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La geografia celeste dei duchi di Savoia: Religione,  
devozioni e sacralità in uno Stato di età moderna (secoli  
XVI–XVII) (review)

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the erotic side of political commitment, but, in my view, he pushes the interpretation further than the text itself allows. Catherine's language, as is well-known, can be earthy. It is also at times metaphorical and allegorical, but is based on sacred texts and spiritual literature, and the letter must be read in relation to the works that Catherine used. As Luongo points out, there is no doubt that Catherine's description of the conversion and death of the condemned man reveals much about Catherine herself and her entrance into public life, but I find the interpretation of his death as a mystical marriage unlikely. The presence of the Virgin Mary and Catherine of Alexandria at the scene, which led Luongo to this conclusion, could be explained differently. Conversion of sinners was a recurring topos among the Miracles of the Virgin from the fourteenth century: furthermore, conversion is a miracle that entitles its practitioners to be apostles and missionaries. Catherine of Alexandria was the patron saint of Catherine of Siena and a martyr, and Catherine of Siena described the execution of Niccolò di Toldo as a martyrdom that inspired her commitment to reforming the church.

These remarks notwithstanding, this work makes a significant contribution both to studies about Catherine and to those regarding female saintliness as a historiographical category.

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Paolo Cozzo. *La geografia celeste dei duchi di Savoia: Religione, devozioni e sacralità in uno Stato di età moderna (secoli XVI–XVII)*.

Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento 43. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006. 370 pp. index. append. illus. bibl. €22. ISBN: 88-15-10904-8.

Until now, scholarly work on the religious policies of the house of Savoy could be found only in a relatively few studies of isolated topics. Paolo Cozzo's well-organized overview is a timely addition to the field of early modern Piedmontese studies, and while it should prove to be a useful resource for students of religious and dynastic history, it should also be handled cautiously.

The four chapters of this work examine various elements of the religious dynamics in Piedmont and the ways in which the house of Savoy manipulated them "come fattori strategici accuratamente pianificati e finalizzati" (18) in order to facilitate its "processo di conquista dell'intero territorio statale" (19). In other words, Cozzo is interested in how the dynasty instrumentalized religion as a tool of state-building during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a thesis that fits squarely into the vast literature (not mentioned by the author) on confession-alization in early modern society. In chapter 1, Cozzo describes devotional life in the city of Turin, identifying key religious sites, saints of importance to the Turinese (especially Maurizio, Secondo, and the other Theban martyrs), religious companies, ceremonies, and relics (including, of course, the Holy Shroud). His general argument in this chapter is that between 1500 and ca. 1630 the ruling

house took control of Turin's civic religious life: by the latter date Turin's "assoggettamento politico all'autorità centrale era stato accompagnato da una sottomissione della religione cittadina a quella dinastica" (88). Chapter 2 extends this thesis to the towns of Asti (where the dynasty associated itself with the local patron saint), Mondovì (where Duke Charles Emanuel I ordered the construction of the sanctuary of Madonna di Vico), and Saluzzo (whose conquest by the dynasty was defended by the ducal apologist Baldessano in religious terms). This chapter also suggests that Savoyard rulers sought to strengthen their presence in dynastic borderlands near Biella by establishing a *Sacro Monte* at Oropa in the early seventeenth century.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal more explicitly with sacred images at the Savoyard court and in diplomatic circuits. Confessors, preachers, and almsgivers are described here, as are symbols of Marian devotion, religious exchanges with the Spanish court (via Catherine of Habsburg, Charles Emanuel's consort), religious collecting and relic trading, and the sanctification of dynastic forbears such as Duke Amadeus IX (ruled 1464–72). One also finds discussions of courtly religious ceremonial, ecclesio-political relations between the house of Savoy and the papacy, and the activities of the Savoyard community in Rome. Though the analytical theme is not as clearly articulated in these chapters, they offer a mine of information about religious culture at the Turinese court.

There are also some shortcomings in this book. Most obviously, it is a "celestial geography" that offers the reader no maps, even though Cozzo's main problematic relates to political uses of space. A second problem is that the work completely ignores the dynasty's relationship to the religious landscape in Savoyard lands west of the Alps and in the county of Nice. This mistake is particularly unfortunate, since it prevents Cozzo from discussing topics as important as the dynastic mausoleum at the abbey of Hautecombe and the activities of François de Sales and Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal (who founded the order of the Visitation at Annecy in 1610), just to name a few. Third, one is startled to learn that this study of "religion, devotions, and sacrality" cites no evidence from diocesan, parish, or other ecclesiastical archives (except for three items from the Vatican and Escorial Libraries). We are thus left with a picture of religious life based almost exclusively on records produced by courtiers and state officials. This would be appropriate for a study limited to analyzing a dynasty's sacred representations of itself. However, Cozzo clearly wishes to make an argument about the impact of dynastic religious policy. Along with matrimonial and military strategies, he writes, "quella 'politica del sacro' . . . aveva permesso alla dinastia sabauda di perfezionare il suo disegno assolutista" (266). It is difficult to accept this assertion, given Cozzo's choice not to examine ecclesiastical records and the book's lack of critical distance from state-produced documents, whose claims the author often mistakes for evidence of effective change in religious practice and assumptions.

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