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# Coexistence and Conflict: Popular Catholicism, the Council of Trent and the Life Cycle in Carini, Palermo, Italy

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COEXISTENCE AND CONFLICT: POPULAR CATHOLICISM, THE COUNCIL
OF TRENT, AND THE LIFECYCLE IN CARINI, PALERMO, ITALY

by

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ABSTRACT


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The area of Palermo and its environs are rich with history that has been virtually untouched. Little can be found in the English language about the history of Sicily and even less about the cities and towns where Sicilians lived and worked. This thesis looks at the town of Carini in the early seventeenth century (1590–1650) when the kings of Spain (Philip II, III, and IV) ruled Sicily. This study uses primarily Catholic parish records from *La Chiesa Madre di Carini* or the mother church of Carini to portray the life cycle of Carinese through birth, baptism, marriage, death, and burial in a southern Italian town at the height of Spanish rule.  Moreover, the records that were consulted came into existence as a result of the religious fervor and revitalization of the Council of Trent. If it had not been for the Council of Trent and its mandates to keep records, this study might not have been possible. However, the Council of Trent made its way lackadaisically toward Palermo and its environs; therefore, this study relays how society effectively coexisted and conflicted with the

reforms of Trent as a result of the politics of Spain, the structure of the church (*chiese ricettizie*), and the social and cultural landscape in seventeenth century Carini. The lives of villagers show us these patterns most clearly. In the birth and baptism chapter, Soro Rosalia Galluzzo, a widow, midwife, and nun shows the limitations for women and religion in this town. Marriage patterns also reveal more about how economics, politics, and religion merged to change the landscape in early seventeenth century Carini. Finally, the life, death, and burial of Don Gaspano Russo is an apropos example of the continuity of cultural practices in Carini despite the reforms of Trent.

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online gratuitously so that all those who have a love of Carini could collaborate and make connections online. I am further grateful because this small act of service on his part cost me countless trips to the library and allowed me to both pursue my ambition and continue my employment while I completed this thesis. I am also grateful to a distant cousin, Michel Alcamo, among others for taking those early Carini records and putting them in a lineage-linked database. All of Michel's hard work made my workload just a little bit lighter and for that I will be forever thankful.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY


Carini

*A piè del monte ove la terra inclina*

*D'ameni prati cinta e d'erbe rare*

*Siede Carini illustre e secolare,*

*E il suo Castel di sopra la collina*

*Staglia superbo l'ombra sulla china,*

*E il cielo e i campi sembra dominare*

*In sino là dove il ceruleo mare*

*d'Iccara lambe la fatal ruina.*

*O forestier che passi per Carini*

*Volgi losguardo sù  verso l'Ostello,*

*Ove giunge la fraganza dei giardini:*

*Giammai saprai trovare*

*Luogo più  bello*

*Cesco Fraianello*

*(Francesco Aiello)*


The Trinacria. The breadbasket of Rome. The island of sun. All of these are

names given to Sicily to describe its vast beauty and resources. Sicily was and is an

island of the Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Saracens, and Normans, rich with ancient

culture and civilization. Contrastingly, Sicily is also a land that has been used as a

stepping stone between Europe and Africa and as a veritable "political football" for

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centuries. To many historians and others, Sicily is considered "both 'Africa' and *terra vergine*, a reservoir of feudal residues, sloth, and squalor on the one hand and of quaint peasants, rustic traditions, and exotica on the other."[1] Historians of Sicily have often focused their scholarship on this Southern view of a picturesque but backward society, emphasizing the problems they saw at hand and almost completely ignoring the early modern era when the Spanish ruled Sicily and Southern Italy. Both Italian and English literature about early modern Sicily focus in large measure on the economic and political ventures of Spain but have little emphasis on the Catholic Church (except for the Inquisition) and the religious culture and climate of the era. There is a clear void in scholarly literature relating to the period after the Council of Trent in Sicily.[2] Beginning in the sixteenth century, Spanish rulers of Sicily maintained what is termed *Monarchia Sicula,* the right to represent the church locally. This right that Spanish kings asserted to maintain local power over the Church in Sicily directly affected the way the Church operated and enacted (or did not enact) certain reforms set forth by the Council of Trent. Additionally, the structure of the Church in Southern Italy (termed *chiese ricettizie*) and the tradition of magic and mysticism in Sicily were also barriers to the full implementation of Trent. What is more, throughout Italy the pace at which the reforms of

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[1] Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 3.

[2] The contributions of the *Consiglio Nazionale della Ricerca* (CNR) should not go unnoticed in the expansion of southern Italian historical studies. The CNR is in some ways equivalent to the National Endowment for Humanities in the United States and since 1967 has helped fund many historical projects in southern Italy. Since the mid- to late-1970s the amount of scholarly work being done by Italian historians in the Mezzogiorno has grown. Erich Cochrane says that the bulk of recent titles at the time his article was published fell into two or three categories, namely political science, law, and economics. However rapid the growth, it cannot replace decades of neglect and still leaves much room for exploration on a variety of topics related not only to the history of Sicily in general but the era of Spanish rule. Erich Cochrane, "Southern Italy in the Age of the Spanish Viceroys: Some Recent Titles," *The Journal of Modern History* 58 (1986): 194–217.

Trent were carried out varied. In fact in Sicily these reforms "coexisted and conflicted with the institutions and forms of life of secular society."[3] Because of the politics of Spain, the structure of the church (*chiese ricettizie*), and the social and cultural landscape this study will reveal that the reforms of the Council of Trent made their way reluctantly toward Carini and did both coexist and conflict with secular society (more significantly with cultural tradition) in the process of life and death in this southern Italian town at the height of Spanish rule.

The loose translation for *chiese ricettizie* is "church of received priests." Essentially, these were churches run by a group of priests in a community fashion. The church owned the property, but each priest who participated shared in the revenue of the property. These pieces of property were called *massa commune*. A distinguishing factor of these communal churches was the requirement that "only priests of local origin could be 'received' (*ricettizie)* into the church—that is, share in the *massa commune*."[4] Each priest was given a portion of the church-owned lands to maintain for a specified period of time (usually three years). The income from all lands was then divided between the priests.

A study of how the Council of Trent influenced the Catholic Church in Carini requires a foundation and knowledge of the relationship between Spain and the Papacy and the structure of the church in Sicily in the sixteenth century. To understand these, it is requisite to begin with a Papal Bull dated July 1098. In this bull, Urban II granted the

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[3] Roberto Bizzochi, "Church, Religion, and State in the Early Modern Period," *The Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): S163.

[4] Michael P. Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim: Popular Catholicism in Italy since the Fifteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 96.

right of papal legate to Count Roger I of Sicily and other Norman kings. This agreement continued for centuries and was revived again in the sixteenth century by the Spanish rulers of Sicily when Ferdinand II asked his secretary, Luca Barberi, to collect documents "by which the rights of the kings of Sicily, both in ecclesiastical and secular matters, were clearly determined." The kings of Spain now claimed a right termed *Monarchia Sicula* to control local church organization.[5] Ferdinand extended these rights beyond current understanding at the time and claimed that because of the Urban II decree in 1098 that the secular rulers of Sicily could always claim (and still claimed) spiritual power.

Ferdinand also wanted legal power on behalf of the church in Sicily. In 1515 Ferdinand said, "As for the Kingdom of Sicily, where we exercise the supervision of spiritual as well as of secular affairs, we have made sure that we do so legitimately."[6] This meant that the rulers did not try to deny or to subvert the "the superiority of the Church as a universal institution" but in order to maintain "temporal sovereignty" the Holy See was entreated not to send papal legates directly to Sicily, but send them via the Spanish Crown.[7] Rome denied repeatedly the authenticity and efficacy of the original Papal Bull to no avail.

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[5] Johann Peter Kirsch, "Monarchia Sicula," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 10 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10451a.htm (accessed 23 August 2008). *Monarchia Sicula* is the name given to the rights secular rulers of Sicily beginning in the sixteenth century over ecclesiastical matters. They derived these rights originally from a Bull by Urban II to Count Roger of Sicily dated July 5, 1098. In that Bull the pope agreed not to appoint a papal legate for Sicily. A later Bull by Pashcal II dated October 1117 to Count Roger II defined more clearly the first Bull sent by Urban II. In essence, the Bull stated that when the pope sent a representative to Sicily that secular rulers were to be informed and would carry out the request of the pope instead of the pope's representative fulfilling the request. Moreover, this struggle between Church and Crown continued well into the mid- to late-1800s.

[6] Kirsch, "Monarchia Sicula," http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10451a.htm (accessed 23 August 2008).

[7] Thomas Dandelet and John A. Marino, *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion, 1500–1700* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 541.

Over the centuries the power and supposed rights of the Spanish crown grew to such an extent that when the Council of Trent tried to enforce doctrine, there was resistance from Philip II in so much that "the edicts of the Council of Trent were refused admission to the country."[8] While the church was working to change the way it operated in Sicily through its bishops, "Madrid was striving to maintain the status quo" and "defend the rights it had acquired."[9] In reality "papal authorities at Rome had very little influence over religious matters in most local communities of southern Italy during the Reformation era."[10]

Rulers of Sicily maintained *Monarchia Sicula* well into the mid-1800s. These rights that Spanish kings asserted to maintain local power over the Church in Sicily meant that the tenets of the council of Trent never fully reached their destination.[11] The Church in southern Italy and Sicily looked different from other areas of Italy and Europe. In many respects Sicilians saw the governance of Spain as an extension of their kingdom and expected not to have "foreign" rulers; Sicilians expected their directives with regard to government and the Church to come directly from Spain. More strikingly, "Choosing between 'the damage to their consciences' and the consequences of disobedience to the secular power, the clergy were more ready to obey the government than the Church."[12]

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[8] Denis Mack Smith, *A History of Sicily: Medieval Sicily, 800–1713* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968)*,* 162.

[9] Dandelet and Marino, *Spain in Italy,* 542–43.

[10] Michael P. Carroll, "Religion, Ricettizie, and the Immunity of Southern Italy to the Reformation,*" Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 31, no. 2 (September 1992): 254.

[11] Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim,* 115.

[12] H.G. Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily under Philip II of Spain* (London: Staples Press, 1951), 144–49. According to Koenigsberger, Philip II was in no way ready to give up his rights of *Monarchia Sicula,* and the kings before and after him fought to uphold their "rights" to ecclesiastical jurisdiction for centuries. In 1574 Philip II sent envoys to Rome to reiterate that he was willing to work

Moreover, in the minds of the Spanish crown and the viceroys of Sicily change was not always welcome. In 1603 the viceroy of Sicily wrote to Philip III about reform at the Great Court of Palermo. The viceroy was worried that some of the requirements to conform may work for other provinces but not for Sicily. He stated, "'all manner of people would tend to take offense at the idea, and for this as well as other reasons, I am more inclined to leave things as they are.'"[13] Traditionally Spain was seen as a domineering power; however, most historians today acknowledge that Spain was "ever fearful of possible revolts in their Italian dominions" and "were well aware of the clergy's ability to sway popular opinion when it so desired, even in matters outside the strictly spiritual domain."[14]

Although the Spanish crown perhaps feared the power of the clergy to sway popular opinion, there is no question that the Church in Sicily was under royal patronage. The king appointed vital clerical positions and, at the highest levels, prized cleric positions were in the hands of the upper crust of society. Such positions were coveted and

with the Pope on matters of church and state; more particularly he stated that if there were any abuses of the *Monarchia* he would be willing to remedy them. On the other side the Popes realized that they were in a precarious situation and "were willing to grant the exercise of many of the jurisdictional rights claimed by the king, but they could never admit in principal a claim which gave a layman greater ecclesiastical power than the head of the church himself." This meant in many instances where an ecclesiastical judge was not a trained lawyer that "secular" lawyers often times stepped in to remedy a situation. All recognized the faults of the systems so Philip conceded that matters of ecclesiastical court appeals could be made to Rome. However, this system was also faulty because the Pope was beseeched to send the case back to an ecclesiastical court in Sicily, thus essentially negating the ability to appeal. This "compromise" was short-lived because by 1583 there were no appeals to Rome. Some Sicilian bishops questioned the way that the king interpreted and sought to carry out the rights of *Monarchia*, but in reality there was little they could do to prevent the viceroy, counts, barons and other secular leaders from also practicing jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters. The places where these crossovers were most felt were "first with the Inquisition, and later with the viceroys themselves." Koenigsberger says the matter was not officially laid to rest until Pius IX abolished *Monarchia Sicula* in 1867.

[13] Agostino Borromeo, "The Crown and the Church in Spanish Italy in the Reigns of Philip II and Philip III," in *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500–1700,* ed. Thomas Dandelet and John Marino (Boston: Brill, 2007), 519–20.

[14] Borromeo, "The Crown and the Church," 520–21.

generally given to foreigners rather than native-born Sicilians. A high-ranking position in the Sicilian church often meant great power and wealth. In fact, "the Archbishop of Monreale at one point possessed seventy-two fiefs: his annual income in 1580 was perhaps 40,000 scudi and was increasing."[15] Furthermore, historians assert that the Archbishop of Palermo and Bishop of Catania each made more than the viceroy.

The clergy were able to amass large amounts of wealth also because they were exempt from both excise and parliamentary taxes. Moreover, "lay property was sometimes improperly registered as ecclesiastical to take advantage of this. One device was to transfer its goods to a son or brother who was an ecclesiastic."[16] Church patronage was an effective way of controlling the Spanish empire. Often times the Spanish kings could think of no easier way to reward a soldier or to "seal a political deal" with a noble than to give certain crucial Episcopal positions to the already wealthy and powerful.[17]

During the reign of Philip II (1554–98) and onward through the reigns of his son Philip III (1598–1621) and grandson Philip IV (1621–65), the government of Sicily functioned in parliamentary fashion with a branch of government known as *braccio ecclesiastico* (ecclesiastical branch). This branch was made up of wealthy bishops and abbots who were part of parliament, not because they represented the interests of the lesser clergy but because they were wealthy feudal landowners. The other two branches were the military/baronial and the royal or "domanial" (those towns directly under the

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[15] Smith, *A History of Sicily,* 162.

[16] Smith, *A History of Sicily,* 162–63.

[17] Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily,* 49.

control of the king). In no branch of parliament was the layman represented. In all reality, parliament did not decide on important matters of governmental policy. In fact, the primary purpose for the parliament was to enact donatives (taxes and levies) beyond the standard amounts. More often than not the heaviest tax burden fell to the peasant and the artisan classes who had no spokespeople to defend their position.[18]

The structure of the southern Italian church was also a barrier to any political or ecclesiastical reforms during the reign of Spanish kings. It is estimated that more than one-third of parishes in Naples and Sicily conformed to a structure known as *chiese ricettizie*; although Gabriele De Rosa's work suggests that the estimate could have reached as high as three-quarters of all Mezzogiorno churches.[19]

There could be a few types of collegial churches either "numerate" or "innumerate" meaning the number of priests who could participate was either open or set at a fixed number. These *ricettizie* could also be *curate* or *semplici*. *Curate* meant that priests shared in caring for the spiritual well being of the community collectively (masses, last rites, etc.). It must be understood that this did not mean that the funds produced through the *massa commune* were used for the upkeep of the church grounds

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[18] Smith, *A History of Sicily,* 124–132; Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily*, 149–61.

[19] Tomaso Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water: A History of Southern Italy* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2005)*,* 124–25*;* Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim,* 96, 172. There is some dispute on the percentage of churches in the early modern era that were considered part of the *chiese ricettizie* system. De Rosa pulls his number from the *ad limina* documents (reports made to Rome) and cites the figure of three-quarters often in his works printed in the 1970s. Historians such as Astarita suggest the number is more like one-third of overall churches in southern Italy with the caveat that some dioceses such as Basilicata and Terra d'Otranto had closer to 80 percent of their parishes following this model. Astarita's work published in 2001 does not cite or mention any particular source for these numbers; however, they quite possibly could have come from R. Po-chia Hsia's work entitled *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* which states that "Of the 3,734 parishes in the Kingdom of Naples, 1,087 were collegiately organized." Like Astarita, Po-chia Hsia's work gives no particular reference for these numbers. R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 57.

and other local community driven cults, etc.; these types of monies came from families or confraternities.[20]

For these priests, this was an economic venture to which only local men were allowed to join. It was an honor to have sons received as members of the *ricettizie* because it meant that their family could remain financially viable. Many priests who were admitted to the group still continued to be part of their families as is evidenced by them still living at home.  Part of the power of these *chiese ricettizie* and one of the most compelling arguments by scholars like De Rosa and Carroll is that because no foreigners were permitted "the net effect was that the structure of the *ricettizie* of southern Italy allowed the *ricettizia* clergy to ignore whatever Tridentine concerns their bishops might have." Essentially, the structure of the southern church meant that the power to enact the reforms of the Council of Trent were that much harder because the local clergy lived, worked—in some cases married—and shared the ideals and tenants of the neighboring community. Ties to the secular world were not severed and the loyalties of local priests were to their family and community rather than to a bishop whom they rarely corresponded with directly. [21]

Bishops were not really in control of a parish that functioned as a *ricettizie*. Each community of priests had an archpriest who governed, someone usually elected by the priests. The bishop needed to approve the archpriest, but it was almost unheard of that a bishop would refuse the choice of local parish priests—and it was almost certain that the

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[20] Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim*, 96; Carroll, "Religion, Ricettizie, and Immunity," 255; Michael P. Carroll, *Veiled Threats*: *the Logic of Popular Catholicism in Italy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 9.

[21] Carroll, "Religion, Ricettizie, and Immunity," 256.

brotherhood would choose one of their own. Choosing a local meant limiting the bishop's power to enact any sort of change at the parish level. If the bishop (generally a foreigner) did not have a progressive person in that significant role, the chances were that the bishop's influence with regard to reform would be weak at best. Furthermore, "bishops were explicitly excluded from interfering in any decisions relating to the *massa commune*. Indeed, the autonomy of the *ricettizie* in these matters was enshrined in the civil law of the Kingdom of Naples, whose governing officials were only too happy to minimize the influence of a foreign power like Rome."[22] The minimization of Rome meant that the restructuring, change, and more particularly the decrees of the Council of Trent would take decades if not centuries to enact.

Despite the best efforts of Rome to encourage change and conformity following the Council of Trent, the southern church was entrenched in mysticism, magic, and culture. In fact, "southern religion was thus almost a form of shamanism: saints and relics effected prodigies. The southern hunger for miracles was often satisfied. From the early sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, churches and religious orders in the kingdom kept track of well over three thousand cases of miracles attributed to saints or their relics."[23] Even though Trent gave less emphasis to the practice of magic in religion, these practices continued to be performed in both northern and southern provinces of Italy, even more so in southern Italy. In truth, "the nature of the terrain, but most of all the peculiar structure of the *chiese ricettizie*, insulated popular Catholicism from Trent and so

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[22] Carroll, "Religion, Ricettizie, and Immunity," 256.

[23] Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water,* 144.

from the Tridentine deemphasis of magic."[24] Magic continued to be used in almost all aspects of religious life. Adoration of saints seemed to grow in the centuries after the Council of Trent rather than abating; relics were coveted and between 1630 and 1700 Palermo added eighteen patron saints.[25]

Why study Carini? Carini is one of the most ancient cities in Sicily. The province of Palermo in Sicily had a natural hinterland in the Conca d'Oro (Golden Shell), a semi-circle formed by Solanto in the east through Misilmeri, Monreale, Carini and Sferracavallo in the west.[26] In the sixteenth century this area was the most populated as well as the most arable area of the island. As an outlying city of the Conca D'Oro, in the Valley of Mazara, Carini has always been agricultural, producing grains, lemons, oranges, olives, and grapes that were exported throughout Europe as well as those sold in the markets of Palermo.[27] Additionally, Carini exported not only grains but rice and licorice as well.[28] During the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries Carini was also a major producer and exporter of sugar cane and refined sugar. The town has thrived since ancient times on these agricultural pursuits, and because of its close proximity to Palermo, it has attracted merchants, traders, and others who, for various reasons, chose to settle close to the city of Palermo.

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[24] Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim*, 115.

[25] Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 143–44.

[26] Stephan R. Epstein, *An Island for Itself: Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 128–29.

[27] Istituto Geografico de Agostini, *Citta e Paesi d'Italia Enciclopedia Illustrate di Tutti i Comuni Italiani* (Novara: Istituto Geografico de Agostini, 1966–1974), 443.

[28] Giuseppe Emmanuele Ortolani, *Nuovo Dizionario Geografico Statistico e Biografico della Sicilia Antica e Moderna, colle nuove divisioni in intendenze* (Palermo: Tipografia degli eredi Abbate, 1827), 65–66.

Not only did agriculture flourish but building increased during the sixteenth century as the religious climate of the area flourished. Like elsewhere in Sicily, there was a religious revitalization in Carini which is evidenced by the many churches constructed during the time period: In 1532 the *Chiesa di S. Vito;* in 1549 *Chiesa di Santa Caterina*; between 1550 and 1560 *Chiesa di S. Maria Libera Infermi;* and in 1571 *Chiesa del Carmela,* with its adjoining convent. Not only were there multiple houses of worship built, but in 1578 the *Confraternity del Gesu and l'Ospedale* was erected.[29] Because of its place in one of the most populated areas of Sicily and the depth and breadth of consultable records available for Carini, it is an excellent place to study post-Tridentine culture on a parish platform.

The swell of religiosity in southern Italy and Sicily is evidenced by the building of churches, monasteries, and convents. We know that there were several parishes in the town of Carini during the early sixteenth century. This study does not specifically define the structure of these churches in Carini because the parish records consulted limits the ability to see clearly whether or not the Carini churches were a true *chiese ricettizie*. The records do not tell us how land was held or how the priests lived. The *ad limina* records used by De Rosa would need to be consulted in the Monreale diocesan archives, if such exist. What we do know is that unlike the archbishops of Monreale, all of the priests during the late 1500s and into the early 1600s were native-born Carinese, except for the archpriest, Ottavio Sanbasili who was born in Lentini in the province of Siracusa, Sicily (a part of the archdiocese of Monreale at the time). While not a native of Carini, Sanbasili

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[29] Centro Attività Francescane, *Villa Belvedere, Carini (PA)* (Palermo: Centro "P. Kolbe," 1983), 21.

was still a Sicilian and likely held many of the same ideas and ideals of the local priests and parishioners (whereas a foreign-born bishop or cardinal would not.)

The Archdiocese of Monreale (to which the *Madre Chiesa di Carini* and all of the parishes of Carini belonged) was established in the twelfth century. Monreale was one of the richest and most extensive dioceses, taking in areas as far away as Siracusa and Catania. During the time period studied for this thesis (1590–1650), there were five different archbishops of Monreale. The first was Ludovico de Torres (1588–1606), founder of the diocesan seminary and garden in 1590.[30] The de Torres family was originally from Malaga, Spain, but relocated to Rome in the sixteenth century. Cosimo de Torres (1634–42), a nephew of Ludovico, also served as archbishop in Monreale. Other archbishops were the Sicilian-born Arcangelo Gualtieri (1612–17), whose tenure was cut short when he died in 1617; and Jerónimo Venero Leyva (1620–28), a Spaniard, who was Gualitieri's successor and was known for many things including: building a wall around Monreale to defend the city against the plague that devastated the city of Palermo, building the Augustine convent and monastery of San Castro, and organizing the association of San Salvatore whose chapter consisted of twenty-four clergymen. Leyva died in 1628 and it was not until 1634 that Cardinal Cosimo de Torres came to Monreale as its leader. Cosimo de Torres died in 1642 and his successor—and Spanish native— Giovanni Torresiglia began his tenure in 1644, but it was also short because he died in 1648.[31]

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[30] Kathleen M. Comerford, "Italian Tridentine Diocesan Seminaries: A Historiographical Study," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 999–1022.

[31] Giuseppe Cappelletti, *Le Chiese d'Italia: Dalla loro Origine Sino ai Nostri Giorni* (Venezia: Antonelli, 1870), 593–94.

In the diocese of Monreale there were noticeable gaps in the appointment of an archbishop. This leaves one to wonder who was responsible for the diocese at that time and what power did they have to realize change? If a diocesan synod is any measure of reluctance to Tridentine reform then the diocese of Monreale would fit squarely in that camp. According to the decrees of the Council of Trent, bishops were required to hold a diocesan synod once a year and a provincial synod every three years.[32] In Monreale synods were held in 1554, 1569, 1575, 1593, 1597 and then not again until 1622.[33] One might wonder what information, if any, was dessimenated from the diocesan level to the parish level if only a few meetings were held within a span of seventy years. Still, in order to make a true study of the diocese of Monreale, many records on the diocesan level would need to be consulted. Since, those records are not available for this particular study we must turn to parish registers.

One way Rome (and the Spanish kings for that matter) tried to control parishioners was to monitor their activities through the records kept on the diocesan and parish levels. Baptismal, marriage, burial, confirmation, censuses, visitations and other records all helped priests and bishops supervise the faithful. Baptismal records were the most commonly kept church record prior to the Council of Trent. In Carini the baptismal registers begin in 1530, nearly two decades before the Council of Trent began, so in

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[32] In session 24, chapter 2 the instructions for provincial and diocesans synods was given. These synods were to be held regularly "for the regulating of morals, the correcting of excesses, the composing of controversies, and for the other purposes allowed of by the sacred canons." The archbishop or the oldest bishop was to preside at this meeting. All bishops and "others" were to be present. If not "they shall incur the penalties enacted by the sacred canons." What those penalties were is never explicitly stated. J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), 207–08, http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm (accessed 2008).

[33] There seems to be some disagreement as to exactly how many synods were carried out for certain dioceses. Records from dioceses that have been thoroughly studied by scholars may be more accurate. Black derives his information from a variety of sources.

many respects they were the easiest to continue keeping. Some parishes in the city of

Palermo started keeping records of baptisms, marriages, and burials as early as 1491.[34]

This could have been largely due to the influence of the Spanish church that had

established parish record-keeping practices as early as the mid-1400s.[35] Burial records for

Carini begin in 1527.  Trent required that marriages be kept and enacted strict rules when

it came to the process and recording of these marriages. Traditionally, a notary kept a

legal record of marriages, and records were not necessarily kept on a church level. The

Council of Trent "turned marriage into a Church matter, confining notaries to a secular

role for dowries, and removing them as marriage makers."[36] Luckily, because these

records were kept in Carini they allow us a small glimpse into the birth, marriage, and

death processes of the town in the early 1600s.

Many historians have stated that the Council of Trent made its way slowly to

southern Italy, especially Sicily. Regrettably though scholars have done little else but

identify that the Church in Sicily was lethargic. To their credit there are several Italian

scholars who in the last thirty years have taken the study of post-Tridentine reform and its

implementation seriously. Many of these religious and social historians study the effects

of reforms on a diocesan level; few look in terms of implementation on a parish level.

Moreover, they seek to determine the dialogue between church and state and the secular

world rather than the dialogue between the parish priest and his parishioners on a basic

social level.

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[34] This is based on a survey of microfilmed church records for parishes in the city of Palermo (diocese of Palermo) housed at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

[35] Trafford Cole, *Italian Genealogical Records* (Provo: Ancestry Publishing, 1995), 100.

[36] Christopher Black, *Church Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 99.

Roberto Bizzochi summarizes well the historiographical debates regarding the church, religion, and state in the early modern period of Italian history. The primary purpose in recounting the longstanding breadth of works on the topic is to acknowledge a shift in the study of church and state in the last twenty years. Bizzochi first noticed this shift when he acknowledged a gross error in a book he authored on the Catholic Church in fifteenth-century Tuscany. He realized that his bibliography contained works from French, German, and a few English scholars but failed to cite any Italian works on the topic. This caused him to delve into the literature of Italian scholars and realize that not even a portion of Eunadi's Volume 9 of *Annali (Storia d'Italia)* is dedicated to medieval and early modern ecclesiastical history in Italy, thus pointing out a clear void. Bizzochi explains this away not necessarily as a shortage of literature but as a lack of comprehensive vision—a vision that was present more than twenty years ago but somehow lost its power. Truthfully, Bizzochi does recognize that some historians are willing to revive the topic and adopt a more all-inclusive range of ideas to enhance Italian ecclesiastical history. Moreover, there are recent writings about local life and the church in secular society that help improve the studies about the relationship of church and state.[37]

For our particular study it is important to ask: what of ecclesiastical studies specifically for southern Italy and Sicily? Bizzochi wholeheartedly agrees with "those who complain about the lack of national syntheses for the south of Italy." In fact in the *Annali,* southern Italy is treated separate and apart and includes only one essay by Mario Rosa on the topic of the church and Spain. Bizzochi argues that the mistreatment of

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[37] Bizzochi, "Church, Religion, and State," S155-S156.

southern Italy in comprehensive works inevitably turns the discussion to the present role of southern Italy as a disconnected conquered land whose history has "less to do with church-state relations than with the role of a largely imported financial elite in stimulating or retarding the development of southern economic life." [38] This narrow view of southern Italian history based on economics and politics thwarts growth in the areas of religious and social history; however, some Italian scholars are trying to change this.

More importantly for this thesis, Bizzochi's historiographical redress includes some discussion of the Council of Trent and how it plays a role in the dialogue of church, religion, and the state in Italian history. He mentions current work on the enforcement of Trent in various dioceses across Italy but says this is "extraneous" to the real issues. More to his point are new studies that focus on the "novelties" in "context of ecclesiastical politics." Bizzochi points out works by Maurilio Guasco and Gaetano Greco and names them leaders in the field of Tridentine studies. Because these authors choose a broad general approach to Trent and embrace the idea that the reforms of Trent varied from place to place in Italy and allowed for coexistence and conflict, historians are able to study niche areas such as seminaries, nuns, and benefices. These niche areas in turn provide a "solid political and institutional" base so as not to oversimplify the topic when placed back into "general history."[39] To historians this is desirable because it allows for views of history from a variety of angles and can in some sense revitalize ecclesiastical history.

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[38] Bizzochi, "Church, Religion, and State," S162.

[39] Bizzochi, "Church, Religion, and State," S163.

There are other Italian scholars who have contributed substantially to the studies of post-Tridentine southern Italy. Gabriele De Rosa is by far the Italian authority on *chiese ricettizie* and the Catholic Church in southern Italy. Many of his works are only available in Italian and it has only been through Michael Carroll's works in English that the findings of De Rosa have been truly brought the English-speaking world. De Rosa uses records of pastoral visits to reconstruct more about the early modern Catholic Church in southern Italy along with parish registers, diocesan synods, and reports called *ad limina (*reports made to Rome). These records describe the functions of the diocese on a local level between bishops and had less to do with large scale reforms. De Rosa's studies really bring the church to life on a local level.[40]

In the introduction of *Veiled Threats* by Michael Carroll, he describes De Rosa's study in detail. According to Carroll, De Rosa claims that "popular Catholicism in the Mezzogiorno was shaped more by the *chiesa ricettizie…*than anything else."[41] De Rosa's study focuses largely on dioceses that are peripheral to Naples and Palermo and not those dioceses that are affected largely by these urban centers. The diocese of Monreale, to which the parishes of Carini belong, would likely not fall into his study. Although there are many things that can be learned from De Rosa's studies and if his estimation that three-quarters of Mezzogiorno churches holds true, it is almost certain that the parishes in the town of Carini would have subscribed to this model.

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[40] Ancillary to this study are the works of other Italian authors on popular religion *and chiese ricettizie* in southern Italy. The work of Giampoalo D'Andrea is similar to that of De Rosa but focuses work specifically in the Lucane area of Basilicata. Pietro Ebner focuses his studies in Campania and specifically the southern portion of Salerno. No Italian scholar to date has delved deeply into the *chiese ricettizie* structure in Sicily.

[41] Carroll, *Veiled Threats*, 9.

In Carroll's works he points directly to the structure of the *chiese ricettizie* as the overarching reason for the delay in the Council of Trent reaching southern Italy and that "Spanish domination of the mainland mezzogiorno in the early sixteenth century increased dramatically the number and dispersion of the ricettizie." He derives most all of his conjectures based on the work of Italian scholars, especially Gabriele De Rosa. The reason, Carroll supposes, that many English speaking scholars have not studied *chiese ricettizie* is because many use an anthropological approach to study popular religion[42] and because most of these studies were carried out in the twentieth century long after *chiese ricettizie* had disappeared from the cultural landscape. Carroll, however has found great value in the studies of Italian scholars and takes De Rosa's work a step further arguing that "immanence-rejecting" traditions that might have spurred Protestant ideas in the north had no place in a land where the structure of the Catholic Church did not distinguish between or separate religion from the everyday life or as Carroll states "divinity" and the "material world," which lies at the core belief of immanence."[43] Carroll's description of the structure of the church (based on De Rosa's work) in southern

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[42] The debate on popular religion was summarized by Patricia McNamara and Enzo Pace in an article written in 1979. For this study it is important to understand Gabriele de Rosa's perspective on the topic in order to more clearly define how religion and culture enmesh themselves in society. "De Rosa maintains that one can speak in terms of popular religion whenever, in a given historical and social situation, a conflict or dialectic emerges between the official religious models proposed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy and 'unofficial' forma. His hypothesis is that a dialectic of this kind is 'physiological' in the organism of the Catholic Church in Italy in the sense that intertwining of the popular with the official is part of a way of being and continuity of the church in time and pertains to its policy of control of mass consent." Scholars such as Alfonso Di Nola, Carlo Ginzburg and Clara Gallini fundamentally disagree with De Rosa because his perspective seems to overlook class division; therefore, it does not entertain the connection between "dominant groups" and "subaltern classes." The reality is that in southern Italy popular religion did not distinguish itself by class; all levels of society subscribed to the tenets of the same religion. Patricia H. McNamara and Enzo Pace, "The Debate on Popular Religion in Italy," *Sociological Analysis* 40 (1979): 71–75.

[43] Carroll, "Religion, Ricettizie, and Immunity," 256–59.

Italy under Spanish rule gives us a clearer picture of how the church functioned and enmeshed itself in the lives of the people of southern Italy and Carini.

The discussion of popular religion is directly associated with the idea that in the southern church the divine combined with material culture. The power of magic did not diminish; in fact Carroll says that it increased in southern Italy.[44] De Rosa and Carroll devote a great amount of time to the idea that some forms of magic in southern Italy were acceptable. In *Vescovi, Popolo e Magia nel Sud* De Rosa describes the life of Angelo Anzani, a bishop in Campagna. Carroll says that "For De Rosa, Anzani's struggle with the *ricettizie* clergy, with a population equally at home with Madonnas and magic, and with a royal government unsympathetic to Rome epitomizes the 'struggle to adapt' that faced all southern Italian bishops after Trent."[45] This struggle was an innate struggle between culture, popular religion, and the decrees of Trent. These conflicting images of magic on the one hand and the decrees of Trent on the other contributed to an environment in the south where the two in many instances were forced to simply coexist.

Thomas Dandelet and John Marino are the editors of a recent compilation of articles (2007) on the relationship of Spain in Italy.[46] This volume collectively called *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society and Religion 1500–1700* is "the first comprehensive overview in English" of the study of Spain in Italy during the centuries of Spanish conquest. The collection is authored by some of the most brilliant minds from universities

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[44] Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim,* 114–15. In this book, Carroll devotes an entire chapter to the discussion of magic.

[45] Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim,* 96; Carroll, "Religion, Ricettizie, and Immunity,*"* 255; Carroll, *Veiled Threats*, 9.

[46] These works came about as a result of a conference sponsored by The American Academy in Rome in 2003 and represent the most up-to-date scholarly work on Spain in Italy.

all over the world who focus their articles on four aspects of Spain's rule in Italy: the states under Spanish rule; Spanish influence in the Italian states, society, governmental administration and economy; and religion and church. Of particular value to this thesis are articles by various authors on the rural world in Italy under Spain; the evolving history of women in early modern Italy, culture, and religion; and the Spanish crown and the Church under the reigns of Philip II and III.[47]

Of the articles in Dandelet and Marino's compiled work, special attention should be given to Agostino Borromeo's article titled "The Crown and the Church in Spanish Italy in the Reigns of Philip II and Philip III." In this article Borromeo attempts to illustrate the relationship between the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church in its Italian dominions. His work is vital because he helps to define the religious policies of Spain and illustrates the sacred rights that the Crown claimed over ecclesiastical matters in its territories. There are three guiding principals Borromeo uses to describe the political climate in Spanish lands: regalism, local administration, and the fear of anti-Spanish revolts. The regalist structure (essentially *Monarchia Sicula)* meant that in each of Spain's various jurisdictions administrative policy entangled itself with ecclesiastical policy, and Spain was obliged to act differently in each of its lands based on how circumstances evolved over time. The Spanish crown "had to adapt the general principles of its overall policy to specific local situations."[48] This adaptation was necessary in order to maintain status quo and prevent revolt. Religious rationale on the part of the Crown directed how Spain attempted to control the Church in its lands.

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[47] Dandelet and Marino, *Spain in Italy.*

[48] Borromeo, "The Crown and the Church," 517–20.

Borromeo concludes that the struggle between Spain and the Church in Spanish Italy was ultimately a battle for jurisdictional rights, yet contrastingly it would seem that there was also a "climate of collaboration" between Spain and the Papacy. Furthermore, for our purposes Borromeo suggests that as the Papacy attempted to assert its rights after the Council of Trent, Spain also began to assert its supposed rights. This created a climate where it became easy to implement certain aspects of Trent but not others and for that matter only the reforms in some cases that were widely accepted by the people.[49]

First published in 2002, John Marino's collection of works entitled *Early Modern Italy: 1500–1796* is an outstanding contribution to the literature specifically on the economy, politics, family, society, religion, science, and everyday life in Italy. Chiefly important to our discussion on society and religion throughout this time period are the articles by John Jeffries Martin on religious reform in the sixteenth century as well as Anne Jacobsen Schutte's essay on religion, spirituality, repression and reform in a post-Tridentine environment. Martin's article focuses on the reforms of Trent and the renegotiation of religious reliefs and practices while Schutte's centers on how those reforms were carried out. Although these historians focus on northern Italy, there are elements of their writings that apply to the story of the Catholic Church in Sicily. All in all, these articles tell us more about Italian religious life in the early modern period.

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[49] Borromeo, "The Crown and the Church," 552–54. An example of the struggle between the Holy See and Spain is recounted in Borromeo's article. In 1606 in the Diocese of Naples Cardinal Acquaviva removed pictures of saints from the marketplace in accordance with a Tridentine reform that prevented sacred images from being displayed in "inappropriate" places. Purely by coincidence these were near a new tax collection office for fruit. When the images were taken down (during the middle of the day) a riot broke out and while some praised the cardinal, thinking that this was a form of ecclesiastical protest to the new tax, local Spanish leaders became upset and demanded that Acquaviva be reprimanded for this act, even calling for his resignation. Instead of removing him, the pope sent the cardinal to Rome for three years. When the animosity abated and the King of Spain (Philip III) agreed, Acquaviva was allowed to go back to Naples.

Thus far we have explored works that examine the relationship of Spain to the Church, the structure of the church in southern Italy, and in small measure the topic of culture and magic.[50] Studies important to the social and cultural aspects of our argument come from a variety of sources. Christopher Black's social history of early modern Italy gives valuable insight on the disunity and complexity of Italy in the early modern era and wholeheartedly acknowledges the diversity that abounded from north to south. Black describes different aspects of life for the rural peasant and their urban counterparts describing how they lived; their various occupations; roles of men and women; and concepts surrounding marriage, family, and relationships. He then describes the lives of the social elites as well as parish systems, priests, and religious social life finally ending the work with a chapter on social tensions and control as it relates to government and church.

Although Black's volume is by far one of the best synopses of social life in early modern Italy, his work published in 2004, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy*, leaves something to be desired in relation to southern Italian churches. This volume is centered on the decades after the Council of Trent, and a significant portion of the work focuses on how the Council of Trent and its policies were implemented in Italy. Black intentionally does not focus on southern Italy except for a few scant mentions when he discusses the Council of Trent and its background, general problems of implementation, religious orders, Episcopal leadership, parish priests and parishioners, religious education, confraternities, nunneries and religious women, and the cultural

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[50] It might go without saying, but many of the Italian scholars especially Gabriele De Rosa, address the topic of magic and mysticism in relation to the Southern church. Carroll's work *Madonnas that Maim* dedicates an entire chapter to magic in the post-Tridentine church.

aspects of churches and chapels. The work is a brilliant depiction of the overall religious climate of Italy in the time period after the Council of Trent.

Black's works provide a broad social base to which we can add more specific literature on peasant society, folklore, and magic. It has already been mentioned that De Rosa and Carroll spent considerable time on the topic of magic, but what is missing from their works are details of the folklore and traditions that accompany the processes of birth, marriage, and death in Sicily. Two articles are crucial to our understanding of these traditions. "Sicilian Peasant Society" by William Whyte utilizes the work of Giuseppe Pitré to illustrate the "social organization and discuss its relations with the sacred beliefs and practices." Whyte determines that there is indeed a close connection between the two. He also surmised that the more intense the social interaction, such as childbirth, an individual's social position was elevated and they "entered into more intimate contact with supernatural powers." Those who shared in the experience with that individual were also able to make intercession with God.[51]

The last work that is crucial to a more in-depth understanding of customs and beliefs in seventeenth century Italy is a little-known work by J. Cassar-Pullicino. This piece of writing is based on a report of Pietro Dusina who went to Malta as an apostolic visitor in 1575. The piece recounts the traditions and beliefs of the Maltese people on witchcraft, birth, baptism, marriage, death, and feasts. Many of these practices wereare similar to Sicilian folkways and beliefs and are pointed out as such in the text. What is most important is Cassar-Pullicino's observation that despite the recommendations of Pietro Dusina (as an apostolic visitor) to rid them of beliefs and superstitions that were

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[51] William Foote Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," *American Anthropologist* 46, no. 1 (1944): 65, 74.

not in line with the Council of Trent and Catholic Church doctrine, the practices explored did not completely disappear for centuries.[52]

This first chapter has introduced our topic and explained how the structure of the church (*chiese ricettizie*) and the politics of Spain could have laid the foundation for a mixture between church, society, and religion in the post-Tridentine era. It has also investigated and discussed the ecclesiastical environment of Carini and its environs. This chapter argued that local culture, magic, and mysticism were a part of popular religion in the era after Trent.

Moreover, the works of Italian and English scholars will allow us a platform to study the parish records of Carini in more depth to understand in what ways the people of Carini related to Spain, their parish leaders, and within their own community to the decrees of the Council of Trent. This work does not claim to delve into the extensive works and the long history of Italian scholarship on the Catholic Church; the list of works, authors, and topics is truly extensive; however it does attempt to add in small measure to a growing number of studies on the matter. This thesis addresses the general human experience of a rural town with large urban ties by describing in detail the life cycle of individuals and more particularly the social and religious aspects of the lives of a few specific citizens of the town. It attempts to find answers regarding the religious climate of Carini at the turn of the seventeenth century. Additionally, it aims to explain how the Council of Trent and local tradition and culture intertwined in the processes of birth, baptism, marriage, death, and burial in Carini.

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[52] J. Cassar-Pullicino, "Maltese Customs and Beliefs in 1575," *Folklore* 62, no. 3 (September 1951): 398–404.

The second chapter utilizes the parish records of Carini. The chapter discusses the birth and baptismal process in Carini as well as the roles of women in society as it relates to the birthing process. The work on birth and baptism will also illustrate how the Council of Trent and its reforms sought to control and monitor midwives more closely to ensure that the proper procedures with regard to baptism were followed. More particularly, the life of one woman, both a nun and a midwife, will be discussed to illustrate how it was socially and religiously plausible to conform to Tridentine rules as a midwife but completely disregard certain tenets of reforms as they relate to the cloistering of nuns.

Chapter Three paints a vivid picture of marriage practices in Carini by exploring the strategies for marriage, mobility of immigrants, and their mixture with local culture, and how the Council of Trent may have affected the process of marriage. Lastly, chapter Four discusses death and burial processes in Carini, the rise in choice of burial place as a result of increased number of churches post Council of Trent, and the mixture of culture with religion in the burial process. Finally, the conclusion will summarize how the ecclesiastical and political environments in Carini and Sicily affected the processes of birth, marriage, and death.

CHAPTER II

BIRTH AND BAPTISM IN CARINI

The reforms of Trent sought to control and monitor midwives more closely to ensure proper procedures for baptism of newborns were followed. This chapter will look at the birth and baptism practices of early seventeenth-century Carini by investigating the use of folklore, tradition, and magic in the birth process and their relation to the Catholic Church and Trent. More particularly, the role of the family, midwife, and godparents in the process of baptism will be explored. Additionally, the life of one woman, both a nun and a midwife, will be discussed to illustrate how it was socially and religiously plausible to conform to Tridentine rules as a midwife but completely disregard certain reforms as they relate to the cloistering of nuns.

According to Sicilian folk beliefs "man was the generator of life and woman was simply soil from which life arose."[1] Women have at times fulfilled multiple roles within society. The titles of daughter, mother, and widow are but a few of the many designations that women have held. For most early modern Sicilian women the two main life paths dictated by social norms were marriage or cloister.[2] Because of these social norms few women were allowed the choice of spinsterhood; it was simply not

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[1] William Foote Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," *American Anthropologist* 46, no.1 (1944): 72.

[2] Silvia Evangelisti, "Wives Widows and Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in the Historiography of Early Modern Italy," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (March 2000): 234.

an option to many. As a result of marriage women were expected to produce children and "wanted to have male issue to perpetuate the family."[3] Consequently, it was expected that a woman would conceive shortly after she was married; if she did not, her status in the eyes of the community would fall dramatically. However, as soon as she conceived a child the trend reversed and her status rose in the community and "she entered into more intimate contact with the supernatural world" [4] by carrying a child and subsequently giving birth.

Those who succeeded in conceiving would at some point in time require the services of a midwife. Midwives were typically mature women who were either married or widowed and had born several children of their own.[5] Many of the midwives in Carini were actually widowed and were anywhere from forty to sixty years of age (on average). The social background of a midwife was not that of nobility or aristocracy and yet she was well respected for her labors. According to Christopher Black, "midwifery in early modern Italy remained a female specialty that gave certain mature women a dominant role and influence in local society."[6] Her social condition was modest and was usually one who "'lived by [the] fruits of [her] daily toil'." [7] She was called *comare* or *mammana*. Both words derive from the word

[3] Christopher F. Black, *Early Modern Italy: A Social History* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 119.

[4] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 72. In Whyte's article on Sicilian peasants he further explains that a pregnant woman could almost command and receive whatever she wanted. For example, if she dropped something on the floor she was not allowed to pick it up. Folklore suggests that the person who picks it up would release a soul from purgatory.

[5] Hillary Marland, ed., *The Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), 154–55.

[6] Black, *Early Modern Italy, 92*.

[7] Marland, *The Art of Midwifery*, 154–55.

"mother" because she acted as a mother figure in the lives of many women. She not only helped them give birth but in some instances acted as a matchmaker negotiating dowries and contracting marriages because of her status and "extensive knowledge of the community."[8]  In the records of Carini the midwives are indicated with the term *mammana* after their name and *obstetrix* in records written wholly in Latin.

In the early modern period the practice of midwifery was still handed down from woman to woman in an apprenticeship fashion. In Sicily health legislation compiled by a physician named Ingrassia in 1564 shows that at that time Sicilian midwives were supposed to be licensed through an oral exam. According to Ingrassia a midwife's duties included serving God and King, caring for people, acting with honesty and responsibility, keeping confidences, aiding clients in inferior economic situations (without pay if necessary), abstaining from gossip or slander as they moved from house to house, and counseling families with kinds words in peace and harmony.[9] A midwife could earn a modest living from her patrons, but if approached by the needy she was supposed to help without payment because "'Charity', in fact, was one of the gifts required of a midwife and her own social esteem was measured by it."[10] This most trusted position in society required a woman to be of strong moral character in order to perform all of the duties described above.

Aside from her obvious duties a midwife was also required to follow advice from doctors, use physician's remedies, and know herbal medicine so as not to

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[8] Nancy Triolo, "Fascist Unionization and the Professionalization of Midwives in Italy: A Sicilian Case Study," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September 1994): 261.

[9] Triolo, "Fascist Unionization," 260–61.

[10] Marland, *The Art of Midwifery*, 157.

prescribe something that would "disturb the body or soul."[11] In the seventeenth century obstetrics was not part of a man's training in medical institutions. It was considered indecent for a male to be part of the process of birth and so the midwife was given complete "dominion" at delivery for "reasons of decency." Males were generally not permitted to be in the room when a child was born; however, a trained physician could assist the midwife in an emergency.[12] According to tradition and culture, bringing life into the world was a female responsibility and as such males were not permitted to participate.

When a woman was in labor the midwife was called to assist in the birth of the child. Those women closest in physical and spiritual relation to the birthing mother were also invited to participate in the process of bringing new life into the world, including a woman's mother as well as other female friends and family members. However, no woman of "bad reputation" was allowed near the home because "her uncleanness could interfere with the birth." Mostly the dreaded "evil eye" was feared. A responsibility of the midwife was to lead the other women in prayer to keep evil spirits away and "secure the support of supernatural powers" during the birth.[13] The family of the woman giving birth instilled all of their faith and trust in the midwife to have a successful labor. A midwife was an important, even central figure, in a town. She was an expert in women's health; including newborn illnesses. She was entrusted with family secrets, knowledge of illegitimate births, and

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[11] Triolo, "Fascist Unionization," 261

[12] Triolo, "Fascist Unionization," 204.

[13] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 72.

even the charge of taking abandoned children to institutions.[14] The midwife was such a trusted part of this process that she oftentimes had a special relationship with the families she helped and was "extended the status of fictive kin."[15]

Not everyone saw the midwives as friends though. Some physicians of the feared the power of the midwife and called for "if not their outright abolition, at least a more rigorous surveillance of their activities." Because midwives used a mixture of folklore, mysticism, religion, and science in their duties they were also "fair game for the witch hunts of the Middle Ages and the venomous attacks of the medical profession."[16]

The ritualistic demarcation of birth in Carini was that of infant baptism. The ritual of baptism was not just a religious act but a social act as well. The role of a midwife did not end when a child was born. In the post-Tridentine period midwives were also responsible to act as an intermediary between the Catholic Church and the lay parishioner. A midwife was one of the few with the rights to conduct baptism, if needed. Additionally, because of her position as an intermediary between the church and the families of those she worked for, she played a role as a societal monitor to help priests control female sexuality in their parishes. After the Council of Trent the Catholic Church became more mindful of the need to direct and observe the practices of midwives because they were the individuals most trusted to help bring life into the world and were given the power to baptize a dying child when a priest could not be

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[14] Marland, *The Art of Midwifery*, 158.

[15] Triolo, "Fascist Unionization," 261.

[16] Triolo, "Fascist Unionization," 261.

present. In fact, church leaders tried to justify this control because of this need to baptize children in danger of death. Several sixteenth century Episcopal synods asked that midwives be instructed on the baptismal process so that they could perform the ritual when necessary.[17] As a result of these decrees parish priests were more easily able to observe and scrutinize the workings of a midwife and were better able to monitor the sexuality of their parishioners by learning about the births of illegitimate children or other compromising situations with regard to the sanctity of women. Midwives were also required to give the name and address of the mother of an illegitimate child or her license could be revoked.[18] These early Tridentine attempts to control midwives were a clear indicator that the Catholic Church realized the power and influence these women had in the community. Additionally local priests needed the connections that their female midwife parishioners harbored in order to watch over their flocks and understand not only the needs of their parishioners but to observe their spirituality. In a Counter Reformation society it was important to maintain a flock that was in harmony and keeping with the Tridentine laws.

Moreover, by the eighteenth century it most areas a woman could not be a practicing midwife unless she took an examination on how to perform a baptism and received clearance by the local clergy. [19] Additionally, "throughout Italy, parish priests and local boards of clergymen began to examine midwives to ensure that they knew the proper baptismal formula." These examinations continued through the

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[17] David I. Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor: Italian Infant Abandonment and the Politics of Reproductive Control* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 39.

[18] Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor*, 40.

[19] Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor*, 39–40.

nineteenth century and in bishops' pastoral visits the local clergy were asked to provide information about midwives fit to perform baptisms.[20] Because a midwife was an expert in the birthing process and could also perform baptisms it could be said that she brought both physical and spiritual relief to her clients. A mother and her family could be assured that the midwife had been trained and had the rites to baptize children—and thus their child would be saved. Thus midwives played a key role in the social and religious lives of those they served.

Once a child was born it was required that they be brought to the church to be baptized. As discussed previously, if it was known or thought that a child would not survive for very long the midwife or another lay person could baptize the child. According to Christopher Black, after the Council of Trent "baptism was increasingly stressed as a prerequisite for salvation, which affected attitudes and procedures over dying or dead babies." [21] The practice of midwives or lay individuals baptizing babies was not new; however, it was watched more closely after the Council of Trent. In Carini, between 1625 and 1645 there were more than 200 such emergency baptisms. Nearly all were performed by midwives.[22] Over this time period there were no less than eighteen different midwives operating in Carini; however, some were more popular than others when it came to an emergency baptism. Since the baptismal registers do not list the midwife for each birth in Carini, only those birthed children

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[20] Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor*, 39.

[21] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 177

[22] A few of the baptisms administered at home were conducted by priests and then supplemented by baptism in the church. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi 1628 (cont.)–1653* (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764339. Example, Baptism performed by Don Onofrio in May 1638, p. 8, http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed 2008).

who were "*batezzato in casa in tempo di pericolo*" or baptized at the home in time of

danger from death, we cannot adequately determine which midwives had the most

work; we can determine only those who assisted in baptizing infants in danger of

perishing. In Carini, Soro Rosalia Galluzzo —a widow, midwife, and nun—

performed nearly half of the 200 baptisms recorded in a twenty-year period. Sister

Rosalia was by far the most popular, trusted, and expert midwife in the town during

the early seventeenth century.[23]

After a child was born the father and other relatives entered into the room but

were not permitted to kiss the child until it was baptized for fear of the child coming

in contact with an evil person.[24] In Sicily a menstruating woman was not allowed to

kiss even a baptized child and in 1575 Maltese culture a menstruating woman was not

permitted to enter the church because of her impurities.[25] As much as the Catholic

Church was part of the lives of Sicilian peasantry so was magic and mysticism. It was

the charge of parents and family members to ward off witches and sorceresses

through a variety of methods. In Mazzara, Sicily family members "kept the lights

burning in the house of the mother of the unbaptized baby, and they hung an image of

the patron saint on the house door, placed a rosary on the wall inside, hung an old

table cloth with frayed edges next to the door to the baby's room, stood a broom in

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[23] This data is taken from a survey of baptisms spanning from 1625 to 1645 in Carini. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi 1566 (cont.) 1592, 1606–1608, 1606–1617, 1621, 1617–1623, 1617–1629; Battesimi 1628 (cont.)–1653* (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764338; 1764339, http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed 2007–2008).

[24] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 73.

[25] J. Cassar-Pullicino, "Maltese Customs and Beliefs in 1575," *Folklore* 62, no. 3 (September 1951), 401; Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 73.

front of the door, and scattered salt over the floor."[26] These methods were used to keep a witch occupied until morning light when her powers to do harm to the child no longer had any efficacy. These rituals were a very real part of the birth process and were not to be taken lightly. Because the practices of religious culture and folklore were so mixed in the minds of Sicilian peasants in this era it was increasingly important for post-Tridentine priests to watch midwives to ensure that their practices and procedures were in line with doctrine.

One way to monitor the faithful was to keep record of their activities in the parish. Since baptismal registers where the most commonly kept church record in the pre-Tridentine period it was easier to enforce the keeping of these documents.[27] For the most part the records of Carini contain the essential elements of baptismal records such as the date of baptism, Christian name of the child, parents' names, and names of the godparents. In July of 1640 the priests in Carini began to record not only the date of baptism but also the child's date of birth. Carini children were generally baptized the same day they were born or within one to two days of birth. A popular belief at the time held that a baby baptized on the same day of its birth meant a soul was released from purgatory.[28]

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[26] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 73.

[27] In Carini, baptismal registers had been kept fairly regularly since the middle of 1538 to the present. There are a few years (1593–1605) that are missing from the registers, and it is not known whether or not those records are extant. In the earlier years the records list the date of baptism, the names of the parents (not including mother's maiden name), the name of the child, and the names of godparents. The earliest known recording of a midwife in Carini performing a baptism is in 1588: Costanza Galluzzo baptized Giovanna Migluri. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, Battesimi 1566 (cont.) 1592, 1606–1608, 1606–1617, 1621, 1617– 1623, 1617–1629; Battesimi 1628 (cont.)–1653* Baptism of Giovanna Migluri 26 Aug 1588, 106 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed 2007–2008).

[28] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 73.

If a child was not in danger of perishing the infant would be carried in processional from home to church by the midwife to be baptized, the midwife often participating as an honored guest.[29] The Council of Trent reiterated the importance of baptism and cleared up many of the false doctrines perpetuated about the sacrament of baptism. During the baptismal ceremony a child was brought forward (usually carried by the midwife) and then held by the godmother while the godfather stood to her right with the father of the child behind them.[30] There were three phases to the baptismal process: the actual baptism, the naming of the child, and the introduction of the child into the community of Christ by the child's godparents.

In the first step the priest would exorcise the child and then baptize the child by sprinkling water on the child's head saying, "God's creature, I hereby baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."[31] In the records of Carini the baptism was simply indicated by the words "*fu battizata in detta ecclesia per me*" or "was baptized in said church by the priest" followed by the name of the cleric.

An important part of the baptismal ceremony included naming the child. This was significant because it gave the child an identity and place within society and a "marker by which individuals identify themselves throughout life."[32] In modern southern Italy it is customary to name the first son after the paternal grandfather, the second son after the maternal grandmother, the first daughter after the paternal

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[29] Triolo, "Fascist Unionization," 261.

[30] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 73.

[31] Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe,* 2d ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 26.

[32] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 24.

grandmother, and the second daughter after the maternal grandmother. This type of pattern is not completely followed in Carini or was not present during the early seventeenth century; however, names of children seem to be taken from family members in many cases—a significant number of these names being derived from the godfather or godmother of the child. Other names chosen could be derived from the names of aunts, uncles, or saints.[33]

After the baptism was performed and the child had been named the final step in the process was the introduction of the child into the community of Christ by the godparents. A godparent was an important person in the spiritual and social life of a child. In Sicily godparents were usually selected from the same social class. Sometimes "social climbers" tried to form associations with individuals in a higher social class than themselves. This meant that "powerful men found themselves frequently in demand for baptismal duties, and the choice of godparents required careful considerations of politics and local power." According to Edward Muir, "The institution of Godparentage became one of the most important social institutions in traditional Christian Europe" and in Italy "godparents were suspended in the webs of elaborate patronage networks."[34] Moreover, "use of godparent relationships gave social protection."[35] The importance of godparents was often symbolized by the giving of gifts from the godparents to the mother and her child (similar to the Magi giving gifts to the Christ child); according to household inventories these gifts could

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[33] Joseph G. Fucilla, *Our Italian Surnames* (Evanston, Illinois, 1949; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1987), 3–5.

[34] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 24.

[35] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 56.

sometimes be very elaborate.[36] For a Sicilian peasant the gift could be small but was always expected.[37]

Baptism and the naming of godparents acted as a unifying ceremony "creating relatives where there were none before."[38] Godparents were so important that it was truly rare to not have godparents named in the baptismal registers. In a study of the town of Pentidattilo, in the Kingdom of Naples, it was found that most godparents were not related to the child's parents; that in most cases godparents were a man and a woman and most often different godparents were chosen for each child.[39] This pattern holds true for the town of Carini as well. On rare occasion, the registers of Carini list only one godparent; in one instance this was because the child was baptized at home by a midwife and a godmother was named quickly.[40] The reforms put forth by the Council of Trent "required the recording of godparents, who were held responsible for registering the birth; and it sought to limit the numbers of godparents to two or three."[41] In general the number of godparents chosen in Carini was two. In some instances the godparents were a married couple that was chosen to

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[36] Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 49.

[37] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 72.

[38] Musacchio, *Art and Ritual of Childbirth,* 49.

[39] Tomaso Astarita, *Village Justice: Community, Family and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 131–32.

[40] Carini, Palermo, Italy *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1622,* p. 98 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1617_1628/098.jpg (accessed April 2008).

[41] Christopher F. Black, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 98.

be the spiritual guardians of the child. Several times the midwife is listed as the godmother.

The relationship of child and godparent was so important that if a godparent was not able to attend the ceremony (especially in the case of a noble) a proxy was used through an official notaries act. On April 23, 1638, Francesco Cavataio als Galluzzo[42] son of Giovanni and Lauria was baptized by Don Francesco Amato. One of the godparents was the Illustrious Don Francesco La Grua of the ruling family of Carini.[43] La Grua was not present at the baptism so a proxy was used instead.[44] On the February 27, 1639 a godmother Vincenza Russo, a native of the city of Palermo, was unable to come to the ceremony for the baptism of Vincenza Ventimiglia so Soro Rosalia Galluzzo stood as a proxy by act of notary. Vincenza Russo's husband, Battista Russo, was present for the ceremony, but since Vincenza was unable to make the ceremony for perhaps reasons of distance (Carini is twenty-three km. from the

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[42] The surname Cavataio alias Galluzzo is fairly prolific in Carini and surrounding areas, especially in Cinisi and Palermo. The surname Cavataio is historically found in the Palermo region, whereas, the surname Galluzzo is found sporadically throughout Italy. According to Italian name historian Joseph G. Fucilla it was tradition throughout rural Italy to carry a nickname in addition to a surname. In some areas the "existence of a large number of identical surnames in one locality…has contributed in making it difficult to distinguish one family from another without employing some kind of sobriquet." Fucilla, *Our Italian Surnames,* 26–27. These surnames are sometimes called a "sopranome." It is possible that the influence of the Spanish double surname had some effect on the choice of this family to add an additional surname. Oftentimes in the records of Carini the family will be represented with either surname on actual parish records and/or both together.

[43] This is likely the son of Vincenzo La Grua III (named Prince of Carini in 1622) and the noble Vincenza Conti and great-grandson of the famed Vincenzo La Grua who was married to Laura Lanza daughter of Cesare Lanza, Count of Trabia. Laura Lanza was murdered by her father in 1563 at the castle in Carini for having an affair.

[44] Don Leonardo Marsala was the proxy for La Grua in an act recorded in Palermo on April 22, 1638, by Pietro Paulo Pontifici. Carini, Palermo, Italy *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi*, 1638, p. 6 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764339, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1638_1646/006.jpg (accessed March-April 2008).

city of Palermo) or otherwise Soro Rosalia stood in her place.[45] Whatever the reasons

for absence from the actual ceremony it is noteworthy that the relationship between

godparent and godchild was so important that it was necessary to have an official

document drawn up when it was not possible for one or more of the godparents to

attend the baptism. In Carini, the person asked to be a godparent and/or stand in

proxy in many instances was Soro Rosalia Galluzzo.

The life of Soro Rosalia is an example of the role women played in not only

the process of birth in Carini but in society and religion as well. Her story

demonstrates how it was socially and religiously plausible to conform to Tridentine

rules as a midwife but ignore certain reforms of Trent, such as the cloistering of nuns.

Moreover, her life is an illustration of popular Catholicism owing to the fact that

nearly a century after the Council of Trent we have seen that magic, superstition, and

tradition were all still a part of the birth process in sixteenth century Sicilian society

and that she as a nun worked outside the confinement of convent walls.

Rosalia was born Vincenza Picone. She was baptized January 3, 1585 and was

likely born that day or a few days prior.[46] Vincenza was the daughter of Battista

Picone and Margherita Muraturi, natives of Carini. She was the eldest of two known

daughters (her sister Caterina was two years younger) and five sons. As the eldest

daughter it is not surprising that she chose the path of marriage (or rather this path

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[45]Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,* 1639, p. 28 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764339, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1638_1646/028.jpg (accessed March-April 2008).

[46] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,* 1585, p. 55 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1584_1592/055.jpg (accessed May 2008).

was likely chosen for her). At the age of seventeen she married Vito Cavataio als

Galluzzo (a man twenty years her senior) on August 12, 1601, and she began having

children shortly thereafter.[47] She had nine known children, the last child Vito was

born at the beginning of July 1624 just a few short months after his father died.[48] The

baptismal record for Vito indicates that his father was deceased and that the

godparents were Giacomo di Simone and Maria Cavataio.[49]

Now widowed and with several surviving children Vincenza needed to care

for her young. Having had nine children of her own she was definitely experienced in

childbirth and was certainly capable of handling the vocation of a midwife. It is often

said that the profession of a midwife was passed down in apprenticeship fashion. It

does not appear that any of Vincenza's close family members were midwives during

this time period. The baptismal registers for the time period 1623 to 1653 reveal that

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[47] Marriage of Vincenza Picone to Vito Cavataio als Galluzzo. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Matrimoni, 1601*, p. 47 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142058 Item 2, http://jamesbianco.com/ChurchRecords/1592_1606/Page47.jpg (accessed May 2008).

[48] Vito Cavataio was buried at the parish church of Santa Caterina in Carini on January 25, 1624. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,* 1624, p. 123 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142064. It is probable that he died due to illness; however, the timing of his death seems to be too early for the plague of that year unless he was one of the very first to contract the disease. Vito Cavataio was baptized February 22, 1564, and was the son of Francesca and Antonella Cavataio. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,* 1564, p. 106 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764337 Item 4, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1556_1566/107.jpg (accessed 2008). He was nearly sixty years old when he died and was twenty years older than his wife. It could be that he died incident to age rather than some other means. This is his son Vito's baptismal register entry. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,* 1624, p. 127 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1617_1628/127.jpg (accessed 2008).

[49] Not much is known about Maria; however, Giacomo di Simone was a native of Marineo, Palermo, a town located approximately fifty-seven kilometers from Carini to the east of the city of Palermo. How he came to live in Carini is also not known, but to make such a long move most likely meant that he was wealthier than the average peasant.

Vincenza became a practicing midwife sometime in 1625 at the age of forty.[50] As previously discussed Vincenza would more than likely have had to take an oral exam and fulfill certain requirements of society and church in order to act as a midwife and perform baptisms for children born in peril. The first time she was recorded as performing an emergency baptism was in July of 1625, this would have a been about one year after the birth of her youngest and a little more than a year and a half since her husband died.

The traditional mourning period for women in Sicily at the turn of the sixteenth century was anywhere from one to two years depending on the degree of relationship to the deceased.[51] For a widow the mourning period would have been closer to two years. Vincenza was nearing the completion of her bereavement period and likely realized that she needed to seek employment in order to maintain her household. As a widow Vincenza would likely see the return of her dowry from her husband's family, but this may not have been enough to sustain her and her young family. It is unknown how large of a dowry Vincenza had when she married; however, in seventeenth century Italy her dowry did stay with her until she died to

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[50] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1625*, p. 137 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1617_1628/137.jpg (accessed 2008). In July of 1625 she baptized Rosalia Passalacqua in her home because it was surmised that she would not survive to be baptized in the church. This is the first time Vincenza is noted in the baptismal registers as a midwife. She could have been practicing before this time; however, there is no way to know for certain the date she started as a midwife. This would have been a little more than one year after her youngest son was born.

[51] Cassar-Pullicino, "Maltese Customs and Beliefs in 1575," 402.

"act as a resource and protection if she were widowed."[52] It appears that she wasted little time in securing work and acquiring clients as a midwife.

As a mother, widow, and midwife Vincenza appears to be a fairly typical woman of her time; however, in 1627 her story changed to one that is not as representative a pattern of a typical Sicilian woman. She chose, like other women of her time, not to remarry. There could have been a variety of reasons for not wanting to remarry; family pressure against remarriage, wills and conditions against remarriage because of dowry payments, the hardships of a blended step family, and social taboos, to name a few.[53] Whatever her reasons she chose a path that would lead her to be an anomaly.

According to Carini baptismal registers sometime between August and December of 1627 Vincenza changed her name and was no longer known as Vincenza Galluzzo, but Rosalia Galluzzo. At first glance this change of name is enough to confuse and bewilder most, leading one to surmise that Vincenza had perhaps died and that Rosalia was simply another of the many midwives in the town of Carini in the early decades the seventeenth century. It was not until she was recorded again at the end of 1629 by Don Giovanni Battista Boccafichi that she was listed as "Soro" Rosalia Galluzzo, not only a midwife but a nun.[54] This combination of social and religious distinctions is rarely if ever seen in this time period in Italian history. The term *Soro* in the baptismal and burial records of Carini connotes *Soru* or

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[52] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 112.

[53] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 124.

[54] This is the first time Rosalia was called "Soro." Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1629*, p. 214 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764339, http://://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/1629_1637/214.jpg (accessed 2008).

an Italian term *Suora* meaning a sister or a nun. Without further documentation the only reasonable supposition as to why Rosalia did not receive this title sooner was the fact that prior to that date a different priest was recording the baptismal sacraments. It was in June 1629 that Don Gaspano Russo died and Don Boccafichi began performing sacramental rites of baptismal, marriage, and burial in his stead. From the end of 1629 until Rosalia stopped as a practicing midwife sometime in 1654 she was always listed with the title "Soro." It appears that she chose to become a bride of Christ rather than remarry a second time.

Customarily a nun who had taken solemn vows and become a bride of Christ changed her name and was consecrated. According to historian Kate Lowe, there are "striking parallels between the ceremonies of marriage and consecration. Both these ceremonies involved a change in the woman's status and identity which was symbolized, first of all, by the change of name."[55]

Traditionally nuns were given a new name upon entering convent life; this usually makes tracing the history of a nun very difficult unless a record shows the given and last names of a woman prior to her becoming a nun. However, there are examples of convents such as that of Le Vergini in Venice where nuns retained their names and were for the most part able to come and go as they pleased and entertain family and friends at the convent.[56]

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[55] Silvia Evangelisti, "Wives, Widows, and Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in the Historiography of Early Modern Italy," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (March 2000): 246–47.

[56] K.J.P. Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 187.

Fortunately, in the case of Rosalia Galluzzo there are records that trace her origins and give some idea of her identity before and after she changed her name. The first record that furnishes evidence that Rosalia is really Vincenza Picone is the baptismal registers themselves. In the 1650s the priest recorded the father of each of the witnesses to a baptism. One record written in 1652 lists her as a godmother and denotes that Soro Rosalia Galluzzo is the daughter of the deceased Battista Picone.[57] However, prior to this date the *rivelo* or tax census of 1636 lists Soro Rosalia Galluzzo as the head of the household with several of her children still living at home, including a daughter Antonella with her young son.[58] The names and ages of her children listed on this census reveal a match to those children known to have survived until adulthood.

Not only does the census give us names and relationships but this particular document gives an interesting amount of detail about Rosalia's life. She is listed as Soro Rosalia Galluzzo, widow of the head of household. The entire page is not readable; however, the discernable parts reveal that she owned a home that is confined on one side by Giovanna Galluzzo, most likely a relation. Rosalia's possessions also included a mare and two cows. The second page of the census shows that she paid 28.17 *onzi* in taxes for *beni stabili* or immovable goods such as her

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[57] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,1652*, p. 149 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764339, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1646_1653/149.jpg (accessed 2008).

[58] Carini, Palermo Italy, *Riveli di Beni e Anime, 1636*, p. 136 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1994–2001), FHL microfilm 2291712 and 2291713. The names and ages of the surviving children of Vito and Vincenza Cavataio als Galluzzo fit nicely according to the baptismal registers of Carini. Some ages of the children are off by a few years; however, this is typical of censuses in Sicily and other areas of the world. A census taker may have rounded up or down on an age by as many as 5 years. Rosalia has three surviving sons living with her: her eldest Gaspano, and Nicolao and Vito. Her daughter, Antonella, became a widow in 1635 when her husband of fifteen years, Giovanni di Cipriano, died. She is listed with a son aged five years.

house and lands and an additional 18 *onzi* in taxes for her movable goods or possessions for a total of 46.17.

Rosalia was not wealthy by standards of the day but seemed to live comfortably from her land and earnings. It is interesting that Rosalia retained her wealth taking into account that nuns typically took vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. She could have been part of an order that was not required to do so. Perhaps she filled the role of poverty by performing acts of charity for those women in the town in need of a midwife, but were unable to pay for the assistance. Lastly, Rosalia's death record in 1660 lists her as the daughter of Battista Picone.[59]

Not a significant amount is known about how a nun chooses her new name. What is known is that "naming was crucially important for nuns, and strong identification with the character and *vita* of their name saint, or the history and legend attached to the most famous proponents of their name, carried real potency for them."[60] In all probability Vincenza changed her name to Rosalia in honor of the patron saint of Palermo who at the beginning of her career as a midwife had saved the city of Palermo (probably the city of Carini) from the plague. The name "Rosalia" did hold great power and prestige in Carini at this particular juncture in time. Moreover, "It is if the act of naming carried with the possibility of constructing a new character in the shadow of the original name-holder."[61]

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[59] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti, 1660,* p. 140 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142064. Soro Rosalia Galluzzo was buried in the *La Chiesa di San Lorenzo* in Carini on November 9, 1660.

[60] Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles*, 65.

[61] Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles*, 66.

In fact, a fascinating trend in naming patterns for Carini can be seen as a result of the plague in 1624 and explains more clearly the reason Vincenza Galluzzo may have used the name Rosalia when she became a nun. A serious infection arrived in Palermo via ships that carried Christian slaves from Tunis in early 1624. In effect, "the whole life of the town came to a halt. The relics of St. Cristina and St. Ninfa were endlessly carried in intercession through the streets, so spreading the infection."[62] The plague tore through the city even claiming the life of the viceroy, Philiberto-Emmanuele of Savoy. The famed Flemish painter Anthony Van Dyck had recently been commissioned to paint in Palermo and sailed to Sicily in April only to find that in May the plague was at its height.[63] Van Dyck escaped the plague and somehow fled eluding the quarantine that had been placed on the city of Palermo.

The consequences of this plague can be seen unmistakably in the naming patterns of female children in Carini during this time period. According to tradition Saint Rosalia stopped the spread of plague in the city of Palermo and its environs when her bones were discovered and according to tradition carried through the city of Palermo to the cathedral. It is written that the massive effects of the plague ended not more than three days after Rosalia's bones were found, but not before more than

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[62] Denis Mack Smith, *A History of Sicily: Medieval Sicily, 800–1713* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 205–206.

[63] Van Dyck somehow escaped the effects of the plague and sailed away from Palermo sometime in September of 1624. According to the painter Bordone, "Van Dyck, having crossed the frontiers of the kingdom of Naples without a health certificate, was arrested and sent to the galleys. There he painted a number of portraits for the captain of the vessel, who sent them as a gift to the Viceroy of Naples. The Viceroy considered them so fine that he set him to work in his own town, whence he came on to Genoa." Moreover, Van Dyck's famed painting, "Saint Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-Stricken of Palermo," was purchased by Antonio Ruffo, a Sicilian art collector of the time, and is found in his inventory of paintings in 1646. Van Dyck painted many other work of Saint Rosalia as a result of his stay in Palermo and brush with the plague. Charles Sterling, "Van Dyck's Paintings of St. Rosalie," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 74, no. 431(February 1939): 53–63.

9,000 people had perished from the plague—including the viceroy.[64] It was Cardinal Giovanni Doria that decided to "demote her rivals and make her the principal patroness of the town" after six months of deliberating.[65]

During the period after this miraculous occurrence, many parents in Carini chose to name their daughters Rosalia in honor of the patron saint of the city of Palermo in gratitude and as a show of pious faith. Of the more than 1,000 females born between 1620 and 1629, 128 of them were named Rosa or Rosalia (nearly 12 percent of the names and by far the most popular name of the entire decade). What is most telling about these statistics is that the name Rosalia did not become popular until the end of 1624 and into 1625. In 1623 a mere four of the more than 100 females born were named Rosalia. In the later part of 1624, the trend shifts dramatically so that of the 119 girls born in 1624, seventeen of them were named Rosalia. Furthermore, of those seventeen all of them were named such in the later part of that year (August to December). Following the timeline of the plague's miraculous end or tapering off in the latter part of 1624. Even more astonishing, in 1625 the shift increases to include more than half of the females born that year in Carini, fifty-two of eighty-seven females born were named Rosalia. In the years following (1626–29) the number of females named Rosalia trends downward again so that by the end of

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[64] Salvo Di Matteo, *Palermo Storia della Città: Dalle Origini ad Oggi* (Palermo: Gruppo Editoriale Kalós, 2002), 101. Saint Rosalia is said to be the daughter of Sinibald, Lord of Quisquina and of a Rosa, and descended from Charlemagne. She lived sometime in the twelfth century, and it was said "in her youthful days she left home and hid herself in a cave near Bivona and later in another at Monte Pelligrino just outside Palermo where she died and was buried." Celebrations in honor of Rosalia are held every year on July 15th and September 4th. She is the patron saint of the city of Palermo. Mershman, Francis, "St. Rosalia," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13184a.htm (accessed 2008); Sterling, "Van Dyck's Paintings of St. Rosalie,"53.

[65] Smith, *A History of Sicily,* 206. According to historian Dennis Mack Smith, Cardinal Doria condemned a Greek doctor to death because he believed this doctor intentionally started the plague to get extra money.

the decade only four births of 100 bear the name of the patron saint of Palermo.[66]

However, this significant shift in the number of females who were named Rosalia

cannot be ignored. This clearly shows the effects were far more reaching than just in

the urban city of Palermo. The plague's reaches in a literal and spiritual sense were

felt for miles surrounding the city.

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[66] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1626–1629* (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764338 and 1764339, http://www.cariniexchange.org/Battisimi.html (accessed 2008). Parents of males born in the same decade were less likely to part with cultural naming patterns that honor Saint Rosalia's feat of releasing them from the plague. However, there were some who chose to honor the passing of sickness and death in the years 1624–25 by naming their sons "Rocco." Rocco was not a significantly popular name in the town prior to that point (only seen maybe 150 times in a 100-year time span), and yet in the year 1625 twenty-six of eighty-one male children born that year were named Rocco. This is an indicator that the townspeople chose to honor Saint Roch who was born in Montpeliere, France, around 1295 and is known for curing the plague in several Italian cities (namely Aquapendente, Cesena, Rome, Mantua, Modena, and Parma) in the early fourteenth century. Gregory Cleary, "St. Roch," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13100c.htm (accessed 2008).
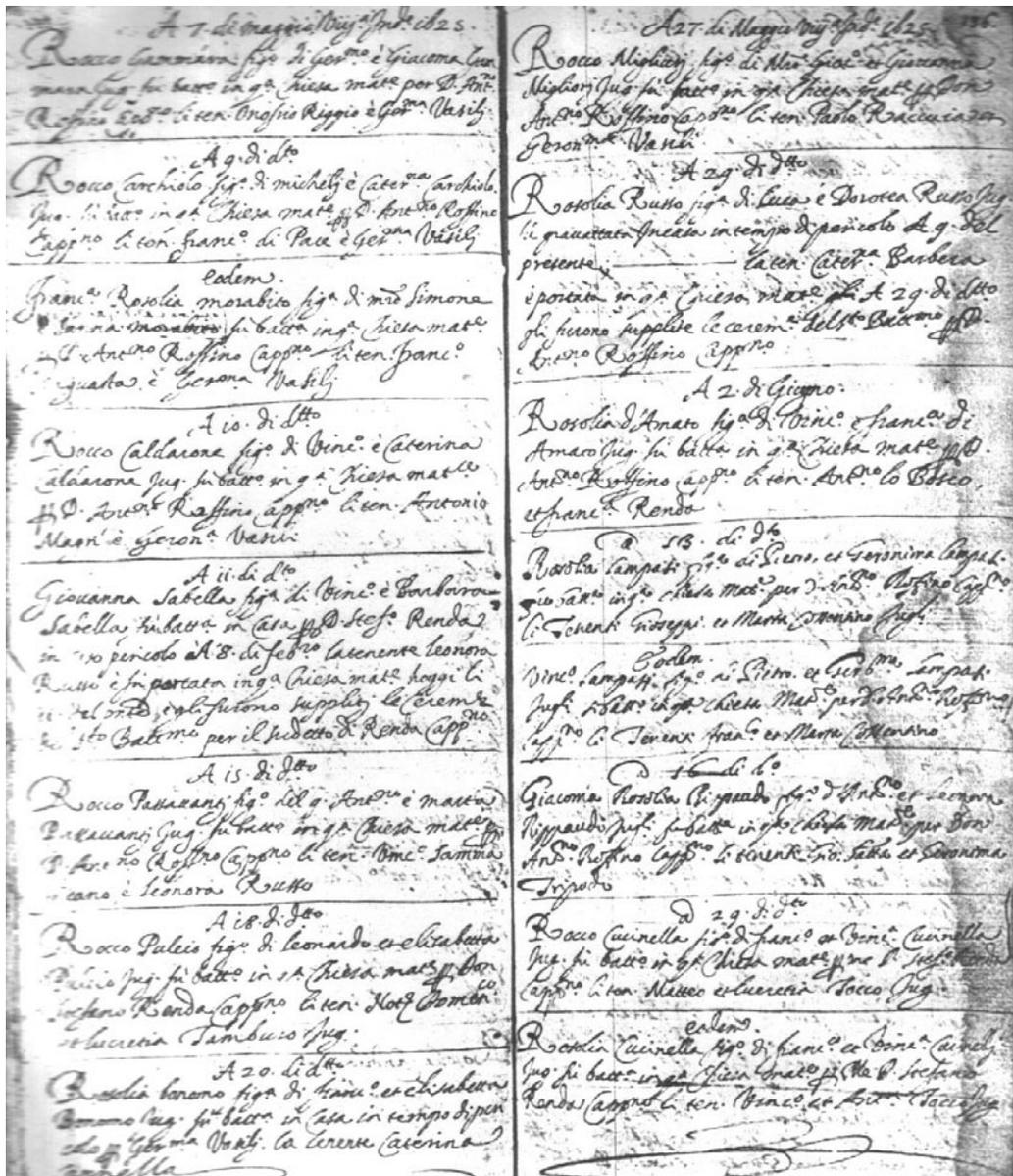
A representative parish register from 1625 is shown here. Five of the eight females born were named Rosalia; a sixth was named Francesca Rosalia; and a seventh was named Giacoma Rosalia. Moreover, seven of the eight males listed on the page were named Rocco.[67]

Clearly Vincenza's secular and religious environment played a key role in the name she chose to take as a bride of Christ. Both the worldly and spiritual climate in Carini also allowed for a fascinating combination of dual social status as both a

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[67] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,* 1625, p. 136 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1617_1628/136.jpg (accessed 2008).

midwife and a nun. The death registers of Carini list several women who at death

carried the title of "Soro," but none of them were midwives, too.[68] The only other

midwife who also became a nun, but years after she became a midwife, was Leonora

Russo. Leonora began as a midwife about 1628, but it was not until 1654 that she is

listed with the title of "Soro." Perhaps this was due to the influence of Soro Rosalia

who was her long time colleague.

It is evident that both the practice of being a midwife and the practice of

becoming a nun were both acceptable social outlets for a widow. This begs the

question as to why there was a duality of roles for a select few of the women of

Carini; especially for Soro Rosalia Galluzzo. Prior to the Council of Trent many

women lived as nuns outside of convent walls; women sometimes lived together in

communities of charity performing good works; and in some areas of Italy widows

banded together to form these communities. The distinction between cloistered nuns

and nuns living outside of a convent was blurry at best so it seems reasonable to

assume that a widow could live outside convent walls and maintain somewhat of the

same lifestyle as she previously led as a lay member of the church. Yet after the

twenty-fifth and final session of the Council of Trent in 1563, Pontiff Pius IV

declared that regulars and nuns at the direction of the bishop should restore the

enclosure of nuns which had previously been violated and furthermore, "for no nun,

after her profession, shall it be lawful to go out of her convent, even for a brief period,

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[68]There are a few rare instances where a midwife did not perform an emergency baptism. Soro Geronima Fillippani baptized the infant Giovanni Pisano on August 27, 1640; subsequently the child died before a baptism could be performed at church. She was not listed as a midwife, but was simply performing her duty as a member of the ranks of clergy. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1640*, p. 57 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 1764339, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1638_1646/057.jpg (accessed 2008).

under any pretext whatever, except for some lawful cause, which is to be approved of by the bishop;"[69]

Clearly the problem of controlling nuns who lived outside of convents was seen as harmful to the body of the church. At this time rules were also set forth that no persons could enter within convent walls unless given explicit permission. Nuns of the early seventeenth century were to truly set themselves aside from the outside world. Moreover, regulars, as they are called (both men and women) had to take "vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, as also all other vows and precepts that may be peculiar to any rule or order, respectively appertaining to the essential character of each, and which regard the observance of a common mode of living, food, and dress."[70] If, in order to be a nun it was requisite to take vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, why did Soro Rosalia remain outside the convent walls still caring for her children and making a living as a midwife? What social mores made this practice acceptable in a post-Tridentine environment?

It is quite possible that the remoteness of Papal authority in the South, especially in Sicily, played a role in the propensity of nuns to live outside of convent walls. This remoteness in the early modern era was "one reason why the Church in Sicily was in some ways lethargic, why so many clergy for example were married, or why, to take another practical case, regulations had to be issued more than once

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[69] Text was taken directly from Chapter 5 of the 25th session as translated by J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), 240, http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm (accessed April-August 2008).

[70] Text was taken directly from Chapter 1 of the 25th session as translated by Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees,* 237, http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm (accessed August 2008).

against the serenading of nunneries by monks."[71] It is evident from these examples and others that the Catholic Church in Sicily did not necessarily follow the same patterns as the church in other areas of Italy or the world. Michael Carroll in his work on popular Catholicism in Italy describes the south as "the land where 'Trent never arrived' in its entirety."[72]

Because many decrees from the Pope were sent via Spain it meant there were even further delays in implementing current practices of the Church. It is therefore not unimaginable to see women who were nuns living outside of convent walls in the early 1600s. For generations it was known that some Italian widows worked together in communities to perform charitable acts and share income.[73] Tomaso Astarita explains further how this could possibly have come about. *Bizzoche*, or house nuns were women who devoted themselves to Christ through good works and prayer. They were associated with local religious orders and were considered tertiary or lay sisters. These women had to be at least forty years old and have a minimum income "to guarantee against dangers to their virtue." These house nuns were prevalent in southern Italy and in Naples in the seventeenth century a survey recorded 800 women living this lifestyle.

The practice of southern house nuns makes it possible and believable that these women who were widowed could also carry on a life outside of convent doors. Perhaps the simple answer to the previous question as to why Rosalia was both a nun

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[71] Smith, *A History of Sicily,* 162.

[72] Michael P. Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim: Popular Catholicism in Italy since the Fifteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 115.

[73] Nicholas Terpstra, *Abandoned Children of the Italian Renaissance: Orphan Care in Florence and Bologna* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 17.

and a midwife in Carini is because she could perform both of these roles in society. Society allowed her to be a mother, a midwife, and a nun. Although this lifestyle was not common it was permitted. Historian Elizabeth Cohen in a discussion regarding the evolving history of women in early modern Italy states, "to be sure, no single woman represented all the others of her sex. Yet, exceptional, transgressive, or not, every female deed or word reveals some part of what early modern women could do."[74]

Understanding the types of orders these women could have belonged to in this time period also helps to explain the possibility of dual roles in society. Three major religious orders were represented in seventeenth century Carini: the Dominicans, the Carmelites, and the Order of Friars Minor (a division of the Franciscans) all had churches associated with their orders. Additionally, some religious orders alternated in their use of *Chiesa di San Lorenzo* and its convent.[75]

The Dominican order (Order of Preachers) was associated with the *Convento del Rosario* in Carini.[76] The Order of Dominican Sisters dates back to 1259 and are a strictly cloistered body of sisters. These sisters are required to take three religious vows, participate in manual labor, and recite canon. While a tertiary order has existed

[74] Thomas James Dandelet and John A. Marino, eds., *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500–1700* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 330–31.

[75] Comune di Carini. "Arte Sacra," from the official community website, http://www.comune.carini.pa.it/artesacra.asp (accessed 2007); Centro Attività Francescane, *Villa Belvedere, Carini (PA)* (Palermo: Centro "P. Kolbe," 1983), 19–22.

[76] Angelo Mannino, "Chiesa del Rosario," http://www.indirettadacarini.it/rosario.html (accessed 10 Oct 2008).

for the Dominicans since the thirteenth century Saint Dominic did not write a rule for this order and as such almost all tertiaries gather on a local level.[77]

The nuns associated with the Carmelite order seem to be less strict in their requirements. In the mid-fifteenth century several beguine communities requested to be included in the Carmelite order. In the sixteenth century their popularity grew and convents were founded in France, Italy, and Spain. The Carmelite movement seemed to be most popular in Spain. It is therefore not surprising to see a Carmelite sect in Sicily. About this same time a tertiary or third secular order was also included. The third order nuns recited prayers, fasted, refrained from worldly pleasures, lived under the supervision of the superiors of the order, and might have even worn a habit. These tertiaries lived outside convent walls.[78]

The Franciscan third order permitted both "seculars" and "regulars." The secular sect was founded in 1221 and encompasses devout Catholics of both sexes. The regulars were typically cloistered nuns.[79] The Franciscans in Carini had a strong presence in the town beginning in the sixteenth century. In 1546 the *Frati Minori Conventuali* erected their first convent. In 1580 the *Chiesa di S. Rocco* was also affiliated with the Franciscan order and remained so for more than sixty years until at

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[77] Pierre Mandonnet, "Order of Preachers," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 12 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12354c.htm (accessed 10 October 2008); Jarrett Bede, Ferdinand Heckmann, Benedict Zimmerman, Livarius Oliger, Odoric Jouve, Lawrence Hess, and John Doyle, "Third Orders," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 14 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14637b.htm (accessed 10 October 2008).

[78] Benedict Zimmerman, "The Carmelite Order," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 3 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03354a.htm (accessed 10 October 2008).

[79] Paschal Robinson, "Franciscan Order," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 6 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06217a.htm (accessed 10 October 2008).

the beginning of the seventeenth century there were two other Franciscan convents. In 1601 the *Frati Minori Riformati* obtained *La Chiesa di San Lorenzo* (one of the oldest churches in the area) and in 1603 the Baron of Carini, Cesare La Grua, constructed *La Chiesa dei Cappuccini.*[80]

To which of these orders could Sister Rosalia have belonged? The most likely of the three would be the Franciscan order based on the knowledge that she was buried in *La Chiesa di San Lorenzo* and the fact that her husband was buried in *La Chiesa di San Rocco.*[81] The Franciscan order also seems to be the most prevalent in Carini with several churches subscribing to the order's philosophies and ideals. Whether or not Rosalia was actually affiliated with the Franciscan's, we do not know. If she was, she would likely be termed a secular; although, it is odd that as a secular she would have changed her name.

What of other nuns in Carini? Of those death records surveyed between 1635 and 1648 there were eight women who were designated as nuns. Two of them, Soro Caterina La Costa and Soro Caterina Fodera were buried in the *Convento del Rosario* constructed in the years 1576–79.[82] These two women do not appear to have ever been married and were buried with their fellow sisters within the walls of the convent.

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[80] Centro Attività Francescane, *Villa Belvedere,* 20.

[81] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti, 1660*, p. 140 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142064. Soro Rosalia Galluzzo was buried in the church *La Chiesa di San Lorenzo* on November 9, 1660. Vito Cavatio was buried at the parish church of *Santa Caterina* in Carini on January 25, 1624. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti, 1660*, p. 123 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142064.

[82] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti, 1575–1692,* pp. 394; 309 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142064, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/1629_1637/394.jpg and http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/1629_1637/309.jpg (accessed 2008).

Other sisters such as Soro Caterina Marretta Tocco, a mother of nine and a native of

Tusa, Messina, Italy, and Soro Francesca Schirinci di Simone, a mother of six were

buried in the *Chiesa del Carmine* and likely spent their lives outside of convent walls

raising children.[83] Soro Francesca had a two year old when her husband Manfredi di

Simone died in May of 1631.[84] For these widows, becoming a bride of Christ meant

they had a choice of who their next marriage partner would be. The status of

widowhood in some instances could imply a sense of independence from male

authority and nunneries, "places that women chose to enter after experiencing

marriage difficulties or dissolution."[85] Historian Silvia Evangelisti believes that this

"opens up the possibility of considering them as institutions with a dual social

function: to meet the needs of patrimonial and marriage strategies, and to contain the

disfunctionalities of marriage."[86] These women chose to take simple or solemn vows,

raised their children, and performed acts of charitable service in the name of God

filling a much needed space in society.

  The life of Rosalia exhibits a fascinating example of what women could do in

Carini during her lifetime and in the decades after the Council of Trent. In 1654

Rosalia stopped her practice as a midwife and is not seen again in the records of

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[83] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,1648–1649*, pp 16; 49 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142064, for Caterina Tocco http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/burials/1647_1654/016.jpg and Francesca di Simone http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/burials/1647_1654/049.jpg (accessed 2008).

[84] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,1631*, p. 257(Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), FHL microfilm 2142064, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/1629_1637/257.jpg (accessed 2008).

[85] Silvia Evangelisti, "Wives, Widows and the Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in Historiography of Early Modern Italy," *The Historical Journal,* 43, no. 1 (March 2000): 238, 246.

[86] Evangelisti, "Wives, Widows and Brides of Christ," 246.

Carini until her death in 1660. Moreover, in the census of 1653 her eldest son

Gaspano is listed with wife and children, but Rosalia is not found in the main tax

registers. Having lived all of his days raised by a religious mother her youngest son,

Vito Galluzzo, joined the ranks of the priesthood and is listed as a *Cappellano*,

performing various acts such as baptisms. The sheer amount of baptisms Soro Rosalia

performed is a testament to her character and position in Carini. The priests,

townspeople, and especially the women of Carini probably had an immeasurable

amount of trust and respect for her as a mother, widow, midwife and nun. Rosalia was

most likely preferred to carry on such an important task of saving a physical and

spiritual life and introducing that new life into the community of Carini and the

community of Christ. She was called on to be a godparent, a witness, and to bring

relief to mother and family during one of the most crucial times in a woman's life.

In a religious and social atmosphere that was both shifting and in some ways

remained the same as it had for decades and even centuries, Rosalia was able to both

coexist and conform to the reforms of Trent while maintaining multiple roles in

society. From this study it is evident that the traditions of magic and mysticism

surrounding the process of birth remained the same as they had for generations.

Traditions such as sprinkling salt on the floor to ward off witches and evil spirits and

the use of herbs and other remedies were infused in the spiritual process of birth and

became a part of popular Catholicism in Carini. Additionally, the process of birth and

baptism, although more closely controlled by the recording of records and the

intermediary role of midwives as informants for parish priests, remained largely the

same as it had for centuries and as it would continue to be in Sicily for decades to

come.

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE AND MOBILITY IN CARINI

The study of marriage is significant because it represents a time of societal change not only in the life of an individual but in the surrounding community as well. Historians traditionally have looked at marriage as a transfer of property, change of legal status, acquisition of a network of wider kin, an occasion for expenditure and consumption, and the rise and fall of social mobility. Because marriage touches so many aspects of life and existence, there can be innumerable approaches to the study of marriage and family. One such method is a demographic study of the rates of marriage, the seasons of marriage, and the movement or migration of those to find marriage opportunities. For this work we will primarily focus on understanding marriage trends and mobility for Carini through the use of parish registers and explore how the Council of Trent affected marriage in Carini coupled with economic, political, and natural disaster trends.

Only in the last thirty years have Italian historians begun to study marriage and family in the context of the Italian peninsula.[1] The Italian studies of the 1970s

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[1] Marzio Barbagli and David Kertzer, "An Introduction to the History of Italian Family Life," *Journal of Family History* 15, no. 1 (1990): 369–83. This article focuses on the historical context for understanding Italian family life studies and marriage throughout Italy, taking into consideration the differences between northern and southern families. It also addresses some of the historiography of Italian family studies up to 1990. There are three main influences that are notable in the study of marriage and family relations for this area of the world: developments in historical demography; influences of the French *Annales* School; and historical household studies by Peter Laslett and the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure.

were primarily focused on demography, which provided a wealth of information on Italian families in northern and central Italy; however, little has been done until recently to help us understand marriage in Sicily and southern Italy. However, the studies on marriage in northern Italy are also important for their influences on southern studies.[2]

In recent years Giovanna Da Molin has been a leader in publishing works about the southern Italian family and marriages in the early modern period. Her works provide a good basis on which to build and model other studies of southern Italian towns. Southern Italy in the seventeenth century was largely made up of nuclear households (a family unit consisting of a mother, father, and children).[3] Da Molin's studies of the town of Noto, Sicily, in 1647 indicate that 72 percent lived in nuclear families with as little as 8 percent of the population living alone.[4] Marriages usually resulted in the formation of a new household. From the study of the town of Noto it can certainly be conjectured that Sicilian towns for the most part adhered to a strong

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[2] Barbagli and Kertzer, 382; David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller, eds., *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 247. Social and micro-history has had an enormous influence on Italian historians who study early modern Italian marriage. In addition, their studies allow them to argue that Italian marriage and family studies, while they may have implications for Europe as a whole, are unique in and of themselves and should not be lumped in with studies for other countries. More important, this approach to designating a unique space for the study of marriage in Italy allows historians to carve out a separate place for Sicily, too. The rise in popularity of the subject of marriage and family for Italian historians originated from the feeling that Italy had too long been ignored for its own unique contributions. Italian historians claim that many of these general social histories regarding marriage and family simply gloss over, generalize, or base their conclusions about Italian families on fragmentary evidence. Kertzer indicates those scholars who have tried to generalize about a single western European type of family cannot be used for families in Italy. Historians further argue that one cannot simply place all Italians into an oversimplification of how marriage and family are structured and not take into consideration the different historical and economic underpinnings associated with various regions of Italy.

[3] Giovanna Da Molin, "Family Forms and Domestic Service in Southern Italy from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of Family History* 15 (1990): 504–505.

[4] Giovanna Da Molin, *Famiglia e Matrimonio nell'Italia del Seicento* (Bari: Cacucci Editore, 2000), 122–23.

nuclear family unit. Da Molin says, "Historical, economic, and social factors as well as traditional mentality, contributed to this pattern of family formation." Furthermore, she states that the nuclear structure of Sicilian families is based on three interconnected variables: an agricultural system, the size of the holdings, and the settlement patterns of the agricultural population. Da Molin reports that southern Italians lived closely together in medium to larger centers and divorced their place of work from their place of residence. "Agricultural workers lived in agricultural towns. The men left home at dawn, and regardless if whether they returned at night or at the end of the week, the women stayed home."[5] This type of argument fits well with town of Carini because although Carini had urban ties to Palermo it was still an agricultural center lying on the outskirts of the city.

Da Molin's studies appear to indicate that in Sicily, Calabria, and Campania women (and at times men) married earlier in the seventeenth century than their counterparts in other southern regions of Italy. For example, women in Sicily married at 21.8 years of age and men at 26.1, just slightly below the figures found for the same time periods in the Puglia and Campania regions of Italy.[6] The difference in age can easily be attributed to the responsibility of the male to provide economic stability necessary to begin a family unit.

Typically, marriages took place in the parish of the bride. Demographic studies for other southern European and western European countries have revealed that "in many of the seventeenth-century parishes whose marriage records have been

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[5] Da Molin, "Family Forms and Domestic Service," 524.

[6] Da Molin, "Family Forms and Domestic Service," 512.

studied, brides and grooms found their partners in their home parish—or within a ten kilometer radius." Historians have argued the issue of the immobility of villagers, especially with regard to marriage partnerships. A villager close to home can find a wife who is of his same or similar status; he does not need to traverse over mountain passes to find a suitable partner. In fact, "in the densely settled Beauvaisis in northern France studied by Pierre Goubert, almost 90 percent of brides and grooms came from the same parish, although many were from different hamlets."[7]

However, southern European towns seem to differ because they contain more cities that are accessible by land or sea. The peninsular nature of Italy and its placement in the Mediterranean make it a stopping ground for merchants and sailors. In the Middle Ages it also was the "hub of Europe's commercial life."[8] In addition to this, Italy was the most urbanized country in early modern Europe. In fact for Sicily, "two-thirds of the island's population lived in large communities of more than 5,000 people. Trapani, with 17,000 people, was a major link with Spain and North Africa, Palermo, with 100,000 inhabitants, was the political hub, place of residence of the nobility, and principal seat of the viceroy."[9] The placement of Sicily in the Mediterranean made it easier for seasonal migrants to journey from place to place to expand their economic opportunities. More generally throughout Europe and specifically true for southern Europe, "the arena in which men found work was much larger than the region in which they found wives. Men traveled in long-distance

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[7] Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe Since 1650* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 36.

[8] Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11.

[9] Gregory Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 19.

circular migration systems, women in localized marriage markets. So although

marriage records tell us a good bit about marriage markets, they omit a great deal

about rural people's migration experience."[10] It is important to note that parish lists

can be problematic, because they are static data and they yield very little information

about actual degree of movement, return migration or repeated moves.[11] However, the

shift in where people are coming from to be married in Carini can illustrate a great

deal about the limited opportunities for growth and their ability to travel far distances

for work. Over time patterns emerge specifically for Carini, discernible by where

people are coming from, whom they marry, and how long they stay.[12]

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[10] Moch, *Moving Europeans,* 36.

[11] Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 19.

[12] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica. Maria Santissima Assunta*, *Registri ecclesiastici, 1527–1919* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed 2006–08). The parish marriage records used in this study come from the *La Madre Chiesa di Carini Maria Santissima* (Mother Church of Carini) established in 1523. Marriage registers exist from September 1568 to the present day. Other parishes existed for the town of Carini; however, the *La Chiesa Madre* holds the records for surrounding parishes as well. For this particular study records were extracted for ninety-three years, from 1568 to 1660. Registers for the years 1613–16 are either unreadable or missing and could not be extracted. Apart from the marriages for these years, all other marriages were extracted and placed into the database. The total number of marriages is 3,638, for a total of 7,276 brides and grooms. For the years 1568–1619 the following fields were extracted: page number; full date of marriage; groom's first name; groom's last name; the names of the groom's father and mother; groom's place of origin; whether the groom was a widower; bride's first and last name; her parents' names; whether she was a widow; and bride's place of origin. For the years 1629–60 page numbers of the marriage acts and entire dates of marriages are not given; only the year in which a couple was married was recorded in the database. The information contained in the marriage records varies over time. The earlier years yield less information than later years. For example, the records from 1568–93 contain the date of the marriage, first and last name of groom, the groom's town, the first and last name of the bride, the bride's parents' names, whether they are deceased or living, and their place of nativity. Some records may indicate whether the person is a widow or widower and in some instances give the name of the father of the groom. It is rare that the name of the mother is recorded. Marriage registers during this time also list at least two witnesses. When available, the names of parents were extracted and whether or not they were deceased at the time their child was married. In registers post-1640, the same information is included, but the priest began to also record the days the banns were read in church and posted on the door of the church and whether there were any impediments to the marriage.

One case study of Foggia (located on the southeastern side of mainland Italy) between 1575 and 1750 reveals that 1,440 men out of a sample of more than 3,000 marriages, were migrants who traveled more than 100 km. from their native towns and married in Foggia where they resided. This is obviously an example of an extremely mobile marriage market where the men traveled a far distance from their homes for economic opportunities.[13] Those areas that attracted a great deal of migration established themselves as diverse areas of rural cultivation where the economy was relatively prosperous.[14] Works like this provide a good basis on which to build and model other studies of southern Italian towns.

Carini and the surrounding area of the Conca D'Oro had also established itself as an economically viable place to work, if not to settle. Specifically, "the sugar industry provided employment for peasants, artisans, and mule drivers during otherwise empty periods of the year, or gave them a way of integrating their income with the high wages supplied. Like silk and olive production, the sugar industry developed within an increasingly complex and integrated agricultural and manufacturing system." Sugar cultivation was combined with other agricultural pursuits such as vineyards, olive and citrus groves, raising of livestock and even the working of tunny fish. Migrant workers exploited this economy of scale because it was evident that the sugar industry could not employ individuals full-time. "Most wage-labourers came from the mountainous north, from the Madonie to Palermo, and from Nebrodi and Peloritani to north-eastern Val Demone; however, western

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[13] Da Molin, *Famiglia e Matrimonio,* 239.

[14] Da Molin, *Famiglia e Matrimonio,* 240.

industries also drew people from central and south-western Sicily, and even from Calabria."[15]

While not as mobile a market as Foggia, marriage records in Carini do reflect some migratory trends. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, 95 percent of the brides were native born Carinesi while only 81 percent of grooms were natives of the same parish. This means that 19 percent of the men came from other areas throughout Sicily and mainland Italy. Thirty-three percent of non-native grooms came from more than fifty-one miles away from Carini to work and marry. (See Table I for additional information.)

Table 1. Division based on miles of places of origin of non-native spouses: Carini, 1568–1660 (excluding 1613–16)

|  | Men | | Women | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | N | % | N | % |
| Within 24 miles | 327 | 47 | 82 | 48 |
| Between 25 to 50 miles | 42 | 6 | 12 | 7 |
| Between 51 to 100 miles | 100 | 15 | 40 | 24 |
| Over 101 miles | 124 | 18 | 5 | 3 |
| Unknown mileage | 96 | 14 | 31 | 18 |
|  | 688 | 100 | 170 | 100 |

More telling is where these men came from across time. Figure 2 illustrates over a period of time the number of non-native men and women who traveled a distance of 101 miles or more to be married in Carini. There were as many as twenty-four men from Calabria, six men from Genoa (a distance of nearly 900 miles from Carini), four from Naples, and others from various cities in southwestern and

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[15] Stephan R. Epstein, *An Island for Itself: Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 219–20.

southeastern Sicily.[16]  It is not surprising to see such a large number of men from Calabria, Genoa, and Naples. Messina introduced the sugar trade to Calabria in the late fifteenth century, and for centuries Calabrese men had traveled all over Sicily participating in the cultivation of sugar cane.[17] Further, Denis Mack Smith surmises that besides the Jewish element (which made up nearly 10 percent of the island's population before they were expelled by edict in 1492) that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Genoese were the next largest foreign element in the country. As bankers and merchants, they could provide the king with what he needed to financially supply Naples and other areas of his kingdom. In return, Genoese merchants received special privileges in Sicily, including exemption from local taxes and extra-territorial rights.[18]
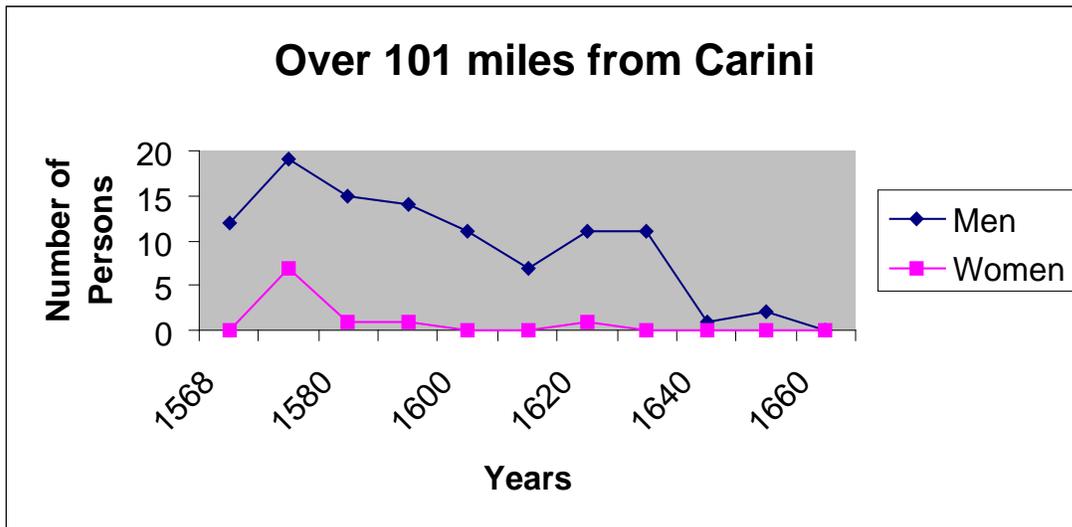


**Over 101 miles from Carini**

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[16] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica. Maria Santissima Assunta*, *Registri ecclesiastici, 1527–1919* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed 2006–08).

[17] Epstein, *An Island for Itself,* 219.

[18] Denis Mack Smith, *A History of Sicily: Medieval Sicily, 800–1713* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 103.

Figure 2. Non-native persons married in Carini whose native abode was more than 101 miles from Carini. Source: Maria Santissima di Carini, original Parish Registers, 1568–1660.

Carini in the late sixteenth century was a thriving town. Under the direction of barons Pietro II and subsequently Vincenzo II La Grua, the area grew in economic splendor and capacity. The urban expansion of Carini intensified with the building of Villa Belvedere, the dwelling place of the Baron and his family. In the early seventeenth century Carini numbered 2,500 to 3,000 inhabitants and was growing. The economic advantages of the town and the picturesque dwellings on "a true natural balcony" overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea were irresistible to many immigrants.[19]

However, this trend of individuals traveling to Carini declined significantly in the beginning of the seventeenth century because of a variety of factors affecting the sugar trade and agriculture in the Conca D'Oro. The climate became drier than it had been in Norman and Arab Sicily. In the sixteenth century some springs and water courses failed, and occasionally mills changed to using oxen instead of water power.[20] This combined with *sciroccos* (a hot wind which blows from the Sahara Desert to southern Europe) from North Africa "so oppressive that windows had to be kept shut in the fierce heat of July" and "sand storms not only ruined harvests but could make it impossible to see across the street at Palermo."[21] Deforestation further exacerbated climate problems in the middle of the sixteenth century.

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[19] Centro Attività Francescane, *Villa Belvedere, Carini (PA)* (Palermo: Centro "P. Kolbe," 1983), 19–20.

[20] Smith, *A History of Sicily*, 183.

[21] Smith, *A History of Sicily*, 183–84. When soil dried, avalanches became a common occurrence destroying roads and towns. This soil erosion began to disturb the balance of water and

The changing climate made it more difficult than ever to grow sugar and the crop that had for centuries buoyed the Sicilian economy and exported its wares as far away as Flanders and England was soon to diminish. With the decline of sugar trade also came the loss of seasonal migrants from mainland Italy and other far distant areas of Sicily. At the end of the sixteenth century "cultivation was expensive since it needed copious but not excessive irrigation; for best results it needed replantation every few years, and extraction also required costly milling machinery."[22]

More importantly, economic decline further found its roots in competition from Madera and the Canary Islands, and after 1580 when Portugal was united with Spain, the sugar imported from Brazil to its Spanish colonies increased.[23] The competition from these other markets through the Indies (and especially expansion of Atlantic markets) greatly reduced the viability of sugar and other products for the Sicilian trade market. As an example, in 1410 there were more than thirty sugar refineries in Palermo alone, but by 1610 exporters found it cheaper to export the raw sugar and then re-import it once it was refined.[24] After that point in time, the economy began a steady decline.

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created floods, diverted rivers, and created wetlands that coupled with heat became a breeding ground for malaria and other disease. In fact, erosion became so bad that "rivers which had once provided irrigation now disappeared for most of the year; in the wet season they became torrents which carried away bridges, destroyed mills and houses, and sometimes broke down city walls and devastated whole areas of Palermo and Messina." Furthermore, the hostilities of pirates and brigands forced farmers to move cultivation of crops inland and onto hillsides where erosion was more prevalent, thus hindering rather than helping the situation of land erosion.

[22] Smith, *A History of Sicily*, 184–85.

[23] Antonino Giuffrida and Giovanni Rebora, *Imprese Industriali in Sicilia (secc. XV–XVI)* (Caltinisetta: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 1996), 49; Smith, *A History of Sicily,* 185–86.

[24] Smith, *A History of Sicily*, 185. Sicilians no longer took the time and expense to actually refine the sugar themselves because their market had plummeted. With the downturn in the market, a decline of those migrant workers who traveled long distances to Carini and its environs to participate

It was evident that the economy of Sicily would not stay as virulent and vibrant as it was in the sixteenth century. Sicily's entry into the Spanish Hapsburg's empire with its commercial advantages "brought it from the mid sixteenth century onwards increasingly crushing fiscal burdens which grew even heavier in the first half of the seventeenth century. In order to sustain its ever-increasing military burdens, the Spanish court demanded ever-higher contributions from the different parts of its empire."[25] Spain's involvement in the Thirty Years War meant increased taxes for all of Spain's dominions. At times Sicilians were forced to borrow to pay taxes, which led to a spiral into further debt. Increased taxes on silk in the 1630s and extra stamp duties placed on them in 1639 only intensified the decline in trade of agricultural goods and services. In the early half of the seventeenth century the shift in mobility of migrant workers also becomes evident in the marriage records of Carini. As the economy declined, migrant workers from far distances were not seen nearly as often as they had been in the later half of the sixteenth century. [26]

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in the sugar trade and other agrarian pursuits followed. "Until about 1620—the entire Sicilian economy remained buoyant, fuelling an extraordinary building boom of palaces, churches, fortifications and public works all over the island." Gregory Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 98.

[25] Herman Van der Wee, ed., *The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and in the Low Countries* (England: Leuven University Press, 1988), 131.

[26] Post 1620, the majority of outsiders who married in Carini came from Alcamo, Partinico, Piana dei Greci, Monreale, and Capaci, all cities within a twenty to twenty-five mile radius of the city of Carini. During this same time period one can see a small but continuous influx from the city of Palermo; after 1645 this influx slows considerably and does not increase again until 1650 or later. Overall, Palermo still has the highest number of non-natives married in Carini. The records show 157 men from Palermo and forty-eight women from the capital city of Palermo representing 50 percent of the total number of non-native persons from within twenty-four miles who married in Carini. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Registri ecclesiastici, 1527–1919* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999), http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed 2006–08). Extractions 1568–1628 by Suzanne Russo Adams; Extractions 1629–60 by James Bianco. The influx of migrants from neighboring towns may be explained by the general trend of cities in the seventeenth century, particularly the large capital and commercial cities of which Palermo with its more than 100,000 citizens and growing was counted as one. Moch, *Moving Europeans,* 12. It is

Although demographic studies are important and provide a basis to our understanding of marriage trends and how they were affected by the economy and natural disasters in seventeenth century Carini, there were other factors that controlled or determined marriage processes in this time period. The Council of Trent addressed not only fundamental dogma of the Catholic Church but also standardized the practice of administering the sacraments of the church. Decrees became church law in 1564 including a decree regarding marriage as a sacrament and what was needed in order to make a marriage valid in the eyes of God.[27] It was shortly after this that parish priests were required to record these events in sacramental registers. Marriage was a sacrament and the church claimed exclusive right over marriage cases. Conditions for marriage became more stringent after Trent. For example, it required the posting of banns on three consecutive Sundays to ensure that no dispensations were necessary for a couple because of a consanguineous or sanguineous relationship, or other prior marriage promise or vow on the part of either party contracting marriage.[28] Preceding the Council of Trent it was only required that a couple express mutual consent to the marriage and the rest was taken care of through a marriage contract written by a

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important to note that the rural population oftentimes preferred to live in urban settlements rather than remain in scattered dwellings and villages in the countryside. This resulted in an urban population that was much greater than that of the agricultural areas. Van der Wee, *The Rise and Decline,* 121–22.

[27] Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy,* 122. These records were to be recorded in Latin, although some registers can be found in vulgate or a mixture of Latin and vulgate.

[28] J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), 193–204, http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm (accessed September 2008). Session 24 of the Council of Trent impediments to marriage included a previous promise to marry, a former vow of celibacy, a mixed marriage, relationship by consanguinity or affinity, spiritual relationship such as being the godparent of the intended, impotence, adultery, homicide, and another living spouse. Many of these could be overcome through a special dispensation from the bishop.

notary.[29] The church stipulated that the couple must enter this holy sacrament of their own choice and not because of familial constrictions. Trent made it clear that a marriage must be validated in the eyes of God by a priest and in the presence of two witnesses. It also required the parents to give consent to marry to avoid clandestine relationships. Further, the Catholic Church not only wished to make the recording of sacraments a matter of church business, but a communal rite.

Parish marriage records did not officially commence until September 1568 in Carini. Considering that baptismal and burial registers were kept for more than thirty years prior to the marriage registers, it is likely that the local parish priests and community did not see a need to record marriages because they were recorded instead by a notary. The reforms on matrimony were discussed in the twenty-fourth session of Trent in November 1563. In January 1564 Pope Pius IV made the decrees of Trent valid and binding throughout all Catholic dominions.[30] But it was not until July 1564 that Philip II reluctantly accepted the reforms of the Council of Trent while still asserting royal power to oversee the church in Spanish lands. [31] It took priests in Carini more than four years to comply with these rules even though Trent clearly

[29] Trevor Dean and K.J.P. Lowe, eds., *Marriage in Italy, 1300–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6. It is interesting to also note that there is debate among historians whether the marriage laws enforced or enacted by the Council of Trent "represented a sea-change for the church or whether the council was exceptional in documenting the codification of already existing behavior." Further research on this matter would need to be conducted in order to determine the influence of the church in the act of marriage prior to the Council of Trent; in addition to studies regarding whether parish priests were present when a notary act was drafted for the marriage are needed.

[30] J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), Session 24, 193; Session 25, 285–89, http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm (accessed April-October 2008).

[31] Spain Sovereign (1527–98: Philip) Council of Trent document, MSS 143, Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection, Archives and Manuscripts Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, http://www.pitts.emory.edu/Archives/text/mss143.html (accessed October 2008).

stated that "the parish priest shall have a book, which he shall keep carefully by him, in which he shall register the names of the persons married, and of the witnesses, and the day on which, and the place where, the marriage was contracted." Further, the decree "enjoins on all Ordinaries" that the reforms reinforced by the council be published and explained to parishioners in every parish in every diocese as often as needed in the first year and after that as often as necessary. Moreover, that the decree should be enforced within thirty days after it is first published in the parish.[32]

The Council of Trent warned priests to marry "vagrants" with caution. This warning was put in place to guard against those persons who traveled to different localities and married again while a former wife (still living) was abandoned miles away. Priests were advised to make a thorough inquiry into those persons and were also told not to be present at the marriage of a vagrant unless an official inquiry had been made. The inquiries and the posting of banns would help to guard against these types of vagrant marriages.[33] Although perhaps unrelated, the reforms of Trent could be another reason why there is a decline in native Carinesi marriages to non-natives in the early seventeenth century. Not only was the economy changing but the rules about how and when a person could be married, meant in the case of persons from distant lands such as Calabria that the time from engagement to marriage was extended so that a proper inquiry could be made in the home parish of the groom before marriage

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[32] Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees,* 198–99, Session 24, Ch I. When parish priests in Carini received the decree, how often they read or posted the reforms, and when they began to institute these reforms on marriage is unknown. What we do know is that it was more than four years between the acceptance of the decrees by the king of Spain and when known parish records begin. Further research in the diocesan archive of Monreale would need to be conducted to give exact dates of synods and injunctions.

[33] Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees,* 200, Session 24, Ch. VII.

was permitted. Banns would need to be posted and the permission of the parish priest from both parties contracting marriage would need to be obtained in order to ensure there were no impediments to the marriage.[34] Clandestine marriages may very well have continued, yet they were not "legalized" in the eyes of the church.

Reformers were intent on keeping sacred the "liberty of marriage."  Strict punishments were to be placed on those who abducted women. If a woman was thought to be abducted she was to be separated from that person and "in a safe and free place" asked whether or not she gave her consent to be the abductor's wife. Whether or not she consented he was "bound" to "settle on her a handsome dowry at the discretion of the judge."[35] Likewise Trent made injunctions toward landlords and magistrates who "compel both men and women, who live under their jurisdiction…to contract marriage against their inclination." This was especially true for those who were wealthy or stood to receive a great inheritance by compelling a contract of marriage. The Council of Trent was indignant and claimed that "whatsoever grade, dignity, and condition" that there be no constraints on anyone to freely contract marriage.[36] In principle the theory of free will to consent to marry is interesting, but

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[34] Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees,* 198, Session 24, Ch. I of the Council of Trent explicitly states that a priest may not marry persons from another parish without the explicit permission of their parish priest. The document states, "And if any parish priest, or any other priest, whether Regular or Secular, shall presume to unite in marriage the betrothed of another parish, or to bless them when married, without the permission of their parish priest, he shall—even though he may plead that he is allowed to do this by a privilege, or an immemorial custom—remain *ipso jure* suspended, until absolved by the Ordinary of that parish priest who ought to have been present at the marriage, or from whom the benediction ought to have been received." These measures were to ensure against bigamy or clandestine marriages.

[35] Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees,* 201–202. Moreover, according Session 24, Ch. VI, an "abducer" and all those who helped by lending advice or aid in the abduction were to be excommunicated and stripped of their dignity. If they were clerics they were required to forfeit their rank.

[36] Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees,* 201–202. Session 24, Ch. IX.

in practice this did not always take place. Sicilian peasant tradition dictated that the

mother (or a woman who acted as proxy for the mother) of the groom visit the mother

of the woman he wished to marry and inquire as to the size of her dowry. What would

then follow would be a period of engagement where the social contact between

groom and bride-to-be was strictly chaperoned. The groom often gave his betrothed

rings, earrings, or other gifts he had made. However, "boy and girl were in a very

subordinate position as marriage approached. Their families originated the action for

them, and they could only submit passively to what was being done."[37]

In Carini, marriages followed a similar pattern. The marriage of Filippo

Picone and Lauria Cucinella in 1602 can be taken as an example of marriage at the

turn of seventeenth century Carini.[38] Mastro Filippo Picone born in Nov 1576 was the

eldest son of Battista Picone and Margherita Balsamo. At the age of twenty-six he

married Lauria Cucinella, daughter of Michele and Pietra Cucinella, age eighteen.[39]

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[37] William Foote Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," *American Anthropologist* 46, no. 1 (1944): 69

[38] Marriage of Filippo Picone and Lauria Cucinella, October 12, 1602, Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Matrimoni, 1602*, p. 56 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 2142058 Item 2, http://jamesbianco.com/ChurchRecords/1592_1606/Page56.jpg (accessed 2008).

[39] Baptismal records of Filippo Picone, baptized November 18, 1576, and Laura Cucinella baptized August 2, 1584, Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1576; 1584*, p. 89, 94 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764338 Item 2, http://www.cariniexchange.com/churchrecords/bap/1572_1579/089.jpg and http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1579_1583/094.jpg (accessed 2008). Of the more than 3,500 marriages extracted for Carini, more than 300 hundred designated the groom, his father, or the father of the bride with the title "Mastro," a title given to artisans. What is most interesting is that many men with this title not only in Italy but throughout Europe complemented their individual crafts with farming and several owned land or animals. According to Tomasso Astarita's studies, the title of an artisan did not necessarily represent an insurmountable social barrier when it came to marriage. Astarita says that sons and brothers of men who carried a title were sometimes described as field laborers. This same sort of scenario was also found in the marriages of Carini. The title of *mastro* did not mean that one had to marry the daughter of a man with that same title. However, in a significant number of cases those who had the title of *mastro* were either native to Carini or came from outlying

What is not striking about this marriage is the age at which both parties contracted marriage. Their ages were typical of the time period. What is interesting is that the vineyard of Battista Picone shared a border with land owned by Michele Cucinella.[40] Moreover, the youngest son of Picone took as his second wife another daughter of Michele Cucinella in 1617.[41] Whether or not these marriage relations were based on land, money, proximity, or for other reasons cannot strictly be determined. However, the fact that the two families owned land bordering each other would suggest that they wanted to created ties that bound them beyond simply being neighbors.

Another example of marriage in Carini finds Francesco Gallina, age forty-two, marrying Caterina Russo, age thirty in 1595.[42] On the *riveli* (tax census) of 1593 Caterina is listed as a *pupilla* ("female pupil" or "ward") of Magnifico Russo since

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towns within a twenty-four-mile radius. The largest number of men with this title came from the nearby towns of Palermo, Monreale, Alcamo, and Partinico. Recurring marriages of the children of these men denote that they were stable members of the society in Carini. This would lead one to believe that they had some investment in the land or economy of the area and chose to make specific alliances with either landholding or constant members of their same society. Tommaso Astarita, *Village Justice: Community, Family and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 100, 212.

[40] Carini, Palermo Italy, *Riveli di Beni e Anime, 1593*, p. 1675 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1994–2001), FHL microfilm 2291462 Item 2; 2332188 Item 1.

[41] Marriage of Matteo Picone and Francesca Cucinella in September 15, 1617. This was the second of four marriages for Matteo. The first was to a woman named Antonella, who died sometime between 1615 and 1617. Francesca predeceased her husband sometime before 1624. Carini, Palermo Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta di Carini, Matrimoni, 1617*, p. 3 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 2142059, http://jamesbianco.com/ChurchRecords/1617_1629/Page03.jpg (accessed 2008). Without looking at marriage dowry documents and other land and notarial documents it is difficult to say what land, money, or goods either family stood to gain from these unions. Additionally, Michele had four daughters successfully married. He must have had enough land and wealth to cover these dowries.

[42] Marriage of Francesco Gallina and Caterina Russo January 22, 1595, Carini, Palermo Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta di Carini, Matrimoni, 1595,* p. 13 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 2142058 Item 2, http://jamesbianco.com/ChurchRecords/1592_1606/Page13.jpg (accessed 2008). The ages at first marriage are certainly not typical of the time period.

the age of eleven.[43] As legal guardian for Caterina, Magnifico may have been

responsible to find Caterina a good marriageable match. The tax list shows that

Magnifico controlled the home and lands owned by Leonardo Russo and his heirs.

The home of Leondardo's heirs was bordered on one side by Baptista di Oliveri and

on the other by Magnifico Russo's land. As the ward of Magnifico, the tax census

reveals that Caterina was receiving income from two different sources. The taxes paid

for the land and income was 43 *onzi* or *oncia* (ounce) in taxes.[44]  This was not an

insignificant amount of money, but also does not amount to great wealth. Why

Gallina and Russo married so late in life is not known but the fact that she was a

thirty-year-old woman who had not entered a convent or been married suggests that

the family could have been waiting for the right match and that match came from an

older gentleman who was likely very well established in his profession and had

amassed a certain amount of affluence.

Surprisingly the Council of Trent was not intent on taking away from or

changing any of the traditional customs associated with marriage. The language of the

reformers states that, "if any provinces have herein in use any praise-worthy customs

and ceremonies, besides the aforesaid, the holy Synod earnestly desires that they be

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[43] Carini, Palermo, Italy *Riveli di beni e anime*, 1593, p. 1107–108 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1994–2001), FHL microfilm 2291462 Item 2; 2332188 Item 1, http://cariniexchange.com/Riveli/1593/150.JPG; Internet. The record states that Magnifico Russo became the ward of the heirs of Leonardo Russo in August of 1576.

[44] Carini, Palermo, Italy *Riveli di beni e anime*, 1593, p. 1107 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1994–2001), FHL microfilm 2291462 Item 2; 2332188 Item 1, http://cariniexchange.com/Riveli/1593/150.JPG (accessed 2008). Caterina was receiving income from Mastro Cosentino and Giuseppe Castrominardo according to official notary documents and receipts mentioned on the *riveli*. The Sicilian *oncia* is the smallest measurement of coinage in the Sicilian system and was a gold coin especially from the Palermo area. It was equal to 30 *tari*. Albert Romer Frey, *A Dictionary of Numismatic Names, Their Official and Popular Designations* (Michigan: American Numismatic Society, 1917), 165; H.G. Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily under Philip II of Spain* (London: Staples Press, 1951), 200.

by all means retained."[45] Persons were still free to participate in such practices as long as they were "praise-worthy." Such traditions were the processional to the church on foot or by carriage by the families and friends of the bride and groom, the throwing of confetti after the wedding, the reception banquets, dancing, preparation of the marital bed, and so on.[46] By all accounts it would seem that the Council of Trent was less concerned with the traditions and ceremonies associated with marriage than with ensuring that marriages took place in a parish with a priest in front of at least two witnesses, and that both partners were contracting marriage of their own free will and that there were no impediments to such marriage.

In conclusion, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was marked decline in the mobility of individuals from extended distances to Carini. However, the economic strength and vitality of Carini and its environs did not decline in terms of population growth and mobility of its citizens until the late 1620s rather than in the Norman reign or more recently in the beginning of the sixteenth century. The decline in immigration and seasonal migration is principally due to economic, political, and natural disaster trends that affected the island of Sicily and specifically the Conca D'Oro. The marriage records of Carini allow one to view the mobility of

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[45] Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees,* 198. Session 24, Ch. I

[46] Whyte, "Sicilian Peasant Society," 70–71. According to Whyte a typical marriage involved the bride and groom proceeding in processional fashion to the church separately. The bride proceeded first with her mother (on her left) and other female relatives; her future in-laws came with the groom leading the procession of men in the same fashion. They were then married in church and afterwards as they walked out of the church husband and wife they were bombarded with confetti, grain, beans, and salt. Each item thrown had a different meaning. The salt was for wisdom, and the foods were for fertility. Other rites of passage included the throwing of orange leaves on the bride as a wish for male children, the breaking of two eggs and a bottle of wine on the threshold of the home, and the offering of a spoonful of honey to the bride and groom all to bless the new couple with fertility. After this banquets took place at both the homes of the bride and groom's parents. The festivities continued with food and dancing until well past midnight, after which, relatives would covey the new couple to their home.

non-natives who married in the town thereby confirming what historians have speculated about the trends of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Sicily. Because of expanding colonialism and new trade markets perpetuated by the Spanish empire, Spain's dominions were left largely to their own resources. This resulted in a Mediterranean collapse of manufacturing and a population decline that thrust the economy into despondency, and revenues tumbled all at once.[47] From that time forward, Italy (especially Sicily) lagged behind northern Europe economically. After many crises in the early seventeenth century, the economy recovered later and grew more slowly in the eighteenth century than did its European neighbors.[48]

Furthermore, the reforms enacted by the Council of Trent changed the way marriages were seen in the seventeenth century from simply a communal act to a rite and sacrament of the Catholic Church. Trent reinforced the sacred right by stipulating the environment in which a marriage could take place (in the presence of a priest and at least two witnesses, with marriage partners were both contracting marriage of their own free will, and without known impediments to such marriage). Moreover, it was clear that reformers sought to control where a marriage took place, by whom, and even what time of year was proper. However, they did not want to infringe upon local traditions and the rights of the people to celebrate the joining of two persons in the eyes of God and the community as long as it was done in a solemn manner

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[47] Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy*, 284–85.

[48] Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy,* 270.

"conducted with becoming modesty and propriety." According to the Council of

Trent "marriage is a holy thing, and is to be treated in a holy manner."[49]

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[49] Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees,* 204. According to Session 24, Ch X, the Council of Trent stipulated the times of the year that marriages were not permitted to take place. Those times were "from the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ until the day of the Epiphany, and from Ash-Wednesday until the octave of Easter inclusively."

CHAPTER IV

DEATH AND BURIAL IN CARINI

"Both the rich man and the poor man die, and both are salted for the pit."[1]

Parish churches in Sicily served not only religious but social purposes in the lives of the members of their congregations. In Carini, the atmosphere was no different. The *Maria Santissima Assunta*, established in 1523, was the *chiesa madre* (or mother church) located in the center of town as well as in the center of its parishioners lives. With a marked swell in religiosity and reform on the minds of many clerics in the seventeenth century there was a desire to more closely control local parishioners. "The Tridentine legislation and Episcopal supplementation from reformers placed the parish church at the centre of the lay person's life from infancy to the grave."[2] As a result of the Council of Trent, sixteenth-century reformers sought to "reduce the more secular uses of the church and sacred space, and instead to have the churches better used for sermons, religious instruction, more major Masses, funerals, and weddings."[3] During this time period in Sicilian history the control of the

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[1] A. Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," *Folklore* 34, no. 4 (December 1923): 352.

[2] Christopher F. Black, *Early Modern Italy: A Social History* (London: Routledge, 2001), 168.

[3] Black, *Early Modern Italy*, 177. The Council of Trent also reinforced the payment of funeral dues. According to the Council of Trent Session 25 Ch XIII, a fourth of the funeral dues were to be paid to the cathedral or parish church. Quoted text taken directly from J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), 270, http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm (accessed April 2008).

Catholic Church over the death and burial process increased, because according to Trent it was no longer lawful for laymen to conduct funerals. Social historian Christopher Black states, "sixteenth-century reformers wanted more parochial control over the dying and dead. While Trent wanted a priest involved in the burial process—and abolished funerals conducted by laymen only—the officiating priest was by no means necessarily the parish priest, or the chief organizer. He was in competition with both religious Orders and confraternities."[4] This competition for place of burial can be clearly seen in the parish registers for the town of Carini. In the seventeenth century, Carinese had more choices for burial places than they had ever had before because of the increase in number of parishes, monasteries, and convents that were offering these services. Moreover, the choice of burial in many cases was based on rank and status in the community. More importantly while numerous Sicilians (and likewise the people of Carini) were conforming to the Council of Trent's practices with regard to the death and burial process, traditional death and burial practices that had been part of the culture in Sicily and Carini for so many centuries remained the same. Cultural customs having to do with death and mourning that were not related to Catholic Church rites were still in practice well into the seventeenth century and beyond. This begs the question, "How did the Catholic Church mix with local customs regarding death and burial?"

It is imperative when looking at the death and burial practices of seventeenth century Carini to first understand the ideas associated with death rituals and customs of the time. The burial of the dead in Mediterranean culture is directly associated with

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[4] Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees,* 182.

the identity of the communal society as a whole. In ancient times burial took place

outside of village walls because it was not lawful to bury dead within the city

confines. With the spread of Christianity, ideas about death and burial changed.

Around 750 AD it became common to have the dead buried in a churchyard.[5] This

was largely due to the Christian doctrine that burial places needed to be sanctified,

cared for, or set apart on consecrated ground. Moreover, thoughts on burial changed

to include the feeling that not only should the dead be buried on consecrated ground,

but that the close kinship ties in a village or parish society should be carried over into

death and thus burial. Therefore, "The custom of churchyard burial seems to have

been suggested by the practice of the monastic orders, who desired to have the bodies

of those their community as near to them as possible, for they were considered in an

exceptional sense, as very closely united to the living of their order."[6]

According to canon law, "Any person is free to select his funeral church or

cemetery, if the canons do not expressly deprive him of this right." If a parishioner

desired to be buried somewhere other than his own parish church a will might

designate his final resting place, although it was not necessary to have this wish

registered officially in a will.[7] Most people chose to be buried in their own parish.

However, in Italy where confraternities also supplied services for the dead some

would choose to be buried in the church connected to their fraternal society. The

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[5] Bertram S. Puckle, *Funeral Customs: Their Origin and Development* (London: T. Wener Laurie Ltd., 1926), 140.

[6] Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 142.

[7] J. Scanlan, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1922), 136. There are several iterations of *The Catholic Encyclopedia* across time; in this study the Scanlan 1922 version was used.

confraternities oftentimes filled a void where parish systems were weak; the fraternal orders provided the deceased with "shelter." This became important because "only the very rich or very saintly obtained a permanent tomb of their own, marked with an inscription detailing their accomplishments in life and sometimes capped with an effigy. Burial was truly an extension of the society of the living with all its discriminations of status, rank, and gender into the community of the dead."[8] The same was true of Carini. Those who were indigent and poor were buried in a much different place than those of the upper echelon of society or even clerics.

Those living were very much tied to the dead and this meant not just immediate family but the community as a whole. Sharon Strocchia's work proposes the concept of "ritual family" as it pertains to death. The premise of her observation is that the gathering of individuals to witness a death or participate in a funeral represents a family as much as if those persons were blood relatives. She further states that although many fifteenth-century humanists argued and debated over public displays of mourning and the idea that death should be a private matter in all reality "a proper death was just as much a public event as a proper marriage." Edward Muir builds on this concept further and categorizes death into three main ritual pieces: last rites or the "art of dying;" funeral rites which reassert ties of kinship among survivors; and finally prayers and masses "for the dead and the All Souls holiday reaffirmed the collective claims the dead had upon the living."[9] These ritualistic

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[8] Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe,* 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 56.

[9] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 52.

aspects of death and burial (more particularly those of the funeral rites and prayers and masses) add an interesting facet to the discussion on death and burial in Carini.

With respect to the last rites or receiving the Eucharist, "The Eucharist received at death was a sign of the full membership of the recipient in the community of Christians and of the saving grace first received at baptism. Nevertheless, the importance of its reception must be related to the comfort derived from a ritual action that maintained a connection with the practices of generations of men and women in antiquity."[10] In this ritual a person was ideally supposed to die at home in bed surrounded by a room full of people during which a "cosmic battle" between good and evil would vie for the soul of the person whose departure into the realms of heaven or hell were imminent. In this sense, the ritual of last rites became for many Christians a "last chance," but it was something that the family was not involved in because the "rites gave them no role and little at this stage to succor them in their grief." According to Edward Muir, "At the Council of Trent, Catholics reaffirmed the rites but transformed them from a last-chance sacramental aid for the remission of the sins to an anointing of the sick." What is most interesting about this phase of the death process is that it is the portion of death where family members could not participate because it was "crossing over a threshold" that none but the person dying could accomplish. It was "the numerous social and ritual events that followed the death assisted in reaggregating the community of kin and friends centering on the deceased and incorporating him into the community of the dead."[11]

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[10] Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 33.

[11] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe,* 53–54.

Because death was the door to salvation for these God-fearing Christians, the body of the deceased person was not thought of as impure "like Jews and pagans, both for whom contact with corpses brought about a state of ritual pollution, Christians regarded the bodies of their dead as sacred and holy, and were urged to handle them freely and without fear."[12] After a person died in Sicily family members were not afraid to participate in such practices as the washing of the body before shrouding (not a religious rite) or closing of the eyelids. The bodies of the deceased were also displayed in the home. Family members removed doorknockers because house doors were to be kept closed for several days.[13] In Sicily, a black strip of cloth that contained the name or relationship of a deceased loved one could be nailed across a window or door as a sign of mourning.[14] Many of these rituals were tied to Christian beliefs, but were not sanctioned as part of the Catholic Church's process for death and burial.

With respect to funeral rites and the kinship among survivors, Sicilians had an out–of-the-ordinary way of displaying and dealing with grief and mourning that was outside the realms of the Catholic Church's death and burial practices. Since at least the early twelfth century (and likely before that) Sicilian women (called *Praeficae* or *Reputatrices*) were paid to lament the death of a person and their mourning was often accompanied by various musical instruments; they also extolled the virtues and accomplishments of the person and deplored the death of those who were taken too

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[12] Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 25.

[13] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 352.

[14] Will Seymour Monroe, *Sicily, the Garden of the Mediterranean: The History, People Institutions and Geography of the Island* (Boston: L.C. Page and Company, 1909), 119.

soon. They lamented the loss of a person and even went so far as to decry divine

providence for having extinguished the life of a precious family member. These

women were paid to support those grieving and were especially welcomed by those

who lacked the support of family such as the widower or the desolate. The use of

*Praeficae* is a custom of Greek and Roman origin and was used also by the Irish until

1849.[15] In Malta (whose practices are similar to those of Sicily) these women wore

veils and "when they entered the premises of the deceased they cut down the bower

vines in the yard and threw the flower pots from the balconies and windows into the

street."[16] They would often search for the finest piece of china in the deceased

person's home and then dash it to pieces, after which they went into the room where

the coffin was and, surrounded by the female relatives dressed in black, they wept and

mourned.[17] During the reign of Frederick II, laws were enacted to limit or ban these

women from such public displays; however, the use of *Praeficae* or *Reputatrices*

continued despite civil or church laws or even penalties, such as fines, for these

elaborate exhibititions of mourning. The laws enacted were logically meant to remove

this practice from the churches and cemeteries but still left the families free to cry in

the mortuary houses. [18] It would seem that the cultural practice of lamenting the dead

in such a way did not fit with the tenets of a church funeral and burial.

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[15] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 353.

[16] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 353.

[17] J. Cassar-Pullicino, "Maltese Customs and Beliefs in 1575," *Folklore* 62, no. 3 (September 1951): 398–404.

[18] *Documenti per Servire alla Storia di Sicilia* (Palermo: Tipografia di Michele Amenta, 1876), 130–31.

Other mourning rituals in Sicily included wearing special mourning clothes or habits, cooking customs, and care of the gravesite. The type of clothes worn changed over time as did the length in days, months, or years for wearing mourning clothes. It can be said in general though that "people of rank wear a mourning dress for a few days following a death in their family, but country people are satisfied with wearing a black felt hat and a dark sash round the waist."[19] Wives and brides would of course be fully clothed in black and most often would have worn a "trailing mantle" similar to the Maltese *faldetta*, a veil that covered the head and reached to the heels. Men would not shave for a period of days or sometimes a month and "middle and lower class people keep away from *festas*, and the higher class from theatres, dancing, and merrymaking."[20] Special customs following a family member's death prohibited cooking by the bereaved for three days. During this three-day period meals were provided by friends and relatives. With respect to the care of the cemetery plots where a loved one was buried, "flowers act as the ongoing witness of the active relationship between the living and the dead."[21] In southern Italy, offerings of fruit were placed on the graves, too.[22] These were all special ways that the living memorialized the deceased that were not in any way explicitly tied to Catholic Church doctrines.

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[19] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 355.

[20] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 355. The wearing of the *faldetta* was likely a tradition that arose from Sicily's ties to Arab culture.

[21] Jack Goody and Cesare Poppi, "Flowers and Bones: Approaches to the Dead in Anglo-American and Italian Cemeteries," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 1 (January 1994): 149.

[22] F. Faeta and M. Malabotti, *Imago Mortis: Simboli e Rituali della Morte nella Cultura Popolare dell'ltalia Meridionale* (Roma: De Luca, 1980), 58.

Prayers and masses for the dead and the All Souls' holiday are yet another example of the mixture of Sicilian culture with doctrines of the Catholic Church. Muir suggests that many of the post-funerary practices can actually be linked to the doctrine of purgatory. Souls in purgatory needed help to pay for their sins and pass from a state of fluctuation to a heavenly state. The link between kinship and the realm of purgatory was intertwined. The belief was that the more masses that were said meant that a loved one spent less time in purgatory.[23] That is why many persons provided a provision in their wills that provided for masses to be said when they departed this life; because masses cost money a clear distinction in the number of masses said for an individual rose between different classes and social statuses. Not only did the upper crust of society receive their choice of burial place, but with more masses said, they were almost insured a faster transition into the realms of heaven. Not only that, but the more masses paid for and said by relatives and priests meant that there was a reciprocal relationship between the living and the dead. The funeral masses were a shared act because the belief was that even when a soul was in purgatory they could somehow intercede for the living. The idea of reciprocity is illustrated well through this customary Italian prayer, *"Sante anime del Purgatorio pregate per noi che preghiamo per voi"* (Holy Souls of Purgatory we beseech you to pray for us as we pray for you).[24]

The good works performed by relatives of the deceased included giving to the poor. Christians would distribute goods to the poor on All Souls' Day in hopes of

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[23] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe,* 55–56.

[24] Goody and Poppi, "Flowers and Bones," 167.

helping their deceased relatives pass more quickly through purgatory. One of the most common gifts to the poor in Sicily was beans and bread.[25] The practices of giving bread and other such acts of good works that accompanied a death in the family or memorializing of loved ones on All Souls' Day was rooted in Christianity but not part of any Catholic Church doctrines.

Because of plague, famine, and pestilence during the early modern era it was almost impossible to ignore death. In fact, "during the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries death could be said to be the central concern of life."[26] In Carini, it was no different. On average, there were about 150 deaths per year recorded in the town of Carini (1624–49) with numbers as high as 304 in 1624, 279 in the year 1633, and 264 in 1648. There are no clear indications in the town records that tell us why those particular years had more deaths than any other years in that time period or what caused these deaths; however, it is quite possible that they are related to plague and famine.[27] Infant mortality rates could help to explain these numbers. In 1630 nearly half (138) of the deaths accounted for were for children under three years of age;

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[25] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 354.

[26] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe,* 51.

[27] In Carini, the early burial registers simply list the name of the person who died; sometimes parents' names or spouse's name and the place and date of burial were recorded. It was not until the middle of October 1639, when Don Francesco Bella began recording, that more detail was added to the burial registers of Carini, such as, the name and age of the deceased, the names of parents or spouse, the date of death, the date the sacraments or last rites were administered, the name of the minister, and the place and date of the burial. Burial records took longer to become uniform after the reforms of the Council of Trent because it was not explicitly stated what information was to be included on these forms. By the mid-seventeenth century most parishes across Europe were not only complying by listing the information noted above on a burial register, but they would also provide information about when last rites were received and sometimes even how many masses were performed for the person.

most were infants of just a few months.[28] In 1648 the number of infant deaths

dropped to eighty-three of 264 deaths reported in that year; not nearly as many young

infants perished in this year. Again, it is difficult to speculate as to the reason for

these trends; however, the 1648 deaths suspiciously follow the 1647 famine and

subsequent revolt in Palermo. "Wheat prices rose fourfold between 1500 and 1650,

and by the middle of the seventeenth century, along with the long period of currency

deflation and rising prices, ordinary taxes became inadequate, times of drought forced

country dwellers into towns to find food, and urban over-population left a shortage of

labor on the farms."[29] Because of costs in the Thirty Years War, Spain dramatically

increased taxes in Sicily and Naples to recover some of these costs. Further, the

eruption of Mt. Etna in 1646 "signaled a period of famine and deaths in Sicily…the

bad harvest of 1646 and the subsequent torrential rains followed by drought in early

1647 upset the balance of the food supply."[30]  In addition to the calamities attributed

to natural disaster, the bubonic plague entered into the mix of misfortunes that beset

the island. Messina and Palermo were both beset by the disease on and off through

the latter part of the sixteenth century. In 1624 another infection arrived at Palermo

on ships carrying Christian slaves from Tunis which killed more than 300 individuals

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[28] More study could to be done with the compiled databases for Carini to determine exact infant mortality rates; however, the rate of deaths to births for this time period (i.e., the three years previous to 1630) only reached its peak of 236 births in 1629 and was at its lowest with 144 births in 1627.

[29] Lamar Chris Curry, "Long Live the King and Down with Bad Government: The Revolt of Palermo, 1647" (MA Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1989), 25.

[30] Curry, "Long Live the King," 28–29.

in Carini that year alone.[31] The on again/off again nature of plagues most definitely affected the patterns seen in the deaths recorded during the mid-seventeenth century in Carini.

In our discussions thus far it is evident that because of the Council of Trent the Catholic Church assumed more control over how the death and burial process was performed; however, the Catholic Church could not completely eradicate the cultural death and burial customs that had existed for centuries. In extracts from wills in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries there are "faint survivals of the gorgeous pseudo-pagan rites which prevailed in all parts of continental Europe up to the period of the Reformation."[32] Death rituals "such as eating and drinking in the presence of the dead, or excessive wailing and groaning in mourning (especially if this involved paid performers), and the particularly southern custom of wives and mothers cutting off their hair and placing it in the grave" were difficult for the Catholic Church to control.[33] These elaborate funeral processions and other shows of mourning were not only part of the grieving process for individuals but were ways for the living to rekindle the relationships they had with the deceased in life and to participate in the process of crossing over into the next life.

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[31] Denis Mack Smith, *A History of Sicily: Medieval Sicily, 800–1713* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 205. Carini had only 209 persons die in 1623. When the plague of 1624 struck the town, the death toll rose to 304. The hardest hit months in Carini due to the plagues were the late summer and autumn months with the largest death toll at 85 deaths in November 1624. The numbers drop significantly in 1625 to 91 deaths as the townspeople were able to control the effects of the plague.

[32] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 356.

[33] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 183.

The life of Don Gaspano Russo, a cleric, in Carini can be taken as an example of the death and burial process for the upper echelon in Carini.[34] During his lifetime he was an administrator of the sacred burial rights, but he, too became a participant in the rituals and rites of passage to the next life.

Baptized January 6, 1577 Gaspano was the son of "Mastro" Magnifico Russo a native of Calabria.[35] Magnifico was born about 1543 and immigrated to Carini sometime before his first child was born in 1568 (in Carini).[36] It was not uncommon to see immigrants from as far distant as Genoa in Carini, so it should be no surprise to see someone of Calabrian descent making a home on the outskirts of Palermo. In fact, "during the fifteenth century, both men and goods fed a constant stream across the Straits."[37] Calabrians often worked as seasonal laborers in Palermo's sugar industry well into the early part of the sixteenth century.[38] Magnifico clearly did not fit into the category of a seasonal worker. The word "Mastro" is an archaic term for an artisan,

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[34] If we follow the idea of Gabrielle de Rosa that popular religion in southern Italy knew no boundaries between classes, then Don Gaspano Russo is truly representative of the process of death and burial in Carini. Patricia H. McNamara and Enzo Pace, "The Debate on Popular Religion in Italy," *Sociological Analysis* 40 (1979): 71–75.

[35] Baptism of Gaspano Russo, Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1566–1592*, p. 93 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.org/bap1572_1579.html (accessed March 2008).

[36] Baptism of Magnifico Russo, child in 1568, Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1566–1592*, p. 47 (Salt Lake City, Utah: filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.org/bap1566_1572.html (accessed March 2008).

[37] Stephan R. Epstein, *An Island for Itself: Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 255.

[38] Epstein, *An Island for Itself*, 255.

teacher, or master[39] and was often used as a title in sixteenth and seventeenth century

Carini. It is not known exactly what Gaspano's father did for employment because the

term artisan is so broadly used and could encompass a number of goods and services

needed in an urban environment. In the *riveli*[40] (civil tax records) taken in 1593,

Mastro Magnifico Russo is listed twice. The first instance tells us that he was a native

of Calabria but resided in Carini and that he was a *tutore* or guardian for the children

of the deceased Mastro Leonardo Russo. The record states that he became the ward of

the Russo children in August of 1576.[41] The tax list then tells us that Caterina Russo

is his *pupilla* which can mean "female pupil" or "ward." More importantly the record

gives us information about *beni stabili* or real estate under the care of Mastro

Magnifico and tells us that the home is in land contracted by the *madre ecclesia* and

is adjacent to land owned by Baptista di Oliveri. We also learn he paid a total of 43

*onzi* or *oncia* (ounce) in taxes.[42]

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[39] Piero Rebora, comp., *Cassell's Italian Dictionary* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1959), 312.

[40] The Sicilian *riveli* records were a civil tax census taken frequently to record inhabitants (*anime*) and possessions (*beni*).

[41] Although Caterina is the only child listed on the tax list as a ward of Magnifico Russo, she is the fifth of seven children born to Mastro Leonardo and Antonina Russo. Why she is the only one listed on the census when records show she has two younger siblings is a matter of speculation. Caterina was born 12 July 1565 and was married to Francesco Gallina in January of 1595, just two years after the census was taken in 1593. Other records show that Mastro Leonardo was also from Calabria, and thus one would naturally draw the conclusion that Leonard and Magnifico are somehow related; however, there are no records that have been consulted to date to substantiate a relationship.

[42] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Riveli di beni e anime, 1593,* p. 1107 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1994–2001), FHL microfilm 2291462 Item 2; 2332188 Item 1, http://cariniexchange.com/Riveli/1593/150.JPG (accessed March-August 2008). (This document is partially available on the aforementioned website.) The Sicilian *oncia* is the smallest measurement of coinage in the Sicilian system and was a gold coin especially from the Palermo area. It was equal to 30 *tari*. Albert Romer Frey, *A Dictionary of Numismatic Names, Their Official and Popular Designations* (Michigan: American Numismatic Society, 1917), 165; H.G. Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily under Philip II of Spain* (London: Staples Press, 1951), 200.

In the next entry, Magnifico is listed again, this time as head of household with six children. Gaspano was the second oldest living in the household at the time and is listed as age seventeen. Again, under the heading of *beni stabili* it is noted that Magnifico has a house contracted by the *madre ecclesia* adjacent to land owned by the heirs of Leonardo Russo and bounded on the other side by Pietro di Gregoli. Magnifico was also responsible for vineyards and other lands owing 237 *onzi* in taxes. Mastro Magnifico's garden was in the contract of "bello vidiri" and was confined on one part by the Baron of Carini and on the other by the heirs of Filippo La Lamia. He also had at least three people owing him income.[43] It would seem that the amount of land and wealth Magnifico had acquired since coming from Calabria would place him squarely in the upper-middle class of society allowing for privileges that would not normally come to those in the lower classes. Additionally, this meant the family as a whole had a vested interest in retaining those assets among family members.

There were several reasons why a young man like Gaspano chose to enter the ranks of the priesthood in this time period and as the third son in a family of nine children it might have been one of the few options Gaspano had for employment. Don Gaspano was born just a few short years after the Council of Trent enacted many of

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[43] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Riveli di beni e anime, 1593,* p. 1109 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmati dalla Genealogical Society of Utah, 1994–2001), FHL microfilm 2291462 Item 2; 2332188 Item 1, http://cariniexchange.com/Riveli/1593/151.JPG (accessed March-August 2008). (This document is partially available on the aforementioned website.) Magnifico is listed as the head of household on the tax list at the age of fifty. This would put his birth at about 1543. His wife is not listed, which likely means that she had passed away sometime between the birth of their last child in July of 1591 and March of 1593 when the census was taken. Children listed in the household are Joanella (f), Gaspano (m) age 17, Petro (m) age 11, Francesco (m) age 8, Jacobo (m) age 4, and Maria (f). Females' ages were not usually listed on tax censuses, most likely because part of the purpose of these censuses was not only to determine lands and goods to be taxed, but also to determine the number of eligible males to serve in the military and other government projects.

its reforms. As a result he may have been caught up in the pressures of society to become a priest. In fact, "from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century the proportion of clergy (priests or deacons) to the whole adult population increased through most of Italy."[44] In Reggio Calabria there was one parish priest for every 250 parishioners in 1595 and 1:144 in 1636. Naples boasted 1,000 priests for 200,000 parishioners (or 1:200) in 1574 but by 1706 it was only 1:88. Not only that, "the late sixteenth century inaugurated a golden age of Catholic piety, celebrated with great pomp by teeming numbers of churchmen."[45] Studies show that at Lecce in Apulia nearly 12 percent of the urban population was made up of ecclesiastics around 1625, and in Noto, Sicily (population of about 10,000), there were fifty-six churches in town and fourteen more located nearby. Catholic piety and devotion was swelling so much in this period that "people attended religious events as if they were a spectacle, hung tapestries from their windows and facades, placed paintings in the streets, laid out silver reliquaries, lamps and other gifts on the altars."[46] Moreover, as "the ratio of the lay clergy increased…what an increasingly Catholicised population wanted was more masses for departed souls and more splendid funerals; so they paid for clergy who would say those masses and accompany funerals."[47]

Other reasons a young man may have chosen to join the clergy in this time period had to do with economics, tax burdens, and family strategy. "Economic stagnation or

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[44] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 171.

[45] Gregory Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 130.

[46] Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy*, 130– 31.

[47] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 171.

depression in town or country pushed some sons to seek careers in or through the church; patricians aimed at canonries and sees, while peasants sought a minor role as a mass priest. The clerical state offered fiscal advantages."[48] Tax burdens were lifted from those who joined the ranks of the clergy. The cities of Messina and Palermo and all of the clergy were tax exempt and "the rest of the population did their best to avoid enumeration or to make their property appear less than it actually was."[49] Family strategy is the last reason a young male could choose to join the clergy. This would often happen to avoid splitting up property whether it is owned, leased, or share-cropped.[50] A second or third son born into a family (like Gaspano) of many sons may have been forced to join the ranks of lay clergy or the monastery in order to make money to support himself and his family.

In spite of plagues that were rampant in Europe and Italy, from 1570 to 1607, the population of Sicily rose from 1 million to 1.1 million and then stayed fairly consistent through the seventeenth century.[51] More importantly, during this time period two-thirds of the island's population lived in communities of 5,000 or more people. Palermo alone boasted more than 100,000 people and was the "political hub, place of residence of most of the nobility, and principal seat of the viceroy."[52] Carini, as an outlier to the city of Palermo had a vibrant community of souls that needed to

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[48] Black, *Early Modern Italy*, 171.

[49] Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily*, 126.

[50] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 171.

[51] Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 408.

[52] Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy,* 19.

be cared for and more often than not in this time period clerics were chosen from among the ranks of local men. "The Council of Trent finally (1563) envisaged a uniform parochial system, with manageable-sized parishes with a resident parish priest exercising full care of souls, who would know all his parishioners."[53] Don Gaspano surely did know the souls of his parish because as early as 1617 he was performing the sacraments of baptism, marriage, and burial alongside his fellow parish chaplain Antonino Ruffino, a native of Carini.[54]

We can only speculate about the education Don Gaspano obtained in order to become a priest. We know that in 1593 he was still living in the household of his father and that at least by 1617 he was an active parish priest. The background of parish priests is more often than not a bit hazy; however, most priests were likely from the local diocese and most likely from a reasonably wealthy family.[55] Because of reforms made at the Council of Trent we can estimate a possible pathway to ordination. In session 23, chapter IV of the decrees of Trent we read:

> No one shall be admitted to the first tonsure who has not received the sacrament of confirmation; who has not been taught the rudiments of the faith; who does not know how to read and write, and concerning whom there is not a probable

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[53] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 168.

[54] Antonino Ruffino was born 25 December 1585 to Domenico Ruffino and Eleonora Di Aurizza and was buried 4 Aug 1644 in the monastery of San Vincenzo having received communion and confession from the then archpriest, Francesco Vecchi and extreme unction from Don Gaspare Cicala. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1568,* p. 71 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764338, http://www.cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/Bap/1584_1592/072.jpg (accessed March 2008); Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,* 1644, p. 79 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 2142064, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/burials/1638_1647/079.jpg (accessed March 2008).

[55] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 173.

conjecture that he has chosen this manner of life that he may render to God a faithful service.[56]

Chapters VI and VII of the same session state that no one "shall be able to hold a benefice before his fourteenth year" and be investigated by the bishop as to "parentage, age, education, morals, learning, and faith." The pathway to become a priest was a step–by-step process that involved meeting certain requirements of education, experience, and piety. Although, the amount of time between promotions to higher levels is not spelled out, there were certain age requirements, too. "No one shall for the future be promoted to the order of subdeaconship before the twenty-second year of age; to that of deaconship before his twenty-third year; to that of priesthood before his twenty-fifth year."        Seminaries were also to be established in the diocese in order "to educate religiously, and to train in ecclesiastical discipline, a certain number of youths of their city and diocese." Moreover, "into this college shall be received such as are at least twelve years old, born in lawful wedlock, and who know how to read and write competently, and whose character and inclination afford a hope that they will always serve in the ecclesiastical ministry." Children of the poor were to be selected to attend classes under the tutelage and care of the Catholic Church at no expense; however, those of the more wealthy classes could attend provided they paid their own expense. If these students chose to enter the priesthood and God chose them, they must above all "manifest a desire of serving God and the Church."[57] In addition to the age requirements, Gaspano surely must have fit into

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[56] J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), 179.

[57] Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees,* 183–88.

each one of the previously listed categories and attributes needed to join the priesthood.

Even though the Council of Trent called for seminaries to be established for this important training of parish priests, throughout the majority of Italy "most parish priests until the late eighteenth century at least were not seminarians, but trained by the local parish clergy, learning on the job through minor orders, receiving additional education from local grammar masters and canons giving theological teaching in Cathedral or collegiate churches and monasteries…."[58] However, the seminary for the Diocese of Monreale (to which Gaspano belonged) was established in 1590 by Archbishop Lodovico de Torres and would have opened its doors when Gaspano was about fourteen years of age.[59] Whether Gaspano was chosen to be one of the first pupils to attend this new seminary or whether he was trained by local parish clergy to perform his duties, we do not know; however, the option of attending seminary in the diocese of Monreale was a very strong possibility.

In conjunction with the establishment of seminaries, the Council of Trent required parish priests to establish a library. They oftentimes would use the Tridentine decrees and other materials to teach their flock. "After Trent the parish priest was not left alone to carry the burden of educating his flock, or ensuring its spiritual and social well-being." The priests were expected to establish a library of usable books. Bishops and apostolic visitors were "known to check on library

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[58] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 173.

[59] Kathleen M. Comerford, "Italian Tridentine Diocesan Seminaries: A Historiographical Study," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 999–1022.

resources."[60] The first community library for the town of Carini was founded in 1775

by the archpriest Don Francesco Scavo in the parish of San Pietro.[61] We can only

guess as to what may have been included in the first library of the *Chiesa Madre di

Carini* but it was probably a mixture of subjects including scriptural texts (such as the

Bible), casuistry, scripture study, sacred rhetoric, histories, works by classical

authors, and more.[62]

By at least 1617 at the age of forty Don Gaspano Russo was a *Cappellano[63]* of

the parish performing all the sacraments of baptism, marriage, and burial.  He was

also responsible for all the affairs of the parish: public mass every Sunday and major

feast days; sermon, homilies, and readings; marriages, funerals, organized religious

education for children and the ignorant; enumeration of the populace; investigation of

his parish's moral and economic conditions; assistance for the deserving poor; and

chastisement of the major sinners.[64]

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[60] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 174.

[61] Comune di Carini, *Biblioteca Comunale di Carini,*
http://web.tiscali.it/bibliotecacarini/indexita.htm (accessed April 2008). The initial volumes were
donated by Don Scavo as "*a beneficio del pubblico e specialmente degli ecclesiastici.. in altro luogo
che sembrerà opportuno a Sua Eccellenza il Principe di Carini, alla di cui protezione raccomando
questa Biblioteca.*" Other volumes important to the history of the area continued to be obtained and
after 1860 the library received 8,000 volumes from the suppressed convents of the Carmelitani and
Cappucini. Today the library contains more than 20,000 volumes.

[62] Kathleen M. Comerford, "What Did Early Modern Priests Read? The Library of the
Seminary of Fiesole, 1646–1721," *Libraries & Culture* 34, no.3 (June 1999): 203–21.

[63] A *Cappellano* is literally translated as "Chaplain." The Council of Trent permitted parish
priests to appoint chaplains to their parish as necessary. J. Scanlan, *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 3
(New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1908; 1922), 176. In Europe, a chaplain may have been
appointed when a priest was unable to care for an entire parish because of the size of the parish. A
chaplain could perform all the necessary offices except for hearing confessions. The support of the
chaplain was to be obtained from parish funds unless they received a benefice of some sort.

[64] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 168.

In May 1629 other members of the clergy began to appear as officiators of sacramental rites in the parish of *Maria Santissima Assunta di Carini*, "*ex licentia parochi*" or by permission/license of the parish. Don Giovanni Battista Boccafichi, Don Antonino Ruffino, Don Placido Venuta, Don Giuseppe Balsamo (all natives of Carini) performed baptisms, marriages, and burials from the beginning of May in lieu of Don Gaspano. Don Boccafichi was recorded as performing the bulk of these ceremonies.[65] The *arciprete* or archpriest, Don Ottavio Sanbasili, a native of Siracusa was also present in the records as an officiator in some instances. On the fourteenth of May Don Gaspano performed his last recorded baptism for an infant, Antonino "*del Populo*" an illegitimate child born of a mother named Elisabetta (no father is listed).[66] It is probable that after this time period he became too ill to perform his duties as the *Cappellano* of the parish. The next time Don Gaspano Russo is listed in the parish registers on June 24, 1629, it is a simple notation "*Don Gaspano Russo Sacerdote di Carini, sepulto nella Maggiore Ecclesia.*"[67]

Sometime between the middle of May and when Don Gaspano passed away at the end of June, his parish brethren would likely have performed last rites or rather

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[65] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi, 1628 (cont.)–1653* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764339, http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed February-April 2008).

[66] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,Morti and Matrimoni, 1628 (cont.)–1653;* p. 195 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764339, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/1629_1637/195.jpg (accessed February- April 2008). The baptisms, marriages, and deaths are mixed in this time period.

[67] Translation: Don Gaspano Russo Priest of Carini, buried in the Mother Church. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,Morti and Matrimoni, 1628 (cont.)–1653,* p. 198 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764339, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/1629_1637/198.jpg (accessed February-April 2008). The next recorded record shows Don Giovanni Battista Boccafichi as the Cappelano of the parish.

the sacrament of extreme unction.[68]  Parish priests were well aware of when their

parishioners became ill or had some bout of poverty or misfortune.[69] As an elder in

the priesthood to Don Gaspano, the archpriest, Ottavio Sanbisili, could have been one

of the persons responsible for performing last rites. His fellow priests of the parish

would have administered to the sick Don Gaspano over the weeks when he was ill

and would have been there when the end of his life was near. It was common for

parish priests to administer the sacrament to the sick and dying, and they would often

times be accompanied by a processional of members of local confraternities carrying

crosses and candles.[70] As a person was near death "in the best of circumstances, the

priest arrived in time to hear a confession, offer words of consolation, encourage him

to forgive his enemies and redress any wrongs, anoint the body with the rights of

extreme unction, and slip the holy wafer into the man's mouth in the *viaticum*. Then

he could die."[71] These rites were administered regardless of whether or not a person

was a cleric or a lay member of the parish.

Don Sanbisili appears in the parish registers on the day of Don Gaspano's

funeral in the records of a marriage and remains in the records until July 9, 1629. He

was likely there to ensure that the parish continued to run smoothly after the death of

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[68] At the Council of Florence in 1439, extreme unction was named the fifth of seven sacraments. Traditionally the rite was administered strictly to those persons who were in fear of death. In the 14th session of the Council of Trent the holy sacraments of penance and extreme unction were spelled out. Extreme unction was to be performed by bishops or those who were "rightly ordained" by a bishop. It was to be applied "to the sick, but to those especially who lie in such danger as to seem to be about to depart this life: whence also it is called the sacrament of the departing." Quoted text taken directly from Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees*, 105–106.

[69] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 169.

[70] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 182.

[71] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe,* 53–54.

Don Gaspano and to appoint someone to take his place. In fact, in the marriage record

of Andrea Cavataio and Joanna Mauro on June 24, 1629, Don Boccafichi is still listed

as performing the marriage "*ex licentia parochi*." However, the next record is of an

infant who was baptized at home by Antonina La Dorina and then was later baptized

at the church by Don Boccafichi, now listed as "*Cappellano.*"[72]

Even though Don Gaspano was a cleric we can still see a mixture of the

controls placed by the Council of Trent on the burial process and the culture of his

environment in his funeral and burial. We also see that despite his position as a priest

the likelihood that some or all of the traditions discussed thus far (such as the wearing

of funeral clothing, cooking customs, the placement of flowers, the mourning

practices of wailing, and so on) were still a part of the process despite the reforms of

the Council of Trent.

The funeral of Don Gaspano might have looked something like this. The end

of June in Palermo and its environs begins the hot and dry season as temperatures

climb into the eighties and nineties and the sun shines for more than ten hours per

day. On June 24, 1629 we can speculate that as the day grew warmer, a processional

marched toward the *Maria Santissima Assunta* or *La Chiesa Madre di Carini*. As

bells tolled a throng of mourners followed the lifeless body of Don Gaspano Russo,

Sacerdote di Carini. Among the mourners were most likely his brethren in the

priesthood who had so diligently performed sacraments in his place.[73] Also present

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[72] Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,Morti and Matrimoni,1628 (cont.)–1653,* p. 198 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 1764339, http://cariniexchange.com/ChurchRecords/1629_1637/198.jpg (accessed February-April 2008).

[73] These included Don Giovanna Battista Boccafichi, Don Antonino Ruffino, Don Placido Venuta, Don Giuseppe Balsamo (all natives of Carini) except for the archpriest, Don Ottavio Sanbasili,

was most likely his brother Francesco and perhaps some of his other siblings and relatives who joined the convoy as they conveyed him to the church. The poor of the parish were probably paid to "swell the ranks and to render respect and assist with the powers of prayer for the departed soul" and "for the more famous deceased, churches and chapels might be festooned with black drapes, with elaborate catafalques, with scenic displays…."[74] In fact Edward Muir states that due in part to the decimation of families in times of plague and to substantiate the power of certain families funeral processionals became very elaborate events. Muir says, "Like marriage processions, spectacles such as these became fantastic public manifestations of the solidarity and power of the great patrician families, especially during times when the vagaries of high mortality threatened the very survival of all families."[75] Funeral services of a wealthy leading citizen or a beloved cleric were major social occasions.[76]

Once at the church the masses were said in honor of the dead and to ensure that passage to the next life transitioned smoothly. In truth, "by the later sixteenth century in the Siena diocese it was not uncommon for testators, male and female, to require 1,000 masses to be said soon after their death. In some cases this involved elaborate sung masses on special days—and the clergy there did not offer discount rates for such a large order."[77] After the funeral mass, the body was then conveyed in

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a native of Siracusa. Parish records of *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Battesimi,Morti and Matrimoni,1628 (cont.)–1653,* 196–99.

[74] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 183.

[75] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 55.

[76] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 183.

[77] Black, *Early Modern Italy,* 171–72.

another final procession to the place of burial in the churchyard for those of the middle to poorer classes "or in a tomb near an altar in the church for the select few who could afford to buy a space close to God and the saints."[78] In fact, "graves of priests and clerics should, if possible, be separate from those of the laity and should be located in a more respectable place; furthermore, if it can be conveniently done, the graves of priests should be apart from those of the inferior clergy."[79] Don Gaspano was one of the few privileged to secure a final resting place in the *Chiesa Madre of Carini* because he was a cleric.

Besides parish priests, only those of wealthier classes, such as notaries and their families (Notar. Domenico Tamburo and a daughter of a notary, Elisabetta Ciluffo) or families like the Vecchios (three of their young daughters) were buried in the Chiesa Madre.[80] However, Don Antonio Vecchio, was buried at the *Capuccini*.[81] A special place was reserved for burial in the *Chiesa Madre* for the infant nephew of

[78] Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe,* 55.

[79] Scanlan, *Catholic Encyclopedia,* 135.

[80] The notary Domenico Tamburo died in August 1629 and was buried in La Chiesa Madre; likewise, Elisabetta Ciluffo, the daughter of a notary, Lorenzo Ciluffo, was also buried in the Chiesa Madre. Elisabetta Ciluffo was buried on April 28, 1630. *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,1629; 1630*, pp. 203; 226. The Vecchio family entries can be found on pp. 254 in 1631, 372 in 1634, 2 in 1638; finally page 35 for Don Antonio Vecchio's burial in 1641. Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,* 1575–1692 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 2142064, http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed March 2008).

[81] The burial of Antonio Vecchio at the Capuchin Convent was an even more prestigious place of burial during this time in Sicilian history than his own parish church. Don Antonio Vecchio was buried at the *Cappucini* which is the Capuchin Convent or also known as the Capuchin Catacombs in Palermo. The first persons to be buried there were the monks and friars of the monastery, but in the early 1620s the catacombs were known for the burial of Palermo's most elite or those of a certain social rank. Angeli Lanfranco, *Palermo City of Art.* (Palermo: F.lli Mistretta, 1986), 28–29; Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,* 1575–1692, p. 35 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 2142064, http://www.cariniexchange.org/1638_1647.html (accessed March 2008).

Don Giovanni Battista Boccafichi (Antonio Boccafichi) and other parish priests like

Don Gioseppe D'Angelo and Don Antonino Ruffino.[82] "In sixteenth century Europe,

and in many parts of that continent much later, the upper classes held sites in

perpetuity and used them for the erection of tombs, often inside the church itself …

Meanwhile the poor were buried in a common grave and others in graves turned over

with varying degrees of frequency, depending upon the nature of the soil and the

pressures of space."[83] Only a handful of persons were buried in the *Chiesa Madre*

compared to hundreds buried elsewhere in the seventeenth century.

In Carini, the laity and those of other classes had several choices for burial

that were not as elaborate, but fitting final resting places for members of the

community. Between the years 1629 and 1654, one of the most popular places and

probably most affordable was the *Chiesa di San Vito* located near the *Chiesa Madre*.

Other possibilities included the *Chiesa di San Rosario* and its convent constructed

between 1576–79, *Chiesa e Convento del Carmine* (constructed 1566–71), *Chiesa di

San Gioseppe*, *Chiesa di Santa Caterina*, and the *Ospidale*.[84] Nearly all of these

churches were built in the mid- to late-sixteenth century as the swell of religiosity

burst across Europe.

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[82] Antonio Boccafichi, son of Cesare and Lauria and nephew of Don Giovanni Battista Boccafichi, was buried July 31, 1630. Don Gioseppe D'Angelo was buried February 22, 1630 and finally Don Antonino Ruffino was buried November 3, 1630. Maria Santissima Assunta, Parish Registers 1629; 1630, pp. 220, 232, 239, Carini, Palermo, Italy, *Chiesa Cattolica Maria Santissima Assunta, Morti,* 1575–1692 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by Genealogical Society of Utah, 1999) FHL microfilm 2142064, http://www.cariniexchange.com (accessed March 2008).

[83] Goody and Poppi, "Flowers and Bones," 146–75.

[84] Most information regarding these churches was found on the official website for the Comune *di Carini*. Comune di Carini, "Arte Sacre," http://www.comune.carini.pa.it/artesacra.asp (accessed March 2008).

It is evident that because of the Council of Trent the Catholic Church assumed more control over how the death and burial process was performed; however, the Catholic Church could not completely eradicate the cultural death and burial customs that had existed for centuries. In extracts from wills in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries there are "faint survivals of the gorgeous pseudo-pagan rites which prevailed in all parts of continental Europe up to the period of the Reformation."[85] It also appears that although the Council of Trent made strides toward reforming death and burial practices church wide, that in Sicily and Carini many of the rituals and practices that had existed for centuries seemed to still exist in some form or another into the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the people of Carini subscribed to the same or similar practices with regard to death and burial in the seventeenth century as did many cities and towns across Southern Europe. The act of death did not preclude the townspeople from participating in a community of the deceased who competed for rank and social status in life as well as in death. Don Gaspano is a clear example of this process of death and burial in Carini. The choices for burial places in Carini expanded as a result of the growth of Catholic religiosity in this time period; however, townspeople were still beholden to their status in death as in life. Just as the *Maria Santissima Assunta di Carini* was at the center of the lives of its parishioners, so too, was death a part of the process of life in this seventeenth century town.

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[85] Cremona, "Maltese Death, Mourning and Funeral Customs," 356.

CONCLUSION


The first session of the Council of Trent opened with the following words,

"unto the praise and glory of the holy and undivided Trinity, Father, and Son, and

Holy Ghost; for the increase and exaltation of the Christian faith and religion; for the

extirpation of heresies; for the peace and union of the Church; for the reformation of

the Clergy and Christian people; for the depression and extinction of the enemies of

the Christian name."[1] The peace and union of the church and the reformation of

Clergy are two aspects of Trent that took centuries to be fulfilled in southern Italy.

Because of the supposed rights of Spain to govern the church in its dominions, the

structure of the church (*chiese ricettizie*), and the social and cultural landscape in

Sicily the reforms enacted by the Council of Trent made their way reluctantly toward

Sicily and those lands ruled by the Spanish crown. This reluctance created an

environment in Sicily that permitted a mixture of culture and religion that was

allowed to both coexist and conflict.

We have studied in small measure the ideas of De Rosa regarding popular

Catholicism. De Rosa's philosophy has given us a supposed model to follow: that in

Sicily popular religion did not only touch the lives of the peasant but was engendered

into all social classes. There are many approaches to the study of popular religion in

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[1] J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848, accessed 2008), 12, http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent.htm (accessed September 2008).

Italy. In this work we have taken an approach typical of De Rosa, that of the folkloric or anthropological. This viewpoint takes into consideration superstitious, pagan rituals and adapts them to the "official religion" and local customs or circumstances of the time. Moreover, we have taken this further and expanded this philosophy to engender the ideas of Michael Carroll who supposes that "popular Catholicism is the religion that develops within these allowable limits." In other words, popular Catholicism is not only the adaptation of local customs to the official religion, but is that which is allowed to coexist with that official religion.[2]

In the town of Carini we have also seen conflict on many levels of society. It was with an unwilling hand that Philip II signed the document accepting the reforms of the Council of Trent. Furthermore, it was only with the acknowledgement that the crown could maintain the rights it had obtained through *Monarchia Sicula* that Philip signed the document.[3] Even then, there was a constant dialogue between the Holy See and the Spanish crown. While Rome was trying to enforce the reforms of Trent, Madrid was "striving to maintain the status quo."[4] Most times the clergy were more ready to follow the government than Rome. Furthermore, "every papal bull or brief had to receive royal endorsement before it could be published in Sicily."[5] At the same

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[2] Michael P. Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim: Popular Catholicism in Italy since the Fifteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), *7.*

[3] Spain Sovereign (1527–98 : Philip) Council of Trent document, MSS 143, Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection, Archives and Manuscripts Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, http://www.pitts.emory.edu/Archives/text/mss143.html (accessed October 2008).

[4] Thomas James Dandelet and John A. Marino, eds., *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500– 1700* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 542–43.

[5] H.G. Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily under Philip II of Spain* (London: Staples Press, 1951), 145.

time Rome and the Spain were both trying to ward off mass discontent. It was almost as if they were at an impasse, neither one wishing to offend the other.

The constant struggle between Rome and Madrid made its way from the highest levels of society to the lowest. One way that they all agreed they could control parishioners was to monitor their activities through the records kept on the diocesan and parish levels. Baptismal, marriage, burial and other records all helped priests and bishops supervise the faithful (and made Spain content knowing more about the people it ruled). Because of these records we have been able to study the lifecycle from birth to death in Carini and understand more about how the reforms of Trent affected their lives.

In chapter two, "Birth and Death in Carini" we discovered the rituals of birth and baptism were intertwined between the secular and the divine. At times it was difficult to distinguish at what point religion and superstition parted. Soro Rosalia was an excellent example of the "allowable limits" Carroll speaks of in his definition of popular Catholicism. Rosalia was able to both coexist and conform to the reforms of Trent while maintaining multiple roles in society. What is most intriguing about her story is not necessarily what she did for society as a mother, midwife, or as a nun but what those roles meant together and more importantly the fact that in her society at that time she was permitted to "exist" in all those roles simultaneously.

Additionally, from our study of birth and baptism it is clear that magic and mysticism surrounded the process of birth. Moreover, we see a glimpse of popular Catholicism in the story of Saint Rosalia and the plague that beset Palermo and its environs in 1624. The naming patterns of Carini revealed that the large majority of

villagers venerated this saint because of the miracle she performed in saving them from the plague. It was Cardinal Giovanni Doria that finally after six months decided to esteem this saint above others. [6] That decision was largely owed to the popularity of Saint Rosalia by the masses. This is an obvious case of official religion meshing with popular consent.

Our study of marriage in Carini revealed a great deal more about the types of people who lived in Carini. In the sixteenth century Carini had a vibrant economy until the early seventeenth century when natural disasters, tied with economic and political reforms, changed the combination of persons marrying in Carini. Moreover, not only did these outside forces affect marriage, but the internal force in the reforms and shifts of the official doctrine of the Catholic Church changed the way marriage was viewed in Carini. Trent reinforced the sacred right of marriage by stipulating the environment in which a marriage could take place. Specific reformations stated that a marriage must take place in a church, be performed by a priest, and could not be performed without the permission of the priest from both the bride and groom's parish of residence. This was done to prevent clandestine marriages and bigamy. Moreover, marriage traditions and customs were the least likely to change out of all the sacraments of the Catholic Church that were reformed during Trent because reformers did not condemn local customs and practices.

Furthermore it is evident that although the Council of Trent made strides toward reforming death and burial practices church-wide, in Sicily and Carini many of the rituals and practices that had existed for centuries seemed to still exist in some

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[6] Denis Mack Smith, *A History of Sicily: Medieval Sicily, 800–1713* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968)*,* 206.

form or another into the seventeenth century. For example, the dress, food and post-funerary practices could not be controlled because it was a deeply personal act that allowed the living to commune with the deceased and take part in the bearing of their soul toward heaven. Although, after Trent the Catholic Church did assume more control over how the death and burial process was performed they could not completely eradicate the cultural death and burial customs that had existed for centuries. Moreover, status markers that were ascribed to a person in life continued on into death. The choice of burial in Carini shows clearly that those persons with more wealth and power could more easily choose their final resting place.

At the conclusion of Council of Trent Pious IV engendered all clerics to diligently observe the decrees of Trent in their churches and dioceses and to refrain from interpretation of the law. Moreover that these decrees also be observed in courts of law so that they could "silence gainsayers…by means of judicial sentences." Furthermore that these clerics should call in the "secular arm" if needed to enforce said law.[7] It is truly astounding that although Trent sought to provoke change that it could not completely do so; especially in Sicily, because the secular arm was so intertwined with the religious. It was because of this environment and close relationship between church and state that one would think it would be easier to enforce the decrees of Trent when in fact it became more difficult. Because of Spain's governmental interference with the Catholic Church, the structure of the *chiese ricettizie* in southern Italy, and the cultural and social beliefs of parishioners we see a fascinating mix of religious and social life as it relates to the processes of birth,

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[7] Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Canons and Decrees,* 287.

marriage, and death in seventeenth century Carini in the centuries following the

Council of Trent.

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