

RECENT THESES

GIOIA FILOCAMO

“ORATIONI AL CEPO OVERO A LA SCALA”: THE LAUDA
COLLECTION OF THE BOLOGNESE CONFRATERNITY
OF S. MARIA DELLA MORTE.

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Abstract

During the fifteenth century a number of laude were destined for the spiritual edification of those condemned to death. The Bolognese Confraternity of Santa Maria della Morte, founded in 1336 and one of the oldest and best documented Italian ‘Companies of Justice,’ had a *laudario* (211 texts in total) now known in some twelve sources, mostly dating from the second half of the fifteenth century. These *laude* are connected to the ‘consolation manuals’ (*confortatòri*) written in some Italian confraternities in order to instruct brethren who, in the few hours before execution, prepared the condemned prisoners to die a good Christian death. In the ‘justice’ laude the poetic identification between the condemned and Christ or martyrs was functional to the main aim of the brethren who assisted condemned prisoners: by turning criminals into saints they could be convinced that their death had a precise function. Indeed, plenary absolution in the afterlife—without any passage through Purgatory—could be obtained through a sincere acceptance of death, after the last confession and communion. The laude in the *confortatòri* clearly had the function of reinforcing these feelings, but there is little evidence on just how this task was realized in practice. This dissertation contains the texts of the whole *laudario*, and focuses on the strong motivation of the brethren who decided to enter this kind of confraternity.

Biographical note

Gioia Filocamo teaches *Poetry for music* at the Istituto superiore di Studi musicali di Terni (Italy). She received a Ph.D. in the Philology of

Music at the University of Pavia-Cremona (2001) and a Ph.D. in Modern History at the University of Bologna (2015). She has held post-doctoral research fellowships at the University of Bologna, the Newberry Library in Chicago, and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel. She has produced a complete critical edition of an anthology of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century music, *Florence, BNC, Panciatichi MS 27: Text and Context* (Brepols, 2010), and has published articles on various aspects of musical life in Italy between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her interest focuses mainly on how music interacted with social life.

LAURA DIERKSMEIER

“CHARITY FOR AND BY THE POOR:
FRANCISCAN AND INDIGENOUS CONFRATERNITIES
IN MEXICO, 1526-1700”

UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN

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Missionary reports claim the existence of at least one confraternity per parish church in colonial Mexico. As was the case in late medieval and early modern Italy, France, and Spain, confraternity members in Mexico worked together to build community infrastructure, to staff hospitals, to dower orphans, to search for abandoned babies, to release prisoners jailed for petty debt, to give loans, to comfort the dying, and to bury the dead. In many cases, the poor were both providers and recipients of care, pooling agricultural goods to store for times of hardship, or to loan to members in need. While Mexican confraternities resemble their Europe counterparts, the transplantation of this medieval tradition into a hybrid society in Mexico led to changes in their activities and administration.

Largely due to the limited number of missionaries, indigenous confraternity members operated autonomously, adapting to the needs of their members. Aztec currencies, Nahuatl record-keeping, and indigenous musical instruments were all incorporated into confraternity life. While archconfraternities, church authorities, and local governors attempted to restrict the power of these local groups, numerous court cases show that indigenous people were willing (and able) to go to court