

Franca Varallo, ed. *La Ronde: giostre, esercizi cavallereschi e Loisir in Francia e Piemonte fra medioevo e ottocento; Atti del convegno internazionale di Studi, Museo Storico dell'Arma di Cavalleria di Pinerolo, 15–17 July 2006*.

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Renaissance scholars are aware that the chivalric tradition persisted in fairly good health not just through their period but into the Baroque, the Enlightenment, and beyond. Its romance supplied the form, if not the spirit, of Ariosto's masterpiece in Italy and then a rich satirical target for Cervantes in Spain. This volume, however, is not about literature, nor even completely about chivalry. It publishes papers from what must have been a stimulating interdisciplinary colloquium dealing principally with the history of an Italian province, the Piedmont, and its French neighbor Savoy, which were for several centuries governed by the same noble house. The single common reference of all the papers is the horse, which gave its name to chivalry but was, of course, long essential also to many human enterprises unrelated to knighthood. Pageantry is the most frequent focus, but there are papers as well on the education of princes and clergymen, on hunting, and on the development of veterinary medicine.

A useful summary by Franca Varallo introduces eleven essays in Italian or French. The first of these surveys the “civilization of the tourney” in the two provinces at the end of the Middle Ages. Its author, Luisa Clotilde Gentile, shows, among other things, that most such entertainments were planned to demonstrate “the dominance of the ducal power over the [lesser] aristocracy” (11). Similar political messages are inferred in most of the other essays. In Alessandra Castellani Torta's analysis of the courtly and martial education of princes at the Savoy courts, we become familiar with the lively influence of Cristina di Francia (1606–63), sister of King Louis XII, consort of Duke Vittorio Amedeo, and then, after the latter's death, regent of the duchy. Blythe Alice Raviola ventures downstream on the Po to examine chivalric celebrations in Mantua and Ferrara, giving some interesting attention also to ceremonial travel on the river itself. Paolo Cozzo looks at the rather surprising importance of chivalric exercises and games in the lives of seminarians and priests.

G rard Sabatier analyzes a 1669 treatise on tourneys, jousts, and other chivalric entertainments by Claude Fran ois M nestr ier, who was both a busy *festaiuolo*, or planner of civic celebrations, and a remarkably prolific author of theoretical writings. The 1663 entry of Duke Carlo Emmanuele II into Savoy's capital of Chamb ry, studied next by Giulio Ferretti, was apparently both planned and chronicled by M nestr ier. In this festival, the familiar triumphal arches and Latin inscriptions of classical revival and the baroque virtually crowd out chivalric motifs. In a sharp geographical — but not thematic — departure from the volume's focus, Martine Boiteux then provides a meticulously researched, probably definitive survey of equestrian games in Rome during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, reproducing handsome engravings and color photographs of relevant paintings.

Pietro Passerin d'Entrèves studies hunting at the Savoys' country estates. Such costly horseback activity, with its own pageantry of sorts, must surely have been one of the most egregious examples of conspicuous consumption under Europe's *ancien régime*. Maurizio Ferro then turns to eighteenth-century France for the beginnings of equine veterinary science. The pioneers in this field were genuine experimental scientists of medicine a century before Claude Bernard, but they had to contend with the bitter opposition of farriers and blacksmiths, who stood to lose income from the provision of their own, often quack remedies. Renato Bordone's final essay deals with a nostalgic chivalric festival at Turin in 1842, during the Age of Romanticism and Gothic Revival. The contemporary state occasion was the marriage of Carlo Alberto of Savoy to an Austrian archduchess, but its tourney evoked a marriage of 1325 that had joined a Savoy princess and the Byzantine emperor.

The volume's author-friendly Italian scholarly publisher has allowed many, often lengthy footnotes that teem with references to archival material and to rare, ephemeral publications. In the absence of alphabetical bibliographies, however, one must often swim slowly upstream through many equivalents of *op. cit.* to find full references. It is unfortunate as well for future researchers that authors have not always indicated the libraries in which they found the rare publications on which their work is largely based. These are, however, minor complaints about a worthwhile and well-edited volume.

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