

Preface

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The term *lauda* usually describes a type of sacred song developed in Italian lands from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century and traditionally sung in the vernacular of the region or in Latin. *Lauda* singing thrived particularly in late medieval Umbria, with its strong Franciscan traditions, but was also present (and *laude* were composed) across the entire Italian peninsula, generally until at least the sixteenth century. Despite its strong Italian roots, the monophonic form of the *lauda* profoundly influenced religious music and poetry in all European lands. In fact, the *lauda* originally composed in central Italy spread widely throughout Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Known across the Alps as *Geisslerlied* (songs of the flagellants), *lauda* singing was picked up in the vernacular language in each country in which it developed, including Germany, Poland, England, and Scandinavia.

Although *laude* were popular within monastic communities, *lauda* singing was promoted primarily by the religious confraternities that appeared and developed throughout Italy between the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. This special issue of *Confraternitas* explores this close-knit relationship to unveil the links between the success of the *lauda* and the history of religious confraternities in the late Middle Ages.

The articles in this special issue concentrate on central Italy (with the notable exception of Filocamo's article on Bologna) in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, a crucial period for the evolution of *laude* in Italian lands. Some contributions underline the well-known influence of flagellant confraternities in shaping the phenomenon of the *lauda* (Nerbano, Piana, Santucci, Zangari, Zimei); others concentrate on the importance of the *lauda* collections, or *laudari*, of religious confraternities in developing late medieval models of sanctity connected to confraternal devotion (Nerbano, Zangari). Several articles point to the influence of the mendicant orders, in particular the Franciscans (Nerbano, Piana, Santucci, Zangari), and Dominicans (Zimei). All articles suggest that music (Zimei), public ritual (Piana), and spiritual enlightenment (Filocamo, Zangari) played an essential role in defining the *laude* in a confraternal context. Similarly, many contributions underline a strong relationship between the *laude* and the role of penitence, bodily suffering, and death in late medieval confraternal culture. Another important aspect of this special issue is more practical and regards the authors' generous sharing of primary sources. Most of these articles include excerpts from relevant *laude* in the original vernacular and English translation, thus providing the broader public with

direct access to examples of these lyrics that might then facilitate future research on the lauda tradition and confraternities in Italy and beyond.

The first contribution in this special issue is that of Gioia Filocamo, who investigates a set of eleven laude found in a fifteenth-century manuscript belonging to the Bolognese confraternity of Santa Maria della Morte, established in 1336. These laude were written by the noble Giovanni Marco Pio da Carpi (d. 1469), a political prisoner sentenced to death. His moral laude, composed in his cell while awaiting execution, were intended to help him face his destiny with piety and dignity; as such, they are a notable example of medieval prison literature and the further development of lauda singing in the world of vernacular moral poetry.

Francesco Santucci's article deals with a series of themes found in some of the laude transcribed by the notary Sante Cicchi in his 1388 laudario made for the flagellant confraternity of Santo Stefano in Assisi. The article provides the transcription and English translation of two rare laude that underline a direct relationship between late medieval Umbrian flagellant literature and the work of the Tuscan poet Dante Alighieri.

My contribution to the collection explores instances of blood devotion in the laudari 'Frondini' and 'Illuminati,' two fourteenth-century laude collections belonging to the already mentioned confraternity of the Disciplinati di Santo Stefano in Assisi. My analysis of the laude celebrating Good Friday and Corpus Domini investigates how the holy blood of Christ is adored, poured, and metaphorically "consumed" in the narratives adopted by the members of the confraternity. The article also highlights the connection with other cultural trends active in medieval Italy, particularly the hagiographical episodes of bloodshed and blood consumption, and the iconographical tradition of the *crucifixi dolorosi*.

Similarly, Mattia Zangari's article deals with the relationship between the hagiographical legacy of Saint Margaret of Cortona, the well-known *Laudario di Cortona*, and the late medieval tradition of the *Crucifixi dolorosi* found in the related confraternity of Santa Maria delle laude in Cortona, the original owners of the laudario. Zangari's work reveals how the iconography of the bleeding crucifixes appears on both the confraternal laudario and Saint Margaret's biography, establishing a clear relation between the laudario and friar Giunta Bevegnati's life of the saint.

Mara Nerbano's work tackles one of the two less-known texts of the collection of laudari known as the "Costellazione assisiata" (Nerbano, Piana): the *Laudario 'Eugubino'*. Nerbano's lucid philological analysis of the laudario opens a radically new hypothesis on its origins, moving away from Gubbio to venture into the confraternal world of the small Umbrian town of Costacciaro. This "relocation" of the *Laudario 'Eugubino'* outside of Gubbio further testifies to the influence of Gubbio's confraternal literature in the area near the northern part of the Via Flaminia (the ancient

Roman road from Rome to Rimini) up to Urbino and perhaps even as far as Pesaro, where the *Laudario* 'Oliveriano' (another notable text of the "Costellazione assisiata") is still kept.

The last contribution to the special issue is by Francesco Zimei and focuses on the laudario of the confraternity of San Tommaso d'Aquino, founded in the church of San Domenico in L'Aquila at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Zimei's article explores the structure and content of this laudario from a musicological standpoint, in order to shed light on some of its most crucial music features. In this regard, Zimei's analysis reveals how the "Libro della Confraternita de Sancto Tomascy de Aquino" is one of the first Italian laudari to experiment with the structural transformation of the medieval *ballata* repertoire into the Renaissance *canzonetta*.

This collection of articles finds its origins in my postdoctoral research experience at the University of Toronto. I would therefore like to thank the Department of Italian Studies, the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, and the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies for their support of my research. This special issue would not have been possible without the generous help and support of Professor Konrad Eisenbichler, who welcomed this collection into the journal.

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