

Belief, Devotion, and Memory in Early Modern Italian Confraternities

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Scholars interested in understanding and explaining changes in European culture and Christian practice from 1400 to 1800 have confronted the problem of belief in a variety of ways.¹ Up through the 1960s, in Northern Europe traditional approaches seeking to account for the Reformation often continued to regard theology as queen of the sciences, but since then social historical methods emphasizing a broad array of non-religious motivations and influences in explaining religious change have taken the foreground.² In Italy, considerations of Renaissance society since the formulation of Jacob Burckhardt have often emphasized secularization as a primary category, establishing it as the precursor of modern de-Christianized or even post-Christian society.³ Once again, however, scholars both above and below the Alps interested in understanding and explaining the shifts in religious practice are seeking new models in the sociology of religion to re-incorporate belief into our broadest schemes of Early Modern religious change.⁴

- 1 For a broad consideration from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, see Thomas Kselman, *Belief in History: Innovative Approaches to European and American Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).
- 2 Bernd Moeller's classic essays on the social status of imperial cities and the link between humanists and those who adopted the Reformation in Germany helped to launch this widespread historiographic shift. See his *Reichsstadt und Reformation* (Gutersloh: G. Mohn, 1962) and his *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. H.C. Eric Midelfort and Mark Edwards (Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1972). As a recent example of this trend, see *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, vol. 1, 1450–1630, ed. Bob Scribner (London and New York: Arnold, 1996).
- 3 Two essays of Eric Cochrane develop these themes, "Counter-Reformation or Tridentine Reformation? Italy in the Age of Carlo Borromeo," pp. 11–30 in *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, eds. John Headley and John Tomaro (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988) and "The Transition from Renaissance to Baroque: The Case of Italian Historiography" *History and Theory* 19 (1980): 21–30.
- 4 An early example of this trend is *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, eds. Charles Trinkaus et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1974). More recently, see *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, eds. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse: Syracuse U.P., 1990). For an example of this trend in scholarship on the Reformation, see *The Reformation Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Carter Lindberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

Confraternities of course have long been regarded as barometers of both popular piety and social change, in all their myriad shapes and sizes reflecting the competing goals and conflicts of their communities. They have proven a remarkably delicate and sophisticated means to gauge the contours of social interaction and evolution, whether in the context of politics, art, or as models of associative behavior more broadly.⁵ When considering confraternities primarily in the context of changes in religious practice, scholars have often highlighted the increasing imposition of clerical control, including the standardization of confraternal models through the use of archconfraternities and aggregation, and the shift from external display to internal devotion as primary hallmarks of Early Modern religious reform.⁶ In this article, I wish to contribute to the broader debate concerning the role of belief in Early Modern religious practice by calling attention to the specific emphasis on the formation and reinforcement of belief found in the most prevalent and widespread confraternities in Italy from the 1540s through the end of the sixteenth century. While devotional confraternities always or often reinforce belief, in the period immediately before and after the Council of Trent a great wave of new and old confraternities responded to the threat and challenge of the Protestant Reformation in a manner more narrowly related to the inculcation and fraternal correction of belief and behavior, a process that has been developed by Paolo Prodi as the “disciplining of the soul.”⁷ Further, I wish to analyze some of the most characteristic of the new ritual and repetitive devotional practices, in particular the *Quarantore* celebrations and the great expansion of Rosary devotion, as meditative tools employed to frame belief by drawing on the mnemonic and mystical traditions developed in the previous centuries. In particu-

5 Numerous monographs approach these issues, but for recent wide ranging collaborative efforts, see in particular, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship. Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1999); *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, eds. Barbara Wisch and Diane Ahl (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2000); *Corpi, fraternità e mestieri nella storia della società*, ed. Danilo Zardin (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998).

6 Once again, for collaborative efforts, see *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain*, eds. Patrick Donnelly, SJ, and Michael Maher, SJ (St. Louis, MO, 1999); also *Il buon fedele: le confraternite tra Medioevo e prima età moderna*, ed. Giuseppina De Sandre Gasparini (Caselle di Sommacampagna [Verona]: Cierre, 1998) and *Confraternite, chiese e società: aspetti e problemi dell'associazionismo laicale europeo in età moderna e contemporanea*, ed. Liana Bertoldi Lenoci (Fasano, BR: Schena, 1994). Andrew Brown has shown how the continued popularity of penitential confraternities in France contrasts with this internalizing trend. See “The Transformation of Penitent Confraternities over the Ancien Régime,” in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform*, pp. 123–135, and his *The Social Dimension of Piety. Associative Life and Devotional Change in the Penitent Confraternity of Marseilles* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994).

7 See his edited volume, *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994).

lar, I will use the devotional treatises of two prolific and influential Jesuit authors, Jerome Nadal (1507–1580) and Luca Pinelli (1542–1607), as valuable paradigms for confraternal participation in these new practices which sought to instill and to ingrain the characteristic internal dispositions of the reform branch of Early Modern Catholicism.⁸

The broad concern for the problem of belief is not new, and rests on a fundamental distinction between approaching religion as an end to be understood in itself, or as a cultural by-product to be explained. The problem, as succinctly put by Nicholas Terpstra, is “our tendency to distinguish religion from society, and then to spend enormous energy determining how these distinct spheres relate.”⁹ What is at stake is the interplay of complex human actors with deterministic models of “historical (or societal) forces,” which in important ways rest on the theoretical foundation of Emile Durkheim, as explored in his classic, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. While giving ample room to religion, Durkheimian approaches tend to explain religion in terms of its empirical consequences for society: “Religion is first and foremost a system of ideas by means of which individuals imagine the society of which they are members and the obscure yet intimate relations they have with it.”¹⁰

Such an instrumental understanding of religion, as an expression of the aims and needs of society, while consonant with post-Enlightenment secularizing trends (which in turn informed Durkheim), anachronistically distorts the mentalité and motivations of Early Modern Europeans, for whom belief was a category and end in its own right.¹¹ In turn, by seeking to “reduce,” “deconstruct,” or “explain” religious belief through its “underlying” or empirically verifiable motivations and objectives, the postmodern successors of Durkheim have misplaced a vital hermeneutic tool for interpreting European culture. If modern scholars “cannot believe in ‘belief’,” it becomes their own impediment to a more

8 I use Early Modern Catholicism more broadly and generically, and reserve “Counter-Reformation” more narrowly for the specific initiatives targeting Protestants. For the most comprehensive recent discussion of the terminology, and a strong argument for “Early Modern Catholicism,” see John W. O’Malley, SJ, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2000).

9 Nicholas Terpstra, “Ignatius, Confratello: Confraternities as Modes of Spiritual Community in Early Modern Society,” pp. 163–182 in *Early Modern Catholicism*, eds. Kathleen Comerford and Hilmar Pabel (Toronto: Toronto U.P., 2001) at p. 177. Terpstra points out that these terms were earlier addressed by John Bossy, in “Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim,” *Past and Present* 95 (1982): 3–18.

10 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, tr. Karen E. Fields (New York, 1995): 227.

11 This Durkheimian analysis is strongly indebted to the fine critical contribution made by Susan Rosa and Dale Van Kley, “Religion and the historical discipline: a reply to Mack Holt and Henry Heller,” *French Historical Studies*, 21.4 (1998): 611–629.

nuanced understanding of pre-Enlightenment civilization, rather than a foundational principle for an interpretive methodology.¹² As Timothy Verdon has aptly noted, “If we ‘process’ medieval and Renaissance data through twentieth-century ‘systems,’ a future generation of historians will find that —like Burckhardt— we have merely refashioned the Renaissance in our own image.”¹³

This is not to say that a “hermeneutic of suspicion” (which deconstructs a text to identify its self-fashioning, or identifies extrinsic pressures or forces influencing individuals’ choices) cannot add considerably to our interpretation of the pre-modern past. There is room for a both/and rather than an either/or approach, and furthermore, as I will discuss below, the Early Modern observers could be every bit as skeptical and circumspect about the motivations or sincerity of belief as postmodern critics may be today. Nor do I wish to advocate that belief need be the only, nor the primary category of interpretation: I neither advocate a naive acceptance of statements of belief, nor a return to the classic position of Lucien Febvre, which finds belief so all-pervasive in the sixteenth century as to negate the possibility of non-belief or atheism.¹⁴ Indeed, the painstaking efforts of numerous scholars have shown how examples of modern secularism and atheism can be traced back confidently to the sixteenth century.¹⁵ Here again, I would argue that sixteenth-century observers were all too aware of the tentative and fragile nature of belief, and therefore sought to buttress it as actively as possible. Lastly, I am emphatically not suggesting that because scholars can interpret believers’ own explanations of their religious behavior as irreducible, and therefore to be understood in properly religious terms rather than explaining them away to ulterior motives, that scholars must also therefore regard those explanations as true. Rather, I am advocating a methodology that accommodates human agency in all its messy inconstancy, and which posits complex actors who respond to a myriad of motivations, both internal and external, some of which

12 The quote is from Stephen Greenblatt, as cited in Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1999), p. 10, and footnote 35.

13 “Christianity, the Renaissance, and the Study of History: Environments of Experience and Imagination,” in *Christianity and the Renaissance*, p. 8.

14 As expressed in Febvre’s treatment of the religion of Rabelais: *Le problème de l’incroyance* (Paris: A. Michel, 1942). *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1982). See the important critical assessments of Febvre’s arguments in David Wootton’s “Lucien Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 60.4 (Dec 1988): 695–731; also valuable is Sylvia Berti, “At the roots of unbelief,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56.4 (Oct 1995): 555–575.

15 Many such discoveries have been conveniently anthologized in *Atheism From the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, eds. David Wootton and Michael Hunter (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

they could recognize and others perhaps which they could not. Thus, I do wish to argue for an appreciation of belief as an end in itself, as a category of explanation, that can assume due proportion in the complex interplay of human motivations. Belief is then a suitable object of scholarly interpretation, and need not be bracketed as unverifiable and therefore outside the purview of interpretation.¹⁶

In his *Salvation at Stake*, Brad Gregory has abundantly demonstrated the need to acknowledge statements of belief as an interpretive tool in order to comprehend how Early Modern Europeans could calmly and passively sacrifice themselves as martyrs to their faith. I would go further to argue that no special pleading is necessary for martyrs, but that Early Modern Europe was bursting with examples of individuals acting for religion's sake: participants in the religious wars,¹⁷ catechists and visitors,¹⁸ promoters of confession,¹⁹ missionaries,²⁰ and inquisitors,²¹ to name a few without even mentioning the theologians and the central discovery of the Reformation itself: the "breakthrough" emphasis on salvation by faith alone. Truly, the sixteenth was a century obsessed with defining, teaching, verifying, and enforcing the rectitude of belief and the validity of interior conversion.²² Seen in this light, many of the new reform-oriented devotional confraternities are quintessential relics of this belief-centered period. By focusing on their strategies and practices, we can gain perhaps the most insightful perspective on how Early Modern Catholics understood the process of religious conversion, and how they sought to nurture it.

Moreover, voluntary collectivities like confraternities can provide exceptionally useful models for reconnecting belief to society, because membership was so

16 I have taken this concept of "bracketing belief" from the eloquent introduction of Carter Lindberg in the collection of articles he recently edited, *The Reformation Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Modern Period* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

17 See the article by John Bossy, "Unrethinking the Sixteenth-Century Wars of Religion," in *Belief in History*.

18 Still a worthwhile classic is Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1978).

19 See W. David Myers, "*Poor, Sinning Folk*": *Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1996). A fine broad collection is *Penitence in the Age of Reformations*, eds. Katherine Lualdi and Anne Thayer (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000).

20 Louis Châtellier, *La religion des pauvres: les missions rurales en Europe et la formation du catholicisme moderne XVIème–XIXème siècles* (Paris: Aubier, 1993). *The Religion of the Poor: Rural Missions in Europe and the Formation of Modern Catholicism, c. 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1997). Also his *L'Europe des dévots* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987). *The Europe of the Devout. The Catholic Reformation and the Formation of a New Society*, tr. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1989).

21 *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois U.P., 1986).

22 *Il concilio di Trento e il moderno*, eds. Paolo Prodi and Wolfgang Reinhard (Bologna, 1996); also edited by Prodi: *Disciplina dell'anima* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994).

clearly embedded within political and economic, as well as familial and fraternal attachments that pull at individual hearts. Such broader models can accommodate the sometimes conflicting but often dovetailing and mutually reinforcing motivations of self-interest as well as civic duty and obligation framed by familial, class, regional, or national identity.²³ Precisely because of the rupture (at least on a mythic level) of the unity of Christianity due to the Reformation, the need to find associative spiritual communities became still more pressing, and the toleration of dissent became still less likely. Thus, occasions for fraternal companionship, and the reinforcement of common beliefs and practices found in an identity group, helped to make the leap of faith less vertiginous, and provided a surer support, foundation, and confirmation in moments of doubt.

Examining voluntary collectivities also offers the opportunity to see how models arose in the Mediterranean context that inspired not just coercion, but willing participation. Although the new Catholic reform confraternities certainly channeled the options available in their communities, they nevertheless demonstrate the more mundane commitment and participation of the laity who “voted with their feet” by swelling the membership of these confraternal organizations. As Giles Meersseman reminds us, perhaps a thousand times in their lives confraternity members attended meetings and may have heard their statutes or founding principles read aloud, and this contributed an important part of their spiritual formation. The statutes were perhaps the only book known by heart by the members and thus must be considered among the classics of formation, more so than Italian translations of fathers or sermons.²⁴ While confratelli did not pay the highest price for their belief, as did martyrs, they are nevertheless an enormously more representative sampling of the Early Modern population and of widespread practices.²⁵ Precisely because their participation did not tax the members to the

23 For an enormously broad treatment of overlapping motivations relating to a single confraternity for youth over the span of three centuries, see Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael. A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411–1785* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). The role of confraternities as an apprenticeship in civic duty is abundantly demonstrated in Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge U.P., 1995) and the wide web of motivations is further developed in Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541–1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1995).

24 “La riforma delle confraternite laicali in Italia prima del Concilio di Trento” in *Problemi di vita religiosa in Italia nel Cinquecento: Atti del Convegno di storia della chiesa in Italia*, various authors (Padua: Antenore, 1960): 27–28.

25 Christopher Black has estimated participation in one or multiple confraternities in Italy in the sixteenth century to be as much as 25% of the population or more. See his *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1989): p. 38 and passim.

core (but they took part again and again in growing numbers through the seventeenth century), it is significant. Indeed, its very ubiquity is a confirmation of the resonance of the call, and the desire to form affective communities that reinforced the spiritual, the material, and the fraternal.

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Let us turn now to a more focused consideration of the character of the most widespread confraternities of the second half of the sixteenth century in Italy, especially as they sought to form, to correct, and to defend belief.²⁶ A group of six standard models formed the most widely aggregated confraternities employing the new devotional discipline throughout the Italian peninsula: the most holy sacrament confraternities (*SS. Sacramento* or sometimes *Corpo di Cristo*); the Name of God confraternities (*Nome di Dio* or *Nome di Gesù*); the confraternities of charity (*di carità*, or frequently *S. Girolamo della carità*); the confraternities of Christian doctrine (*della dottrina cristiana*); the Rosary confraternities (*del SS. Rosario*); and the Marian congregations (*congregazioni mariane*). Before turning to each of these models individually, it is worth reaffirming that by articulating the manner in which they sought to influence the character and quality of belief of their members, I do not wish to deny their individual variations, nor the more earthy motivations surrounding their social role, nor the efforts at social control implicit in their clerical direction. Nor do I wish to assert that they achieved their goals, and produced uniformly believing *confratelli*. Instead, I seek to return our attention to the emphasis on nurturing belief that is no less a central element of these confraternities.

It is also worth noting that the clerical mentality of “circling the wagons” through the foundation of confraternities to oppose threats or religious competition is in no way unique to sixteenth-century Italy. The rise of the Cathars in the

26 For what follows, see the following panoptic treatments: especially for the Mezzogiorno, see Pasquale Lopez, “Le confraternite laicali in Italia e la Riforma Cattolica,” *Rivista di Studi Salernitani*, 4 (1969): 153–238. Gilles Gérard Meersseman, “La riforma delle confraternite laicali in Italia prima del Concilio di Trento” in *Problemi di vita religiosa*, 17–30; also Meersseman and G. P. Pacini, “Le confraternite laicali in Italia dal Quattrocento al Seicento,” in *Problemi di storia della Chiesa nei secoli XV–XVII* (Naples, 1979). Roberto Rusconi, “Confraternite, Compagnie e devozioni,” in *Storia d’Italia: Annali 9. La Chiesa e il potere politico dal Medioevo all’età contemporanea*, ed. Giorgio Chittolini and Giovanni Miccoli (Turin: Einaudi, 1986): 467–506. Danilo Zardin, “Le confraternite in Italia settentrionale fra XV e XVIII secolo,” *Società e storia*, anno 10, no. 35 (1987): 81–137. Ronald Weissman, “From Brotherhood to Congregation: Confraternal Ritual between Renaissance and Catholic Reformation,” pp. 77–94 in *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali*, eds. Jacques Chiffolleau et al. (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo, 1994); also Weissman, “Cults and Contexts: in Search of the Renaissance Confraternity,” pp. 201–236 in *Crossing the Boundaries*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan U.P., 1991).

twelfth and thirteenth centuries prompted just such a response, as lay confraternities, especially under the direction of the Dominican order, were established across Italy to combat the spread of heresy.²⁷ Similarly, outside of Italy in Early Modern France, confraternities rose up in solidarity with the Catholic League during the French Wars of Religion to oppose the Huguenot presence politically, or to console through traditional devotions and charities the townspeople devastated by the fighting.²⁸ Thus, the foundation of lay associations was a primary device in the clerical repertory both for confronting heretical movements and for inoculating the populace against any further spread. Perhaps no confraternity represents those goals better than the most holy sacrament confraternities that became the most widespread of the new reform-minded confraternities.

Fanned by meditative literature, such as the *Devotio moderna* classic, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, Eucharistic devotion had inspired numerous confraternities in Italy already in the fifteenth century.²⁹ In 1506 in Rome, a devout Spanish noble woman, Doña Teresa Enriquez, earned the surname "the crazy lady for the Sacrament" for her desire for daily reception, and her pious donation to found a *corpo di Cristo* confraternity in the Roman church of S. Lorenzo in Damaso.³⁰ During the 1520s–30s, Eucharistic theology, and Protestant objections thereto, leaped to the foreground in differentiating traditional from reformed beliefs. Not surprisingly, by 1538, a Dominican friar named Tomaso

- 27 See Norman Housely, "Politics and Heresy in Italy: Anti-Heretical Crusades, Orders, and Confraternities, 1200–1500," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982): 193–208. See also Gilles Gérard Meersseman, OP, *Ordo Fraternitatis. Confraternite e pietà dei laici nel medioevo*, 3 vols. (Rome: Herder, 1977): esp. 578–818.
- 28 Robert R. Harding, "The Mobilization of Confraternities against the Reformation in France," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11.2 (1980): 85–107. See also Allain Tallon, *La Compagnie du Saint Sacrement (1629–1667) Spiritualité et Société* (Paris, 1990) and Catherine Martin, *Les compagnies de la propagation de la foi (1632–1685) Paris, Grenoble, Aix, Lyon, Montpellier. Etude d'un réseau d'associations fondé en France au temps de Louis XIII pour lutter contre l'hérésie des origines à la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes* (Geneva: Droz, 2000).
- 29 The *Imitation of Christ* gained authority from the mis-identification of its author with the influential chancellor of the university of Paris, Jean Gerson, and its fourth book is an extended meditation on the Eucharist. Thomas à Kempis, 1380–1471, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin Classics, 1952). The "Autograph" manuscript of 1441 is in the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels, #5855-5861. On early SS. Sacramento confraternities, see Giuseppe Barbiero, *Le confraternite del Santissimo Sacramento prima del 1539* (Vedelago (Treviso), 1944).
- 30 Constantino Bayle, SJ, *La Loca del Sacramento Doña Teresa Enríquez* (Madrid, 1922). On Eucharistic devotion in the early Cinquecento, see Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, SJ, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia narrata col sussidio di fonti inedite*, 2 vols., second edition (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1950), vol. 1: *La vita religiosa in Italia durante i primordi dell'ordine*, pp. 217ff.

Stella founded a confraternity of the *corpo di Cristo* in the Dominican headquarters of S. Maria sopra Minerva, with the express purpose to chastise the “vain madness of the modern heretics, who at this time speak disgracefully against the most holy sacrament.”³¹ With the bull “*Dominus noster*” in 1539, Pope Paul III approved the statutes, and encouraged its diffusion throughout all the parishes in Rome, and indeed, throughout the world.³²

Precisely because Protestants questioned Eucharistic theology (the Council of Trent directed its thirteenth Session, on 11 October 1551, to its doctrinal definition) the new Eucharistic devotion at the centre of this confraternity’s piety provided a convenient opportunity for each local believer to take a stand in defense of the real presence.³³ The idea spread like wildfire. Between 1539 and 1543, at least 1698 *SS. Sacramento* confraternities became affiliated, and in Rome itself, within the first two decades as many as 4,000 people or 5% of Rome’s population had joined in the various affiliated outlets in parishes throughout the city, including such notable figures as Ignatius of Loyola, Filippo Neri, and Carlo Borromeo. The reaction of the Archbishop of Milan is telling. In 1566, upon returning to Milan, Borromeo effused: “my aim in governing the laity is to introduce as far as it is in my power to do so the habit of frequenting the sacraments as the most effective guard against all sins and evil behaviour; I have already proposed establishing in every parish a company of the *SS. Sacramento* to which all the leading families of the place would belong and which would promote many rules to the benefit of their lives.”³⁴ He made good on his intent, as testified by a

31 “la superba pazzia delli moderni heretici, li quali in questo tempo sceleratamente parlano contra esso Santissimo Sacramento” from the Introduction to the statutes: *Capitoli, statuti et ordinationi della venerab. Compagnia del Sacratissimo Corpo di Christo, posta nella chiesa di S. Maria sopra Minerva della città di Roma* (Roma: per gli heredi di A. Blado [s.d.]). An excerpt is published, with a discussion in Luigi Fiorani, “L’esperienza religiosa nelle confraternite romane tra Cinque e Seicento,” *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, 5 (1984): 155–196, pp. 170–171.

32 The bull can be found in *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum Romanorum pontificum Taurinensis editio locupletior facta ...*, ed. A. Tommasetti, 24 vols. (Augustae Taurinorum [Turin], 1857–1885): VI, 275–280. Alternatively in *Magnum bullarium Romanum: bullarum, privilegiorum ac diplomatum Romanorum Pontificum amplissima collectio*, eds. C. Cocquelines and H. Mainardi, 18 vols. (Rome, 1733–62; repr.: Graz, 1964–6): Tom IV, part I. It was not formally raised to archconfraternal status until 1573 under Gregory XIII, see *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, (1977–): vol. 6: 393–396.

33 *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent Original Text with English Translation*, ed. Rev. H. J. Schroeder, OP (St. Louis, 1941, 1955; Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books and Publishers, 1978).

34 For the quotation and the following numbers, see Danilo Zardin, “Relaunching Confraternities in the Tridentine Era: Shaping Conscience and Christianizing Society in Milan and Lombardy,” in *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, pp. 190–209, at 192. An almost identical version of the paper can be found in Italian in “Riforma e confraternite nella

listing of 772 parishes in the archdiocese of Milan in 1599 recording 556 confraternities of the *SS. Sacramento*.

Extending in capillary fashion down to the parish level in most dioceses, the *SS. Sacramento* confraternities' role in reinforcing the orthodox Catholic position on the real presence in the communion wafer can hardly be exaggerated. Although control over aggregation ultimately resided with the Dominican father General, members of all religious orders and secular clergy promoted this confraternity. Indeed, the first treatise to advocate and defend the practice of frequent reception of the Eucharist (promoting even once per day, or once per week, unlike the annual reception that had been canonically established since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215) was published by the Spanish Jesuit Cristóforo de Madrid in Naples in 1555.³⁵ The Jesuits were among the most fervid proponents of frequent communion, perhaps best illustrated by the early seventeenth-century spectacle of 20–30,000 recipients in a day in a “General Communion” in Rome,³⁶ or in their grandiose *Quarantore* displays during Carnival (more on *Quarantore* below). Display and spectacle were intimately associated with Eucharistic devotion, and with the *confratelli*, who would process through villages and towns accompanying the sacrament (for instance, on their way to a sick recipient) with the grave decorum befitting the actual presence of God in the host. Festivities on the annual feast day of Corpus Christi would culminate in a grand procession uniting all the individual *SS. Sacramento* confraternities, thus reaffirming and unifying the town itself in solidarity as the mystical body of Christ.³⁷ In southern Italy, where the

Milano di Carlo Borromeo,” in *Il buon fedele*, pp. 235–263. Another similar version is in “Il rilancio delle confraternite nell’Europa cattolica cinque-seicentesca,” in *I tempi del Concilio. Religione, cultura e società nell’Europa tridentina*, eds. Danilo Zardin and C. Mozzarelli (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997): 107–144.

35 *De frequenti usu sanctissimae Eucharistiae sacramenti libellus* (Napoli, 1555; Roma, 1557). Republished with a French translation and commentary in Paul Duden, *Pour la Communion fréquente et quotidienne* (Paris, 1910): 221–293.

36 Giovanni Battista Memmi, SJ, 1695–1740, *Notizie storiche dell’origine e progressi dell’Oratorio della SS. Comunione generale e degli Uomini illustri, che in esso fiorirono, date in luce da Gio. Battista Memmi della Compagnia di Gesù e dedicate all’Ill.mo e Rev.mo Signore, Monsignor Lodovico Valdina olim Cremona Vescovo di Ermopoli, Prelato domestico di Sua Santità, Referndario dell’una, e l’altra Segnatura, e Assistente al Soglio Pontificio* (Rome: Bernabò, 1730).

37 See Alessandro Donzellini, *Historia et origine della solennità e festa del Corpus Domini* (Rome: V. Accolti, 1585). From its thirteenth-century start outside Liège, the feast of Corpus Christi often expanded with anti-Semitism, following the accusations of Jewish host defamation, and came to occupy a central role in the devotional life of late medieval and Early Modern towns across Europe, but especially in the Iberian peninsula and lands colonized and converted by the Spanish and Portuguese. See Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1991) and also her “Corpus Christi Confraternities and Late Medieval Piety,” in *Voluntary Religion. Studies*

traditions of voluntary confraternal affiliation were not as deeply integrated as in the north, if a village were so tiny as to support but one confraternity, that confraternity would usually be of the *SS. Sacramento* as the solitary link to Catholic Reformation devotion.³⁸

While the *SS. Sacramento* confraternities can perhaps be considered the quintessential Catholic Reformation model in terms of their ubiquity, parish base, clerical leadership, reinforcement of orthodoxy, and anti-Protestant ideology, they shared with the *Nome di Dio* confraternities an emphasis on reaffirming the consequences of the real existence of God, perhaps the most basic tenet of faith. If God is really present in the Eucharist, then the host should be revered and treated with the utmost decorum, and similarly, if God is really present in the world, then one should reverence His name, and avoid taking it in vain. Or conversely, if one treats the existence of God with a renewed seriousness, then the consequences of insulting Him or taking His name in vain would logically become more dire, and the determination to control any offense to Him would become more intense. Thus, the *Nome di Dio* confraternities represent another characteristic expression of the Catholic reform-minded goal to form the conscience and to discipline the soul. And by all accounts, the Italians needed it, as confessors and missionaries regularly cited blasphemy as the most characteristic of Italian sins.³⁹ Leaving a *Nome di Dio* confraternity behind in the wake of a successful mission became a favored means to preserve the fruits and good intentions achieved by the missionaries already from the 1540s.⁴⁰ That vice seems

in church history, vol. 23, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). On the Corpus celebrations in Latin America, see Carolyn Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke Press, 1999) and *Celebrando el cuerpo de Dios*, ed. Antoinette Moloníé (Lima: Pontificia universidad catolica de Peru, 1999).

38 On the cultural consequences of the lack of a broader confraternal network in the Mezzogiorno, see Robert Putnam with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P., 1993), and the commentary by Dylan Reid, "Measuring the Impact of Brotherhood: The Implications of Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* for Confraternal Studies," *Confraternitas* 14.1 (2003): 3–13. For surveys of confraternal presence in the south, see Luigi Donvito and Bruno Pellegrino, *L'organizzazione ecclesiastica degli Abruzzi e Molise e della Basilicata nell'età postridentina* (Florence: Sansoni, 1973): 61–106; also *Le confraternite pugliesi in età moderna*, ed. Liana Bertoldi Lenoci, 2 vols. (Fasano (BR): Schena, 1988), and Antonietta Latorre, *Le confraternite di Fasano dal XVI al XX secolo* (Fasano (BR): Schena, 1993).

39 As one of the most frequently reprinted treatises of the Jesuit devotional writer Gaspar Loarte attests, see his *Trattato delli remedii contra il gravissimo peccato della bestemia*. Paolo Segneri devoted much attention to blasphemy in his Lenten sermons: *Quaresimale* (In Roma, Appresso N. e M. Pagliarini, 1752).

40 This was a favorite device of Silvestro Landini, for instance, see Armando Guidetti, SJ, *Le missioni popolari: i grandi gesuiti italiani: disegno storico-biografico delle missioni*

to have extended throughout the Mediterranean, as the Spaniards waged their own wars against it.⁴¹ Moreover, letting such oaths pass one's lips had already been described in the fourteenth century by the Dominican Inquisitor Nicholas Eimeric as indicative of internal imbalance and false belief, and thus it was closely related to heresy.⁴² Devotion to the name of Christ or more specifically the monogram of Christ also ante-dated the Reformation, as attested by the zeal of the fourteenth-century Dominican mystic Heinrich Seuse, who carved 'IHS' into his chest, and as shown by the famous devotion of the observant Franciscan Bernardino of Siena in criss-crossing Italy with his popular missions, everywhere brandishing the 'IHS' monogram.⁴³ Of course, the Jesuits nursed a special devotion to the name of Jesus, and indeed, the first confraternity rules written by a Jesuit were for the "Compagnia del Nome di Gesù," founded by Pierre Favre in Parma in 1540.⁴⁴ But while various religious orders promoted the *Nome di Dio* confraternities, canonical control of the indulgences once again devolved on the Dominicans, mentioned in the papal recognition of the first statutes by Pius IV in 1564 shortly after the conclusion of the Council of Trent. Soon thereafter, the Dominican Pope Pius V raised the *Nome di Dio* to archconfraternal status (and indeed, looked after the needs of the confraternities of his order on a number of occasions).⁴⁵ The Dominicans also published numerous devotional treatises with the *Nome di Dio* confraternities in mind.⁴⁶

Along the continuum of Catholic reform confraternities whose intent was to uphold traditional Catholic teaching and to repudiate Protestant error, the *carità* confraternities were not nearly so wide-spread as the SS. *Sacramento* or *Nome di*

popolari dei gesuiti d'Italia dalle origini al Concilio Vaticano II (Milan: Rusconi, 1988).

41 See Maureen Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Past & Present*, 149 (1995): 29–56.

42 See Nicolau Eimeric, OP, 1320–1399, [Directorium inquisitorum. French] *Le manuel des inquisiteurs*, introd., traduction et notes de Louis Sala-Molins (Paris, Mouton [1973]).

43 On Seuse, see Henry Suso, *The Exemplar, with Two German Sermons*, ed. and tr. Frank Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1989). On Bernardino, see Franco Mormando, SJ, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1999).

44 "Descrittione dell'origine et principio della Compagnia del Nome di Gesù &c." in the Archivio di Stato in Parma, Reg.º I, §2, fo. 4, also Pierre Favre, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*. p. 37 (*Gesta Parmae*) *Origine e fondatione del collegio di Parma*, fo. 3.

45 Cocquelines and Mainardi, *Magnum bullarium Romanum* (Rome, 1733–62; rpt Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1964–66), 18 vols. Tom. IV, part II, also Cocquelines and Mainardi, *Mag. bull. Rom.*, Tom IV, part III.

46 For instance, Paolino da Lucca, OP, *Officio, letanie, capitoli et indulgenze della compagnia del Santissimo nome di Dio ...* (In Napoli: appresso Gio. Tomaso Aulio, 1593). On Paolino, see Quéatif, Jacques, 1618–1698, and Échard, Jacques, 1644–1724, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum recensiti, notisque historicis et criticis. Inchoavit Jacobus Quéatif absolvit Jacobus Échard* (New York: B. Franklin, [1959]). 2 v. in 4.

Dio confraternities, but they helped to reinforce the traditional Catholic stance on demonstrating faith through actions, the “works righteousness” at the soteriological heart of Protestant objections. In a direct line of descent from the *Compagnia del divino amore* (Company of divine love) founded in 1497 by Ettore Vernazza under the influence of Catherine of Genoa, and transferred to Rome before 1515, the *carità* confraternities exemplified the practice of voluntary charitable outreach that became the ideological linchpin of Catholic attitudes to poor relief.⁴⁷ It was precisely that impulse that Pope Leo X wished to spread throughout Christendom by making the Roman company of St. Jerome of Charity an archconfraternity, the first in the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ In emphasizing an elite membership, they also represented the social stratification that would become ever more prevalent in confraternal organization and interaction.⁴⁹ Carlo Borromeo also mentions a goal of establishing the *carità* confraternities in Milan: “I also propose setting up another company *della carità* whose business it will be to discover all the parishioners’ temporal and spiritual needs so that they can always be dealt with as far as possible by the local priest or the Archbishop; this has the additional benefit that it involves the gentry in religious works.”⁵⁰ Their elite character posed an inherent limit on their expansion, and unlike the *SS. Sacramento* confraternities, the *carità* confraternities were planted far less successfully in Milan.

With far greater numerical significance, and an ideological trajectory in direct opposition to Protestant belief and practice, the confraternities and schools of Christian doctrine represented for Catholic reform perhaps the most methodical attempt at the formation of conscience and prophylaxis against erroneous belief.⁵¹ After several false starts with figures such as Angela Merici, who founded the

47 On the *Divino Amore* and its transformation into the confraternity of S. Girolamo della *carità* of Rome, see Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci, *I devoti della carità. Le confraternite del Divino Amore nell’Italia del primo Cinquecento* (Napoli: La città del sole, 2002). On their high-profile service to syphilitics (*incurabili*), see *The Great Pox: The French Disease in Renaissance Europe*, eds. John Henderson, Jon Arrizabalaga, and Roger French (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1997).

48 With the Bull “*Illius qui caritas*” of 28 January 1520; see Cocquelines and Mainardi, *Mag. bull. Rom.*, Tom IV, part I.

49 See the provisions insisting on noble membership in *Gli Statuti della Compagnia della Carità di Roma. Parte Prima* (Rome, [1536]). See also Carlino, A., “L’arciconfraternita di S. Girolamo della Carità: l’origine e l’ideologia assistenziale,” *Archivio della società romana di storia patria* 107 (1984): 275–306.

50 Danilo Zardin, “Relaunching confraternities in the Tridentine era ...” *op cit.*, pp. 192–193.

51 On the Schools of Christian Doctrine, see Paul Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1989): 333–362; also his “The Schools of Christian Doctrine in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” *Church History* 53 (1984): 319–331, and “Borromeo and the Schools of Christian Doctrine,” in his Variorum reprint: *Books and Schools in the Italian Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995).

new Ursuline order for women, a priest named Castellino da Castello began in 1536 to round up young boys using the pedagogically sound temptation of apples to entice them to learn the sign of the cross and other basic elements of the faith. The Milanese children proved as susceptible to that lure as Adam, and by 1539, da Castello founded a lay confraternity to take on the educational work.⁵² The schools quickly spread under the administration of local lay confraternities in Lombardy and the Veneto, reaching Rome through the auspices of a wealthy Milanese nobleman, Marco de Sadis-Cusani, by about 1560, and gaining the support of Pope Pius IV in 1562. Expanding on the endorsement of the Council of Trent, the bull “Ex debito” of Pius V in 1571 recommended the establishment of schools of Christian doctrine in every parish, and in 1607 Pope Paul V raised its status to an Archconfraternity headquartered in St. Peter’s in Rome, whence it has spread throughout the world.⁵³

Targeting boys and girls aged from four to fourteen, the schools of Christian doctrine sought to supply the “least common denominator” of knowledge of the faith that would direct the children on the road to salvation and protect them from false belief. In this formation of faith and conscience, the schools relied on two primary treatise types. The *Summario* was a 16-page, duodecimo-sized textbook comprised of standard prayers in Latin (the sign of the cross, Pater noster, Ave Maria, Credo, Salve regina) followed by the baptismal promises, and devotional lists in Italian: ten commandments, four cardinal virtues, seven gifts of the holy spirit, seven spiritual and seven corporal works of mercy, seven capital sins, the opposing seven virtues, three powers of the spirit (memory, intellect, and will), five senses of the body, seven sacraments, and so on. The *Interrogatorio* was a more advanced catechism in question-and-answer format, which ran typically from 120 to 220 pages.⁵⁴ While the “list format” found in the *Summario* had an ancient pedigree, and had been printed in Italy since the arrival of the printing press, the more detailed format of the *Interrogatorio* was first effectively developed by Zwingli in 1523, and especially Luther in his *Small Catechism* of 1529, transforming the medieval genre of “Mirrors for Christians.”⁵⁵ Translations into

52 The earliest rules are *La regola della compagnia delli servi dei puttini in carità* (Milano, 1555), reprinted in Carlo Marcora, “La chiesa Milanese nel decennio 1550–1560,” in *Memorie storiche della Diocesi di Milano*, 7 (1960): 470–481.

53 Bull “Ex debito pastoralis officio” of Pius V of 6 Oct. 1571 and Paul V’s brief, entitled “Ex credito nobis” in Tommassetti, ed., *Bull. Rom. Taur.* See Miriam Turrini, “Riformare il mondo a vera vita christiana: le scuole di catechismo nell’Italia del Cinquecento,” in *Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico*, 8 (1982): 407–489, and for a wealth of detail regarding the expansion of the confraternities, see Alessandro Tamborini, *La compagnia e le scuole della dottrina cristiana* (Milan, 1939).

54 For what follows, see especially Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 343–356 and appendix 3.

55 See the article, “Catechism,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans

Italian from Luther (but published anonymously) as well as Juan de Valdés' *Small Catechism* also circulated until placed on the early Index of Venice in 1549.⁵⁶ The production of the Catholic children's catechisms like the *Interrogatorio* only began in the 1540s and then expanded dramatically from the 1560s through the end of the century.

Indeed, the goal of moral formation and teaching the rudiments of the faith was so important that many confraternities, especially confraternities for boys and young men, had traditionally taken on the responsibility. The Florentine Archangel Raphael confraternity for youths aged 13 to 24, studied so copiously by Konrad Eisenbichler, was one of many founded specifically for that purpose in the fifteenth century.⁵⁷ But the advent of the schools of Christian doctrine, along with the lay confraternities that directed them, signaled a new determination and resolve to bring the catechism to the broadest cross-section of society. To that end, the "list format" of the *Summario* could be condensed still further into a single broadsheet convenient for rote memorization and suitable for posting on walls or distributing after missions, sermons, or even dramatic performances.⁵⁸ The mnemonic efficacy of such broadsheet lists might be still further enhanced with the incorporation of prayers, litanies, woodcuts, and hymns. To a degree previously unknown, the catechism had entered popular culture.

After the *compagnie del SS. Sacramento*, the confraternities with the greatest diffusion in both northern and southern Italy, and undoubtedly, with the greatest female membership, were the Rosary confraternities.⁵⁹ Of all the types associated

Hillerbrand, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1996). The best broad interpretation of catechetical literature in the Lutheran Reformation is Robert James Bast, *Honor your fathers: catechisms and the emergence of a patriarchal ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997).

- 56 See José C. Nieto, *Valdés' Two Catechisms: The Dialogue on Christian Doctrine and the Christian Instruction for Children* ([Lawrence, Kan.]: Coronado Press, 1981). Also see Salvatore Caponetto, *The Protestant Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, tr. Anne and John Tedeschi (Kirksville, MO, 1997), esp. 63–94, and Appendix 3: Carlo Papini, "Lorenzo Lotto Philo-Reformer," 403–408.
- 57 Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael. A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411–1785* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), regarding Christian doctrine, see pp. 128–137.
- 58 Zardín, "Relaunching confraternities in the Tridentine era," pp. 200–201. On the use of catechetical broadsheets with drama, see Eisenbichler, *Boys of the Archangel Raphael*, pp. 129–130.
- 59 See Mario Rosa, "Pietà mariana e devozione del Rosario nell'Italia del Cinque e Seicento," in *Religione e società nel Mezzogiorno tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Bari: De Donato, 1976): pp. 217–244. L. Guglielmo Esposito, "Le confraternite del rosario in Puglia tra Cinquecento e Ottocento: datazioni e note storiche," in *La sociabilità religiosa nel mezzogiorno: le confraternite laicali*, ed. Vincenzo Paglia, in *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, vols. 37–38 (1990): 271–299 (including a listing of towns with rosary

with Catholic reform, the Rosary confraternities were the most purely devotional in character, requiring little of their members beyond the regular recitation of the “Psalter” of the Virgin Mary. The practice of reciting long strings of prayers in honor of Mary, like the Ave Maria prayer itself, emerged in the twelfth century from an enormous variety of ancient practices.⁶⁰ After some early experimentation around the year 1300, the practice of combining serial meditations on the life of Christ along with the repetitions of prayer gained great momentum through the publications of two Carthusians from Trier, Dominic of Prussia and Adolf of Essen, in the early fifteenth century. The first confraternities organized around the devotion were those of the Dominicans Alain de la Roche in Douai in 1470, and a more famous confraternity founded by Jakob Sprenger in Cologne in 1475. German Dominicans founded the first Rosary confraternities in Italy, first in Venice in 1480, and then in Rome at the Dominican headquarters of S. Maria sopra Minerva in 1481, before spreading them to other towns.⁶¹

The Rosary confraternities had attracted papal attention and been enriched with indulgences already in the 1480s by the popes Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII, and again by Leo X. However, it was only in the reign of the Dominican Pope Pius V that they became a primary vehicle for disseminating the spirituality of the Catholic Reformation. A devotee of the Rosary in his private practice, the austere Michele Ghislieri wasted no time in expanding the indulgences for the Rosary and the Rosary confraternity within a year of his election to the papacy in 1566. By 1569, he raised the Minerva confraternity to an Archconfraternity, and reserved to the Dominican father General the power to accept new aggregations.⁶² After attributing the victory of the Christians over the Ottoman Turks at Lépanto on 7 October 1571 to the intercessions of Mary, Pius V designated a new annual feast on that date to “Our Lady of Victory” (later amended to “Our Lady of the Rosary” by Gregory XIII). The new prestige accorded to Mary prompted a new wave of devotional treatises, with Dominicans and Jesuits leading the way. In

confraternites). Luigi Donvito and Bruno Pellegrino, *L'organizzazione ecclesiastica degli Abruzzi e Molise e della Basilicata nell'età postridentina* (Florence: Sansoni, 1973): 61–106. Black, *Italian Confraternities*, pp. 103–104.

60 The broadest and best recent survey is Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1997). For much of what follows, see the introduction and chapter 6: “Rosaries and the language of spirituality”. See also Giles Gerard Meersseman, ed., *Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland*, 2 vols. (Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1958–1960). Also by Meersseman, [Akathistos hymnos] *The Acatistos hymn; Hymn of praise to the Mother of God* Greek text translation and introduction by G. G. Meersseman. (Fribourg, Switzerland: U.P., 1958).

61 Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, 3: 1170–1232.

62 For the bulls and papal pronouncements relating to the confraternity of the Rosary, see *Acta Sanctae Sedis nono Magistrorum et Capitulorum Generalium Sacri Ordinis Praedicatorum pro Societate SS. Rosarii*, ed. J. M. Larroca, OP, 2 vols. in 4 (Lyons, 1890–91).

1584, the archconfraternity in the Minerva in Rome revised, standardized, and published its statutes, combining them with the *Nome di Dio* Archconfraternity also under its care.⁶³ Significantly, female membership in the Rosary confraternities had been anticipated from the outset, and continues to characterize this association to the present day.⁶⁴ The transformation was complete from a traditional devotional outlet into a vehicle to vindicate the honor of Mary while repudiating Protestant objections to her status, which had reached even the ears of rural peasants by the 1550s.⁶⁵

The Jesuit Marian congregations were the last of the characteristic Catholic Reformation confraternities to arrive on the scene, having been founded by the Belgian Jan Leunis as an association for young students in the Roman College in 1563.⁶⁶ By arriving late, they had the advantage of perspective, and in many ways were a hybrid of the devotional characteristics found in the other types. Their most important difference, however, was that their director was always a Jesuit priest appointed by the Society of Jesus, rather than a priest selected by the members, or their own lay leader chosen from the membership. In addition, once they began to form Marian congregations for adults, they were always strictly segregated by social class, whether for nobles, for merchants, for artisans, or even for former slaves.⁶⁷ For these and other reasons, Claudio Aquaviva, the fourth father General

63 *Capitoli, statuti et ordinationi della venerab. Compagnia del santissimo Rosario, fondata nella chiesa di Santa Maria della Minerva di Roma dell'ordine de Predicatori, l'anno 1481 quali saranno anco comuni alla Compagnia del Santissimo nome d'Iddio mutate però le cose che secondo la diversità della Compagnia dovranno esser mutate: fatti, & notevolmente revisti dal Reverendissimo padre Generale dell'ordine de Predicatori, con l'intervento de molti Reverendi Padri. Conforme à quali capitoli si dovranno governare ancora tutte l'altre Compagnie dell'istesso Santissimo Rosario, & Nome d'Iddio, poste in qualsivoglia luogo.* (Rome: G. Osmarino, 1584; Rome: Her. di Antonio Blado, 1585).

64 Children and youths were also explicitly directed toward the Rosary devotion, see for example Eisenbichler, *Boys of the Archangel Raphael*, pp. 149, 167. On female devotion to the Rosary, see Michael Carroll, *Madonnas That Maim. Popular Catholicism in Italy since the Fifteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1992): 14–29.

65 The Jesuit Silvestro Landini reported aspersions to the Virgin Mary in the rural Garfagnana on the border between Tuscany and Liguria. See Caponetto, *The Protestant Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, p. 284. Theological disputes relating to Mary were not just between Protestants and Catholics, as in the case of the heated controversy over the Immaculate Conception between the Franciscans and Dominicans in the 1560s, causing Pius V to prohibit public disputation of the topic. See Hilda C. Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 2 vols. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1980).

66 On the character and development of the Marian Congregations in Rome, see Michael Maher, SJ, "Reforming Rome: The Society of Jesus and Its Congregations," Ph.D. Diss., U Minnesota, 1998.

67 See Jennifer Selwyn, "Procur[ing] in the Common People These Better Behaviors": The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples 1550–1620," *Radical History Review* 67 (Spring 1997): 4–34.

of the order, was able to secure from Pope Gregory XIII in 1584 the bull “Omnipotentis Dei” which secured for the Jesuit Marian congregations Archconfraternity status along with special privileges and exemptions from various requirements, such as the Episcopal oversight which applied to other confraternities.⁶⁸

Jesuit priests and missionaries in Italy promoted confraternal affiliation broadly and continued to endorse membership in a great variety of confraternities and even to organize and “to reform” confraternal statutes; however, only Jesuits remaining in a fixed location would undertake the direction of a confraternity, and then it would only be one of their Marian congregations.⁶⁹ Yet wherever the Jesuits went, the Marian congregations went with them, and their professed houses and colleges were soon bristling with these sodalities, often five or more, divided by the social status of the membership.⁷⁰ Precisely this carefully guarded status—as congregations under Jesuit direction—gave these institutions remarkable devotional flexibility.⁷¹ Like the Christian doctrine confraternities, they were always concerned with the formation and molding of consciences, and the warding off of false doctrine. Like the *SS. Sacramento* confraternities, they always promoted frequent reception of the Eucharist as a primary devotional outlet.⁷² Like the *nome di Dio* confraternities, they worked against blasphemy and exercised corrective measures toward their members and toward others to control swear-

68 Aquaviva also promulgated standard rules for the society. See *The Sodality of our Lady Studied in the Documents*, ed. Elder Mullan, SJ (New York, 1912). However, these exemptions and privileges were not always clear to the bishops, nor to the congregation members, a confusion which occasionally resulted in disputes. For one such example, see Archivio di Stato di Parma, Congregazioni, Busta 40: “Osservazioni sulle norme che regolano le Congregazioni” an eighteenth-century compilation recounting an acrimonious property dispute between the Jesuits and the Congregazione della Natività della beata Vergine, detta dei Mercanti.

69 On Jesuit organization and re-organization of confraternities, see my “Jesuit Missions in Italy, Confraternities, and the Jubilee of 1575: Centers and Peripheries” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* (forthcoming in 2004 no. 2). See also chapter 5 of my monograph, *Working in the Vineyard of the Lord: Jesuit Confraternities in Early Modern Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

70 See Louis Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout. The Catholic Reformation and the Formation of a New Society*, tr. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1989).

71 On the evolution from confraternity to congregation, see Mark Lewis, SJ, “The development of Jesuit confraternity activity in the Kingdom of Naples in the sixteenth and seventeenth century” in *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, 210–227; also Danilo Zardin, “Confraternite e ‘congregazioni gesuitiche’ a Milano fra tardo Seicento e riforme settecentesche,” in *Ricerche sulla chiesa di Milano nel Settecento*, eds. Massimo Marcocchi and Antonio Acerbi (Milan, 1988).

72 See Michael Maher, “How the Jesuits Used their Congregations to Promote Frequent Communion,” in *Confraternites and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain*, eds. John Patrick Donnelly and Michael Maher (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1999): 75–95.

ing. Like the *carità* confraternities, they promoted voluntary activities and charitable outreach such as hospital or prison visiting, and also targeted a selective membership, whether within their colleges or in the cities with professed houses.⁷³

For their Marian congregations with the financial means, usually the Assunta congregations for nobles, the Jesuits also encouraged a heightened sensibility for spectacle. Among the most famous examples of Jesuit confraternal spectacle were the grandiose *Quarantore* devotions staged in the Gesù in Rome and elsewhere in order to promote a glorious yet sober contrast to the usual Carnival excesses that preceded Lent.⁷⁴ For the duration of the spectacle, the choir of the Gesù became a theatre of devotion with the triumphant and breath-taking *trompe-l'oeil* scenery built and painted on-site.⁷⁵ The Noble congregations' special and tightly held status also provided the Jesuits with innovative means to finance these spectacles and to skirt their obligations to poverty by way of creative accounting.⁷⁶ But the *Quarantore* devotions were not only about spectacle, and the forty hours spent by the members in prayer and meditation before the exposed Eucharist were also at the heart of the internal devotional discipline reinforcing the basic tenets of traditional belief that were so characteristic of the Catholic Reformation. It was also a devotion that could be performed by the humblest members of society, and indeed, soon after the start of the *Quarantore* celebrations in the 1530s in Milan, the Capuchins were among its most prolific and determined proponents.⁷⁷

73 The classic work on Jesuit prison visiting is Vincenzo Paglia, *La pietà dei carcerati: confraternite e società a Roma nei secoli XVI–XVIII* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1980). On Jesuit charitable outreach in confraternities see Flavio Rurale, *I Gesuiti a Milano. Religione e politica nel secondo Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992), and “L’attività caritativa degli istituti religiosi e il ruolo della compagnia di Gesù,” in *La città e i poveri: Milano e le terre lombarde dal Rinascimento all’età spagnuola*, ed. Danilo Zardin (Milan: Jaca Book, 1995): 253–272.

74 The best-known consideration is Mark S. Weil, “The Devotion of the Forty Hours and Roman Baroque Illusions,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974): 218–48, but see also Angelo De Santi, SJ, *L’orazione delle Quarant’ore e i tempi di calamità e di guerra* (Rome: 1919), and P. Giuseppe Castellani, *La congregazione dei nobili presso la chiesa del Gesù in Roma* (Rome, 1954).

75 The Jesuit lay brother, artist, and architect Andrea Pozzo published some of his fictive *Quarantore* scenography in his famous treatise on *trompe-l’oeil* painting, *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum. Perspective in Architecture and Painting. An Unabridged Reprint of the English-and-Latin Edition of the 1693 Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* (New York: Dover, 1989).

76 See Michael Maher, “Financing Reform: The Society of Jesus, the Congregation of the Assumption, and the Funding of the Exposition of the Sacrament in Early Modern Rome,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 93 (2002): 126–144.

77 See Carlo Cargnoni, *Le quarantore ieri e oggi. Viaggio nella storia della predicazione cattolica, della devozione popolare e della spiritualità cappuccina* (Rome: Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 1986).

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Lastly of course, in their emphasis on devotion to Mary, Jesuit Marian congregations resembled the Rosary confraternities, and this practice of meditative devotion will be the final element of Catholic reform devotional sensibilities that I wish to highlight in the remainder of this paper. The Jesuits were among the most prolific writers of devotional treatises for both an elite and a more popular market within Early Modern Europe.⁷⁸ One of the genres that they developed and refined to a particularly high degree was the “collection of devotional meditations” accompanied by illustrations, either woodcuts, or engravings. In this respect, the Jesuits were drawing on their Ignatian heritage by utilizing one of the primary methods of meditation found in the *Spiritual Exercises*, the “composition of the place.” As Gauvin Bailey has pointed out, Ignatius’ own language in describing the process of imagining the locale for a meditation is exceedingly vague, and yet the practice of deliberately and vividly constructing in the mind’s eye the setting for a directed meditation is central to Jesuit practice, whether applied in rhetorically vivid preaching or in directing the *Spiritual Exercises* for retreatants.⁷⁹

In the First Exercise of the First Week, designed to evince contrition and penitence, the retreatant is instructed to meditate on the first, second, and third sin (that of the angels, that of Adam and Eve, and that of a sinner condemned to Hell) by employing the three powers of the soul (memory, understanding, and will). After praying and asking God for grace, the retreatant proceeds to the first meditative prelude, a mental representation of the place:

When the contemplation or meditation is on something visible, for example, when we contemplate Christ our Lord, the representation will consist in seeing in our imagination the material place where the object is that we wish to contemplate. I said the material place, for example, the temple, or the mountain where Jesus or His Mother is, according to the subject matter of the contemplation. In a case where the subject is not visible, as here in a meditation on sin, the representation will be to see in imagination my soul as a prisoner in this corruptible body, and to consider my whole composite being as an exile here on earth, cast out to live among brute beasts. I said my whole composite being, body and soul.⁸⁰

The retreatant then employs the memory to fill out the scene, and engages and anchors the understanding through the creative manipulation of the figures in the scene. Lastly, the retreatant commits the will in framing a resolution

78 See my article “The Formation of the Pious Soul: Trans-alpine Demand for Jesuit Devotional Texts, 1548–1615,” in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1648*, eds. John Headley and Hans Hillerbrand (forthcoming from Ashgate Press, in 2004).

79 Gauvin Bailey, *Between Renaissance and Baroque: The First Jesuit Paintings in Rome, 1564–1610* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

80 Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, tr. Louis J. Puhl, SJ (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1951): Chapter 47, p. 25.

regarding the moral principles resulting from the first two steps.⁸¹ Even before the first edition of the *Spiritual Exercises* was published in 1548, the Jesuits began peeling off its devotional elements and reorganizing them for other purposes, such as preaching and spiritual direction. Thus, the Jesuit productions of illustrated collections of devotional meditations, by providing the ready-made illustration of the place and the thematic elements in order to give the reader a “jump-start” on the Ignatian method of meditation, stand in direct descent from this Ignatian principle of “composition of the place”.⁸²

Without doubt, the most famous and celebrated example of this genre is the *Evangelicae historiae imagines* and *Adnotationes et meditationes in Euangelia*, written by Jerome Nadal and published posthumously from 1593–1595, and accompanied by the exquisite illustrations produced by a team of the finest engravers in Antwerp.⁸³ The first edition, in grand folio size to showcase the elegant engravings, represents the highest standards of the Renaissance bookmakers’ art. The third Jesuit father General, the Belgian Everard Mercurian, was determined that the undertaking should be accomplished in Antwerp, to assure the quality of the results.⁸⁴ The preface to the *Adnotationes*, written by Nadal’s assistant, Diego Jiménez, indicates that Nadal had taken up the project specifically

81 For two extended considerations of the Ignatian process of imagination, see: Pierre-Antoine Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola le lieu de l’image* (Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1992) and Antonio T. de Nicolas, *Powers of Imagining. Ignatius de Loyola: A Philosophical Hermeneutic of Imagining through the Collected Works of Ignatius de Loyola, with a translation of these works* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986).

82 For a brief historiographical overview of the connection between the illustrated meditations and the technique of composition of place, see Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “Les ‘Exercices Spirituels’ sont-ils illustrable?” in *Les Jésuites à l’âge baroque (1540–1640)*, ed. Luce Giard (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996): 197–212. Scholarship on the broader process of utilizing images with interactive textual accompaniment is vast, but two excellent surveys can be found in Marc Fumaroli, *L’école du silence: Le sentiment des images au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994) and Walter J. Ong, SJ, *Orality and literacy: the technologizing of the word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982).

83 *Evangelicae historiae imagines ex ordine euangeliorum ...* (Antuerpiae [s.n.] 1593). *Adnotationes et meditationes in Euangelia* (Antuerpiae, excudebat Martinus Nutius, 1594/5). Happily, these are both available in beautiful new editions and translations: *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, 3 vols., Vol. 1: *The Infancy Narratives*, ed. Walter Melion, tr. Frederick Homann, SJ (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph’s U.P., 2003). (volumes 2 and 3 are forthcoming). Also available are: *Evangelicae historiae imagines* (Scranton, Pa.: University of Scranton Press, 2002). *The illustrated spiritual exercises* (Scranton, Pa.: University of Scranton Press, 2001).

84 For much of what follows, see the introductory study of Walter S. Melion, “The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal’s *Adnotationes et Meditationes in Euangelia*,” in *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, Vol. 1: *The Infancy Narratives*, *op cit.* pp. 1–97. On Antwerp’s role as a devotional print centre, see Alfons K.L. Thijs, *Antwerpen, Internationaal Uitgeverscentrum van Devotieprenten 17de–18de Eeuw* (Leuven, 1993).

in response to Ignatius' request to produce an illustrated commentary on the Gospel passages for Lent and the Sundays of the year for the benefit of the young religious of the Society. However, a letter written to pope Clement VIII in order to seek funding for the volumes indicates a wider intended audience:

[The book will be] useful and profitable to all classes of persons who know Latin, especially to candidates for the priesthood.... [The book] is not only much desired by contemplatives in Europe, but also coveted in both the Indies by the Company's workers who, using the images, could more easily imprint New Christians with all the mysteries of human redemption, which they retain with difficulty through preaching and catechism.⁸⁵

Thus, both the devotional efficacy, and the pedagogical utility of the images are carefully underscored. In addition, by printing the engravings separately from the textual annotations and meditations (which were organized according to the liturgical year), the textual descriptions could be sold separately and inexpensively, while the images could then be reordered, presenting them chronologically as a virtual "life of Christ" in images.⁸⁶ The chronological reordering was also a radical departure from the medieval traditions of the Book of Hours, the *Bible moralisé*, the *Biblia pauperum*, and blockbooks like the *Speculum humanae salvationis* which also interspersed biblical excerpts with thematically linked illustrations, and as such were important precedents for the *Adnotationes*.⁸⁷ Besides realizing Ignatius' goal of utilizing illustrations as tools for meditation, Nadal also maintained firm convictions of his own about the efficacy of contemplative images. In lectures on the *Spiritual Exercises* to Jesuit scholastics in Coimbra, Nadal indicated that "meditation elevates the soul; raised heavenward, the soul enters into contemplation, by stages perceiving itself to be present before God, fashioning the divine images within itself, and then discerning in that image its union with the divine presence."⁸⁸ The fluidity with which Nadal could pass between image, text, and contemplative imagination is amply demonstrated by the organization of the *Adnotationes*. Each of the 153 images is linked by key

85 *Monumenta Historia societatis Iesu*, Nadal, 4: 727–728, translated and quoted in Melion, ed., *The Infancy Narratives*, p. 1.

86 Jiménez describes these two goals in the dedicatory letter, cited in Melion, *The Infancy Narratives*, p. 99.

87 On Books of hours, see Roger S. Wieck, *Time sanctified: the Book of hours in medieval art and life*, 2nd ed. (New York: G. Braziller in association with the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 2001). On the blockbooks, etc. see *The Mirror of Salvation: An edition of British Library Blockbook G. 11784*, tr. and ed. Albert C. Labvriola and John W. Smeltz (Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne Univ. Press, 2002).

88 Taken from the transcriptions of the Coimbra students who heard Nadal's lectures, and Paraphrased by Walter Melion in *The Infancy Narratives*, pp. 7–8. On Nadal's career, see William V. Bangert, SJ, *Jerome Nadal, S.J., 1507–1580: Tracking the First Generation of Jesuits*, ed. Thomas McCoog (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1992).

letters to a legend beneath with short titles. Then the Gospel text for the day is included in its entirety, followed by an expanded annotation on each of the titles (which refer back to the letters in each image). Lastly, the meditation dilates rhetorically and thematically on all the previous material, referring back both to the annotations and to the image. In sum, the work represents a remarkably compact and potent devotional device, with the images mnemonically anchoring and triggering the associated elements of the faith.

If the *Adnotationes* represent the high end of Jesuit aspirations in publishing illustrated devotional manuals, then the numerous smaller and shorter vernacular treatises of the prolific author Luca Pinelli can represent Jesuit efforts to reach a far broader market. The statutes of the Marian congregations always enjoined the members to engage in pious reading and meditation, and so by the seventeenth century, a great variety of texts were produced for the congregation readership, ranging from ephemeral single-page cards with the “saint of the month,” to small devotional treatises distributed during the festivities of the beginning of the year (called *xenia*), on up to, plausibly, the *Adnotationes* themselves.⁸⁹ Pinelli’s production of nearly two-dozen Italian devotional treatises (that went through frequent re-editions and translations into other European languages) usually fell somewhere in the middle of this range. Usually in octavo or duodecimo format, they were frequently around 100 pages or less.⁹⁰ Whereas Nadal spent much of his career in administrative functions, and directing Jesuit religious themselves, Pinelli was an active teacher and even rector of a number of Jesuit colleges. He was intimately familiar with the devotional life of Jesuit Marian congregations for students and adults, having directed a number of them, and some of his devotional publications were dedicated to specific Jesuit congregations, as well as to some non-Jesuit confraternities.⁹¹

89 For congregation rules, see Mullan, *The Sodality of our Lady* passim. On the tradition of *xenia*, see Alfons K.L. Thijs, “Leven in en rond de ‘Sodaliteit’ te Antwerpen: sedert eeuwen een tijdspeigel,” in *De Nottebohmzaal: Boek en mecenaat*, various authors (Antwerp, 1993). For a cursory overview of such texts, see Carlos Sommervogel, SJ, *Biblioteca mariana de la compagne de Jesus* (Paris, 1885): pp. 147–169 deals with the Marian congregations (rule books, devotional books, etc.).

90 On Pinelli’s *oeuvre*, see Carlos Sommervogel, SJ, 1834–1902, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 12 vols. (Brussels, 1890–1930, repr. Louvain, 1960): tom. VI: cols. 802–817. See also F. Regina, “Pinelli, Luca,” in *Diccionario histórico de la compañía de Jesús*, eds. Charles E. O’Neill, SJ, and Joaquín M.a Domínguez, SJ, 4 vols. (Rome: IHSI, 2001): 3138–3139. He could be more prolix. His treatise on purgatory ran to 463 pages, for instance.

91 For instance, his treatise on the seven deadly sins was dedicated to the “Congregazione dell’ Assunzione della B. Vergine nella Casa professa della Compagnia di Giesu in Roma” a nobles’ congregation, whereas his treatise on the life of the Virgin Mary was dedicated to the “congregazione della natività della beata Vergine nella casa professa Della Compagnia di Giesù in Napoli” a congregation for merchants. see below.

Not all of Pinelli's devotional treatises included woodcuts or engravings, but when they did, Pinelli would usually include explicit directives on how these should be incorporated into meditative practice. For instance, in his treatise on contemplating the life of Christ,⁹² dedicated to Don'Anna di Mendoza Contessa di S. Angelo, Pinelli provides a wealth of instructions. It is worthwhile to consider them in greater detail. Written in the form of direct address, in the familiar imperative, an introduction divided into short chapters advises that meditation should be done at the same time each day, as the Devil would interfere otherwise, and the best time is in the morning before lunch. It should be in a quiet and undisturbed location, and 'you' should be in a modest and reverent position. The evening before, you should prepare the points for meditation the following day. Imagine yourself going to meditate with Jesus and being presented by your Guardian Angel and favorite saints. You should imagine yourself as present to the events taking place in the mystery. If you feel consoled by devotion, then you should not hurry on to the next meditation. At the end, you should say a personal prayer, which is more like a familiar and warm conversation with God, praising His greatness, thanking Him for His blessings, asking forgiveness for sins and perseverance in good deeds, and making a commitment in your life and works with a firm resolve not to do anything that would displease His divine majesty. After describing difficulties that might arise in the course of meditating (relating to aridity, distractions, boredom, etc.), and offering suggestions to defeat them, the treatise moves into the meditations proper. The text appears on the verso side, with the engraving on the following recto, so that word and corresponding image are across from each other on a two-page spread. The text consists of a heading with citation from Scripture, brief points for meditation, items to notice in the image and to imitate in life, and a brief pious description. On pages 34–35, for instance, Jesus heals a paralyzed man (from John, Ch. 5) and the image and text shows him tending to the paralyzed, weak, and crippled, and the reader is reminded of the Christian responsibility to do the same. The pages 57–100 recount the Passion story, ending with the resurrection. Thus, the treatise displays the remarkable versatility of the genre of illustrated meditative guides devised by the Jesuits. In a much less expensive and simplified format, Pinelli has condensed the chronological "life in images" found in Nadal's *Adnotationes*, while effectively retaining the mnemonically-charged image/text correspondence that serves to anchor and to direct the meditations.

Pinelli is still more explicit about the role of contemplative practices in the devotional life of the Marian congregations in two short treatises of brief meditations on the life of the Virgin Mary and on the Seven Deadly Sins.⁹³ In the

92 *Libretto d'imagini e di brevi meditationi sopra alcuni misteri della vita, e passione di Christo Signor Nostro* (Venice, 1601). 2nd edition. 100 pages. octavo.

93 *Libretto d'imagini e di brevi meditationi sopra la vita della Santissima Vergine Maria*

dedication letter to the merchants' congregation in the professed house in Naples, Pinelli begins with praise for the work of the missions in the Indies and the Orient as described in the annual letters, a clear indication of the integration of the congregations into the work of the Society. He also expresses delight that so many kings, princes, dukes, and knights are partaking of the sacraments in the congregation, winning the Neapolitan members over by the example of their social betters. He then passes on to the many laudable works of the congregation, including helping the shame-faced poor, providing dowries, peacemaking, and looking after the dead of the congregation. He also praises the flagellation (*discipline*) and meditations, as well as the other acts of charity (which are too numerous to recount...). Then in a letter to the devout reader, he explains (in first person singular and plural) that his superiors asked him to write meditations on the life of the Virgin, because there are so many congregations in Naples devoted to Mary, and it could help them all. He moves on to his method. Since experience shows that an image helps to keep a person more recollected and attentive to the meditation, there will be three points for each image taken from the *Historia di Maria*, or some other pious text. Then three directives will suggest how "to regulate and to conform our lives and actions to those of the Virgin our Queen." To these points he adds meditative discourses of slightly greater length than in the life of Christ discussed above, and indicates his sources, usually from the fathers, or from the Jesuit theologian Peter Canisius. The meditations often expand on the images with concrete descriptive detail: for instance, although the engravings are in black and white, an early meditation describes the appearance of Mary as having darker skin, but light hair, which she keeps without fuss. Olive pupils animate her active eyes, and her coral lips distinguish her long face, hands, and fingers. Similarly, the meditation text intertwines word and image in the description of the moral qualities of Mary, who is God's second model for humanity after Jesus.

In his work on the seven deadly sins that he dedicated to the Nobles' congregation located at the Gesù in Rome, Pinelli begins once again by dilating on the wonderful works of the congregation. He mentions in passing the penitence, and fervid meditations and other devotions the noble members do on behalf of the Magdalen [the contemplative life], and provides a small edifying sermon on the work they do for Martha [the active life], especially the pacification of disputes and discord. In this case, there are fewer images, only eight: one for each vice, plus an introductory image of all the vices (always personified as women in accordance with the female gender of the Italian words) holding court beneath

Madre di Dio (Venice, 1601). second edition (first in Naples) 72 numbered pages. octavo. *Libretto d'imagini e di brevi meditazioni sopra i sette peccati Capitali, e le virtù à loro contrarie. Si da ancora una breve cognitione de' vitij per fuggirli, e delle virtù per acquistarle.* (Naples, 1600), 68 numbered pages. octavo.

their queen, pride (*superbia*). Although the written discussion of the vices and their contrary remedies is longer, the format for the booklet is the same: first presenting the theme, then summarized points for meditation, then points to apply in life, and finally the meditative discourse. The second part focuses on the virtues (also personified as women) holding court under their queen, humility. Then the meditations again proceed in the same format, linking the engraving with the text.

In both treatises composed for use by the congregations, the Jesuit ideal of “contemplation in action” is readily apparent. The charities and devotional life are carefully integrated to discipline the interior volitions of the members and to direct them toward positive outlets. In a compact and reinforcing circle, the charitable activities of the congregation exercise and fuel the virtues that are then the subject of the devotional meditations. The meditations graphically model the pious actions that the confraternity organizes and facilitates. But the serial and repetitive nature of the format itself provides another powerful conceptual tool for strengthening and embedding the formation of the conscience. The vivid images, tightly linked to “bullet point” summaries that are then expanded in the discussion and manipulated by the intellect of the reader through meditation, are part of the classical craft of memory developed by the Greeks and co-opted by Christianity throughout the middle ages.

In an insightful collection of essays that merits broader consideration among confraternity scholars and others interested in the practice of devotional meditation in Early Modern Europe, Fernando de la Flor demonstrates the profound influence of classical mnemonic theory on the Jesuits from Ignatius and Nadal and expanding well into the seventeenth century.⁹⁴ The practice of composing a “place” and then finding “images” to which are attached more complex associations stands in direct descent from the discussion of “artificial memory” developed in the first century BCE by an anonymous Roman rhetorician in the letter *Ad Herennium*. As developed by the desert fathers of early Christianity, the cognitive craft of memory implicit in this “art of composing” became the meditative practice of *mneme theou*, “memory of God,” a state approached by a set of established and repeated practices, including particular postures, murmured phrases of memorized sacred text, and “pictures” —both mental and physical— used to induce a prescribed path of emotionally marked-out stages toward divine *theoria*, or “seeing.” Medieval monastic authors like Hugh of St. Victor emphasized the regularity and discipline necessary for the exercise of the *ars memorativa*, and learning something “by heart” was an intimate performance of repetitive

94 For much of what follows, see Fernando R. de la Flor, *Teatro de la memoria: siete ensayos sobre mnemotecnia española de los siglos xvii y xviii* ([Salamanca?]: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Bienestar, 1988). Also Paolo Rossi deserves attention in this regard, *Logic and the art of memory: the quest for a universal language*, tr. Stephen Clucas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

acquisition. In the hands of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, it became a moral art, the corollary of a well-ordered mind.⁹⁵ Indeed, for Aquinas, the virtues were habits of thought and action that could be cultivated through repetition and the techniques of impressing images on the memory.⁹⁶ This is precisely the technique as applied in the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius, and as popularized through the illustrated devotional treatises of the early Jesuits. A vivid or striking illustration becomes the “memory place” in which the individual images are located, and the particular character of the juxtaposition of the image in the place draws out the deeper associations. When combined with ritual repetition and enacted by the active intellect through associative meditation, it becomes a still more potent means of anchoring and reinforcing habits of thought and action.

Simultaneous with the popularization of mnemonic techniques for meditation, interest in hermetic practices led to the creation of memory systems like those of Giulio Camillo and later Giordano Bruno.⁹⁷ What these systems all shared was an emphasis on utilizing striking, symbolic, or at least uncommon images in combinations to produce complex associations of meaning. Indeed, even modern scientific inquiry into the methodology of “mnemonotechnics” has emphasized the efficacy of uncommon or even bizarre mental images.⁹⁸ Of course, what is bizarre for one person may be commonplace for another, and the Jesuit devotional images tended not to be as contrived and artificial as the more esoteric astrology- or kabala-influenced systems. Nevertheless, their common practice of embedding smaller pictures, windows, shields, or clouds of heavenly interventions did at times make for awkward juxtapositions and thus overlapped

95 The best recent discussion of the Christian monastic tradition of the art of memory is Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 1998) and *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 1990). Carruthers along with Jan M. Ziolkowski, has recently edited an anthology of sources: *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

96 For Aquinas on the virtues, in *Summa theologiae*, first part of the second part, questions 55–7. A translation is *Thomas Aquinas. Selected Writings*, ed. Ralph McInerny (London: Penguin, 1998): 653ff.

97 Giulio Camillo, *L'idea del teatro*, ed. Lina Bolzoni (Palermo: Sellerio, 1991). Giordano Bruno, *De imaginum, signorum et idearum compositione* (Frankfurt, 1591). *On the composition of images, signs & ideas*, tr. Charles Doria, ed. Dick Higgins (New York: Willis, Locker & Owens, 1991). Jonathan Spence has developed this in relation to the Chinese mission of the Jesuit Matteo Ricci, in *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking, 1984).

98 See Keith A. Wollen and Matthew G. Margres, “Bizarreness and the Imagery Multiprocess Model” in *Imagery and related mnemonic processes: theories, individual differences, and applications*, eds. Mark A. McDaniel and Michael Pressley (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1987).

with the practice of devising allegorical emblems, another memory-training device (that was also incorporated into the devotional images in the form of ‘IHS’ monograms, sacred hearts, and the like).⁹⁹

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In summary, I wish to emphasize again the multi-valent and overlapping means by which the new confraternities and devotional meditations reinforced a new emphasis on internal consent and formation of conscience in the Catholic Reformation. This inward turn, which because of its preference for the spiritual over the material has been characterized as a “Platonic transcendentalism” or Neoplatonism refracted through the mind of Augustine, gained ground already in the fifteenth century through the *Devotio moderna*.¹⁰⁰ In the sixteenth century, it came to fruition either in the Protestant Reformation, or in the areas that remained Catholic, through the reinvestment of traditional practices with an overlay of internal formation. “Going through the motions” was no longer acceptable without the proper internal disposition. Because gauging internal dispositions was so elusive, then as now, a broad array of new devotional patterns arose to secure those dispositions as much as possible.

As we have seen, the SS. *Sacramento* confraternities provided the opportunity in nearly every community to reinforce belief in the real presence of God in the Eucharist. Through their emphasis on frequent reception, and the concomitant obligation of auricular confession before receiving communion, they provided the regular occasion to frame consciences in the confessional, one of the primary means of disciplining the soul.¹⁰¹ The *nome di Dio* confraternities, through their policing against blasphemy in their communities, reinforced belief in the real presence of God in the world. Similarly, their devotional practices, which included more frequent reception of the Eucharist and recitation of litanies in honor

99 On the layering of images inside of images, see John F. Moffitt, “Francisco Pacheco and Jerome Nadal: new light on the Flemish sources of the Spanish “picture-within-the-picture”,” *The Art Bulletin*, 72.4 (1990): 631–638. See also the letters and exchange with David Freedberg and Leo Steinberg and Moffitt’s reply in *The Art Bulletin*, 73.3 (1991), p. 503–507. On emblems and Jesuits, see *Emblematik und Kunst der Jesuiten in Bayern: Einfluss und Wirkung*, eds. G. Richard Dimler, SJ, Peter M. Daly, and Rita Haub (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

100 On the coinage of Platonic transcendentalism, see Carlos Eire, *War against the idols: the Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 1986). On the Augustinian revival, see A.D. Wright, *The Counter-Reformation: Catholic Europe and the Non-Christian World* (London: St Martin’s Press, 1982) and Peter Kaufman, *Augustinian Piety and Catholic Reform: Augustine, Colet, and Erasmus* (Macon, GA: Mercer Press, 1982).

101 For a detailed discussion of the use of confession in Borromean Milan, see Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), especially chapter 2, pp. 43–83.

of God and the Virgin Mary worked to ingrain that belief through the formation of devotional habits.¹⁰² The *carità* confraternities sought to enlist the elites in their communities as models of charitable giving, reinforcing the traditional emphasis on faith in action, or *fides caritate formata*, in the formula prescribed by the Council of Trent. The Christian doctrine confraternities took on as their primary obligation the formation of the faith of the young. Through their free lessons and wide dissemination of catechetical literature, they sought to ensure, at least through rote memorization, the reception of the basic tenets of faith both as a model for the conscience and as a shield against Protestant interpretation.

The Rosary confraternities, in their wide diffusion across the Italian peninsula, sought to preserve the traditional cult of the Virgin Mary. Through the practice of the Rosary devotion, with its ritual repetition of prayers accompanied by meditations on the life of Christ, they disseminated one of the primary devotional models of the Catholic Reformation. Indeed, the practice of incorporating illustrations in published devotional manuals had been a commonplace of the Rosary devotion since 1483, when tiny woodcut vignettes of the fifteen mysteries (five joyful, five sorrowful, and five glorious) were first added to a rosary handbook.¹⁰³ The linked images facilitated the meditative visualization of the mysteries so as to defeat the distraction caused by the rhythmic repetition of prayer, whether in voice or in thought. Indeed, by the end of the sixteenth century, the images accompanying Rosary manuals could be extremely ornate and intricate, a virtual memory palace in themselves.

Not surprisingly, the Rosary devotion introduced another variant on the use of repetition and memory for devotional purposes: the development by Dominicans after 1600 of the recitation of the Rosary in chorus.¹⁰⁴ This “call and answer” technique served to break the monotony and repetition of the practice by producing more aural stimulation, and requiring more active engagement in the recitation, two features which served to anchor it in the mind and conscience still more strongly. It stands in contrast to the usual Catholic reform tendency to emphasize internal over external devotions, and thus created a communal practice from what had previously been an individual practice. In this regard, it stands in line with the spectacular devotions of the *Quarantore* and the *Oratorio*, which in their

102 For instance, see the *Lode al Santissimo Nome di Dio in riparazione delle bestemmie* ([S.l., s.n., s.d.]).

103 The first handbook had been printed only eight years before, in 1475. On illustrations in the Rosary devotion, see Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*, pp. 31–64 and esp. 33.

104 See Alfonso Chacon, OP, *Raccolta di varie devozioni col modo di dire il Santissimo Rosario a chori, come lo dice la Compagnia di quello della Minerva di Roma* (Rome, 1601), discussed in Roberto Rusconi, “Confraternite, Compagnie e devozioni,” pp. 493–494.

seventeenth-century manifestations became so characteristic of Baroque piety. Andrew Barnes has questioned whether these meditative devotions, no matter how grand, could provide the “neurophysiological release” and “ergotropic stimulation” that had previously been accomplished through physically cathartic devotions such as flagellation.¹⁰⁵ Whether or not one may consider the repetition of the *Ave Maria* 150 or 300 times as agonistic as ritual flagellation, it must be regarded as a mnemonic and meditative tool aimed at reinforcing both belief and community that was so characteristic of Catholic reform.

Lastly I have discussed the Jesuit Marian congregations, which appropriated numerous elements from the other confraternal models and directly incorporated meditative practices combining visualization, repetition, and other techniques deriving from the mnemonic traditions of the middle ages, as filtered through the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius. The close guidance of the Jesuit priest directing the congregations, combined with the charitable initiatives and the collective devotions, as well as the meditative guidebooks produced for the members, all created a taut knot of practices reinforcing moral formation and internal conviction.¹⁰⁶ The ritual engagement of the memory, the understanding, and the will, both in individual contemplation and in collective devotional activities, promoted the creation of internal habits of virtue. As these dispositions were exercised through charitable activity, they further ingrained the mental habits, thus seeking to reform the member in both thought and deed. Through their closely integrated use in the congregations, the illustrated devotional books became a part of the physical as well as the mental baggage of every member.

Shortly after the publication of Anne Jacobsen Schutte’s useful “Finding List of Italian Religious Books,” Roberto Rusconi called for the re-integration of the “libri da compagnia” and other pious books into the consideration of religious formation accomplished through confraternities.¹⁰⁷ Such devotional books,

105 See his article “*Ces Sortes de Pénitence Imaginaires: The Counter-Reformation Assault on Communitas*” in *Social history and issues in human consciousness: some interdisciplinary connections*, eds. Andrew Barnes and Peter N. Stearns (New York: New York U.P., 1989): 67–84. He reprises these arguments in his consideration of flagellant communities in Marseille from the Reformation to the Revolution: *The Social Dimension of Piety. Associative Life and Devotional Change in the Penitent Confraternity of Marseilles* (New York, 1994). While it may account for some devotional shifts in Catholicism, it is difficult for such a neurological model to account for the heartfelt sentiment and enthusiasm of Protestants, who, for instance, limited their ergotropic stimulation still further.

106 Michael Maher develops the Jesuit use of ritual in congregations in “Jesuits and Ritual in Early Modern Europe,” in *Medieval and early modern ritual: formalized behavior in Europe, China, and Japan*, ed. Joëlle Rollo-Koster (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002): 193–218, esp. 205–209.

107 Anne Jacobsen Schutte, *Printed Italian Vernacular Religious Books, 1465–1550: A*

through their familiarity and ubiquity, were as much a part of the mental devotional landscape of Early Modern Catholicism as the “Madonnas on the street corner.”¹⁰⁸ They formed a regular reminder and exercise of the devotional dispositions that were becoming the normative models, and as we have seen, they could form an integral part of the infusion of new practices. Much work remains to be done to realize Rusconi’s goal of integration, but I hope to have drawn attention to the ways in which both institutional development and devotional techniques can be united to increase our understanding of the inculcation of belief and devotion in Early Modern Italian confraternities.

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Finding List (Geneva, 1983). Rusconi’s comments, made at the important conference in Lausanne, were later published as “Pratica culturale ed istruzione religiosa nelle confraternite italiane tardomedievali: ‘libro della compagnia’ e ‘libri di pietà’,” in *Le Mouvement confraternel au Moyen Age: France, Italie, Suisse: Actes de la table ronde organisée par l’Université de Lausanne ...* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1987): 133–153.

108 See Edward Muir, “The Virgin on the Street Corner: The Place of the Sacred in Italian Cities,” in *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Steven Ozment (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1989): 25–40.