

and his later *La musica ecclesiastica* (1638), both of which furnish excellent opportunities to appraise his creative processes. Due to the more than thirty years that lie between their composition they are valuable sources for Agazzari's changing philosophical and compositional tendencies. In particular, *La musica ecclesiastica*, written near the end of his life, explicates the dramatic decline of his compositional success and withdrawal from musical life in the 1620s.

The last section, on musical style, focuses on Agazzari's Latin sacred pieces. In a book of this kind it is difficult to devote an equal amount of space to different genres and so Reardon has elected to discuss only those works which would have a direct function within the cathedral. Reardon's discussion of the Masses, litanies and psalms is brief, and she emphasizes Agazzari's concern for textual clarity throughout. She devotes little more than a page to the Masses, describing their general characteristics and style as being in keeping with the spirit of the Council of Trent. The litanies are described as changing very little in the course of the twenty-eight years in which he composed them, although his final efforts in this genre were the finest products of his late career. The psalms that Agazzari published between 1609 and 1611 offer no opportunity for a survey of stylistic development so Reardon uses them as examples of his approach to composition for differing numbers of voices and for various different liturgical functions.

For various reasons the majority of space in Reardon's discussion on style is given to Agazzari's motets: they represent a broad span of published works, they present all combinations of voices and instruments and they furnish opportunity for heightened text expression. Agazzari's early success and eventual decline as a motet composer unfolds through an examination of the style and reception of his major publications. A prodigious amount of musical examples clearly illustrate her analysis of style throughout the chapter.

As a conclusion Reardon reappraises Agazzari's musical works through the environs in which they were created and offers personal and professional reasons for his changing style. It is perhaps unfortunate that Reardon at this time decides to examine parallels of style between Agazzari's madrigals and early motets since it raises questions and takes away some of the decisiveness from her final argument. The strength of this book lies in the solid archival research it displays and in how this research is used to gain insight into the composer's creative process.

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Torre, Angelo. *Il consumo di devozioni. Religione e comunità nelle campagne dell'Ancien Régime*. Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1995. xxiv, 362 pp.

Angelo Torre's complex, multi-layered volume approaches the history of lay religiosity between 1570 and 1770 in the north-western Italian region of Piedmont through a discussion of the similarity between the search for authority and "legitimacy" by laypeople and by clerics in this period. Torre has examined the records of episcopal visitations of three dioceses in the region, and suggests that these sources point to how both clergy and laypeople in the region participated in an "intense and continu-

ous relationship" governed by their response to the "legitimizing role" of ritual religious activity.(xi) He sets out to demonstrate, through a painstaking analysis of the details of the visitation records, how official, institutional religious observance can rarely be distinguished from more popular and informal practices in this period. Frequently, lay institutions such as confraternities shared many characteristics with ecclesiastical institutions such as parishes. The role of confraternities in this context is significant in that their activities demonstrate how religious life in this period was marked by a "plurality...of protagonists and authors..." all of whom were intent on creating cohesive, enduring communities. (73)

In the section of the volume entitled "Charity and Harmony" (*Carita e Concor- dia*), Torre examines how *disciplinati* confraternities sought to develop and maintain their power. The episcopal records reveal a desire on the part of the official church to control the activities of these groups and distinguish them from parish-based organizations or parishes themselves, while the members of the organizations exhibited a significant degree of authority in their communities, so much so that in some areas the oratories of the *disciplinati* became the site of meetings of the local municipal council. (77) The ritual activities of the confraternities occasionally existed in competition with those of the parish, as masses said in the early morning for confraternity members rivalled those of the parish in some areas (79). Confraternities also provided services which were unavailable at the parish church, such as masses for the dead. Torre argues that the role of confraternities in the rituals surrounding death was probably seen as more significant by their members than other activities, which were already performed by parish churches. (80) He questions the goals of such rituals, including the regular distribution of food and wine by confraternities at Pentecost. He notes that such charitable acts were not appreciated by the bishop, and suggests that this was because the distribution of food did not aim to relieve actual need in the community, but instead was a ritual action designed to reinforce ties between confraternity members. (86) Torre further suggests that all such activities existed to develop and maintain the cohesiveness of confraternities rather than to reach out to members of the community outside the confraternity. (87)

Torre views the goal of all pious activities as helping to legitimize the power of the groups which participate in them. He argues that confraternity members followed the guidelines of ecclesiastical authorities out of a pragmatic desire to increase their local authority rather than out of any particular pious impulse. (344) He notes that ecclesiastical and lay authorities in this period often worked closely together, linked by "pragmatic, not ideological" motives. (345) In this light the "rigorist" arguments of Italian ecclesiastical historians appear to be lacking, as they attempt to create distinctions between the lay and clerical spheres. Torre argues that the differences between lay and clerical experiences in Piedmont were simply "contextual" and that both groups were in fact participating in "the same process of the construction of legitimacy" (346).

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