of Christ, Mary, and the Cross, dressed in brocade and other rich fabrics. Reflecting the strength of the confraternities during this period, Sánchez Herrero is at his best in describing the lush processions that took place in this period, as well as in laying the seeds for the crisis to come.

The confraternities of Holy Week in Seville experienced a great crisis from 1700–1844, reflective of the crisis gripping Spain as a whole during this period.

The War of Spanish Succession and the triumph of the French were devastating for many of these institutions whose destruction, at times, seemed immanent. However, after their dramatic fall, these associations were able to reinvent themselves from 1844–1931 to become, as Sánchez Herrero argues, strong expressions of Sevillian and Spanish nationalism. Moving away from charitable works, the confraternities of the romantic period focussed instead on maintaining their roles in the penitential processions of Holy Week, but in a very different guise from before, shifting from the celebration of the Passion as a time of grief to one of happiness. The author argues that it is at this point that the confraternities of Holy Week became cultural representations not only of Seville, but more specifically of the particular neighbourhood with which they were associated (274).

The final chapter takes the reader through the catastrophes of the Second Republic and the Civil War, which saw not only few confraternities participate in Holy Week celebrations, but also the destruction of many churches and convents, and the reinvigoration of these associations as “neobaroque”, thereby harkening back to the sodalities’ glory days. In their most recent form, these confraternities and brotherhoods have become centrally involved in new charitable and cultural activities, while remaining closely tied to the penitential processions of Holy Week.

At the end of his volume, José Sánchez Herrero poses the question “Did the confraternities of Holy Week in Seville develop their own religiosity? And has this changed from the sixteenth century to today?” (334) In answer, he argues that three elements have remained constant: (1) these confraternities consisted of close associations, rather than groups of individuals; (2) they continued to focus on the Passion and Death of Jesus; and (3) they persisted, despite much criticism, in their contemplation of the physical and public exercise of penitence. These elements are strongly present throughout this monograph as central themes tying together the disparate periods. While at times bogged down in specific details, *La Semana Santa de Sevilla* nevertheless provides the reader with a clear understanding of the development and important role of Holy Week confraternities and brotherhoods in Seville as well as with a broader understanding of Sevillian popular piety from the sixteenth century to today.

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