*Ad dotandum puellas
virgines, pauperes et
honestas: Social Needs and
Confraternal Charity in
Rome in the Fifteenth and
Sixteenth Centuries*

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Summary: *In the late fifteenth century, Roman confraternities, especially that of SS. Annunziata, provided dowries for poor but “honest” girls. This charitable work was in response to the growing needs of a relatively defenceless segment of a society that was undergoing rapid transformation. This study of the rich holdings of confraternal archives provides insight into the increase in confraternal dowries, into how dowries were administered, into the selection of recipients, all viewed within the broader context of dotal practices in Renaissance Rome.*

Providing dowries for marriageable girls was not among the traditional charitable activities of medieval Roman confraternities. Even in the late fifteenth century, dowering indigent girls was in Rome an act of individual charity. In the surviving testaments of the fourteenth century, and more commonly of the fifteenth, bequests often included property that was meant to serve as a dowry for needy young women. Usually the recipients belonged to a poor branch of the testator's family, or to families of friends or neighbors. It was also not unusual to make testamentary bequests to persons generically described as *pauperes puellae*, and charge the executors of the will to identify suitable recipients.¹ It was only in the last decades of the fifteenth century that this act of charity became, in Rome as in other Italian cities, one of the accepted forms in which fraternal associations of lay persons commonly practiced philanthropy, and the practice expanded throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²

The Roman Confraternity of the Minerva, founded around 1460 by the

Dominican Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, was the first to dedicate itself specifically and exclusively to providing dowries for poor girls, either to allow them to marry, or to enter the religious life.³ The confraternity's statutes described this work of charity as necessary in equal measure as it was "necessary and praiseworthy to conserve propriety, to avoid that on account of poverty numerous souls fall to the snares of the evil one, and finally to ascertain that the faithful multiply through the lawful procreation of children through the holy sacrament of matrimony."⁴ These explicit reasons addressed a complex of problems surrounding the condition of women in a society which, like that of Rome in the late Middle Ages, was undergoing rapid change, and of which prostitution was only the most serious and visible aspect.⁵ In addition to the usual problems of women, particularly if they possessed little or no property, women in fifteenth-century Rome faced strains that arose from the massive immigration which began in the first decades of the century.⁶ Furthermore, Rome confronted the problem of rapid growth in the amount of dowries, which made it increasingly more difficult for the heads of families of all levels of wealth to provide adequate dowries for their daughters.⁷

Following the model of the Confraternity of the Annunziata, which quickly became one of the most prestigious and affluent lay brotherhoods, other confraternities began to dower poor girls, thus illustrating the "success" of the initiative. In 1472 the Confraternity of S. Spirito, in 1474 the Racommandati del Salvatore, in 1475 the Confraternity of S. Maria dell' Aracoeli, and in 1482 that of the Gonfalone added this work of charity to other more conventional ones.⁸ The latter included the operation of hospitals, which also witnessed a greater attention to the needs of women. In mid-century, Roman hospitals, which, with the sole exception of S. Spirito, were operated by lay associations, opened wards for women alongside the traditional mixed wards. At the same time, new hospitals for "poor women" were founded. Some of these were established along national lines, such as those of the German and Spanish, others had a more broadly religious character, such as the numerous houses of tertiaries and beguines (*bizzoche*).⁹

The surviving documentation on just how such contributions to dowries were paid in the second half of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth is fragmentary, and it is difficult, therefore, to estimate the actual contribution of the confraternities during this initial period of charitable dowry giving.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it has been possible, I believe, to collect sufficient reliable information to give a clear picture, particularly of the norms and procedures which govern this "new" charity, which underwent further devel-

opment in the course of the sixteenth century.

It was the Confraternity of the Annunziata alla Minerva which sought to structure this charitable service in its first set of statutes, which in part can be attributed to Torquemada himself.¹¹ Its model was followed by other brotherhoods, with adaptations to meet their particular needs. To obtain the grant of a dowry from the brotherhood of the Annunziata, a girl had to present a formal written request. This application had to contain all the details to allow the officers of the confraternity to assess the case. The officers were charged with evaluating the applications and, in inconclusive cases, to conduct an investigation “in the regions, quarters and neighborhoods where the said girls lived [. . .] and regarding the age, moral character, status, reputation [. . .] and poverty” of the applicant.¹² In these first statutes the criteria for selection are very precise. For the Confraternity of the Annunziata the ideal girl is born in Rome of Roman parents, who are honest and themselves from good families. She is more than 14 years of age, a virgin and poor. Her case goes to the head of the list if both her parents are dead, if she has a relative or acquaintance who is a member of the confraternity, and if she has a prospective husband, ready to marry her.¹³ A full six chapters of the statutes deal with this subject and present a very detailed set of criteria.¹⁴ If other requirements are met, a girl was given preference if she was born in Rome, even if her parents were not Romans, or if she had lived in the city longer than others. Unconditionally excluded were girls who were engaged in household service, and might be subject to sexual pressures on the part of their masters, and for whom it was more difficult to demonstrate the state of purity and “good reputation” which was seen as a fundamental requisite to obtain the dowry.¹⁵

An examination of the surviving register of the Confraternity of the Annunziata reveals that for the years 1471-1475 the majority of dowries granted went to daughters of Roman parents.¹⁶ For the years 1499-1500, the situation is sharply different. Fewer than half the girls who received a dowry were from Roman families. Particularly striking is the presence of artisans' daughters from localities outside Italy. This development, which continued also in the following years, must be seen in light of the growth in the number of immigrants residing in Rome. It is clear that the daughters of non-Romans, especially of recent immigrants, faced serious difficulties in obtaining an adequate dowry, and indeed the means of subsistence, especially if they were orphaned through the death of their fathers. It is no accident that orphans stand out in the assignment of dowries. Thus, the ten dowries paid by the brotherhood of the Annunziata in the second half of 1499 all were for girls whose father was

not alive.¹⁷

As concerns social groups, it is above all the class of artisans which seems in need of the confraternities' assistance. Tailors, shoemakers, millers and weavers appear frequently in the registers of the Annunziata, and also in those of other lay confraternities, in the context of dowries for their daughters or their orphaned children. Indeed, the future husbands of these girls belong to the same professional groups. The husbands' collective profile also shares another feature. They are almost universally non-Romans, coming from a very wide range of localities, both in Italy and outside, and residing permanently in the city.¹⁸ In the statutes of the Annunziata there is, in fact, only one single reference to the husbands of girls who were to receive a dowry, and this reference concerns their place of residence. Men residing *extra urbem* were considered undesirable, and marriage with a non-resident *ipso facto* deprived a girl of the dowry she had received.¹⁹ Insistence on residence in Rome was a particularly important concern of the brotherhoods which provided dowries for girls. There were several reasons for this. First of all, the intention was to encourage the growth of the resident population through legitimate marriage and procreation. But there was also the intention of keeping track of the married couple in order to avoid abuses. A prime concern was that, once a dowry had been paid, the new husband might abandon his wife. Another consideration was for the recovery of the dowry in case the woman died without offspring.²⁰ In a number of cases the future husband formally undertook, in a written act drawn by a notary, to "reside continuously in Rome and to make his living there," or else to pay back the dowry.²¹

The Confraternity of S. Spirito took a different approach to the matter of dowry giving. In addition to operating its famous hospital, it also took care of abandoned infants in Rome.²² Beginning in 1472, the year in which its records first list contributions to the dowries of its wards, four or five marriages are reported each year.²³ Often these marriages are with persons who lived in locations where the hospital owned real property, and normally this land was used to make up the contributions to the dowry of the girl, usually in the value of the hospital's standard gift; 100 Roman florins. Thus, in 1475, the preceptor of S. Spirito gave a girl named Potenziana in marriage to a *discretus iuuenis*, Antonio di Guglielmo di Acquapendente, with a dowry of 100 florins, comprised of possessions of the hospital in the district of Acquapendente. The same arrangement was made for a certain Piera and for other wards of S. Spirito, who were married to brothers of Antonio.²⁴ It is evident that the dowries provided by S. Spirito were particularly appreciated, even outside the

Roman setting, perhaps because they were made of real property, commonly land, which ended up in the hands of persons of same social standing, as indicated by the description “*discretus*” applied to the young man from Acquapendente. At the same time it was good management practice for an organization like S. Spirito, which often received donations of real property from benefactors who resided in a great many localities, to convert these possessions into contributions to dowries for its charges, especially because the properties in question were usually small and difficult to manage efficiently.

The standard dowry paid by the Confraternity of S. Spirito in 1470 was, as indicated above, 100 florins, the approximate equivalent of 45 ducats or *scudi* at the end of the fifteenth century. In the same period the Confraternity of the Annunziata gave notably smaller dowries: through the end of the 1480s, its standard rate was 50 Roman florins, raised to 75 in the subsequent decades, and to 100 only at the end of the century. It remained substantially unchanged in the following period.²⁵ In 1474, the Confraternity of S. Salvatore also gave dowries of 100 Roman florins. Like S. Spirito, S. Salvatore’s main work of charity was the operation of a large hospital, and dowries were given to only four girls each year.²⁶ In the 1480s, the Confraternity of S. Maria and S. Alberto at the Aracoeli, which subsequently merged with that of the Gonfalone, gave four dowries, typically in the amount of 75 florins, but sometimes decidedly smaller ones (40 to 50 florins), depending on its current financial circumstances.²⁷ The deliberations of the Confraternity of the Annunziata make it clear that the intention was to meet the needs of the largest possible number of girls. In fact, the number of dowries to be granted was not specified in the statutes and changed from year to year according to the “*facultas et potentia*” of the confraternity.²⁸ The brotherhood of the Annunziata sometimes supplemented dowries promised to girls by their own families. In the cases for which we have documentation, these dowries never exceeded a total of 200 Roman florins, including the allowance for the *corredo*.²⁹

An ongoing study of dowry practices in Renaissance Rome suggests that the contributions made by confraternities were meant to meet the needs and conventions pertaining to dowries among the social groups to whom they were chiefly addressed. Given the current stage of research, it would be hazardous to be categorical regarding the actual impact of these dowries on the marriage market. It is clear, however, that in this period dowries given as charity were far from being a decisive element. They did allow women of relatively low standing to contract marriages in their own social setting, and indeed at times

to rise in the hierarchy of trades, and to benefit from the explicit acknowledgement of a good reputation. In these social circles, dowries were, of course, decidedly lower than in those of the substantial burghers, represented by merchants, spicers or butchers, who in Rome belonged to the affluent groups that gave to their daughters dowries of between 300 and 400 florins. In the same period, members of the civic “nobility” offered around 1,000 florins, while the baronial families rarely gave less than 3,000 florins.³⁰

Although already high, these average amounts kept increasing, and in fact doubled in the last years of the fifteenth century, despite the sumptuary laws which were repeatedly issued by Renaissance popes.³¹ The doubling of the dowry contribution on the part of the Confraternity of the Annunziata, from 50 to 100 florins, is another indicator of inflation in the marriage market in the late fifteenth century, a situation which evidently affected not only the higher social circles, but also less distinguished ones.

Much remains to be said on the subject of dowries furnished by confraternities: on the delays of actual payment; on the safeguards meant to ensure the restitution, if necessary, of the amounts paid out; and on the systems developed by the confraternities to ensure that the institutions’ aims were actually met. For now, however, I wish to turn to another element which was an integral part of the charitable granting of dowries: the ceremonies developed by confraternities to publicize their activity, and to project, at the same time, a specific religious message. Such ritual festivities involved a considerable effort in organization and expense, which fell to the communities and to the individual members.³²

For the Confraternity of the Annunziata at S. Maria sopra Minerva the choice of dowering girls as a charitable activity was, of course, directly linked to the prime features of its devotion to the “Annunziata.” Torquemada, the founder of the confraternity, had been a strong defender of dogmatic faith, and in particular of dogmas related to the devotion to the Virgin, whose centrality in Catholic belief had been vigorously promoted by the Dominican order.³³ The opening chapter of the oldest set of confraternity statutes asserts the central role of the figure of Mary, Virgin and Mother of the Son of God, in the history of salvation through the incarnation.³⁴ It is on this theological basis that the cardinal had founded the confraternity, bringing together 200 Roman citizens for religious purposes exclusively, among which the celebration of festivities linked to the Virgin was prominent. Particular emphasis was placed on the feast of the Annunciation.³⁵ Charitable dowering on the part of the confraternity can be dated with certainty to 1471, when the first marriage contract was

included in the fraternity's records. The absence of documentation does not allow us to trace this activity back to Torquemada himself, even if tradition within the confraternity unanimously points in this direction. For the confraternity, responding to a social need thus became not only a means to uphold a dogma, but the justification of its very existence.

The image of the Annunziata carried rich and exceptionally suggestive symbolic associations. In presenting to Christian women the *persona* of the Madonna as a model, these associations focused simultaneously on her virginity and her motherhood. Through a "disquieting contradiction," in Odile Redon's recent characterization,³⁶ the two aspects strikingly convey the meaning of a change in status, and of a passage from a state of negativity to one of positivity. The social dimension of the event, and the fact that it constituted the form of charity specific to the confraternity were particularly suited to render explicit, and thus easily comprehensible, the same concepts which were implicit on a more general level in the special devotion to the Annunziata.

Christiane Klapisch has analyzed such concepts, along with the "matrimonial" and contractual aspects of this type of devotion, in the context of social life in Tuscany, with specific attention to Florence.³⁷ Particularly important was the role of the matchmaker (*sensale*), a role of intermediary, which the confraternity assumed, and which made possible a change in status that would have been beyond the reach of girls who, without the confraternity's intervention, would not have possessed sufficient wealth to undergo this passage. It is no accident that Antoniazio Romano puts particular emphasis on the element of mediation when on the occasion of the jubilee year, 1500, he painted for the Confraternity of the Annunziata his "Annunciation with Cardinal Juan de Torquemada presenting the Poor Girls who receive Dowries from the Virgin in Annunciation." In the painting it is the Virgin herself who hands the girls the purses with the money for their dowries. The presence of Torquemada, who offers the girls to the Virgin, makes it explicit that the confraternity also holds the function of intermediary.³⁸

The "marriage" celebration in which the dowries were conveyed was solemnly carried out on March 25. It served to restate these meanings and to make them public outside the confraternity, in the view of the city at large. The celebrations occupied not only sacred space inside the church, but also the square outside, which was carefully prepared to receive not only the girls and their following, but also the papal *cortège*.³⁹ To highlight the social importance attributed to this "work of charity," the ceremony included, only a few years after its inception, the participation of famous preachers such as Roberto

Caracciolo,⁴⁰ as well as cardinals and even the pope. Initially the papal presence was an exceptional occurrence, but beginning in the 1480s under Innocent VIII it became a regular feature and was codified in the complex liturgy of the celebration, and inserted in the relevant chapters of the statutes.⁴¹

In competition with the festivity of the Annunziata was the celebration of “marriage” by the Confraternity of the Gonfalone on December 13, the feast day of S. Lucia, one of the fraternity’s patrons. The ceremony, about which we have detailed information in the statutes of 1495, began with a procession that issued from the church of S. Lucia in the rione Parione, passed through one of the neighborhoods particularly favored by prostitutes, and terminated again in the church where it had begun, and where the liturgical celebration was to take place. The spectacular aspect of the procession—the singers, the men on stilts, the silver candlesticks, the “dowered” girls dressed in blue and accompanied by the older women of the confraternity—was aimed at exciting the imagination of the by-standers and to arouse feelings of admiration and emulation. To witness a tangible rewarding of “good and laudable life and comportment” was an admonition and a message for all the women of Rome.⁴²

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Notes

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- 1. The standard studies of dowry practices are D. Owen Hughes, “From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe,” *Journal of Family History*, III (1978), 262-296; J. Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1983). For Italy, see P. Cammarosano, “Aspetti delle strutture familiari nelle città dell’Italia comunale: secoli XII-XIV,” in G. Duby and J. Le Goff, eds., *Famiglia e parentela nell’Italia medievale* (Bologna, 1981), pp. 109-123, esp. pp. 111-114. Cf. also note 7 below.
- 2. See Ch. F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: 1989), pp. 178-184. Regarding dowries as part of testamentary dispositions, see D. Herlihy, *La famiglia nel Medioevo* (Bari, 1987), pp. 128-129.
- 3. For summary information on Roman confraternities, see M. Maroni Lumbroso and A. Martini, *Le confraternite romane nelle loro chiese* (Rome, 1963), pp. 51-53.
- 4. “. . . quanto é necessario et laudabile il conservar la pudicizia, il prohibir che molte anime per povertà non trabocchino nei lacci del demonio et finalmente il procurare che il popolo fedele moltiplichi con legittima procreatione di figlioli mediante il Sacramento Santo del matrimonio.” *Statuti della Venerabile Compagnia dell’Annunziata in Santa Maria della*

Minerva di Roma (Rome, 1575), p. 4. One copy of the Statutes is in the Archivio di Stato di Roma (=ASR), Arciconfraternita della SS. Annunziata (= SS. Annunziata), b. 262, fasc. II.

5. There are as yet no substantial discussions of prostitution in Rome. In addition to the old study by U. Gnoli, *Cortigiane romane* (Arezzo, 1941), see P. Larivaille, *La vita quotidiana delle cortegiane nell'Italia del Rinascimento*, Italian translation (Milan, 1983). See also the general treatment of the subject by J. Rostaud, *La prostituzione nel Medioevo*, Italian translation (Bari, 1984).
6. Concerning population growth in this period, see A. Esposito, "I 'forenses' a Roma nell'età del Rinascimento: aspetti e problemi di una presenza atipica," in G. Rossetti, ed., *Dentro la città. Stranieri e realtà urbane nell'Europa dei secoli XII-XVI* (Naples, 1989), 163-175, including bibliographical references.
7. The increase in the value of dowries was constant throughout the late Middle Ages, and accelerated at the end of the fifteenth century. See. Ch. Klapisch-Zuber, "Il complesso di Griselda. Doti e doni di nozze nel Quattrocento," in her *La famiglia e le donne nel Rinascimento a Firenze* (Bari, 1988), pp. 153-191. For Florence, where the *Monte delle doti* was intended to resolve this problem, see J. Kirshner and A. Molho, "The Dowry Fund and the Marriage Market in Early Quattrocento Florence," *Journal of Modern History*, L (1978), 404-438, and A. Molho, "Investimenti nel Monte delle doti di Firenze: Un'analisi sociale e geografica," *Quaderni Storici*, LXI (1986), 147-160. For Venice, see S. Chojnacki, "Dowries and Kinsmen in Early Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, IV (1975), 571-600, including bibliography concerning the dowry system. In an attempt to limit the growth of the cost of weddings (and of funerals), the civic authorities repeatedly issued sumptuary laws, which also set ceilings for dowries. See D. Owen Hughes, "Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy," in J. Bossy, ed., *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West* (Cambridge: 1983), pp. 69-76. Italian translation: "La moda proibita. La legislazione suntuaria nell'Italia rinascimentale," *Memoria. Rivista di Storia delle Donne*, XI-XII (1984), 82-105. Concerning sumptuary legislation in Renaissance Rome, see A. Esposito, "Strategie matrimoniali e livelli di ricchezza," in M. Chiabò et al., eds., *Alle origini della nuova Roma. Martino V (1417-1431). Atti del Convegno di Roma, 2-6 marzo 1992*, pp. 571-587, esp. pp. 583-585.
8. For the Roman confraternities which, beginning in the sixteenth century, focused on providing dowries as their chief charity, see C. Fanucci, *Trattato di tutte le opere pie dell'Alma città di Roma* (Rome, 1601); G. Piazza, *Opere pie di Roma descritte secondo lo stato presente* (Rome, 1679); G. Morichini, *Degli Istituti di pubblica carità ed istruzione primaria a Roma* (Rome, 1835).
9. Regarding the Hospice for German women, see the recent study by P. Berbée, "Von deutscher Nationalgeschichte zu römischer Lokalgeschichte. Der Topos vom 'nationalen Pilgerheim' am Beispiel des deutschen Frauenhospizes St. Andreas in Rom (1372-1431)," *Römische Quartalschrift*, LXXXVI (1991), 23-52, esp. pp. 39, 40, and 46; for the Spanish Hospice, see M. Vaquero Piñeiro, "Proiezione sociale e risorse economiche di San Giacomo degli Spagnoli alla fine del '400," *Studi Romani*, XXXVIII (1990), 69-82, esp. pp. 73, 75, and 76; *Idem*, "Lineamenti generali dell'Ospedale della Nazione Castigliana in Roma tra Medioevo ed Età moderna," *Roma moderna e contemporanea. Rivista interdisciplinare di*

- storia*, I (1993), 11-22. On houses of beguines, see A. Esposito, "S. Francesca Romana e le comunità religiose femminili a Roma nel secolo XV," in S. Boesch Gajano and L. Sebastiani, eds., *Culto dei santi, istituzioni e classi sociali in età preindustriale* (L'Aquila, 1984), pp. 539-557.
10. The documentation for subsequent centuries is much more extensive and has given rise to substantial studies, including M. D'Amelia, "La conquista di una dote. Regole di gioco e scambi femminili alla Confraternita dell'Annunziata (secc. XVII-XVIII)," in A. Ferrante *et al.*, eds., *Ragnatele di rapporti. Patronage e reti di relazione nella storia delle donne* (Turin, 1988), pp. 305-343; *Idem*, "Economia familiare e sussidi dotali. La politica della Confraternita dell'Annunziata a Roma (secoli XVII-XVIII)" in S. Cavaciocchi, ed., *La donna nell'economia, secc. XIII-XVIII. Atti della Ventunesima Settimana di Studi, Prato, 10-15 aprile 1989* (Florence, 1990), pp. 195-215.
 11. ASR, SS. Annunziata, b. 262, fasc. I. These are the *Statuti vecchi* of the confraternity, of which the only manuscript was written between 1570 and 1575, the year in which a printed edition was issued, that included changes to the earlier dispositions. The manuscript *Statuti vecchi* gives both the provisions that can be attributed to Torquemada and the later additions, as explicitly indicated in the "Tavola di quanto si contiene nei presenti statuti vecchi delle Compagnia della SS. Annunziata nelli quali sono quelli che ordinò il cardinal Turrecremata di felice memoria." The citation, *Statuti vecchi*, refers to the MS statutes, of which I am currently preparing an annotated edition.
 12. *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 23: "Del scrutinio delle zitelle."
 13. *Ibid.*, ch. 25: "Del elettione et qualità delle zitelle." The confraternity of the Gonfalone applied similar criteria to the recipients of dowries: "in primo debiano essere romane de padre o vero de madre, de etate de quarto decimo anno in su, de buona et laudabile vita et costumi, nate legitime de buoni, honesti et bisognosi parenti, altrimenti non possessini maritarle . . ." See the "Statuti della venerabile compagnia del Gonfalone di Roma," Ch. XXXXII ("Del ordine del maritaggio"), published by A. Esposito in an appendix to "Le 'confraternite' del Gonfalone (secoli XIV-XV)" *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, V (1984), pp. 91-136, esp. pp. 126-127. The same rubric also contains all other dispositions that governed grants of dowries by the confraternity.
 14. See ch. 25 cited above, as well as ch. 26 to 30.
 15. *Ibid.*, ch. 30: "Del non dare doti a chi serve ad altri: Item additum et ordinatum est alicui puelle, que esset servitialis aut pedissequa sive fantessa alicuius, non fiat subsidium predictum." The prohibition was reinstated in 1498. It is clear that this clause gave rise to a division of opinions. See *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 54. See also Ch. Black, *Italian Confraternities*, p. 179.
 16. ASR, SS. Annunziata, Reg. 353 for the years 1471-1475; Reg. 354 for 1499-1500. The volumes contain *instrumenta fidantiarum et dotis*.
 17. *Ibid.*, reg. 354, cc. 1^r-7^v.
 18. *Ibid.* The future husbands came from a wide variety of locations, including the environs of Rome (Roccadipapa, Albano, Zagarolo, Marino), other Italian cities (Pisa, Salerno, Bolo-

- gna, Bergamo, Como), as well as regions within Italy and outside (Monferrato, Lombardia, Gallia, Corsica).
19. *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 31: "Di non maritarsi fuor di Roma alcuna dotata dalla Compagnia: Item statutum est quod nulla puella de his quibus sit subsidium dotis possit aut debeat maritari alicui habitanti extra Urbem, et ubi secus fieret, dos sibi a dicta societate constituta, dari non debet." The prohibition was further repeated in 1514. See the *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 55.
 20. The Annunziata took various precautions to protect against malfeasance on the part of future husbands of its wards. The notarial *instrumenta solutionis dotis* were drawn up until after the marriage ceremony and paid at that time; until then the dowries were merely promised and the amount deposited with the fraternity's chamberlain. In addition, the dowries were without exception secured by a *sigurtà*, normally a lien on real property. This procedure involved the drawing up of a dowry obligation, as was common in Roman marriage practice. If the future husband did not own suitable property, the dowry was secured through the possessions of a guarantor. As in all marriage agreements, a *donatio propter nuptias* was required, which, according to the Statutes of Rome, amounted to half the value of the dowry. The confraternity's registers record this usage until 1475. Also resembling normal marriage contracts were the clauses governing restitution of the dowry in the case of the woman's death without offspring from the marriage. See ch. 46 of the *Statuti vecchi*: "Se le maritate dalla Compagnia sono morte con figlioli o senza." Among the changes in management of the dowries introduced by the Annunziata in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the most important was the payment of interest on the amount of the dowry, but not on the capital itself, a practice justified by the pretext that the husbands might abandon their wives once the marriage was consummated. This provision drew the protest of even the women who benefitted from the dowries. Its advantages for the confraternity were evident and were justified with the argument that in this way a larger number of dowries could be assigned each year. See M. D'Amelia, "La conquista di una dote," pp. 322-324.
 21. The quotation comes from the act concerning *Francesco de Neapoli . . . habitator castri Arignani districtus Urbis*, which includes two guarantors: Cecco Tasca, who offers his property in security for the dowry, and the *nobilis vir Johannes Baptista Iulliani de Capranica*, who guarantees the husband's residence in Rome. See ASR, SS. Annunziata, Reg. 353, c. 118^v. Also the woman was obliged to reside in Rome. See the case of *Evangelista filia Nicolosi corsi*. Her dowry was guaranteed through a house owned by *Matteo corso* "cumpactis statutariis dicte societatis videlicet quod casu quo propter mortem dicte Evangeliste sine suis legitimis et naturalibus filiis, vel ab eius inhonestam vitam vel propter absentiam suam cum eius familiam, dicata dos ad ipsam societatem reverteretur": *ibid.*, Reg. 354, c. 198^v. See the *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 32: "Di notificarsi per il segretario a chi é ammessa al sussidio, non si mariti fuori di Roma."
 22. For the S. Spirito Hospital, the standard study is still P. de Angelis, *L'Ospedale di S. Spirito in Saxia* (Rome, 1960). Regarding assistance to abandoned children, the earliest period still awaits study. For more recent times, where documentation is more abundant, see C. Schiavoni, "Gli infanti 'esposti' del S. Spirito in Saxia di Roma tra '500 e '800: numero, ricevimento, allevamento e destino," in *Enfance abandonnée et société en Europe - XIV^e/XX^e siècle* (Rome, 1991), pp. 1017-1064.
 23. ASR, Ospedale S. Spirito, Reg. 210 (for the years 1431-1473): this is the confraternity's first

register of *instrumenta*.

24. *Ibid.*, Reg. 215 (for the years 1474-1478), c. 80^r (December 24, 1475). Beyond the dowry itself the S. Spirito furnished an *acconcio* to its "çitelle mandate a marito." On January 28, 1472, the preceptor made the following provision for three girls: "Supradictus dominus Preceptor Marinam, Christofoam et Paulinam, proiectas hospitalis maritatas, misit ad domos maritorum suorum, et cuilibet earum, per manus fratris Francisci de Cingulo, dedit et consignavit pro acconcimine iuxta morem observatum hospitalis cum predictis proiectis quando mictantur ad maritum infrascripte res, presentibus earum maritis et illas recipientibus et de illis se contentos et satisfactos vocantibus videlicet in primis: calze, pianelle, intrecciato, cintura, vestito per le domenicha, guarnellum, vestitu de honore, lino cioè libras V 1/2 per lu pannu listato, camise dui, lensole uno paro, lecto cioè matarazzo, capezzale et coltra etc": *ibid.*, Reg 210, c. 167^r.
25. ASR, SS. Annunziata, Reg. 353-354, *passim*. For the sixteenth century, see M. D'Amelia, "Economia familiare e sussidi dotali," pp. 204-210.
26. See P. Pavan, "Gli statuti della Società dei Raccomandati del Salvatore ad Sacta Sanctorum (1331-1496)," *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, CI (1978), 35-96, esp. p. 46.
27. For dowries provided by this confraternity, see Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Gonfalone, Reg. 110 (formerly 152). Regarding the brotherhood of the Aracoeli, see A. Esposito, "Le 'confraternite' del Gonfalone," pp. 99-100.
28. *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 22.
29. The payment records normally use the formula "pro dote seu supplemento dotis . . . secundum morem dicte sotietatis." See e.g., ASR, SS. Annunziata, reg. 353, c. 3^v.
30. For a discussion, see A. Esposito, "Strategie matrimoniali," pp. 584-585.
31. The first sumptuary laws for Rome were approved by Martin V in 1425. See Archivio Capitolino (= AC), Fondo storico, Credenzione XV, t. 45, cc. 95^v-96^v. They were confirmed by Eugenius IV in 1442 (*ibid.*, cc. 115^r-116^r). The laws approved by Paul II are published in an appendix to Marco Antonio Altieri, *Li Nuptiali*, ed. E. Narducci (Rome, 1873), XLIII-L. Sixtus IV confirmed them in 1472, and the revisions appear in a book by E. Muntz, *Les arts à la cour des papes pendant le XV^e et le XVI^e siècles*, III/1 (Paris, 1882), 280-284, date to 1473. For the new regulations under Innocent VIII, see AC, Fondo storico, Credenzione IV, t. 88, cc. 194^v-201.
32. For an initial study of the confraternities' public devotions, see A. Esposito, "Apparati e suggestioni nelle 'feste e devozioni' delle confraternite romane," *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, CVI (1983), 311-322.
33. Concerning Torquemada, see T. Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Predicatorum*, iii (Rome, 1980), 24-42. For his reflections on the mystery of the Incarnation, see his *Meditationes* and the cycle of frescoes which he commissioned for the cloister of the Minerva, now destroyed. See L. De Gregori, *Del chiostro della Minerva e del primo libro con figure stampato in Italia* (Florence, 1927).
34. *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 1 (Foreword).

35. *Ibid.*, ch. 3: "Della processione da farsi nel giorno dell'Annunciazione"; ch. 4: "Delle processioni da farsi le feste della Madonna."
36. O. Redon, "Le choix du temps," paper read at the international conference organized by Villa I Tatti and the French Institute of Florence in 1986, on the subject "L'Annunciazione in Toscana nel Rinascimento." Although the proceedings of this conference were not published, Redon's paper is now published under the title "Le choix du temps ou le temps de l'Annonciation en Toscane au Moyen Age," *Bulletino senese di storia patria*, LXXXVIII (1991), 9-15.
37. Communication read by Ch. Klapisch during the same Villa I Tatti conference.
38. For Antoniazzo's painting, see A. Cavallaro, "Antoniazzo Romano e le confraternite del Quattrocento a Roma," *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, V (1984), 335-366, esp. pp. 350-353. Cf. also her contribution in M. Fagiolo and M. Luisa Madonna, eds., *Roma 1300-1875. L'Arte degli Anni Santi* (Milan, 1984), pp. 369-370, and plate XIX. R. Cannatà has made an important contribution to what is known about Antoniazzo, supplementing G. Noehles, *Antoniazzo Romano. Studien zur Quattrocentomalerei in Rom* (Munster, 1974), p. 283; see her note on this painting in C. Bon Valsassina, ed., *Laboratorio di restauro* (Catalogue of the exhibition, Rome, December 14, 1985 - February 28, 1986), pp. 50-52.
39. Some notion of the preparations for these festivities can be derived from the confraternity's registers of income and expenses. Inside, the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva was hung with precious draperies; a hanging over the altar carried the coats of arms of the pope and the cardinals expected at the ceremony (ASR, SS. Annunziata, Reg. 548, c. 8^v). The podium for distinguished participants was lined in black velvet, and the space around it covered in *mortella* (*ibid.*, Reg. 551, cc. 39^v-40^r). A tree was planted in the center of the square and was decorated with streamers, while a large papal *stemma* was placed "nello cerchio della piazza" (*ibid.*, Reg. 550, c. 23). For the style in which the occasion was celebrated in more recent times, see M. Mori Frigola, "Roma sacra. Ceremonie papali e feste religiose," in M. Fagiolo and M. Luisa Madonna, eds., *Roma sancta. La città delle basiliche* (Rome, 1985), pp. 156-157, and plates 18 and 19, for the "Corteo per la festa dell'Annunziata al tempo di Urbano VIII" and the "Processione della SS. Annunziata in piazza della Minerva."
40. "Eodem die (25 marzo 1482), tempore mediano, in area Minerve predicavit Robertus (Caracciolo), [. . .] auditores fuere innumeri, cardinales vero quinque." See E. Carusi, ed., "Il Diario romano di Iacopo Gherardi di Castello," *RIS/2*, XXIII/3 (Città di Castello, 1904-1906), p. 93.
41. See *ibid.*, p. 130 for the celebration of 1484. For the *festa* of 1488 we have the detailed account by Johannes Burckard ("Liber notarum ab anno MCCCCLXXXIII usque ad annum MDVI," ed. A. Celani, *RIS/2*, XXXII/1, II [Città di Castello, 1907-1910], 225-226), who also records the papal *cavalcata* to the church of the Minerva: "Feria tertia, XXV sensis martii, festum annuntiationis beate Marie virginis, SS. D. N. in mane, indutus amictu, alba, cingulo, stola, alba pretiosa et capucino albo, precedente ipsum croce et sequentibus cardinalibus, episcopis assistantibus, prelatis orantibus et aliis prelatiis, equitavit ad Sanctam Mariam supra Minervam, ubi coram altari genuflexus in faldistorio oravit; tum surrexit et deposito sibi capucino, retenta stola, accepit pluviale album pretiosum et fecit confessionem cum celebrante more consueto. Cantores retro altare stantes dixerunt introitum,

cardinales deinde fecerunt reverentiam pape in solio sedenti . . . Solium pape fuit ordinatum in cornu evangelii altaris quasi in opposito ipsius cornu. Ad eius sinistram fuerunt parate sedes pro episcopis et presbyteris cardinalibus usque ad ostium introitus intra dictum cancellum, in opposito autem parate erant sedes pro diaconis cardinalibus et a fine sedium diaconorum cardinalium usque ad ostium introitus predicti erant sedes humiliores pro oratoribus laicis. Finita missa et data benedictione per pontificem, non fuerunt publicate indulgentie quia per bullam erant publicate plenarie. SS. D. N. sedit et faldistorium celebrantis fuit positum in plano capelle, coram quo [the officiating], quidam officialis societatis Annunciate obtulit unum bacile cum X bursis carlenis plenis pro maritandis puellis: quarum una bursa fuit aperta et carleni in bacile sparsi ut viderentur, deinde repositi in bursam. Tum accesserunt puelle maritande, singule inter duas matronas albis vestibus indute, et genuflexe coram celebrante capiebant ex eius manibus bursam et manum suam osculabantur; accedebant deinde ad pontificem et osculabantur eius pedem tam puelle quam matrone. Quo facto pontifex, eo ordine quo illuc venerat, equitavit ad ecclesiam Sancte Marie de Populo." As concerns the statutory prescriptions, see *Statuti vecchi*, ch. 78.

42. A. Esposito, "Apparati e devozioni," pp. 317-318. It is significant that in the confraternities of the Gonfalone as well as of the Annunziata, the female members were actively involved in the awarding of dowries, unlike in other confraternities. Women were charged with carrying out the inquiries into the morality of prospective recipients, with preparing the girls for the ceremony, and with accompanying them in the procession. The subject of women's participation in confraternal activities awaits a separate study. For Bologna in the early sixteenth century, there is now N. Terpstra, "Women in the Brotherhood: Gender, Class and Politics in Renaissance Bolognese Confraternities," *Renaissance and Reformation*, XIV/3 (1990), 193-212.