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**Celebrazione e autocritica: La Serenissima e la ricerca dell'identità veneziana nel tardo Cinquecento.** Ed. Benjamin Paul.

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This book gathers the proceedings of a conference organized by the Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani in 2006 focusing on Venetian identity in the second half of the sixteenth century. The authors' main purpose, as also underlined by the curator Benjamin Paul, is to convey the ways in which the city, after a period of difficulties that included "internal and external political conflicts, wars, and a long list of natural disasters, epidemics, and famines, to which one must add the religious tensions resulting from the papacy's increased pressure on Venetians conventions and traditions after the Council of Trent" (9), first underwent a process of self-criticism and then elaborated a celebratory model aiming at the construction of what will be later recognized as the myth of Venice. In other words, the book presents a

discussion of Venetian modes of self-reflection in the late Cinquecento. As Benjamin Paul reminds us, this self-reflection led to political and cultural changes as well as legal and constitutional reforms that made Venice “more welcoming to foreign traders than previously” (11), for example, or redefined the relations of power among some of the major governmental organisms of the republic (as, for instance, the Senate and the Council of Ten).

Anna Bellavitis discusses Venetian exceptionality under two main points of view: the model of hereditary transmission in nonnoble families (artisans, merchants, and professionals), and the stronger sense of self-consciousness and societal criticism exerted by women. For the first she analyzes archival documentations of a fiscal nature that reveal modes of transmission of goods and productive activities that underscore a type of societal mobility that was stronger in Venice than in other Italian cities. By tracking the use of the mothers’ dowries to ensure the children’s careers, she also uncovers mechanisms that were strongly criticized even by some Venetian women, such as Moderata Fonte and Arcangela Tarabotti.

In a markedly religious culture, Venice’s identity is also reflected in the organization of religious institutions and the practice of cults. For Deborah Walberg the specificity of the Venetian church consisted in the existence of “an alternate church authority [that] was closely tied to the prerogatives and power of the doge under the aegis of the *primicerio* of San Marco, a mitred dean who did not answer directly to the Holy See but rather to . . . the doge” (235). This caused continuous conflicts with the church of Rome, which eventually led to the Interdetto (1605–7) and the consequent reaction of the citizens to demonstrate their relative independence from the papacy. Giovanni Tiepolo, *primicerio* of San Marco, thus became a pivotal figure in “maintaining a viable Venetian religious tradition” (237). His distinctive approach included, for instance, a more compassionate attitude toward female monasticism that brought him to alleviate the dire conditions of nuns, as well as a direct involvement in hagiographical research. By stressing a sense of collective piety and by identifying a group of specifically Venetian holy figures, later recognized by the church of Rome, Tiepolo defined the sense of Venetian religious identity.

Claudio Bernardi and Ian Fenlon focus on liturgy and music after the battle of Lepanto (1571). Bernardi analyzes the procession of the Corpus Christi in light of the conflict between state and papacy in 1606 and discusses the associative model of confraternities and *compagnie* or *scholae* that “aggregated individuals or families of a neighborhood or of members of the same profession” (59). The world of confraternities, thus, is placed between the “trumpets” of the state and the “bells” of the church as a third way to liturgical celebration. For Ian Fenlon, Lepanto was a defining moment that “terminated the Ottoman threat” and ended “a period of uncertainty and even a sense of inferiority in the face of Turkish supremacy” (61). The feast of Santa Giustina, a virgin and martyr, whose relics were preserved in the nearby Padua and whose feast was celebrated on the day of the victory (7 October), became a major celebration with a determinant role “within the official articulation of the myth of Venice” (66). The composition of the *Trionfo di Christo contra Turchi* (text by Celio Magno) and the motet “Intret super eos formido et pavor” by Pietro Vinci underscore “the topos of the victory as Christ’s victory (69).”

Martin Gaier, Deborah Howard, and Thomas Worthen examine the ways in which self-criticism and celebration are expressed in architecture. By contrasting Palladio’s neo-classicism to Antonio Da Ponte’s pragmatism, Gaier shows that Da Ponte’s buildings—the Rialto bridge, the Church of the monastery of Santa Croce on Canal Grande, and the Prigioni—integrated functionality and comfort, thus privileging “livability and functionality” (91) over exteriority. That Da Ponte was a proto (in Venice an expert of the technical

aspects of construction) rather than a celebrated architect, such as Palladio or Sansovino, shows a conception of architecture as reflection of public conscience. Contemporaneous historiography, as for instance Leonardo Fioravanti's *Dello specchio di scientia universal* (1564), also recognizes this aspect. By contrast, the construction of Palmanova, the city-fortress conceived as prevention of a Turkish invasion on the terraferma, was marked by a struggle between "power" and "practicality." In the project, as argued by Deborah Howard, "[c]elebrazione... sustained the exorbitant expenses, while *autocritica* tempered the idealism" (120). At the intersection between architecture and decorative arts, Thomas Worthen's essay argues that the decorative program of San Nicolò dei Mendicoli was a better concretization of the Tridentine values than that of San Giorgio Maggiore. And in fact the church became a model for the renovation, rather than the rebuilding, of other churches mostly concentrated on the west side of the Grand Canal.

Benjamin Paul, Giorgio Tagliaferro, and the late David Rosand discuss how figurative arts could also convey a specifically Venetian political message. Paul examines Venetian modes of self-representation during the crisis of the 1570s in the depictions of the Dogi Alvise Mocenigo and Sebastiano Venier by, respectively, Jacopo Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese. In particular he compares the changes in composition between the original *bozzetti* and the final paintings, and considers how these were meant to underline the Dogi's public role. Venier, thus, is first depicted as the direct interlocutor of St Mark and therefore the major intercessor for the republic and is then moved into "the group of saints, allegorical figures, and spectators" (125), while Christ dispenses his grace to the city. Less dramatic, but still highly ideological, are the revisions made by Tintoretto for the Mocenigo painting. Since the changes go in the opposite direction (from a more penitential to a more celebratory portrayal of the Doge) Paul argues that between the time of execution of the *bozzetto* and that of the painting, the city had moved from self-criticism to self-celebration. Within a similar chronological frame, Giorgio Tagliaferro discusses the republic's modes of self-representations between Lepanto and the Interdetto by analyzing Domenico Tintoretto's *Venezia raccoglie il sangue di Cristo*, whose detail is also reproduced on the cover of the book. By comparing it with a *paletta* in San Francesco della Vigna, Tagliaferro argues that Tintoretto's painting stresses the highly communitarian culture of the republic in which both the representatives of power and the citizens had to comply to their ethical, political, and religious duties.

That self-criticism and celebration can also be conveyed by attitudes toward and evaluations of the past is evident in David Rosand's and Dorit Raines's essays. Rosand considers the crisis of the art of painting the 1570s, as represented by the struggles of both emerging and foreign painters (as, for instance, El Greco, Jacopo Palma, Albrecht Dürer, Pietro Malombra, Giovanni Contarini) in a city dominated by the great masters (especially Tiziano, Tintoretto, and Veronese), familial *botteghe*, and the rigid rules of corporations. This situation, made direr by the pestilence, was reflected by the stylistic choices and career trajectories of younger painters. While closely following the teachings of the great masters of the previous generations, painters of the late Cinquecento in Venice started to be considered as humanists, rather than as artisans, a transformation that had occurred in Florence at the beginning of the fifteenth century. As a consequence, Malombra's and Contarini's legal problems for not having been initially matriculated as painters well demonstrate the struggle between innovation and tradition in the Venetian conception of the societal role of painters.

Dorit Raines examines the role of the public historiographer primarily in the writings of Andrea Morosini. Between Titus Livius (the champion of republican values) and Tacitus (the “neutral” historian of contemporaneous facts), Morosini chooses Livius and his Renaissance heir, Pietro Bembo, as his models. In analyzing the present situation, marked by the “emergence of States-nations, the struggle between France and Spain, the overwhelming power of the Ottoman empire, the shifting of the commercial barycenter toward the West, the increasing loss of markets in the East” (162), Morosini and other young Venetian historians distanced themselves from the historiographic methods of previous generations. In their view, Venice’s identity was balanced between pride in the liberty from an external power, well characterized by the myth of Attila as the founder of Venice, and the need for stability, guaranteed by social and political unity. The patrician class had to respond to this need for stability by upholding strongly the concept of public interest. Therefore Morosini stresses the importance of an internal reform that could create “an organ capable of courageous choices taken after an in-depth and organic reflection and discussion” (175).

In its broad variety of perspectives, this volume presents a multifaceted examination of the complex political and cultural situation of Venice during the second half of the Cinquecento. The apparatus of illustrations, the rich bibliography, and the index of names facilitate an enjoyable and cross-referential reading. Notwithstanding some typos and clerical mistakes that could have been easily fixed in the revision stage, and although some comparative analyses with other peninsular realities would have been beneficial, this book will soon become a necessary tool to investigate the cultural history of Venice and to frame more general discussions of societal identity in the late Cinquecento. (All translations from Italian are by the reviewer).

