

Solfaroli Camillocci, Daniela. *I devoti della carità. Le confraternite del Divino Amore nell'Italia del primo Cinquecento*. Istituto italiano per gli studi filosofici. Il pensiero e la storia, 98. Napoli: La città del sole, 2002. 480 pp. Euro 30 (pbk) ISBN 88-8292-038-0.

The confraternities of Divine Love have their origin in the sodality founded in 1497 in Genoa (Italy) by a number of followers of the mystic St Caterina Fieschi, also known as St Caterina of Genoa (1447–1510). They developed, however, into a significant venue for piety, charity, and reform with the founding, sometime before 1515, of the omonymous confraternity in Rome at the hands of the Genoese community resident in that city. Just as the original group had directed its charitable endeavours towards the founding and upkeep of a hospital for the incurable, which thus contributed greatly to the needs of the indigent population, so, too, the Roman confraternity revived and supported the great hospital of San Giacomo in Augusta. While the spiritual goals and charitable activities may have been similar, the Roman confraternity quickly gained enormous prestige and pre-eminence, partly because of its location in Rome, which made it a natural candidate for elevation to the rank of an arch-confraternity with affiliates in several major cities in Italy, and partly because it attracted the attention, and participation, of several eminent members of the Curia, among whom Gaetano Thiene and Gian Pietro Carafa. The experience and insights these two great reformers of Catholicism gained in the Divine Love may, in fact, be one of the factors that eventually contributed to their founding of the Theatine Order (1524) – and, incidentally, to the quick disappearance of the Roman confraternity of the Divine Love in the years immediately following it. Though the Roman sodality had already disappeared by the time of the Sack (1527), its impact and influence can be traced throughout the sixteenth century in the many hospitals for the incurable that soon were established in a number of large and medium-sized Italian cities – Savona, Bologna, Naples, Florence, Brescia, Vicenza, Verona, Venice, and Padua – for, in each case, the local hospital can be linked either directly or indirectly to the Roman and the Genoese models.

Solfaroli Camillocci's study begins in Genoa with a brief discussion of the life and influence of St Caterina Fieschi, an analysis of the founding of the Genoese confraternity, its charitable work with the incurables, and the changing nature of politics and charity in Genoa at the turn of the fifteenth-sixteenth century (chapt. 1). It then moves to Rome (chapt. 2), where it examines the founding of the Roman sodality. Chapter 3 focuses more intently on the latter's involvement with the hospital of San Giacomo, on the membership of the confraternity and its network of patrons, the Jubilee Year of 1525, the Sack of 1527, and the hospital's re-opening in the wake of the Sack. Chapter 4 examines the links between the Divine Love and the Confraternity of the Carità dei Curiali, that is, the confraternity for charitable work promoted in those years by members of the Papal court. The fifth and last chapter focuses on the final years and eventual dissolution of the Roman Divine Love, its influence on the founding of similar groups in Naples, Brescia, Vicenza/Verona, and Venice, and the founding of the Theatines. The

volume is nearly doubled in size by four extensive and annotated appendices of members of the Divine Love of Genoa from 1497 to 1556, of members of the Divine Love of Rome from 1515 to 1524, of members of the confraternity of Santa Maria del Popolo e San Giacomo in Augusta from 1508 to 1535, and of members of the Carità dei Cortigiani from 1520 to 1536.

Solfaroli Camillocci's careful reading of archival and published sources, her keen eye for the personal connections that linked members of the various sodalities, her awareness of the dynamics of early sixteenth-century Rome (especially during the papacy of Leo X de' Medici) provide a very nuanced and perceptive analysis of the spiritual, social, and political factors that contributed to the practice of charity in early sixteenth-century Italy.

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Vigo, Gian Paolo. *La confraternita e Vargo*. Tortona: Comune di Stazzano, 1989. 64 pp., 4 b/w illustrations.

This volume is borne from a re-evaluation of the confraternity in the town of Vargo when, in August 1988, it inducted a number of new brothers into the sodality. The author's intention was to accompany such an event with a publication that might highlight the origin and scope of such a lay religious association, much in disuse and even dismissed in his town from the 1950s to the present. The work is thus aimed, first of all, at the people of Vargo, whom the author wishes to inform on the history of their confraternity. However, an outside reader may also be quite interested in the volume and appreciate its strong local colour, its specificity and its richness.

The volume's six chapters frame the history of the confraternity within the great historical, political, and religious events that touched Italy and, more specifically, the border region between Liguria and Piedmont where Varga is located. They then focus on the town's own history and reality, which is the ultimate scope of the volume. In so doing, it is possible to examine how national and regional events had consequences that were fundamentally important in small communities. As the example of Varga illustrates, these communities were quite active and highly receptive to external stimuli, both religious and social.

Chapter 1 deals with the town's history in the Carolingian period and the High Middle Ages. Chapter 2 focuses on the great penitential movements of the late Middle Ages and then leads into a discussion of the movement of the Whites (chapt. 3). The following chapters outline how the town was touched by the reforming movements led by figures such as St Bernardine of Siena (chapt. 4), St Charles Borromeo and St Philip Neri (chapt. 5). The confraternity's constitution, a product of the reforms promoted by the Counter Reformation and the work of Borromeo and Neri, can be dated to the sixteenth/seventeenth century, while the confraternity's aggregation to the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy Trinity in