

Mario Ascheri, Gianni Mazzoni, and Fabrizio Nevola, eds. *L'ultimo secolo della Repubblica di Siena; Arti, cultura e società: Atti di convegno internazionale, Siena 28–30 settembre 2003 e 16–18 settembre 2004*.

Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 2008. 548 pp. + 160 b/w pls. index. illus. €35. ISBN: 978–88–89073–10–0.

This bilingual volume of thirty-one essays is the result of two conferences held in Siena in 2003 and 2004. Gathering scholars from universities and institutes in Italy, England, the U.S., and elsewhere, these conferences explored issues regarding Siennese culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, chiefly up to the fall of the republic in 1555 and Siena's absorption by the Florentine Grand Duchy. As the previous volume dealt with matters political, institutional, social, and economic, this one treats the literary, artistic, architectural, musical, and scientific realms.

The first of the collection's five sections is devoted to classical influences, literary and scholarly pursuits, and festive life. Stefano Carrai examines the poet Benedetto da Cingoli, and Gilda Bartoloni and Piera Bocci Pacini discuss the contributions of Annio da Viterbo and Sigismondo Tizio to Etruscan archaeology. Several pieces consider the impact of classical culture in various settings: the iconographical presence of Orpheus by Gioachino Chiarini; the influence of Roman architecture on Baldassare Peruzzi by Ann Huppert; and the resonance of Ovid in visual culture by Marilena Caciorgna. This last piece, quite engaging and the longest in the volume, examines how artists received and combined literary texts in their decorations of *cessioni*, chair backs, and tables. Caciorgna focuses on the impact of translations of Ovid's *Heroides* — which consists of letters of scorned women such as Oenone (to Paris) and Ariadne (to Theseus) — and shows how such images formed part of a didactic culture of *exempla* directed to women. Two studies in this section treat the festive activities and cultural life of the Contrade. Alberto Cornice examines a register of the Contrada dell'Onda from 1524 to 1764 to reveal the Contrada's commissioning of, for instance, floats and other decorations for civic festivals on religious holidays or political occasions. In an intriguing piece linking high and low culture, Patrizia Turrini analyzes the impact of bestiaries and the moral iconography of creatures on the Contrade's choice of totemic animals in their participation in the (cruel) hunts of boars, deer, bulls, and oxen in the piazza del Campo.

The second section, on architecture and material culture, opens with pieces examining architectural patterns from political and social vantage points. Fabrizio Nevola analyzes public and private "housing strategies" in the building renewals (ca. 1450–1510) on the Strada Romana, via del Capitano, and via del Casato. Matthias Quast examines the "language" of palace facades in terms of the political events of the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento, notably the rise and aftermath of Pandolfo Petrucci's control of the city. Among the other pieces are two dealing with Baldassare Peruzzi — Renata Samperi discusses his design for the castello di Belcaro, and Giulia Sebregondi his commission for the palazzo Francesconi — and one on Peruzzi's student Bartolomeo Nerone (called Riccio) by Maurizio Ricci. As for material culture, Paula Hohti's fascinating piece shows how and why material wealth extended considerably beyond the confines of the elite to the artisan and middling class. She attributes the discrepancies between the modest tax assessments of this class and the more sizeable postmortem estate inventories to the fruits of side ventures, especially pawnbroking. And because the latter entailed holding items for later redemption, these objects often graced the homes and swelled the estates of this class.

The third section examines painting, religious architecture, and devotional cults. Three pieces concern projects of Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, called Sodoma, two of which focus on his series in the chapel of St. Catherine in San Domenico. In one of these articles, Diana Norman discusses the likely influence of Filippino Lippi's frescoes in the Carafa chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, pointing to stylistic connections, and linking the two churches as cult sites of St. Catherine.

Wolfgang Loseries explains Sodoma's choice of the theme of the *Decapitation of Niccolò di Tuldo* by his, and possibly his patron's, ties to the newly formed confraternity, Compagnia della Morte, which ministered to the condemned. Tom Henry examines the role of reputation in the commissions and influence of Luca Signorelli, and Gail Aronow offers a preliminary biography of the long-serving Operaio del Duomo, Alberto Aringhieri, linking his appointment and eventual eclipse to the factional politics of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The final two sections of the collection deal with scientific and military matters and with music. Francesco Benelli examines the painter Francesco di Giorgio Martini's pursuits as a military architect, Simon Pepper analyzes the siege of Siena in 1554–55 to challenge Geoffrey Parker's thesis concerning the "military revolution" in bastioned fortification, and Raffaello Vergani discusses the encyclopedic *Pirotechnia* of Vannoccio Biringucci. The volume closes with pieces on music education by Frank D'Accone, the convent choir of Santi Abbondio e Abbondanzio by Colleen Reardon, and North Italian style in Pietro Sambonetto's 1515 book of secular music by William Prizer.

This collection is impressive both in its scholarly detail — often presenting editions of unpublished documents — and its visual appeal, including 275 plates especially helpful in the architectural and art historical pieces. While the volume is wide-ranging in scope and includes pieces other than those cited here, it is somewhat surprising to find little on the cultural activities of the Sienese academies arising in the second quarter of the Cinquecento, such as the theatrical productions of the Intronati and the Rozzi — this, ironically, despite the fact that the volume was published by the still-flourishing Accademia degli Intronati. Nor is there anything on Siena's role in the intellectual elevation of the *volgare* in the first half of the sixteenth century — as in the figure of Alessandro Piccolomini — and relatively little on the cultural lives of women. Thus, the volume should not be taken as a representative sampling of Sienese culture in this period, but as a potpourri — as conferences usually are. But in this, the collection offers new material, innovative approaches, and a window onto recent scholarship on Renaissance Tuscany's other great republic.

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