

respect, what needs to be stressed is the management of monastic confraternities in which the nomenclature and hierarchy of offices were modelled on the structure of their original order. This chapter also contains interesting information on the internal organisation of Unitarian confraternities.

Chapter 4, the longest, deals with the parish confraternities that operated in the territories of the five dioceses under discussion, as well as with those brotherhoods that remained under the supervision of the Franciscan-Bernardine order. The relative frequency of confraternities enables the author to demonstrate the special character of each investigated diocese, as well as to present the relationship between the network and registers of parishes and the types and numbers of confraternities operating within them. This approach toward fraternal issues provides useful guidance for research into other church institutions as it demonstrates the need to investigate confraternal issues in detail.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the issue of the recruitment of members to confraternal communities, which is considered “a measure of their influence.” On the basis of quantitative research concerning the entry of new brothers into the books of twelve brotherhoods, the author confirms the findings of other confraternal research, namely that recruitment to brotherhoods was strongest in the first years of their operation, and their attraction declined with the passing of time. This chapter describes the reasons and circumstances of this process.

Chapter 6 examines aspects of confraternal devotion that provided the fundamental purpose and, in general, the essence of brotherhood activities. The author first characterises the services typical of the majority of communities and then discusses more exclusive practices, such as the observance of the virtue of purity, special respect for the name of God and sacred words, or the fight against heresy. The final chapter, in turn, shows the broad spectrum of charitable, educational and cultural operations engaged in by brotherhoods.

Serving, in a way, as a guide to confraternities in early modern Poland, the volume provides valuable information on confraternities in Poland and serves as a model for further investigation.

Dominika Burdzy
The History Institute
Holy Cross Academy, Kielce Poland

Kiddy, Elizabeth W. *Blacks of the Rosary. Memory and History in Minas Gerais, Brazil*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-271-02693-6

This volume examines the lay religious brotherhoods devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil that were established for non-white peoples. It is divided chronologically into three sections – European and African origins of the brotherhoods, the Brazilian colonial and Imperial periods

(1690–1880), and the modern period (1888–1990). The first two sections, in which Kiddy traces the development of these brotherhoods in early modern Portugal, their spread to Western and Sub-Saharan Africa, and then their subsequent leap to Brazil are of special interest to readers of *Confraternitas*.

In Part One, Kiddy identifies and presents the antecedents of the Minas Gerais brotherhoods as they began in Europe and Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Chapter One traces the beginnings of lay devotional activity and interest in the Rosary in Europe, and more specifically, on the Iberian Peninsula. Chapter Two explores the history of Portuguese and African contact in the seventeenth century and traces the beginnings of the slave trade and the intersection of African cosmologies and European Catholicism.

In Part Two, Kiddy examines in detail the brotherhoods of the Rosary of the blacks in Minas Gerais from the late seventeenth to the late nineteenth century. Chapter Three traces the development of these brotherhoods in the frontier atmosphere of the early eighteenth-century gold rush that occurred in Minas Gerais, an event that attracted the Portuguese who, in turn, brought large numbers of African slaves to the region. Because of the constant shortage of clergy in Brazil, the brotherhoods flourished, both as the main organisations of Catholicism in Minas Gerais and as a growing community for non-whites.

Kiddy's sensitivity to concepts of race, power, and social construction inform the presentation of her findings and enable her to correct past historiographical misunderstandings. One of her key assertions is that not all non-white members of the brotherhoods were slaves, either in Portugal, Africa, or Brazil, as had been previously assumed. In fact, Kiddy's findings indicate that throughout the period of her study the majority of members of black brotherhoods were free non-whites.

As with other confraternities, Kiddy asserts that non-white members actively pursued membership in these groups because of the social and communal benefits available. Like white European groups, blacks from these brotherhoods engaged in charitable work, the physical and spiritual care of the dead, communal religious devotion, and annual religious celebrations. The fact that there were many similarities between African cosmologies and Catholicism explains why Africans were able to understand and adopt so well Catholic beliefs and devotional practices. However, the specific situations of the Africans made such beliefs and practices doubly attractive. Kiddy persuasively argues that the attraction of Catholic brotherhoods for Africans, who had been plucked from their own societies, forced to cross the ocean and live in a new climate, controlled by people of a different culture, lay in the communal opportunities such lay religious organizations offered them. Both slaves and free blacks were viewed by Europeans as inferior beings and thus socially lower. By establishing their own communities within the brotherhoods, blacks were able to regain the affective kinship ties that they had lost when they left or were removed from Africa, and were able to begin to rebuild a group identity in their new surroundings. Moreover, because

of a constant shortage of clergy in Brazil, black brotherhoods were fairly autonomous in their activities from the official, Portuguese church. With the end of the colonial period and the beginning of the Brazilian empire, the autonomy of the brotherhoods from church and state control came to an end. However, the brotherhoods have continued to thrive into the modern period and up to the present, in part because they remained a traditional element of the shared cultural history of Brazilian blacks.

Kiddy's findings demonstrate her nuanced understanding of the affects of Catholicism when adopted by non-European peoples and its role in the colonization of such peoples. Like other recent scholars of confraternities have found, Kiddy also identifies the brotherhoods of the Rosary as places of both assimilation and resistance. Membership in brotherhoods reduced the perceived "danger" blacks have posed to a society that considered them inferior because it helped to socialize them into the new culture by teaching them Christianity and also because it tied them to the Euro-Brazilian social milieu. However, these lay religious groups also created a stable and shared existence for non-whites living in a world that was much different from their homelands, in a culture that was different from their own, and in a social context where their natal families and other kinship relations had been severed. Indeed, Kiddy argues forcefully for the stability of identity that the brotherhoods offered through kinship and community, as non-whites, both slave and free, attempted to create new and meaningful identities for themselves in Brazil.

This fresh and insightful endeavour is of interest to confraternity scholars first and foremost because of its focus on sodalities for non-whites – something that, to my knowledge, is very scarce in scholarship in this field. Furthermore, it is of interest to scholars because of the light it sheds on the exportation of European lay religious practices to Africa and to Brazil. Finally, it provides a fascinating glimpse into the ways in which colonized groups, such as Africans and Afro-Brazilians, have managed to balance and orchestrate their own lives, build their own transnational and multi-ethnic communities, and, to some extent, retain their cultural practices while living under the control of a culture that systematically discriminated and devalued them. It is a testament to the power of confraternal groups to unite people through community, identity, and devotion.

Vanessa McCarthy
Department of History
University of Guelph