



Aspiring Saints

Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition,
and Gender in the Republic of Venice,

1618–1750

ANNE JACOBSON SCHUTTE

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Anne Jacobson Schutte

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Preface

ON RETURNING from vacation in early September 1990, Rembert George Weakland, archbishop of Milwaukee, found on his desk new evidence of a continuing problem. A parishioner in her early forties who called herself the Little Eucharistic Lamb was inundating him with letters. As he told Paul Wilkes, whose profile of him appeared in the *New Yorker*, “She claims that she’s possessed and that only I can exorcise her. She’s having visions, revelations, she’s a saint, doing penance for others. Problem is, she has a few priests believing her. I’ve got to get a panel of three or four psychologists together and have them interview her. It’s turning into a cult. This has to stop.”¹ Soon thereafter, having somehow obtained Weakland’s private telephone number, the Little Eucharistic Lamb called to inform him that in the film *Dick Tracy* she had discerned evidence of a plot to assassinate the pope, masterminded by a character called Eighty-eight Keys—uncannily, the archbishop’s nickname in seminary. Dressed in bright red, she began to attend his 8 A.M. Sunday masses. Because the lead psychologist on the investigation team suspected that her ostentatious dress might be a predictor of dangerous mood swings, the archbishop hired two plainclothes female guards to watch her closely during mass. Soon he doubled the surveillance contingent.²

Who the Little Eucharistic Lamb was, whether the psychologists managed to interview her, and what became of her Wilkes’s two-part article does not say. How Archbishop Weakland set out to handle her, however, was fully in accordance with the contemporary Catholic Church’s approach toward visionaries. The initial presumption is that such people are mentally ill and must be evaluated by psychologists. Their delusions must be nipped in the bud before a cult forms around them. If they appear to pose a physical threat to others, the persons at risk must be protected. Those called in to help are lay experts: mental health professionals and security personnel. The possibility that visionaries’ delusions amount to

heresy that should be adjudicated in an appropriate ecclesiastical court does not arise.

EXCEPT FOR HIS CONCERN that the Little Eucharistic Lamb might attract followers, Archbishop Weakland's formulation of this problem and his approach to solving it bear little resemblance to the ways in which his predecessors in the early modern era dealt with similar challenges. This book addresses the phenomenon of visionaries in the Republic of Venice. Between 1618 and 1750, sixteen people, nine women and seven men, came to the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities because they were reporting visions, revelations, and special privileges from heaven (or contributing to others' doing so) and attracting interest, as well as support in some cases, from those around them. All were investigated, and most were put on trial by the Holy Office of the Inquisition on a charge of heresy variously termed *affettata*, *falsa*, *finta*, *pretesa*, or *simulata santità*—in English, “pretense of holiness.”

I use the term “pretense of holiness” to translate the Italian adjective-noun pairs just mentioned (and the Latin terms from which they derive). All of them originated in the fifteenth century in the writings of theologians; eventually, in the early seventeenth century, they entered the working vocabulary of inquisitors. Finding English equivalents for them is tricky. The first difficulty arises with the noun *santità*. In Italian and all other Romance languages, a single set of words derived from the Latin *sanctus* serves a dual purpose that in English requires two: “saint” and “holiness.” Technically, “saint” in contemporary English means a dead person officially recognized as extraordinarily holy by the Catholic Church through canonization. In the Anglophone world today, calling a living person a “saint” or speaking of his or her “sanctity” would create confusion. Hence I have opted to speak of aspiring saints (for variety, occasionally termed “false saints,” always within quotation marks) and to render *santità* as holiness.

Just as difficult to capture accurately in English are the adjectives. The Italian adjective *pretesa* denotes “claimed.” Although it can and usually does convey the pejorative impression that the claim is exaggerated, boastful, and perhaps illegitimate, it does not automatically connote insincerity. *Affettata*, *falsa*, *finta*, and *simulata* express a much stronger negative judgment: “putting on,” “falsely assuming the semblance of,” “projecting the false image of,” “pretending to be,” “faking”—or in modern academic parlance, carefully crafting a “presentation of self.”³ Inquisitorial

judges employed these tendentious adjectives in order to attribute to persons under investigation or on trial a theological crime for which they could be convicted: the deliberate intention to perpetrate a fraudulent impression of holiness.

Few of our sixteen subjects consciously practiced to deceive—at least not thoroughly and consistently. But to treat them as helpless victims of injustice and their prosecutors as villains would seriously distort the context in which both groups, and their contemporaries, operated. Inquisitors were highly educated, conscientious men with good reasons for what they did. Their mission of defending orthodoxy enjoyed wide support across the social spectrum. In order to do justice to them as well as to those they prosecuted, I have chosen to use a word derived from their lexicon: “pretense.”

UNLIKE THE Little Eucharistic Lamb in Milwaukee, the nine women and seven men on whom this study focuses were subjected to judicial attention, which means that we can know much more about them than we do about her. Provided that their main purpose and the ways in which they were produced are taken into account, Inquisition records are an extraordinarily valuable source, not only for the theological and judicial bases of the courts’ operation but also for the beliefs and practices of the people prosecuted in them. They enable the careful scholar to weave a thick description of pretense of holiness as experienced by all protagonists: those suspected and in most cases formally accused, tried, and found guilty; their judges; and witnesses called into court because they had known the suspects/defendants and seen them at work, sometimes over a long period of time. Pretense of holiness in court was a discourse in the literal sense of the term. Trial transcripts record quite accurately people actually talking about holiness.⁴ Relevant theological and medical treatises give access to an ongoing written dialogue about differences between “true” and “false” holiness and ways of determining whether visionaries’ thoughts and behaviors were “legitimate” and “orthodox” or “illegitimate” and “heretical.”

LIKE SO MANY projects, this one developed by sheer chance. On sabbatical leave in Venice in the fall of 1985, I planned to continue my work on religion and the press by investigating a group of Venetian printers of the 1540s who issued philo-Protestant books. Knowing who they were and what they published, I decided that my first assignment was to go to

the Archivio di Stato and look at their tax records in the hope of beginning to understand their business practices. When I called for a set of these documents, I got a most unpleasant surprise. Sixteenth-century tax records, the archivist on duty that day informed me, were very large volumes on very high shelves, dangerous to lift down; the contract of those who fetched materials exempted them from doing so. If I wished to give her a few printers' names, she kindly added, she and her colleagues would look for printers' tax records in their spare time and tell me what they found.

Disinclined to do secondhand research, I realized that my project was doomed from the start. To calm myself and try to think of a fall-back plan, I pulled from the shelf in the *sala di studio* my favorite volume: Index 303, the handwritten inventory of material in the series Sant'Ufficio (Holy Office, that is, Inquisition) completed by Giuseppe Giomo and Luigi Pasini in 1870. As I leafed through it, I came across the listing of a familiar case. A book by the Italian novelist Fulvio Tomizza I had read a few months earlier told the story of two natives of the Bergamo region, the priest Pietro Morali and the weaver's daughter Maria Janis, tried by the Inquisition of Venice in 1662–63 for pretense of holiness.⁵ “What a fascinating case, probably a unique one,” I had thought at the time. Within a few hours that day in the Archivio di Stato, I realized that the case of Morali and Janis was not one of a kind. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Venetian Inquisition had convicted several other individuals and two-person groups on the same charge, categorized by Giomo and Pasini as *affettata*, *falsa*, *finta*, *pretesa*, and *simulata santità*. In the next few days, I located additional cases under such rubrics as “imposture.” Twelve cases against sixteen people struck me as constituting a significant group. Soon I discovered that three scholars had studied individual “false saints” elsewhere in Italy.⁶ Thus my next assignment found me.

READING THE TRIAL dossiers (two of them lengthy enough to fill cardboard storage boxes six or seven inches high), tracing the prosecuted and the prosecutors in other sources, examining pertinent contemporaneous theological and medical works, familiarizing myself with modern studies of pretense of holiness in other regions on the Italian peninsula as well as in the Iberian world, and reading around in the scholarly literature for potentially useful insights naturally took a great deal of time. The demands of this mostly fascinating “normal science,” however, paled in comparison with the challenge of deciding how to present my findings.

Strongly attracted by such modern masterpieces as Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* and Natalie Zemon Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre*, I initially intended to cast my work in the form of microhistory.⁷ Reconstructing and re-presenting these twelve stories, I thought, would satisfy my taste for crafting complex, sophisticated narratives about individuals that would illuminate for readers the larger historical contexts in which these people operated. Transcribing, editing, and then translating the inquisitorial autobiography of one of them, Cecilia Ferrazzi, fed my microhistorical temptation.⁸ Eventually, however, I determined to resist it. Recounting a single story, I realized, might be a feasible, worthwhile endeavor. Telling twelve would make it logistically difficult, if not impossible, for me to draw them into a common field. Since I wanted to present pretense of holiness as the significant historical phenomenon it undoubtedly was, I would have to devise a different, primarily analytical approach.

From Thucydides on, historians have traditionally claimed—and after a hiatus that supposedly occurred between about 1950 and 1975, many have reiterated—that their principal task is to tell “true stories.” The adjective “true” connotes “verisimilitude.” Historians aim to represent past events “accurately” and “plausibly” by maintaining “fidelity to the historical record,” accessible in “the original sources.” They scrupulously avoid flights of imagination which would push their accounts over the precipice into another, implicitly inferior genre, “fiction.” The noun “stories” (or in recent usage, “tales”) suggests that historians’ main mode of exposition is and should be “narrative.”¹⁰ Unlike social scientists, historians are primarily committed to the “diachronic” approach, to “accounting for” or “explaining” change over time. To explain how and why things changed, they may have to opt at some points for an alternative mode, “analysis”; but following an analytical excursus, the story moves ahead in narrative form.¹¹

In the preceding statement, placed here not as my personal credo but as a heuristic point of departure, every word within quotation marks signals an issue hotly debated since the 1920s by practicing historians and analysts of historical thinking and writing. Although I have no intention of addressing all these issues directly, my awareness of them pervades this book.

In Chapter 1 I introduce one set of principal characters, those accused of pretense of holiness, by constructing brief, synthetic versions of their stories. Next I turn to the operations of the Inquisition in the

Republic of Venice (Chapter 2) and the emergence of pretense of holiness as a theological and juridical category (Chapters 3–4). Then I consider two control groups on opposite ends of the early modern holiness spectrum: “genuine” holy people on the one hand and those considered to be in league with or manipulated by the devil (sorceresses and witches) on the other (Chapters 5–6).

The following chapters provide close analysis of themes that emerge from the twelve trials. In Chapters 7 and 8 I consider the theory and practice of exorcism and medicine. Physical objects, the accessories to pursuit of holiness ultimately deemed illegitimate, form the subject of Chapter 9. Time and space concern me in Chapter 10, gender and sex in Chapter 11. I conclude in Chapter 12 by addressing directly the issue of pretense. To what extent were these aspirants to extraordinary holiness fabricating evidence of being specially favored by God, or at least seeking to enhance their public images as holy people? To what degree did their prosecutors’ theological and social presuppositions result inevitably in the construction of “false saints”?

NOW FOR A FEW historiographical observations. When I began work on this study, Venetian and indeed Italian history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was virtually *terra incognita* for me. Most Anglo-phone historians of the early modern period in Italy have focused on the Renaissance, a term that long ago burst the seams of its original art-historical and intellectual-historical garment. The era that followed will be less familiar to most readers of this book. (It does not even have an adequate or generally accepted name: the designation “baroque Italy” is just as misleading as “Renaissance Italy,” and “Counter-Reformation Italy” privileges certain topics while excluding others.) Although I have not supplied much “general background,” I have done my best to explain what I had first to discover for myself, so that intelligent readers will be able to situate my analysis of pretense of holiness within its larger context.

Psychoanalytic language is by now so embedded in historical thinking and discourse that employing it on occasion is difficult to avoid. I have not tried and do not claim, however, to have probed systematically the psyches of my subjects so as to uncover “real” motives “masked” by religious language. Although some psychoanalytic paradigms offer useful heuristic leads, they cannot be transplanted successfully into situations very different from those in which they were generated.¹² To put it more

accurately, features of the social, cultural, and economic environment suffice to illuminate, if not to explain fully, the paranormal experiences of early modern visionaries. In my view, a cigar is usually a cigar.

Gender lies at the center of this book. For me, it is not merely “a useful category of historical analysis” to be employed alongside other, more traditional historical modes of operation. In the seminal article in which she coined the phrase, Joan Scott expressed her hope that attention to gender would transform the practice of history.¹³ It has certainly transformed mine. Here I endeavor to show that socially constructed assumptions about male and female nature permeated both theologians’ and inquisitors’ conceptions of pretense of holiness and aspiring holy people’s ways of formulating and executing their projects of moving closer to God.

OVER THE MANY years I have been working on this project, I have received assistance from many individuals and institutions. My former colleagues in that vibrant intellectual community Lawrence University (especially William Bremer, Miriam Clapp Duncan, Michael Hittle, Judith Sarnecki, George Saunders, the late William Schutte, and John Stanley) followed my work with interest and enthusiasm, as did some of my students. The university facilitated my work through a sabbatical leave. Several graduate students at the University of Virginia, particularly those enrolled in my seminar “Saints and Society” (spring 1998), cheered me on and furnished occasional reality checks. Louisa Parker Mattozzi, Duane Osheim, and Susan Karant-Nunn lent a hand in preparing the final version of the manuscript. The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded me two fellowships (the second at the Newberry Library). From the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, which supports research on Venice and the Veneto, I received two short-term grants.

In Venice, my second home as well as the focal point of this project, staff members at the Archivio di Stato, the Archivio IRE (Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione), the Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, the Biblioteca del Seminario Patriarcale, the Biblioteca Correr, the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, and the Biblioteca dell’Istituto Storico della Fondazione Cini furnished expert assistance. I am particularly grateful to Maria Francesca Tiepolo, former director of the Archivio di Stato, for authorizing the opening of several sealed testaments, as well as to archivists Francesca Cavazzana Romanelli, Michela Dal Borgo, Claudia Salmini, Alessandra Sambo, and Alessandra Schiavon for unlocking the

secrets of inventories and helping me to solve some paleographical puzzles. My compatriot and fellow archive rat Stanley Chojnacki opened my eyes to the wonderful world of wills. The priests of several churches in Venice kindly allowed me to consult their parish records.

In Rome, I profited from help at the recently opened Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (special thanks to its director, Msgr. Alejandro Cifres Giménez), the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. The directors of the central archives of the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance, the Discalced Carmelites, and the Society of Jesus assisted me in tracking down some of the figures in this study.

A host of parish priests, archivists, and librarians too numerous to name aided my work on my peregrinations to depositories in other towns and cities. These include Alfianello and Bassano del Grappa (parish archives), Bergamo (Archivio Vescovile and Biblioteca Comunale Angelo Mai), Bologna (Archivio della Provincia Lombarda dell'Ordine Domenicano, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, and Biblioteca Universitaria), Brescia (Archivio di Stato, Archivio Vescovile, and Civica Biblioteca Queriniana), Chicago (Newberry Library), Faenza (Archivio Vescovile and Biblioteca Manfrediana), Florence (Archivio Arcivescovile, Archivio di Stato, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, and Biblioteca Riccardiana), Milan (Biblioteca Ambrosiana), Padua (Biblioteca Antoniana, Biblioteca Civica, and Biblioteca Universitaria), Trent (Biblioteca Comunale, Biblioteca dell'Istituto Religioso, Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico), Vicenza (Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana), and Washington, D.C. (Catholic University of America Library).

Throughout, a number of American and Italian friends and fellow scholars have generously offered moral support, intellectual guidance, and hospitality. Several have read my manuscript and made valuable suggestions. To them—Linda Carroll, Andrea Del Col, Michael Knapton, Edward Muir, Brenda Preyer, Silvana Seidel Menchi, Janet Smith, John Tedeschi, the late Fulvio Tomizza, Elissa Weaver, Gabriella Zarri, and my University of Virginia colleagues Mary McKinley and Alison Weber—I dedicate this book.

Aspiring Saints

Venetian *contrade* (coterminous with parishes). From Ennio Concina,
Venezia nell'età moderna: Struttura e funzioni (Venice: Marsilio, 1989).
Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

Twelve True Stories?

TO INTRODUCE a primarily analytical exposition, I have chosen to perform an experiment: constructing succinct narratives, “stories” based almost entirely on records of proceedings in Venetian territory against the sixteen people accused between 1618 and 1747 of feigning holiness. This group includes all known instances of alleged pretense of holiness, except those in the dioceses of Aquileia and Concordia, which came to the attention of ecclesiastical authorities in the Republic of Venice before its collapse in 1797.¹ Ten of these probes were conducted wholly or in part by the Holy Office in Venice, two by an inquisitorial tribunal or another ecclesiastical authority outside the dominant city.

In this chapter I present these stories as succinctly and neutrally as possible, reserving interpretation of them for the chapters that follow. Only in this way can I lay firm foundations for reconstructing analytically the phenomenon of feigned holiness. Let me emphasize that these are not stories of whole lives but judicial tales, based almost exclusively on what the records of investigations and prosecutions reveal. In virtually all cases, naturally enough, investigators attempting to discover what had led a person toward aspiring—in what was assumed in advance to be an illegitimate fashion—to become a “living saint” sought information about the past, and witnesses and defendants provided it. Afterwards, most of those suspected or convicted retreated into the obscurity from which they had briefly emerged. Their lives were not abruptly terminated; none of them was sentenced to capital punishment, let alone executed. Rather, they slipped silently off the stage, leaving few or no further marks on the historical script. Their relatively brief emergence into the light of notoriety and close scrutiny, however, opens a window onto individual ways of striving to become holy and institutional means of “discerning spirits”—that is, of distinguishing “genuine” and acceptable holiness from “false” and inappropriate manifestations of it and nipping the latter in the bud.

NARCISA

The Venetian Holy Office first encountered the problem of pretense of holiness in the fall of 1618.² On 4 September the inquisitor, fra Giovanni Domenico Vinuccio da Ravenna, received a letter from padre Adriano, a Somaschan priest. A certain Paola, he reported, had told her confessor, the sacristan at the Benedictine church of San Gregorio, about a woman who was claiming to have visions. Nine days later, a letter from Paola arrived at the chapel of San Teodoro, headquarters of the Inquisition. In an ungrammatical and confused fashion, she explained that her confessor, padre Lorenzo, had urged her to denounce a woman named Narcisa. Until a few months earlier Narcisa, who resided with a cousin in the parish of San Vio, had led a licentious life. Recently, however, she had begun to claim that God in the company of angels paid her frequent visits, that she knew the secret faults of priests and what penitents told them in confession, that obedience to such superiors as parents and confessors was unnecessary, and that, after the Virgin Mary, she herself was the mother of God. Paola concluded by suggesting that her niece Lucretia and two neighbors could furnish additional information about Narcisa.

After Paola's letter was read into the record on 13 September, the Inquisition decided to investigate her charges. In early October the two neighbors, Marina and Lucieta, daughters of Giovanni da Palma and cousins of the suspect, were summoned for questioning. They testified that Narcisa, a widow, had visited them frequently during the past three or four years. When she complained about the difficulty of finding a compatible spiritual adviser, they encouraged her to seek out their own confessor, padre Lorenzo at San Gregorio. According to the sisters, Narcisa was a good, pious woman. They had often talked with her about spiritual matters, but she had never mentioned having visions or the ability to discern priests' shortcomings and penetrate the seal of the confessional.

Here, on 8 October 1618, this tantalizing tale terminates abruptly without a conclusion. For unknown reasons, the Holy Office decided against interrogating the author of the denunciation, her niece, or padre Lorenzo. Nor did they summon Narcisa.

ALVISE BALBI AND MARIETTA ZAVANA

The spiritual adventures of this pair also reach us in fragmentary form: testimony taken by the Venetian Holy Office in the spring and fall of 1630 at the request of the inquisitor in Treviso.³ In September 1629 the

Venetian patrician Alvisè Balbi, age fifty-two, and a lower-class woman named Marietta Zavana, called Coltrera, had been tried and convicted in Treviso on twenty-one counts of pretense of holiness.⁴ The sentence, more a warning than a punishment, required them to cease seeing each other, stay away from female convents, and confess only to priests appointed by the Inquisition. If they failed to abide by these provisions, Balbi would be confined to prison at the pleasure of the Holy Office and Zavana would be sentenced to forced labor sewing sails in the Arsenal, the state shipyard of Venice.⁵

As the Inquisition of Treviso soon learned, Balbi and Zavana paid little heed to the terms of their sentence. Hence, on the basis of documents and suggestions sent from Treviso, the Venetian inquisitor, fra Girolamo Zapetti da Quinzano, proceeded to interrogate several people who had been in contact with the two. The line of questioning was designed to shed light on the activities of Balbi and Zavana preceding as well as following their condemnation. Witnesses' testimony yielded abundant evidence about a spiritual relationship dating back at least five years which, despite opposition from some clerics, had drawn in many people besides the two defendants. Key members of Balbi's and Zavana's circle were suor Benetta Girardi, an Augustinian Hermitess at San Marcuola in Venice, and suor Gabriella Malipiero, abbess of San Girolamo, a Benedictine house in Bassano.

According to both sympathizers and antagonists, Balbi and Zavana frequently went into ecstasy, during which they received revelations from on high. Awed by their ability to see into people's hearts, predict the future, and effect miraculous cures, their adherents, above all nuns in the two convents, believed them to be potent intermediaries with the divine. Suor Benetta and suor Gabriella had therefore collaborated in efforts to record and promote Balbi's and Zavana's extraordinary holiness.

Here again, we are left in suspense. Presumably the Venetian inquisitor transmitted the transcripts of the interrogations he had conducted to his colleague in Treviso, but what use was subsequently made of them there cannot be determined. Except for the fact that Balbi, middle aged at the time of the trial, lived on for another thirty-nine years, his and Zavana's trail runs cold in September 1630.

PIETRO VESPA

Named after his father, who belonged to the select category of *cittadini originari* (commoners eligible for certain important offices in the Vene-

tian state), Vespa was born in Venice in late July 1596.⁶ Around 1614 he became a Carmelite friar and soon attained positions of responsibility in the order. After earning a degree in canon law at the University of Padua, he served from 1619 to 1621 as master of novices at Santa Maria del Carmine in Venice and then as prior of the monastery of the same name in Vicenza. In the latter house he financed out of family funds the construction of a residence for novices and the restoration of the church; in addition, he founded new Carmelite houses in Brendola and Bassano. On 16 July 1629 his exemplary service was rewarded. At the instance of the Venetian government or at least with its approval, Pope Urban VIII named him bishop of Paphos. The nomination, contingent on his going to Cyprus and taking up residence, was supplemented with an appointment as apostolic visitor to all three dioceses on the island.⁷

This was a challenging assignment. Cyprus, once a Venetian possession, had fallen to the Turks in 1570 and was therefore *in partibus infidelium*. For decades the holders of Cypriot sees had been bishops *certo modo*: they did not govern their dioceses either in person or through a vicar, and they supported themselves with revenues derived from ecclesiastical appointments in Italy. Attempting to make the best of a bad situation, Paul V in 1619 had ceded responsibility for the Roman Catholics remaining on Cyprus to the Maronite patriarch of Antioch. Vespa's mandate, inspired by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, represented an abrupt reversal of this policy designed to reestablish a Roman Catholic presence on the island.⁸

The newly appointed bishop traveled immediately to Cyprus, where he set about reconciling former Christians who had apostatized to Islam and converting Jews. Before long, hostility on the part of the Turkish authorities rendered his position untenable, whereupon he made his way to Candia (Crete), an Aegean island still in Venetian hands, armed with an appointment as vicar general to Luca Stella, the nonresident archbishop of Candia. In the exercise of his mandate to reform the local clergy, he encountered opposition from priests disinclined to change their ways, who appealed over his head to their ordinary. From an itinerant Turinese artist with a sideline in antiquities he acquired an extraordinary object: an alabaster vase that he believed had once contained the perfumed unguent used by Mary Magdalene to anoint the feet of Christ.

After resigning the post of vicar general, for which he had received no compensation, Vespa packed up his only valuable possession, the vase, and headed for Rome to report on his mission. His ultimate destination

was his native city, where he planned to present the vase to the doge. En route, in Messina and Naples, water from the vessel cured many people afflicted by physical ailments and diabolic possession. The governing authorities in both cities, as well as local ecclesiastics, tried by fair means and foul to gain control of this precious object. While Vespa lay gravely ill in Messina, a Theatine from Calabria, Stefano Pippe, coerced him into dictating a will bequeathing all his worldly goods, including the vase, to the local Theatine church. As soon as Vespa recovered, he voided the testament. Infuriated, Pippe and Defendente Brusati (or Bruggiato), vicar of the archbishop of Messina, who suspected Vespa of aiming to take over his position, decided to retaliate by denouncing him to Rome. Not only, they wrote, had he abused his authority as vicar general. In Messina he had purported to be a special messenger of the Virgin Mary, who had supposedly sent him two letters via an amanuensis, Rosa Comminale, a novice in the convent of Santa Barbara. He also claimed to have lived for nine days on communion alone.

Once he reached Rome in late 1631 or early 1632, Vespa reported to Urban VIII. When the reward he had been led to expect—a bishopric in the mainland part of his native state—did not materialize, he correctly surmised that rumors originating in Messina had reached the ears of the Inquisition. Therefore he requested that the Congregation of the Holy Office institute a proceeding in Venice by which he could establish his innocence. On 30 August 1633, having learned that the order had finally been forwarded from Rome to Venice, he voluntarily came before the Venetian inquisitor, fra Clemente Ricetti da Iseo, to tell his story.

Much to Vespa's surprise, his spontaneous appearance and the written account and various affidavits he presented did not satisfy the Venetian Holy Office. Between November 1633 and March 1634 he and numerous witnesses were questioned at length, and transcripts of testimony taken in other tribunals were sent to Venice. The interrogations covered everything that had allegedly taken place in Cyprus, Candia, and southern Italy, as well as the defendant's earlier efforts to promote a miracle-working image of the Madonna in the church of Brendola. In the defense phase between March and May, several witnesses designated by Vespa and his attorney were heard, and additional documents were received into evidence. Then Ricetti forwarded the trial fascicolo to Rome. On 23 December 1634 the inquisitor was informed by Cardinal Francesco Barberini that the case could not be decided until further investigations were conducted in Messina. Apparently Vespa's trial con-

cluded at this point: the Venetian records shed no light on its resolution, and nothing on his case survives in the Roman archive of the Congregation of the Holy Office. The end of his inquisitorial story, however, cannot have been entirely unhappy, for when he died in Venice two decades later, he still held the bishopric of Paphos.⁹

CATERINA ROSSI

Rossi was born around 1595 in Poschiavo, the main urban center in the northeastern Valtellina, a religiously mixed region subject ecclesiastically to the bishop of Como.¹⁰ A domestic servant and perhaps a Franciscan tertiary, Rossi married twice and outlived both husbands; according to her, neither marriage was consummated. Before moving to Venetian territory, she had been tried by a secular court in Poschiavo for witchcraft and by the Holy Office of Como, which condemned her as lightly suspect of pretense of holiness. The only extant records of her activities are a brief summary of proceedings against her conducted in 1642–43 by the Inquisition of Brescia on the same charge and that tribunal's sentence.

Rossi made numerous claims to holiness: that she was visited in visions by the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints, who helped her pray; that she had lived for twelve years on communion alone; and that when a priest in the Valcamonica refused to give her communion, the consecrated host flew miraculously into her mouth. Confronted by testimony that contested her assertions, she refused to recant and took advantage of the opportunity to mount a defense.

Rossi's recalcitrance, compounded by her birth in a zone notorious for Protestantism (her sister was a Lutheran) and her previous prosecution for witchcraft, led the Brescian Holy Office to suspect diabolical involvement. The discovery on her left thigh of a mysterious raised, flesh-colored inscription, I.V.M.L., seemed initially to confirm this hypothesis. Although she denied under torture that she had made a pact with the devil, her bizarre words and gestures indicated that she was possessed. Extensive tests performed by an exorcist established that she was faking. Put to torture again, Rossi acknowledged that, in order to gain fame as a living saint, she had invented all the tales about special favors conferred upon her by divine powers, and she confessed that her behavior during the trial was a charade designed to mislead members of the tribunal. Judged vehemently suspect of heresy, she was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Extant sources do not indicate how long she stayed in jail and whether she survived her term.

GIUSEPPE RICCARDI

A thirty-seven-year-old Conventual Franciscan from Alcara li Fusi, near Messina, Riccardi was one of only two members of the regular clergy tried in Venetian territory for pretense of holiness.¹¹ Upon leaving his native Sicily, he spent some years in Rome before settling around 1643 in the monastery dubbed by Venetians “the big house,” Santa Maria Gloriosa de’ Frari. He frequently heard confessions and fulfilled preaching assignments in other parts of the city.

Riccardi was denounced to the Inquisition on 27 August 1650 by Zuan Francesco Leoni, a wool merchant who lived nearby, and fra Marino Cavaletti, *guardiano* of the Frari. Along with numerous witnesses subsequently summoned to testify, the accusers had become increasingly suspicious of the allegedly miraculous rosary beads given by Riccardi to his devotees, the friar’s claims that he frequently went into ecstasy and that his breath inoculated people against sin, and various statements he made in what hostile priests and friars termed “extravagant” sermons. Above all, they were skeptical about his promotion of a “living saint,” Francesca Tusa, a Franciscan tertiary of Caccamo, with whom he was in frequent epistolary contact. By commissioning and distributing copies of Francesca’s portrait and preaching about her spiritual prodigies, Riccardi had spread her cult in the parish of San Tomà, which surrounded his monastery. Suspension *a divinis* by his superior had done nothing to curtail his activities.

Arrested on 22 September, Riccardi was summoned before inquisitor Giovanni Battista Raimondo da Gavardo on 10 January 1651 for the first of five long interrogations. He vigorously rebutted all the charges against him, which he dismissed as calumnies by his numerous lay and clerical enemies, and cited sources to validate the orthodoxy of everything he had said in his sermons. His effort to mount a defense was unavailing. On 7 November 1651 he was sentenced to banishment from the city and the entire Venetian state and ordered to cease preaching, blessing the sick, distributing pictures of Francesca Tusa, and going into ecstasy. If apprehended in violation of these prohibitions, he would be assigned to seven years’ service on the Venetian galleys. He immediately expressed his intention to appeal to the Holy See. Whether he did so and with what result neither the Venetian trial record nor the central archive of the Holy Office reveals, but he never again appeared before the Venetian Inquisition.

PIETRO MORALI AND MARIA JANIS

Born in 1631, Janis, the daughter of a weaver, left her home in Colzate in the mountains north of Bergamo when she was about twenty years old in order to follow don Pietro Morali, a friend of her father's, to the nearby village of Zorzone, where he was serving as priest.¹² The attraction between the two, which both perceived as purely spiritual, remained so deeply sublimated that despite certain witnesses' efforts to insinuate otherwise, it seems not to have gone further than an occasional pat on the shoulder. Janis, who supported herself by spinning and weaving, was soon enlisted by Morali to conduct classes in Christian Doctrine for the children of Zorzone. So that she would be qualified to enter a convent for poor women under construction in a nearby town, the priest taught her to recite the Great Office in Latin.

Gradually Janis slipped into inedia (noneating). Having developed a psychological and intellectual aversion to ordinary mortals' sustenance, she came to prefer the spiritually nourishing food and drink available at the altar. She began to experiment, eating less and less and taking communion as frequently as possible. One day the idea occurred to her of trying to live on communion alone. When Morali realized what his penitent was doing, he initially vacillated in handling her but eventually capitulated to her demand for communion at least once a day.

Morali's belief in what he and Janis called her "privilege" and his confidence that eventually God would allow it to be revealed to the world led him to take her and a male chaperone, the devout weaver Pietro Palazzi, on the road to Rome and then to Venice. There, in January 1661, the woman and the priest were spied on by their neighbor Antonia Bellini while they conducted an improvised private communion ceremony, sanctioned by their visions but not by ecclesiastical authorities. Bellini informed her confessor, Iseppo Rizzo, a priest on the staff of San Giovanni Elemosinario di Rialto, about what she had seen; he reported Janis and Morali to the Inquisition.

The inquisitor, fra Ambrogio Fracassini da Brescia, who had handled the concluding phase of Giuseppe Riccardi's trial a decade earlier, took this new case of pretense of holiness very seriously. After questioning Rizzo, Bellini, her mother, and her sister, he ordered a search of Janis's and Morali's apartment, the seizure of their possessions, and the arrest of the two suspects. In addition to interrogating members of the Bergamasque community in Venice who had assisted the defendants since their

recent arrival in the city, the inquisitor had his colleague in Bergamo conduct an extensive background investigation among those who had known the two in Zorzone.

From the Holy Office's point of view, the crux of the matter was "the knot of noneating." Had Maria really subsisted for more than five years on communion alone, as she and her codefendant steadfastly claimed? Most witnesses, considering Janis a holy woman and Morali a well-intentioned priest, maintained a prudent reserve. Circumstantial evidence, however, pointed to the likelihood that she had occasionally taken mundane nourishment. In March 1663 Morali and Janis were finally persuaded by defense attorneys to admit that they had not been telling the truth. Morali, judged "vehemently suspect" of heresy, was sentenced to a five-year term in prison, which was soon commuted to confinement in the Venetian home of a merchant from Bergamo. Janis, adjudged only "lightly suspect," was to be imprisoned at the pleasure of the Holy Office. After a few months she was transferred to the hospital of the Mendicanti. Thereafter the two made no marks on the historical record.

CECILIA FERRAZZI

Born in Venice in April 1609, one of numerous children of a box maker from Bassano, Ferrazzi decided very early that God had called her to become a nun.¹³ Her parents reluctantly agreed, but their death in the great plague of 1630 thwarted her project of monachization. For more than a decade she survived in an uncertain status in the homes of several affluent Venetians. Her frequent illnesses and fainting spells, which she interpreted as visitations from divine and infernal powers, evoked admiration from some of her hosts and confessors and concern on the part of others. Investigated at one point by the patriarch of Venice, she was rejected for admission to at least two convents.

In the early 1650s Ferrazzi emerged from her time of troubles, having found herself a vocation: running a house for *putte pericolanti*, girls and young women lacking adequate familial supervision who were at risk of being seduced and forced into prostitution. Her operation, relocated several times, proved a great success. By the mid-1660s, she was caring for some three hundred charges in a converted palace at Sant'Antonio di Castello in Venice, as well as running a refuge in Padua.

Ferrazzi's supporters accepted her accounts of visions, instructions, and assistance given her by the Virgin Mary and various saints. Some relatives of the girls in her establishments were more skeptical. In May 1664,

Cecilia Ferrazzi's trial record, title page. Venice, Archivio di Stato, Sant'Uffizio, b. 112, fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi. Reproduced by permission of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (concession no. 16, 1 March 2000).

when Ferrazzi refused to release the daughters and niece of Chiara Bacchis, whom she suspected of planning to force the girls into prostitution, the woman and her friend Chiara Garzoni, a former inmate in one of Ferrazzi's houses, denounced her to the Inquisition for false claims to holiness.

Fra Agapito Ugoni da Brescia, inquisitor of Venice, who little more than a year earlier had brought to a conclusion the trial of Janis and Morali, was now faced with a much more complicated and politically sensitive case. Over the next fifteen months, during the prosecution and defense phases of the trial, he interrogated almost three hundred witnesses: former residents in her establishments, professional men, clerics, and patricians. Many supplied information confirming the accusations,

but others professed ignorance of suspicious activities or assertions on Ferrazzi's part. Some unequivocally supported her vigorous denial of all the charges against her.

Nonetheless, on 1 September 1665 the Inquisition found Ferrazzi "lightly suspect" of heresy and sentenced her to seven years' imprisonment. She immediately appealed her case to the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome. In the summer of 1667 the Congregation authorized her transfer from the Venetian Inquisition's prison to Padua, where she was held under house arrest in the custody of Cardinal Gregorio Barbarigo. Eighteen months later, on 29 January 1669, the authorities in Rome, under heavy pressure from the Venetian government and Cardinal Barbarigo, ordered her release.¹⁴ She died in her native city on 17 January 1684.¹⁵

FRANCESCO VINCENZI AND ANTONIA PESENTI

These two Venetians, the *pievano* of the parish church of Santa Ternita, who was fifty-seven, and the thirty-four-year-old daughter of an artisan in the parish of San Polo, were denounced to the Holy Office on 19 June 1668 by Giovanni Daviano, a canon of Candia who said mass in Vincenzi's church.¹⁶ According to the accuser, Pesenti had taken up residence some two months earlier in a hermitage adjoining the priest's residence. Following her suggestion, allegedly inspired by the Virgin Mary, Vincenzi had moved a painting of the Madonna to a prominent location in the church, where it prompted what he claimed were miracles. Pesenti frequently went into what appeared to be ecstasy in front of the painting; only Vincenzi could bring her out of these trances. With other young women, she participated in ceremonies choreographed by the *pievano* which in Daviano's view were at the very least superstitious. Worst of all, Vincenzi's aggressive promotion of Pesenti as a living saint was drawing crowds of credulous visitors to Santa Ternita.

Under interrogation, the canon furnished other incriminating information about Pesenti's behavior, including strange fits of paralysis and abstention from eating, and Vincenzi's involvement in it. Once his allegations had been corroborated and supplemented by numerous witnesses from the parish, the Holy Office ordered that the two suspects be apprehended. When he was brought in for questioning, Vincenzi cooperated enthusiastically, seeing the proceedings as an opportunity to elucidate the miraculous occurrences with which he and his church had been favored. In her first extended appearance before the tribunal, Pesenti responded

only with stuttered syllables, sobs, and gestures, leading the Holy Office to suspect that she was possessed. After treatment by an experienced exorcist, she became voluble in her response to questions.

Many further interrogations of the defendants brought to light a circumstantial account of their relationship, which had culminated in an improvised ceremony of spiritual marriage complete with a white gown and flowers for the bride and the placing of a ring on her finger. Given the opportunity to consult attorneys, neither Pesenti nor Vincenzi opted to present a defense but threw themselves on the mercy of the Holy Office. On 14 March 1669 they abjured as “vehemently suspect” of heresy. Pesenti was sentenced to be housed with some “honest woman” who would make sure that she refrained from talking about her “illusions” and had no further contact with her codefendant, at which point her story ends. Vincenzi, also given an indeterminate jail sentence, was warned that if he ever saw or communicated with Pesenti again, he would incur additional punishment. A petition from the parish council was instrumental in bringing about his early release. He died in office as pievano of Santa Ternita on 6 September 1676.¹⁷

MARIA PELLIZZARI

The daughter of Girolamo Reato, Pellizzari was born around 1635 in Angarano on the western outskirts of Bassano del Grappa.¹⁸ There she soon went to live with an aunt, married the blacksmith Zuanmaria Pellizzari, and had a family.¹⁹ One day many years before her trial, while she was praying at home, she was attacked by the devil. A Reformed Franciscan, fra Diedo, assured her that God was testing her patience. She had previously constructed a little gilded chair covered with red damask and embossed with the Holy Name, on which she imagined that the infant Jesus sat. The friar reassured her that this pious activity was legitimate. Dubious about her claims that Jesus and the Virgin Mary actually came to sit in the chair and converse with her, that she received revelations about souls in purgatory and heaven and possessed the gift of prophecy, and that through her intercession sick people were cured, her neighbors, who sarcastically dubbed her “the *beata* [blessed woman] of Bassano,” considered her insane. The vicar of Bassano representing the Inquisition of Vicenza, who held the same opinion, reprimanded her on several occasions for her presumptuous and suspicious behavior.

In November 1685, Pellizzari, now a widow, moved to Padua to earn support for her three children by begging. A widowed prostitute, Betta

Borella, commissioned her to have a mass said at the shrine of St. Anthony of Padua, asked her to dinner, listened to her expound on the glory of God, and then, impressed by her piety, invited her to move in. Borella's relationship with a man twenty years her junior, Giovanni Battista Filomena, shocked her houseguest. In the name of God, Pellizzari urged the two to regularize their sinful relationship. On 9 March 1686 they married and moved with Pellizzari to Venice, where Borella opened a boardinghouse.

Pellizzari was denounced to the Venetian Inquisition in late June 1686 by Giovanni Battista Filomena's father, Girolamo, a career civil servant currently serving as *vicario pretorio* in Padua. Having found a suitable wife for his son, he was appalled by the young man's marriage to an aging prostitute. This strange misalliance brought about by Pellizzari, he asserted, suggested that the woman from Bassano must be in league with the devil. After questioning the accuser and various Venetian servants, neighbors, and friends of Betta Borella and Giovanni Battista Filomena, the Holy Office ordered the arrest of Pellizzari and requested that the inquisitor of Vicenza, who had jurisdiction in Bassano, and his colleague in Padua obtain further information about her.

Two interrogations of Pellizzari and evaluation of testimony gathered from witnesses in Venice, Bassano, and Padua led the Inquisition to reject Girolamo Filomena's hypothesis that the beata of Bassano was a sorceress. Her testimony and behavior, they decided, pointed to mental instability rather than a conscious attempt to misrepresent herself as a living saint. She was ordered to return to Bassano, remain there unless granted permission by the inquisitor of Venice or his colleague in Vicenza to go elsewhere, and stop talking about inspirations from on high. If she failed to abide by these stipulations, she would be imprisoned again. Since there is no further record of proceedings against Pellizzari, it appears that she obeyed these orders.

GIACOMO LADICOSA AND MARIETTA BON ERIZZO

The Minim friar Giacomo Ladicosa, a fifty-five-year-old native of Venice residing in the monastery of San Francesco di Paola, came to the attention of the Venetian Holy Office in July 1692.²⁰ He was denounced by Marina Bon, wife of Matteo Schiavo, to whom (along with her older sister Marietta, widow of Paolo Erizzo) he had long been spiritual adviser. A few years earlier, in large part prompted by Marietta Bon Erizzo, Ladicosa had begun to exercise his priestly functions in a new manner. Hav-

ing persuaded him that in ecstasy she was receiving divine revelations vouchsafed primarily by the founder of his order, to which her late son Francesco had also belonged, the woman convinced him to make frequent house calls. During these visits, he celebrated mass at an improvised altar, confessed Marietta and other women, and sometimes stayed overnight. To solidify her position as conduit between heaven and earth, Bon Erizzo presented Ladicosa with a number of “relics.”²¹

Ladicosa’s unorthodox method of administering the sacrament of penance included requiring women to compile written records of their sins and chastising them with rods and his hands on their bare buttocks. In the course of the trial it became clear that Marietta Bon Erizzo was not Ladicosa’s only source of inspiration. Books found in his cell, as well as contacts and statements he acknowledged, demonstrated that he had been influenced by Quietism, an antinomian current of thought fiercely combated by the church in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth. He had espoused and put into practice what orthodox theologians considered to be the inevitable consequence of Quietist beliefs: the claim that he was not only incapable of sin but obliged to court sexual temptation in order to manifest and confirm his impeccability.

Until the very end of his long trial, while conceding his gullibility about the “relics,” Ladicosa insisted that he had sincerely believed everything Bon Erizzo had told him. In his defense, he attempted to justify his behavior by quibbling about the precise canonical status of the confessions he had conducted and by citing authoritative texts. On 13 May 1694 he was suspended forever from exercising priestly functions, sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment, and debarred for eight years from petitioning for an abbreviation of his jail term. Ten years later, on 29 May 1704, he was released from prison. Bon Erizzo, interrogated intensively on numerous occasions, eventually admitted that sorrow over the death of her son had led her to trick the friar. Perhaps because she had just become a *conversa* (servant nun), she was never jailed or subjected to a full-fledged trial. On 18 June 1694, following summary proceedings, she signed a printed abjuration form acknowledging that she had been found vehemently suspect of heresy and was assigned salutary penances.

LUCREZIA GAMBARA

Gambara, daughter of a peasant, was born in Alfianello, about twenty kilometers northeast of Cremona, on 4 January 1704.²² Her native village lay in the southwest corner of the diocese of Brescia, near the bor-

Abjuration of Marietta Bon Erizzo. Venice, Archivio di Stato, Sant'Uffizio, b. 127, fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa. Reproduced by permission of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (concession no. 16, 1 March 2000).

der between the Venetian state and Spanish-controlled Lombardy. At the age of five, putting into practice her pious mother's encouragement to love and suffer for Christ, she began to undertake a variety of penitential practices. Not long after initiating this ascetic regimen, she began to experience frequent visions of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other saints.

When she was seven or eight, Gambara dedicated her virginity to Christ, a vow supplemented at the age of twelve by the resolve never to look a man in the face. As she moved into adolescence, her inner life came out into the open. Her devotion to the Holy Sacrament caused her to sigh and scream in its presence, which led most people in Alfianello to consider her insane. Her visions became more troubling as well. In addition to saints, she now saw young men and animals whose words and

actions incited her to lust and dissuaded her from taking communion. Apprised of these apparitions, her confessor, Giuseppe Simoni, *prevosto* of Alfianello, had her exorcised by a priest from nearby Verola and examined by the inquisitor of Brescia.²³ Although their expert ministrations temporarily ameliorated her situation, they did not suffice to banish entirely the disturbing elements in her spiritual life.

Shortly after she had seen the inquisitor, Gambara began to suffer from pains, paralysis, and the inability to hold down food. In the spring of 1728, after having subjected herself to unusually harsh penance, she felt in her heart Christ's cross and the instruments of his passion. When she prayed for additional wounds, this petition was promptly granted: a cruciform wound in her side began to exude blood and water; wounds on her hands bled profusely as well. In mid-December 1728 Simoni belatedly informed the vicar general of the diocese of Brescia about the unusual occurrences in his parish; on the same day, the Benedictine abbot Filippo Garbelli notified the Congregation of the Holy Office. Following instructions from the Congregation transmitted by his bishop, Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini, from Rome, vicar general Leandro Chizzola began to investigate what he suspected was some sort of pious fraud.

Gambara never went on trial before the Inquisition. Instead, the vicar general summoned Simoni to Brescia for questioning, harshly reprimanded him for delaying to report on his difficult penitent, and gave him detailed written instructions on interrogating and counseling her. When it became clear that Simoni was incapable of managing Gambara and damping down local enthusiasm about her apparent holiness, Chizzola decided that she must be brought to Brescia. Having been ordered to identify a learned, pious cleric with previous experience in such matters who could get to the bottom of the matter, Chizzola found a well-qualified candidate: the Benedictine monk Agostino Randini, who had been involved some years earlier in the case of a deluded nun in Reggio Emilia.²⁴

The ensuing series of colloquies between Gambara and Randini had a dual purpose: determining the cause of Gambara's fantasies about her holiness and the degree of responsibility she bore for holding them and disabusing her of her presumptuous notions. The monk accomplished his assigned task. He managed to satisfy himself and persuade her that she had allowed herself to be deluded. Once she had finally admitted her fault, he promised to secure her release from the vow of virginity, assuring her that she could proceed to live a pious, normal life as a married

woman. On 16 May 1729 Chizzola, with Cardinal Querini's authorization, ordered Simoni to make arrangements for Gambarà's return to Alfianello and provided him with guidelines for monitoring her behavior thereafter. Thus ended Lucrezia Gambarà's brief period of notoriety. The parish records of Alfianello shed no light on whether she married and when she died.²⁵

ANDREA SCOLARI

Our last story features a priest in his mid-forties from Bogliaco on the Riviera di Salò, the northwestern shore of Lake Garda, in the diocese of Brescia.²⁶ Where Andrea Scolari trained for the priesthood the trial documents do not indicate, but during the first decade or so of his career he served as private chaplain to a gentleman in Tremosine, near his birthplace. Around 1740 he joined the Oratory, a company of secular priests founded in the sixteenth century by Filippo Neri, in Vicenza, but left it after a short time for financial reasons. For eighteen months in 1743–44 he lived in Venice in the house of the noblewoman Elisabetta Minio. Between July and October 1747 he confessed the nuns of Santa Maria della Visitazione, a Visitandine convent in San Vito al Tagliamento (diocese of Concordia). After being dismissed, he was denounced to the Holy Office of Venice on 12 December 1747 by the Venetian Discalced Carmelite Pietro Paolo di Santa Teresa. The inquisitor, Paolo Tommaso Manuelli, immediately pursued the Carmelite's accusations. By the time Scolari was denounced in Udine on 18 April 1748 by the Observant Dominican Leonardo Maria Cantarutti, he had been apprehended on the Riviera di Salò and jailed in Venice. Carlo Ippolito Baratti, inquisitor of Aquileia and Concordia, initiated an investigation, the results of which he sent to his colleague in Venice.

The two friars furnished disturbing information about Scolari's peculiar conduct during the previous few years, first in the home of Elisabetta Minio and then in the convent. According to Pietro Paolo di Santa Teresa, he had proclaimed that because the Virgin Mary had rendered him impeccable, he was free to engage in sexual acts without feeling temptation or incurring sin and exempted from other requirements such as fasting. On this pretext he had persuaded Minio that by embracing his naked body in bed and sucking his flesh, she could express her love of God and attain a state of sinlessness similar to his. In the convent of the Visitation, according to Cantarutti, he had required the nuns to sign pacts of exclusive allegiance to him, refrain from confessing to other priests, and sub-

mit written accounts of their thoughts and actions. His leading the Visitandines to believe that he was extraordinarily holy made the Dominican and a few of the nuns suspect him of hypocrisy, if not worse.

The inquisitors of Venice and Udine accepted uncritically the accusers' damning portrait of Scolari's conduct. For almost three years, extensive interrogations of witnesses were conducted in Venice, San Vito, Udine, Brescia, Padua, and Vicenza; almost none of their testimony supported the accusations. Questioned on twenty-eight occasions between May 1748 and December 1749, Scolari persisted in maintaining that he had always followed the precepts of the church, vigorously opposing rather than endorsing the heresy of Quietism, and never consciously committed any wrong. Protesting that Minio, the original source of the accusations, was sexually promiscuous as well as mentally unbalanced and that those who supported her charges were inspired by malice, he and his defense attorney furnished several sets of questions which the inquisitor put to witnesses, as well as presenting numerous affidavits attesting to his innocence. None of this counterevidence persuaded the Holy Office. On 17 September 1750 Scolari was judged vehemently suspect of heresy, sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and prohibited for life from administering the sacrament of penance. Late in December 1751, after forty-one months in jail, he was released by order of the Congregation of the Holy Office and sent home to Bogliaco.

By late 1757, if not earlier, Scolari had somehow managed to land on his professional feet. Although he could no longer hear confessions, he found employment in the episcopal curia of Brescia. For a person convicted of pretense of holiness, his job was an peculiarly appropriate one. In three sets of proceedings concerning the beatification of Maria Maddalena Martinengo (1687–1737), a Capuchin nun of Brescia, he served as *promotor fiscalis in subpromotorum fidei deputatis*: the “devil's advocate” responsible for making certain that the claims of holiness advanced on behalf of this candidate for the honor of the altars were genuine.²⁷

FROM MANY POINTS of view the documents that yield these constructed accounts are rich and informative. Unlike most records utilized for doing history “from the bottom up,” they let us “listen to the inarticulate” recounting their life experiences and elucidating their ideas and motives—or so it appears at first glance. We have opened a window, but how far? Do judicial documents actually enable us to reconstruct

“true stories,” as many historians and their readers have assumed? In recent years, interpreters have become skeptical. As Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero have rightly observed, “criminal records can never be simple windows into the past, rather they are highly crafted images fashioned in accord with legal procedures, statutes, precedents, and the cultural and power dynamics of the past.”²⁸

Two experts on the Inquisition have explored these problems in depth. In his studies of the *benandanti* and of the miller Domenico Scandella, nicknamed Menocchio, Carlo Ginzburg emphasizes the enormous cultural and linguistic gulf separating inquisitors, representatives of high culture operating something like anthropologists, from many of the people whom they interrogated.²⁹ This gap was eventually bridged—but not by inquisitors’ coming to understand and communicate fully with those in the subordinate classes. Prosecutors, holding the power of life and death within the courtroom and allied with the secular authorities in the world outside, utilized an interpretive framework formed by their own categories of thinking to elicit and interpret information from defendants and witnesses. Occasionally, testimony had to be translated for them from dialect into Italian.³⁰ Hence, according to Ginzburg, the inquisitorial encounter did not allow for a free and frank exchange of views; inevitably the inquisitors’ gestalt prevailed. Nonetheless, Ginzburg contends, we can capture at least partially defendants’ and witnesses’ original beliefs by using our own interpretive filter. When a defendant’s or witness’s response takes the inquisitor by surprise, then modern scholars can catch a glimpse of alternative beliefs and worldviews.³¹

Can Ginzburg’s interpretive filter help us to interpret prosecutions for pretense of holiness?³² It is important to make clear that, in one respect, the Venetian trial records differ significantly from the Udinese ones he examined. In the literal sense, the “false saints” spoke the same language as the judges who interrogated them and the notaries who recorded the questions and responses. Courtroom proceedings were conducted in a common mother tongue, Italian strongly marked with Venetian words and turns of phrase.³³ In these trials, furthermore, neither party had much trouble understanding the other’s theological parlance. Serious difficulties in communication arose, however, over interpretation of the defendants’ experiences and intentions. Sometimes defendants and witnesses offered more or different information than they were asked to provide. When this occurred, a variant of Ginzburg’s inter-

pretive filter can be employed to identify the diverse criteria by which inquisitors and persons under interrogation separated “truth” from “falseness” and the important from the trivial, as well as to comprehend how each processed messages received from the other.³⁴

Andrea Del Col, a historian trained in canon law, urges even greater caution in trying to use inquisitorial sources to tell “true stories.” Records generated by the Holy Office, he insists, are internal legal documents, primary sources only for what the judges aimed at: repressing heterodoxy. They do not reflect directly, faithfully, and fully what suspects, defendants, and witnesses believed. Treating these sources as if they were anthropologists’ field notes or literary texts containing dialogues in the modern sense of the word between judges and those who came before them is a serious mistake.³⁵ In order to comprehend what such documents can and cannot tell us, it is essential to understand both the training and outlook of the personnel on the court and the theological and legal framework in which they operated.³⁶

What the inquisitor asked for, Del Col shows, he usually got. If he confined himself to a line of interrogation based entirely on and intended solely to validate or invalidate what an accuser had claimed, as was often the case, then little or no information outside the original framing of the accusation emerged. Asking a leading question such as “Do you believe that the pope is the vicar of Christ?” almost always elicited a short, possibly disingenuous, and for the historian not very useful answer: “Yes, Father.” Seldom, even in response to nondirective questions, did persons under interrogation have a chance to furnish detailed, complete, sincere accounts of their lives and beliefs—nor is it at all likely that they wished to do so.³⁷ In the flock of early modern religious dissidents, Ginzburg’s Menocchio, apparently so anxious to share his worldview with inquisitors, was a rare bird indeed.³⁸

For the lives and beliefs of those being prosecuted, according to Del Col, trial records per se are indirect and incomplete sources. By examining writings presented to the tribunal during the trial (previous correspondence with friends, autograph defense statements and confessions, supplications, and so forth), however, we can come a little closer to what suspects and defendants actually believed. Even when prepared within the context of the trial, documents of these sorts are not as thoroughly conditioned by the judges’ imperatives as are transcripts of interrogations. Using them in conjunction with relevant extrajudicial sources providing

a context wider than that of the trial enables us to read between the lines and enter at least partially into the texture of “heretics’” everyday lives.³⁹

TELLING “TRUE STORIES” based on court records, then, is difficult but not a completely impossible dream. To gain access to the points of view of the inquisitor (shaped by the writings of canonists and theologians), the accused, and the witnesses, we must first see how the Inquisition worked and explore the intellectual and procedural evolution of pretense of holiness as a prosecutable offense. Then, for purposes of comparison, we need to identify two control groups on opposite ends of the judicial and theological spectrum: some contemporaries of the “false saints” who won acceptance as genuine holy people, others who were sentenced for sorcery and witchcraft. To these tasks we turn in Chapters 2 to 6.

The Roman Inquisition in Venice

FROM THE MID-SIXTEENTH until the late eighteenth century a network of courts of the Roman Inquisition operated in the Venetian republic and almost every other state on the Italian peninsula, as well as in Malta and the papal enclave of Avignon.¹ Established by Paul III in the bull *Licet ab initio* (21 July 1542), it differed in several ways from its medieval predecessor. Most of the responsibility for prosecuting heresy was shifted from the ordinaries, individual bishops in their dioceses, to tribunals directed by Observant Dominican or Conventual Franciscan friars, whose work was supervised by a committee of cardinals in Rome, the Congregation of the Holy Office.²

Viewed in a general perspective, the reorganization of the Inquisition parallels efforts by early modern European secular rulers to centralize and enhance their authority through reshaping existing institutions and creating new ones, both firmly under their control.³ Paul III and his advisers had a very specific motive for assuming direct charge over the prosecution of heresy. Along with the recognition two years earlier of Ignatius Loyola's Society of Jesus, which its founder made subject directly to the pope, and the effort, which finally materialized in 1545, to convoke a general council managed by the papal curia, the new-model Inquisition constituted a belated but vigorous response to the Protestant challenge.

Unlike the Iberian Inquisitions, ecclesiastical courts governed by a council (the Suprema) that was a department of the secular government, the Roman Inquisition was created by and responsible only to the Holy See.⁴ The pope chose experienced men of unimpeachable orthodoxy to serve on and head its governing body, the Congregation of the Holy Office, and normally presided over its meetings.⁵ When Sixtus V reorganized the papal curia in 1588, this body assumed first rank among the fifteen commissions of cardinals which oversaw ecclesiastical operations.⁶ Even earlier, membership in the Congregation of the Holy Office had

become a preferred penultimate stage in the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum*. Four of the twelve men elevated to the papal throne during the first fifty years of the Roman Inquisition's existence had previously served on it: Marcello Cervini (Marcellus II, 1549), Gian Pietro Carafa (Paul IV, 1555–59), Michele Ghislieri (Pius V, 1566–72), and Giovanni Battista Castagna (Urban VII, 1590).⁷ Even though a key role in the prosecution of heresy figured less prominently on the *curricula vitae* of pontiffs in the seventeenth century, several had inquisitorial experience that undoubtedly contributed to their prestige and hence to their perceived qualifications for election to the highest office in the church.⁸

In another respect, the Roman Inquisition bore some resemblance to its Iberian counterparts. That the initiative for founding the Inquisition in Castile in 1478 and extending it to Aragon five years later came from the rulers of these two kingdoms is well known. Yet Isabel and Ferdinand could not have acted without papal sanction, nor could Pope Sixtus IV have imposed the tribunal upon Castile and Aragon without their consent. Similarly, in order to establish the Roman Inquisition in Italian polities other than their own States of the Church, Paul III and his successors needed both initial acceptance by and subsequent cooperation from secular governments.

Such advice and consent were no mere diplomatic formalities. On the contrary, they attested to a fundamental characteristic of the western European *mentalité* in this period. Those who ran early modern states, along with the overwhelming majority of their subjects, were only occasionally and superficially Machiavellians. The sharp conceptual and operational distinctions we make between sacred and secular, church and state, were not part of their mental furniture. Princes and civil servants shared with prelates and priests several general assumptions: that Christian truth was one and indivisible; that it must be manifested on earth by a single church; and that all those in authority, as well as their subjects, must cooperate in conforming to the will of God and promoting his purposes. As recent scholarship has shown, Venice constitutes no exception to this rule. Contrary to an older view that the Serenissima was a unique harbinger of modern secularism in continual, irrepressible conflict with the papacy, the men who ran the republic and those in charge of the church were in substantial agreement concerning the ultimate purposes of a Christian society.⁹

On the means by which to achieve these ends, however, consensus was by no means easy to achieve. Venice and Rome frequently collided

on such jurisdictional issues as whether all bishops and inquisitors appointed to serve in Venetian territory should be Venetian subjects, under what circumstances (if any) defendants in Inquisition trials could be extradited to papal territory, and how to regulate the conveyance and taxation of property.¹⁰ Although these disputes escalated into a major confrontation only once, in the Interdict Crisis of 1605–7, diplomatic dispatches and other documentary sources reveal continual tension in the relationship between the republic and the Holy See.

Chief among the matters giving rise to such tension was the prosecution of heresy. As John Tedeschi and William Monter put it, “Any branch of the Roman Inquisition located in the domains of an aggressive secular ruler labored under some set of special disabilities.”¹¹ Andrea Del Col fleshes out this generalization for the early years in which the Roman Inquisition operated in Venice, showing how adroitly and successfully the Venetians fought in the 1540s and 1550s to secure a governmental presence in inquisitorial proceedings more significant than any other state managed to attain. Through the regular participation in all trials of lay representatives—in Venice, the *Tre Savi all’Eresia*, elected by the Senate from among its most distinguished, experienced members; in subject cities, the rector or his designate—the republic strove to protect its subjects against arbitrary actions by overzealous or unscrupulous inquisitors and to shield them from extradition. Nor did the rulers of Venice cede to the Inquisition all responsibility for ferreting out manifestations of unorthodoxy. Via correspondence with rectors throughout the vast territory under the republic’s sway and with ambassadors in Italy and elsewhere, key government bodies, notably the Council of Ten, kept an eye on individuals and groups engaged in what appeared to be heretical activities.¹²

During the first forty years of its activity, the Roman Inquisition in Venice, like tribunals of the Holy Office elsewhere in Italy, was concerned mainly with the detection and suppression of Protestantism. Most of those whom it brought to trial were suspected of committing one or more of the following offenses: owning, reading, discussing, and distributing heretical books; attacking Catholic and praising Protestant doctrines, practices, institutions, and clerical personnel; and failing to observe such requirements as confessing, taking communion, and fasting.¹³ The vast majority of them were men. In the mid-1580s, once the threat posed by Protestantism had lessened, the caseload of the Venetian and other Italian Inquisitions was transformed in three ways. The proportion of

“complete” trials—prosecutions culminating in a verdict and penalty—declined. As we shall see in more detail in Chapter 6, magic and sorcery (often misleadingly termed *witchcraft*) and the solicitation of sexual favors in the confessional replaced philo-Protestant activities as the major offenses.¹⁴ Because women were heavily involved in the practice of sorcery, the gender balance among defendants became roughly equal.¹⁵ These trends persisted at least through the seventeenth century and probably until the abolition of the Inquisition in the late eighteenth century.

BY THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY the working schedule, meeting place, and membership of the Venetian tribunal had settled into a pattern that can be reconstructed from a handbook compiled by Jacopo Altoviti, papal nuncio in Venice from 1659 to 1666, and from trial records.¹⁶ The tribunal convened every Tuesday and Thursday morning except on feast days, when the Grand Council was meeting, and during a vacation period in the early autumn.¹⁷ It met in the small church of San Teodoro, located across a courtyard from the sacristy of the ducal church, San Marco.¹⁸ In attendance were the members of the court: the papal nuncio or his auditor, the patriarch of Venice or his vicar general, the inquisitor, and one or more of the Tre Savi. Support personnel regularly present included the *fiscale* (prosecuting attorney) and the chancellor, clerics appointed by and responsible to the inquisitor.¹⁹

First to enter San Teodoro were the nuncio and the patriarch. Most likely they, and the inquisitor as well, had arrived by gondola from their residences in the eastern part of the city—respectively, the Palazzo della Nunziatura, near San Francesco della Vigna; the patriarchal basilica of San Pietro di Castello; and the Observant Dominican monastery of San Domenico di Castello—and disembarked on the Fondamenta della Canonica. Altoviti’s manual emphasizes that the nuncio was the most prestigious member of the tribunal: he did not shake hands with his colleagues.²⁰ After offering a prayer, he and the patriarch asked the inquisitor to summon the lay deputies. Following another prayer, the ecclesiastics and Savi took their assigned positions. If the seating arrangement worked out in the 1650s for outlying tribunals was modeled on that of Venice, we can infer that the members of the court sat along one long side of a rectangular table on a raised platform, with the chancellor on the short side at their right. Their assistants took chairs situated “lower and outside the line.”²¹ Defendants and witnesses called to testify sat on a bench at the other end of the table, next to the inquisitor.

The opening formula for meetings of the Venetian Inquisition found in trial records confirms for the most part the rank order prescribed in Altoviti's handbook. Although the lay deputies (usually one or two, but when a sentence was to be pronounced, all three) are listed first, immediately following the date, they are described as *assistentes*. Their presence was essential to a valid inquisitorial proceeding, but they were not in charge of conducting it. Then come the names of judges present on that particular day, meticulously arranged by the chancellor in rank order. Ordinarily the pope's ambassador headed the list, but if the patriarch was a cardinal, as was the case during the tenure of Federico Corner, the nuncio was relegated to second place, followed by the inquisitor.²² On those occasions, relatively rare in the seventeenth century, when the nuncio was represented by his auditor or the patriarch by his vicar, the substitute's name was placed at the end, after that of the inquisitor.

CONTEMPORARY PROTOCOL and etiquette notwithstanding, the most visible member of the Venetian Inquisition in trial records is the inquisitor general. A Dominican friar appointed by the Congregation of the Holy Office, he managed the caseload of the tribunal and bore primary, if not sole, responsibility for interrogating suspects and witnesses.²³ Between 1560 (when Observant Dominicans took over the position from Conventual Franciscans) and 1572, inquisitors general were all natives of the republic. During the next fifty-four years, "foreigners," subjects of other Italian states, held the post. After repeated remonstrances from the government, the Congregation returned in 1632 to the practice of naming Venetian subjects, almost always natives of Brescia.²⁴ This geographical consistency may not have been a coincidence. Not only was Brescia the seat of a distinguished Dominican monastery that was a veritable nursery of inquisitors. It was also one of the major centers on the Terraferma (the mainland portion of Venetian territory) farthest from the dominant city; the diocese of Brescia, in fact, though not its Inquisition tribunal, was subject to the archbishop of Milan. Perhaps the Congregation hoped that Brescians would be less susceptible than other Venetians to pressures from the secular government.

Like his counterparts elsewhere in the network of Roman Inquisition courts, the inquisitor general of Venice was a mature man who held a degree in theology. Before being appointed to Venice, he had gained experience on subordinate tribunals.²⁵ The career of Agapito Ugoni,

whom we shall meet later in connection with several trials for pretense of holiness conducted in the 1660s, is typical. Born around 1600 into a noble Brescian family, Ugoni professed at San Domenico in his native city about 1627. After a period as *lettore* (instructor) in philosophy in the Dominican houses of Brescia, Ferrara, and Vicenza, he was advanced in 1650 by the Lombard province of his order to the rank of master of theology. From August 1652 to January 1663 he served as inquisitor in Vicenza. The Congregation of the Holy Office then promoted him to Venice. He retired in June 1670, probably on account of illness, and returned to San Domenico in Brescia, where he died early in 1674. Ugoni was also a scholar. Dominican biobibliographies list several works on philosophy and inquisitorial law which he wrote or edited, including a handbook on expediting Inquisition cases.²⁶

Besides conducting trials, Ugoni and other inquisitors general of Venice exercised surveillance over the publication and marketing of books and kept an eye on “outsiders” such as foreigners and Jews, who were believed to be potentially subversive.²⁷ They recruited and supervised a large staff: both the regular employees of the Holy Office (including the jailer) and a battery of legal advisers, defense attorneys, physicians and surgeons, pharmacists, exorcists, and other experts called on from time to time to provide services. In addition, they oversaw the work of inquisitors in outlying tribunals.²⁸ Out of a fixed income deriving from annual contributions by the bishoprics of Verona and Torcello and a canonicate at Cividate in the Valcamonica, they maintained the office at San Teodoro, the apartment of the jailer within it, the Inquisition’s prison, the inquisitor’s suite in the monastery of San Domenico, and the house and chapel at Cividate, as well as compensating employees and providing food for prisoners.²⁹

In some respects the inquisitor general’s job was a gratifying one. His work brought him into contact with important people, both high ecclesiastics and members of the governing elites. These notables, like members of his staff and those whom he interrogated, paid him the deference that his rank demanded and his important function inspired. Regular communications from the Congregations of the Holy Office and the Index made clear that Rome considered him a key agent in the fight against heresy and more generally in the protection and enhancement of the church’s position vis-à-vis the secular government. No doubt he realized that superior performance in his post might lead to a bishopric, the

Habit of Observant Dominican friar. From Vincenzo Coronelli,
Catalogo degli ordini religiosi della Chiesa Militante (Venice, 1707).

cardinalate, and even the papacy. Perhaps most important to a pious friar was a benefit stressed in the Dominican Eliseo Masini's influential manual of inquisitorial procedure, *Sacro arsenale*: that for their work in suppressing heresy, popes had granted inquisitors and their subordinates plenary indulgences, full remission of all their sins.³⁰

Like the holder of any responsible position, however, an inquisitor had to cope with a good deal of conflict and stress. The requirement that he abide by the rules and participate in the communal observances of the monastery in which he resided not infrequently provoked tensions between him and his brothers in religion.³¹ His authority, furthermore, was limited by his supervisors in Rome. The Congregation of the Holy Office routinely reviewed and sometimes amended or voided the procedural decisions and sentences he formulated, as well as reprimanding him

harshly and sarcastically for legal errors and lapses in judgment.³² Most troublesome to an inquisitor in Venetian territory was what he and his superiors saw as interference and obstruction by the secular authorities.

THE RULERS OF VENICE were highly conscious and exceedingly jealous of their prerogatives regarding the Inquisition, which from 1613 on were easily available for inspection and citation in a work by the Venetian Servite friar Paolo Sarpi, *consultore in iure* (legal adviser to the doge).³³ At the request of Doge Leonardo Donà, Sarpi codified the laws passed by the Senate and related precedents regarding the Inquisition under thirty-nine headings, followed by extensive historical-juridical comments.³⁴ He operated on this guiding principle: "The office of heresy in this dominion is not a dependency of the Court of Rome but rather of the Most Serene Republic—an independent one, founded and constituted by the same [republic] and established by contract and agreement with the Apostolic See—and therefore it must be regulated by its own customs and laws, without the obligation to follow orders from elsewhere."³⁵ As papal nuncios frequently reminded their masters in Rome, Sarpi's word was law for the Venetians.³⁶ When asked to provide opinions on controversial matters, the *consultori in iure* regularly utilized his treatise, usually called the *Capitolare*, to clinch their arguments. So did the Heads of the Council of Ten in their meetings with the papal nuncio and the Venetian ambassadors to the Holy See in audiences with the pope.

Although the republic took a high view of its prerogatives, it was not always able to enforce them. Difficulties arose particularly with the foreign inquisitors whom the Congregation of the Holy Office, disregarding the pleas and protests of Venetian ambassadors in Rome, persisted in appointing. As the *consultore in iure* fra Francesco Emo put it in 1663, at a moment when almost all the inquisitors in the republic were non-Venetians, subjects of other states were "not so inclined toward and devoted to the public interest as one might wish."³⁷ These "adherents and dependents" of the Holy See, according to Emo, did their utmost to erode secular authority, especially by trying to circumvent the requirement that lay deputies take part in all inquisitorial proceedings. Furthermore, they gathered and passed state secrets to Rome, surreptitiously instituted proceedings against and attempted to extradite Venetian subjects, and took jobs away from native Dominican and Franciscan friars with superior qualifications.³⁸

Even an inquisitor who was a Venetian subject could find himself in

grave jurisdictional difficulty, as two contretemps during the tenure of Agapito Ugoni in Vicenza attest. In early August 1653, breaking a promise he had made to the *podestà* and *capitano* of Padua, Ugoni released from jail one Carlo Sala, who was wanted for questioning in Padua. Reacting angrily to this “very grave transgression,” which demonstrated “flagrant disregard for the public welfare,” the Senate ordered the rector of Vicenza to expel Ugoni from Venetian territory. Little more than a month later he was back on the job. The senators, who in order to please the pope voted almost unanimously to reinstate him, expressed their hope that “from now on he will comport himself in a manner that makes us satisfied about the favor we have granted him.”³⁹

They must have been disappointed when Ugoni’s intransigence emerged again. Late in 1655, he arrested and put on trial two brothers from the Grisons, the shoemakers Giacomo and Pietro Tognotti, for publicly espousing Protestant ideas, distributing prohibited books, and desecrating a painting of the Virgin and Child. Following protests from authorities in the Swiss canton, the Senate solicited the opinion of the *consultori in iure* Gaspar Lonigo and Alvise Valle. The two advisers sarcastically noted the inquisitor’s real or pretended ignorance of chapter 25 of Sarpi’s *Capitolare*, which stated explicitly that subjects of non-Catholic states were immune from prosecution by the Holy Office in almost all circumstances.⁴⁰ Accordingly the Senate ruled that law, precedent, and diplomatic accords with the Grisons called for the Tognotti case to be handled in a secular court rather than by the Inquisition. Because Ugoni refused to abandon his prosecution and turn the trial record over to the rectors of Vicenza, the *capitano* of the city was instructed on 26 February 1656 to send him out of Venetian territory. It proved unnecessary to execute the order, for on the same day, the Tognotti brothers were expelled permanently from the republic.⁴¹ No lingering hard feelings poisoned the future relationship between the secular authorities and Ugoni. The Senate expressed satisfaction when he was named inquisitor general of Venice in January 1663, and his tenure of more than seven years was unmarked by jurisdictional clashes over the operations of the Holy Office.⁴²

FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, the second most important figure present in San Teodoro was the chancellor, responsible for recording the proceedings. A profile of a seventeenth-century chancellor, Andrea Vescovi, who held the office for fifty-four years, sheds some light on the nature of this position. Vescovi’s ancestors came from Chioggia, where they

worked as sailors and processors of salt. At some point in the fifteenth century a branch of the family moved to Venice. By the sixteenth century his grandfather, Giovanni Maria, qualified as a *cittadino originario*.⁴³ Giovanni Maria's son Antonio, after serving as chancellor of the papal nuncio, of the Inquisition, and then of the patriarch, ended his career in the prestigious post of *pievano* of Santa Maria del Giglio.⁴⁴

From Antonio Vescovi's last testament, redacted in 1654, we learn that his brother Domenico and sister-in-law Antonia Cattaneo, Andrea's parents, had died early in poverty. Uncle Antonio therefore made bequests to provide for his nephew and niece, Andrea and Angelica.⁴⁵ Long before, he had begun to groom Andrea, born in 1622, to follow in his footsteps. When the boy was nine, Antonio made him an acolyte; later he secured him a position in the corps of priests at Santa Maria del Giglio and arranged to pass on to him a benefice in the diocese of Treviso.⁴⁶ No later than February 1646 Andrea was a notary on the staff of Patriarch Giovanni Francesco Morosini, and early in the following year he began to assist his uncle in recording the proceedings of the Holy Office.⁴⁷ In his will Antonio expressed the hope that his nephew, "in whom I have little confidence, will not ruin my property and that of the people for whom I have obtained benefices."⁴⁸ He need not have worried. Three years before Antonio's death in 1657, Andrea assumed the chancellorship. From then until 16 July 1709 (shortly after his election as *pievano* of Santa Maria del Giglio, where he served until his death in 1714), he recorded in his distinctive hand practically every act of the Venetian Inquisition.⁴⁹

DO THE TRANSCRIPTS produced by chancellors such as Vescovi constitute full, reliable records of the trials? A skeptic might assume that in their own and their masters' interest, the inquisitor and the chancellor deliberately and systematically deformed, by omissions and fabrications, "what really happened." Such seems not to have been the case. Procedural manuals dictated that notaries render completely and faithfully what witnesses said.⁵⁰ As Tedeschi has demonstrated, the Congregation of the Inquisition insisted on compliance with that prescription. In contrast to functionaries and their masters in modern totalitarian regimes, the personnel of the Roman Inquisition did not operate with one eye toward a future in which they and their actions would be critically scrutinized, and therefore they had no motive for covering their tracks. As Tedeschi puts it, "inquisitors did not feel that they had anything to hide."⁵¹

Seventeenth-century Venetian trial records lend support to Tedeschi's

Andrea Vescovi, memorial bust, church of Santa Maria del Giglio, Venice.

Reproduced by permission of the Ufficio Beni Culturali del Patriarcato di Venezia;
photograph Osvaldo Böhm Fotografo Editore, no. 24341.

contention. In the *verbali* (transcripts of interrogations), a bare minimum of the proceedings is summarized. Questions put by the inquisitor and the name, birthplace, age, marital status, occupation, and residence of deponents are cast in the third person; the latter information is generally given in Latin. Once the interrogation was under way, chancellors seem to have followed closely the requirement of transcribing, in the first person and in the language spoken, what those being questioned said, including their exclamations and cries of pain during torture. They did their best to reproduce dialect, and they noted tones of voice, facial expressions, gestures, tears, and pauses for reflection, these last measured in ecclesiastical units of time—"half an Ave Maria," for example. When an interrogation was over, the transcript was read back to the deponent, who had

the opportunity to correct it before signing or making a mark attesting to its accuracy.⁵²

AN INQUISITORIAL PROCEEDING began in one of two ways: usually with a denunciation, very rarely with the inquisitor's *ex officio* decision to investigate a person or persons who he had reason to think were engaged in heretical activities.⁵³ Most denunciations were submitted in writing with the name of the accuser, but not always in his or her own hand; almost never did the Inquisition pursue an anonymous tip. An accuser might also seek out the inquisitor in the tribunal or at his monastery and make a verbal denunciation or self-denunciation. By no means all accusations by such *sponte comparentes* were completely voluntary, however. In 1559 Pope Paul IV had mandated that confessors ask their penitents whether they themselves or anyone they knew held and propagated unorthodox ideas, read prohibited books, or engaged in sorcery or magic. If the response was affirmative, the penitents, in order to obtain absolution, had to promise to report to the Holy Office.⁵⁴ The urgency of the requirement to report, or self-report, heresy was reinforced from the pulpit in sermons. Some scholars claim that, primarily through the confessional and secondarily through the sermon, priests served as inquisitors' right-hand men.⁵⁵ Unlike the Spanish Inquisition and some Italian tribunals, the Inquisition of Venice did not employ squadrons of "familiaris" to spy on, entrap, and denounce heretics.

Having received a denunciation, the inquisitor and his colleagues decided whether to follow it up. Unfortunately for historians, no transcripts of these or any other deliberations among the members of the tribunal survive; at most, the record states that they agreed to pursue a certain course of action. When their decision was negative, and it often was, proceedings terminated at that point. Otherwise, the accuser was summoned and interrogated. If this interview indicated that further investigation was called for, those who the accuser had suggested could shed light on the matter were called in to testify; often they provided names of others who might furnish information. Once all these witnesses had been heard, a process that could take weeks or months, the Holy Office considered whether there were sufficient grounds to summon the person or persons accused. Here again, in many instances—particularly when the alleged offense was sorcery—proceedings came to a halt.

If a decision was made to proceed, the suspect was cited to appear in court. When there was reason to believe that he or she would not obey

the summons and in cases of particularly grave alleged offenses, the *capitano* of the Holy Office, who doubled as jailer, was ordered to arrest and imprison the suspect. Before the Italian Reformation movement was crushed in the late sixteenth century, a considerable number of philo-Protestants, correctly anticipating or forewarned by friends that they were about to be prosecuted, fled out of the reach of the Inquisition and were tried and sentenced in absentia, but in the seventeenth century, most eventually turned up in court. The suspect was then questioned. In the event that he or she was able to rebut the accusation, the case was dropped. If the judges were not persuaded that nothing worth prosecuting had occurred, the interrogation proceeded.

Judges conducting a *processo informativo* had one main purpose: to elicit a confession of guilt. Before becoming inquisitors, all friars had served as teachers, preachers, and confessors. As Silvana Seidel Menchi has suggested, their previous experience was relevant in the courtroom. To be sure, the inquisitors' repressive function soon eclipsed their pastoral role, but their concern for souls never entirely disappeared.⁵⁶ Going over and over the same ground, adjuring suspects and defendants to "think carefully and tell the truth" (*pensi bene e dica la verità*), confronting them with witnesses' testimony about what they had said and done, and requiring them to recognize the physical evidence of their offenses, inquisitors sought to obtain an admission of guilt. In rare instances—when a defendant was stubbornly reticent or when he or she had been previously tried and convicted—the judges, after obtaining permission from the Congregation of the Inquisition, employed torture.⁵⁷ Usually, however, the mere suggestion that "other means" might be employed sufficed to convince the defendant that making a confession and appealing to the mercy of the Holy Office was the wisest course of action.

If a defendant persisted in denying guilt, and only a minority did, then he or she was given the opportunity to consult an attorney.⁵⁸ Those who knew lawyers and could afford to pay them provided names of several potential defenders, from which the Inquisition selected one; others were assigned an advocate compensated by the court. Sometimes a single interview with the attorney was enough to persuade a defendant to confess immediately rather than persisting in the affirmation of innocence. When legal counsel did not bring about a confession, a *processo difensivo* ensued. Given an extract of the proceedings prepared by the inquisitor's *fiscale*, from which the names of people who had testified were removed in order to protect them from harassment and retaliation, the defendant and the

attorney prepared a set of questions to be put to witnesses who had testified previously. They were also permitted to identify enemies of the defendant whose testimony should be excluded and to name additional people to be questioned. The inquisitor then conducted *repetitiones* (reinterrogations) of witnesses who had already been heard, putting to them the queries formulated by the defense and counterquestions proposed by the prosecution, and questioned new ones. Occasionally, when the defense wished to rebut statements made during these examinations, the process was repeated.⁵⁹

Once the *processo difensivo* was concluded, or at the end of the *processo informativo* if no defense had been mounted, the Holy Office deliberated on the verdict (*sentenza*).⁶⁰ Because *sentenze* in all but the most routine and trivial cases were reviewed by the Congregation of the Holy Office, most defendants had to wait many months to learn their fate. In the wide range of verdicts provided by canon law, several resulted in the defendant's immediate release. Absolution signified that the charges were baseless. In a *purgazione canonica*, after a number of people in a position to know solemnly confirmed the defendant's oath of innocence, he or she was considered absolved. Prestigious defendants were sometimes permitted to make a *revocazione* or *ritrattazione*, a sort of plea bargain amounting to something less than an admission of guilt.

In most cases, however, the defendant was required to sign or make a mark on an *abiura* (abjuration), a document prepared by the Holy Office which enumerated his or her crimes against the faith.⁶¹ The most common grades of abjuration were *de levi* ("lightly suspect of heresy") for comparatively minor offenses and *de vehementi* ("vehemently suspect of heresy") for serious transgressions.⁶² Some writers of manuals on Roman Inquisition procedure drew the line between "lightly" and "vehemently suspect" according to whether convicted persons' behavior had serious consequences for anyone besides themselves. Others, following the lead of Spanish canonists, prescribed the lesser grade for offenses not involving illicit administration of sacraments, abuse of sacramental materials, or pacts with the devil.⁶³ During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in territories where the Roman Inquisition operated, abjurations *de levi* occurred in private, that is, in the presence of the judges only.⁶⁴ On rare occasions, an abjuration *de vehementi* might be pronounced before an invited audience of clerics and eminent laypeople.⁶⁵ Unlike the Spanish Inquisition's auto-da-fé, this ceremony was not open to all comers in a truly public space.

Introduced by the phrase “And so that your guilt will not go unpunished,” the sentence announced what the guilty party was required to do in order to expiate his or her crimes. Spiritual penalties, known as “salutary penances,” were always prescribed: a detailed regimen of set prayers, fasts, attendance at religious services, and penance (confession) at specified times to designated confessors. Other disabilities—payment of fines, prohibition of contact with co-perpetrators and associates, temporary or permanent suspension of priests from the exercise of their functions—were often mandated. Corporal punishments, not inevitably assigned, included confinement, service on the galleys, public humiliation, whipping, and exile. Only those who persisted in heresy during the first trial or challenged a fundamental doctrine of the faith (the divinity of Christ, the virginity of Mary), laypeople who usurped the priestly prerogatives of celebrating mass or hearing confession, and those who had “relapsed” into heresy following an earlier conviction were subject to the death penalty.⁶⁶ Sentences of capital punishment in Venice were usually carried out secretly: by drowning in the lagoon in the dark of night or strangling in jail.⁶⁷ Between 1587 and the beginning of the eighteenth century, only two defendants in a Venetian Inquisition trial were put to death.⁶⁸

The place of incarceration could be a prison, a religious house, the guilty person’s own home, or the residence of someone willing to post bond to ensure that the prisoner abided by the terms of confinement. Alternatively, he or she might be required to stay in a designated neighborhood, city, or district. “Perpetual incarceration” meant not what the words denote but a limited term, often as little as three years. Sentences, furthermore, were not written in stone. Condemned heretics had the right to appeal a verdict to the Congregation of the Holy Office, which occasionally found in their favor.⁶⁹ Petitions addressed to local tribunals requesting the reduction of assigned punishments were not infrequently granted.

JOHN TEDESCHI has asserted that “the Inquisition was not a drumhead court, a chamber of horrors, or a judicial labyrinth from which escape was impossible.” Defendants in tribunals of the Roman Inquisition, he maintains, were less disadvantaged in most respects than their contemporaries brought to trial in secular courts. Recognizing that by contemporaneous legal standards Inquisition trials were conducted “fairly,” however, entails no obligation either to endorse the inquisitors’ mission of stamping out religious dissent or to accept their assessment of evi-

dence brought forward in court, their formulation of charges and sentences, and their assignment of punishments. An informed understanding of inquisitorial procedure, necessary as it is, should not lead us down the slippery slope into historical relativism. We should keep firmly in mind, Tedeschi insists, the crucial distinction between legal justice and moral justice.⁷⁰

Yet as we shall discover, the “false saints” did not receive even legal justice. Indeed, like most people tried by the Inquisition, they can be considered victims of the judicial system.⁷¹ Far from being considered innocent until proven guilty, they were prejudged in terms of closely linked, rarely questioned assumptions held by their judges and the overwhelming majority of their contemporaries. These included views about relationships between the profane and the sacred, orthodoxy and error, appearance and reality, inferiors and superiors, and women and men—all of which had a decisive influence on the concept of pretense of holiness, to be explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

“Little Women” and Discernment of Spirits

THE VENETIAN HOLY OFFICE’S conclusion in 1618 that the accusations against Narcisa did not merit full investigation was probably motivated by the fact that her reported behavior did not fit into an established category of heresy. Before long, Italian inquisitors would have little difficulty deciding how to frame, investigate, and prosecute such cases, for in the mid-1630s pretense of holiness made its appearance on the Italian juridical scene. From then on, prosecutors of heresy had ready to hand the intellectual and judicial equipment necessary for categorizing and taking action against people who claimed to receive information, instructions, and special privileges from heaven.

It took more than two centuries for pretense of holiness to become an offense prosecutable by the Roman Inquisition. For heuristic purposes, we may divide this long process into two overlapping phases. The first, running from the early fifteenth to the early seventeenth century, concerns us in this chapter. Its features include attempts to evaluate the behavior of visionaries, efforts to provide guidance to spiritual people, and investigations of paranormal phenomena. Writers on the subject were reacting to concrete situations, some experienced firsthand and others encountered in their reading. In the second phase, between the latter half of the sixteenth century and the fourth decade of the seventeenth, directors and functionaries of the Italian Holy Office confronted and eventually resolved the problem of how to handle defendants in their courtrooms. Their work is assessed in Chapter 4.

Why did Italians take so long to conceive of pretense of holiness as a prosecutable offense? A brief survey of the much more precocious development in the Iberian world may suggest some answers. There the series of trials and convictions for pretense of holiness begins with Isabel de la Cruz, sentenced by the Inquisition of Toledo in 1529. In both theological and sociological respects Isabel’s case is paradigmatic. Her offenses could be fitted into a preexisting slot: she was condemned for *alumbra-*

dismo (illuminism), the belief that salvation came to the individual primarily through direct communication with the divine, rather than being earned by the performance of good works or mediated via the sacraments of the church. Furthermore, she had a recognized, if somewhat suspect, status as a *beata*, an unmarried woman or widow who, without taking a formal vow of obedience to a superior and withdrawing from the world into a convent, eschewed sexual relations and dedicated herself to God’s service. Of the numerous Spanish, Portuguese, Sicilian, and Latin American “false saints” from the sixteenth through the early eighteenth century who followed Isabel into an Inquisition court and thence into prison, the vast majority were women, many of them beatas or tertiaries.¹

In the Iberian world, preexisting features of the social and religious landscape thus contributed to an early classification of certain attitudes and behaviors as heretical. The virtual absence of these elements in Italy helps to explain why the concept of pretense of holiness was slow to crystallize there. For two reasons, nothing resembling an indigenous variety of antinomianism rose immediately to the top of the Roman Inquisition’s agenda. First, unlike the *reyes católicos*, Italian rulers did not in any systematic way force upon their non-Christian subjects the choice between emigration and conversion, thereby creating a critical mass of reluctant “new Christians” open to spiritualist ideas.² Adherents of that potent amalgam of *alumbrado* and Protestant ideas promoted in Italy by the Spaniard Juan de Valdés were so highly placed and so cautious that only a few of them were belatedly caught in the Inquisition’s net.³ Second, it appears that the beatas’ Italian counterparts, *pinzochere* or *bizzocche*, probably not in the sixteenth century as numerous or noticeable as their Spanish sisters, were driven even further to the margins by prompt implementation of the Council of Trent’s decree requiring that all female religious be enclosed behind convent walls.⁴

IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH and early seventeenth centuries the Spanish formulation of pretense of holiness would make its way to Italy in several genres of books examined later in this chapter. Long before these appeared on the scene, however, the foundations for their reception had been laid by writings in another genre, treatises on *discretio* (or *probatio spirituum*). “Discernment of spirits” is the science of investigating visions and revelations and judging those who claimed to have experienced them.⁵ Writers on the subject found scriptural warrant for their efforts in two New Testament proof tests:

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. (2 Cor. 11:13–15)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)⁶

Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, pioneered in this enterprise.⁷ In his *De probatione spirituum* (1415), he identifies two primary ways of assessing visionaries and their visions, a delicate and difficult task that not everyone can perform. Some, he writes, prepare themselves to do so “by means of general art and doctrine, that is, through learning in the Holy Scriptures,” attained through diligent study with assistance from the Holy Spirit. A very few others are divinely endowed with the gift of “intimate inspiration or an internal sense.” To aid the vast majority of investigators incapable of following either the “doctrinal” or the “experimental” route, Gerson advises discerners of spirits to consider three possibilities: the source and content of visions are divine, diabolical, or merely human. He does not, however, provide specific guidelines for distinguishing between them.⁸

Some years later Gerson brought to light a concrete example of the third type, the false visionary. In 1424 a town in the duchy of Savoy, Bourg-en-Bresse, was convulsed by a “little woman who under the mantle of devotion and revelations feigned miracles.”⁹ God, she claimed, had assigned her a special mission, the redemption of sinners: burning coals on her feet alerted her to souls’ descent into hell, and she was allowed to liberate three of them per day. She frequently went into what seemed to be ecstasies, during which she prophesied, and she appeared to eat almost nothing. Thereby she deluded many “simple little women” but not the rector of the local church, who obtained through torture her admission that she had perpetrated a fraud in order to gain alms on which to live. After much discussion, experts concluded that she was not a heretic who deserved to be burned at the stake but rather an ignorant, poverty-stricken epileptic who should be assigned penances.¹⁰

Gerson’s treatises set the tone for subsequent discussion of discernment of spirits. The gist of his message is that investigators should be especially wary of “little women.” On account of their mental incapacity and gullibility, they are prime candidates for diabolical intervention.

Because of their moral weakness, they are prone to perpetrating frauds. Voluble and superficially plausible, they are able to attract popular support, particularly from other women.¹¹ When testing the spirit of female visionaries, priests should look out for base motives and remain alert to the possibility of physiological explanations for what purport to be spiritual phenomena. Gerson’s passing mention of medical causes of apparent ecstatic behavior was not immediately taken up by writers on discernment of spirits. Only in the late sixteenth century did it begin to make its way into the discourse on pretense of holiness.

At the end of the fifteenth century another authoritative figure addressed the problem. In his *Compendio di rivelazioni*, published in 1495, Girolamo Savonarola reiterates most of Gerson’s arguments. He casts the section concerning discernment of spirits in the form of a dialogue between himself and a “tempter,” the devil disguised as a hermit, who has heard that Savonarola “follows the visions of certain little women.” Not at all, the friar replies. As much as possible, he avoids talking with and confessing women, let alone listening to accounts of their visions, because “being ignorant and naturally weak in judgment, talkative, quite fragile, and much inclined to vainglory, [women] easily allow themselves to be tricked by the wiles of the devil.” Drawing perhaps on his own experience as the first prophet-reformer to utilize the new medium of print, Savonarola offers an additional observation. Though conceding that not all prophetesses should be spurned, he notes the fact that only a select few women’s visions are widely available for inspection in written form. This, he argues, is God’s way of indicating that men should not put much faith in revelations conveyed orally, especially if the visionaries are women.¹²

Savonarola probably knew that six decades earlier, a fellow Dominican had availed himself of what the Ferrarese friar characterized as a rare opportunity. In 1435 the Spaniard Juan de Torquemada took pen in hand in order to defend the revelations of Bridget of Sweden, widely circulated in manuscript during and after her death in 1373, which had recently come under attack at the Council of Basel.¹³ He posits several questions to be asked in testing revelations:

1. Do the revelations pass muster with “expert and seasoned spiritual savants”? (Bridget’s, he pointed out, had done so on three occasions: once during her lifetime when she was afraid that she was being deluded by the devil, again in 1377 after her death, and finally during

- the Council of Constance, where her canonization was debated and approved.)
2. Do the revelations leave the recipient “humble, flexible, and disposed to accept discipline”?
 3. Do the revelations contain “the purity and integrity of truth . . . without any admixture of falsehood”?
 4. Do the revelations conform to Holy Scripture and the teachings of the saints?
 5. Have the revelations attained official sanction from the church, signified by canonization of the recipients?¹⁴

Torquemada’s agenda offers more than the generic warnings issued by Gerson and reiterated by Savonarola. It is worth noting that his last query implicitly posits a criterion put forward more clearly in Gerson’s account of the “little woman” of Bourg-en-Bresse: a social rank and mode of life consonant with the reception of visions and revelations. Bridget, a royal widow who founded an order of nuns, had passed this test with flying colors during her lifetime and again in the process of canonization. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, living visionaries both male and female—even educated ones of middling or high social status belonging to religious orders—would have greater difficulty in doing so.

IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN, Torquemada’s agenda was expanded and rendered much more vivid by the most famous female visionary of the early modern era, the Spanish Carmelite nun Teresa of Avila. Her *Life*, completed in 1565, was written at the command of two confessors, the Dominican Pedro Ibañez and the Jesuit García de Toledo.¹⁵ Along with many ecclesiastical and lay contemporaries of Teresa, they feared, as did she, that despite her religious status and her irreproachable style of life, her visions and inspirations might come not from God but from the devil or her own imagination. Ordering her to put on paper a general confession, a full account of her spiritual life, constituted a strategy designed to generate evidence that would lay to rest persistent doubts about the source of her inspiration.

In Teresa’s confessional autobiography the Evil One plays a leading role. Not only does she detail his efforts to tempt, delude, and discourage her and suggest tactics—sprinkling holy water, brandishing the cross, making rude gestures—for fending him off.¹⁶ With an engaging mixture

of humility and assurance, she steps out of the socially imposed and internalized role of “foolish, weak little woman” in order to offer guidelines drawn from her own experience for determining the source of verbal, visual, and extrasensory communications to the soul.¹⁷

Divinely inspired visions, Teresa explains, can be distinguished from diabolically inspired ones in several ways. When God, Christ, and their agents (the Virgin Mary, saints, living holy people) appear or speak to the soul, the messages conveyed are clear, easily and instantly comprehensible, irresistible, and unforgettable. In contrast, messages from the devil are ambiguous; by making an effort of the will and employing the appropriate defensive strategies, one can easily shut them off.¹⁸ Visions from God are always glorious, pure, chaste, comforting, and lasting, whereas those from the devil are very often disgusting and frightening and always of short duration.¹⁹ A genuine communication from on high containing a prediction inevitably proves reliable; the Father of Lies, on the contrary, makes prognostications that are not fulfilled.²⁰ Above all, “by their works you shall know them”: the surest test of a vision is its aftereffects. Unlike a diabolical delusion, which leaves the victim sorrowful, troubled, arid, and weak, a divine inspiration endows its recipient with the joyful confidence and strength to do God’s will.²¹

Although Teresa maintains that God does not allow persons sincerely committed to pleasing him to be tempted beyond their strength,²² she repeatedly insists that expert human assistance in eluding the devil’s wiles is essential, especially for women.²³ A major theme of her autobiography is the necessity of finding a competent confessor. In evaluating candidates for this position, she states, the first thing to look for is learning coupled with experience in administering the sacrament of penance. If the priest or friar is devoted to prayer and far advanced in the spiritual life, so much the better.²⁴ Whether or not the confessor’s bent is similar to one’s own, he must be told everything and obeyed to the letter, even when his instructions seem uncongenial or mistaken. If he is wrong, God will change his mind.²⁵

The impression of total submissiveness to the confessor conveyed by these injunctions is misleading. Teresa reveals that, on occasion, she took the lead in discerning a priest’s or friar’s faults and inspiring him to follow her example.²⁶ From her and her confessors’ point of view, this role reversal seems to have presented fewer problems than a less extreme modification of the confessor-penitent relationship: one of relative par-

ity in a mutual search for spiritual advancement, which carries the risk of “some particular friendship or attachment, even a holy one.”²⁷

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, Teresa’s teachings on discernment of spirits became a touchstone for guiding and evaluating aspiring saints.²⁸ Her name and words were frequently invoked in a new genre that emerged in the late sixteenth century: handbooks intended for use by devout people under the guidance of spiritual directors. Fostered by both a growing demand and an increasing supply of experts prepared to offer the service, including members of such new orders as the Society of Jesus, spiritual direction became a recognized specialty in the sixteenth century. Spiritual directors assisted a self-selected minority, people in and especially outside convents who were seriously committed to improving their spiritual state. In conversations and sometimes by letter, they counseled their clients, many of them women, on the most appropriate means of reaching God and helped them to avoid the pitfalls involved in this project.²⁹

Although most spiritual directors were priests, they functioned quite differently than pastors who served “ordinary” Christians by preaching, teaching, and administering the sacraments, above all penance (eliciting the confession of sins, transmitting God’s promise of forgiveness, and assigning appropriate prayers and acts that would solidify repentance and break sinful habits). For the latter and the majority of their clients, men and women who did not aspire to become spiritual athletes, help was available in what might be termed primers: the confessional manuals for priests and penitents which from the fifteenth century on rolled in profusion off European presses.³⁰ Few of these works, however, had much to offer to “elect spirits” and their mentors.³¹ They needed vade mecums of a different sort, more detailed than treatises on discernment of spirits and confessional manuals and easier to consult than Teresa’s *Life*. Spiritual directors themselves soon began to generate what they and their protégés required.

Naturally enough, Spaniards were among the first to confront the problems involved in aspiring to lead an especially devout life. Although not designed specifically to diagnose and prescribe remedies for such difficulties, Ignatius Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* provided two important leads. Ignatius insisted that his series of meditations be undertaken under the close supervision of a director, and he appended to the volume a set of

annotations on discernment of spirits.³² Such concerns were addressed more directly in the *Aviso de gente recogida* by Diego Pérez de Valdivia. A “new Christian” and disciple of the mystic Juan de Avila, who had also written a spiritual guide for layfolk, Pérez ran afoul of the Inquisition in the mid-1570s, while he was serving as archdeacon of the cathedral in Jaén.³³ He was convicted among other things for dissuading women from entering convents on the ground that they could serve God better in the world and requiring his female penitents to promise exclusive obedience to him. Once his relatively lenient sentence had been lifted, he was appointed to the chair of Scripture at the University of Barcelona. There he published his *Aviso* (1585), which was soon made available to Italian readers as *Avvertimenti spirituali*.³⁴

From beginning (the “warnings” in the title) to end, Pérez’s guidebook, intended primarily for the use of beatas, betrays nervousness about but not complete disavowal of the mode of spiritual direction which had precipitated his trial by the Inquisition. The author expresses considerable sympathy with the plight of women who feel a divine call to chastity but are not able, or in some cases willing, to become nuns.³⁵ “Especially at the present time, when the devil, with greater astuteness, increased urgency and force, and new and strange means, is tempting those who undertake to live well,” devout laywomen, many of whom lack competent spiritual directors, are in much greater danger than their sisters safely enclosed behind convent walls.³⁶ To protect them from going astray, he enumerates at length the numerous obstacles strewn on their path by the devil and suggests ways to avoid them.

Of course, Pérez argues, uncloistered devout women must eschew the temptations of the world, particularly those of the flesh.³⁷ They must also avoid more insidious traps of the spiritual life: becoming overly dependent on a particular preacher, confessor, place in which to conduct their devotions, or mode of approaching God (such as confession and communion at frequent fixed intervals).³⁸ Similarly, the reading of spiritual books, valuable in moderation during spare moments and on feast days, should be undertaken to learn how to serve God and fight temptation, not out of mere curiosity or the illegitimate desire to “make a profession of being a *teologa* or *dottoressa*.”³⁹ Acknowledging that a good spiritual director is difficult to find, he advises his readers to beware of three types: those who teach “new and unusual” doctrines; others who are “bereft of compassion, impatient, vindictive, and lacking in charity”;

and a third sort, overly lenient priests who enjoy chatting and joking with women. Having found a person capable of curing her conscience, a devout woman should remain in his care and obey him.⁴⁰

Mental prayer presents another peril. Although Pérez warmly commends the practice, he warns that its extremely dangerous by-products must be eschewed: "Spiritual persons must not wish to have visions or revelations of any kind or to go into ecstasy. On the contrary, they must pray God not to give them such things, and either withdraw them if they are already present or change them into true holiness, mortification, and patience in bearing the cross."⁴¹ Dramatic manifestations of spirituality, Pérez insists, are "almost always suspect, but more so than ever in our day," when Antichrist and the Apocalypse loom on the horizon. What is needed at the present time is not the miracles that marked the early phases of Christianity but humility. Devout people and their directors should realize that "a single dram of true mortification weighs more than many pounds of ecstasies and revelations."⁴²

Drawing mainly on biblical proof texts and an important late medieval treatise, the Spanish Dominican Vincent Ferrer's *De vita spirituale*, Pérez devotes some space to discernment of spirits in a section entitled "On the transfiguration of the demon into an angel of light."⁴³ From the lives of the saints one may confidently infer that genuine ecstasies and raptures are private, brief, and feared by those who experience them. In contrast, the devil is obviously at work in the case of self-proclaimed visionaries who "seek profit, honor, privilege, publicity and recognition . . . [and enjoy] gaining access to great masters . . . , making deals [*negotiare*], vaunting authority, advising, preaching, and avoiding their assigned responsibilities." Other signals pointing to "fraudulent raptures" are conveyed by subjects who are "great talkers who never stay at home," "pursue their own inventions and singularities," and boast about seeing great lights and having information about others' sins and the identity of souls in purgatory.⁴⁴

About diabolic possession in the strict sense of that term Pérez is very skeptical. The ministrations of doctors, he observes, create imaginary invalids both physical and spiritual. Would that there were not "so many [exorcists] who seek to cure the possessed, so that one would not find so many who feign to be such," he exclaims. In public exorcisms, "one madman makes a hundred." Preferable remedies are tying up and isolating those who appear to be possessed and keeping them occupied with reading, oral prayer, and fasting. When the devil finds himself un-

able to create an uproar, he departs of his own accord, “especially when [the cause of possession] is all simulation, imagination, temptation, or a melancholy humor.”⁴⁵

Pérez’s sensitivity to the social and economic constraints on nonelite women determined to pursue the devout life was unusual. Other features of his analysis, particularly the diffidence about the reality of demonic possession and the efficacy of exorcism, would soon emerge in Italian discussions of pretense of holiness. His handbook, however, seems not to have entered into the mainstream of the discourse. One reason may have been that its intended audience was layfolk, not the spiritual advisers who addressed their problems in print. Furthermore, his exposition is lengthy (in the Italian edition, 787 pages) and repetitive. Rather defensively, Pérez justifies the size of the tome by explaining that since those to whom the work is directed cannot afford to amass a library of the many “learned, useful, and devout” spiritual guidebooks in circulation, he has provided a single compendium, a richly furnished banquet table from which they can select what appeals to them.⁴⁶ Lacking an analytical index, however, the book does not lend itself to judicious sampling.

A counterpart to the *Avvertimenti* which may well have proved more palatable was Marc’Aurelio Grattarola’s *Pratica della vita spirituale*, first published in 1609 and reissued three times in a revised edition.⁴⁷ Whether the Milanese Oblate Grattarola had seen Pérez’s work and determined to set a simpler table is unclear, but he, too, begins with a gastronomic simile. Devout people have been so overwhelmed by the plethora of good books in circulation that they risk dying of spiritual hunger, as if they had a chest full of bread that they are unable to slice and chew. To solve the problem, he has constructed his contribution “like a loaf of bread already broken and divided into mouthfuls.” In addition, this chef offers suggestions about consumption recalling Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises*: read a chapter; meditate on it in prayer; put it into action; dedicate that action to God; ask assistance when necessary from the Virgin, the saints, and one’s guardian angel; conduct a daily examination of conscience; and proceed methodically to eliminate one vice or defect after another.⁴⁸

For those concerned with obstacles to the devout life, Grattarola provides six short consecutive chapters of clearly presented diagnosis and prescription. The devil, he writes, does indeed transform himself into an angel of light. When he finds himself unable to corrupt humans through “manifest temptations,” he turns to subtler means, “falsity and illusion,” which achieved their object the first time when he took the form of a

serpent and offered Eve the fatal apple. Preferred targets of the Evil One are women, “weak subjects” inclined to pay heed to the “flattery and fraud of that trickster.”⁴⁹ If beginning aspirants to the devout life overindulge in prayer, he ruins their complexions, weakens their stomachs, and addles their brains, causing them to give up their project. If they derive excessive pleasure from taking communion, he cancels its spiritual effect, reducing them to the condition of prematurely weaned infants who try to nourish themselves on dirt and coal.⁵⁰

Those who succumb to the devil’s wiles, Grattarola asserts, lack discretion and attempt too much too soon. By engaging in arduous discipline, they make themselves ill. By taking it upon themselves to instruct others, they arrogate authority over their elders and superiors. By “not wanting to stay within the bounds of ordinary life, but to make themselves singular in everything,” they upset convents and homes. His path cleared to wreak additional havoc, the devil then sends false visions, revelations, and ecstasies, sometimes to men but more often to women. They hear amorous murmurs in the heart (“‘You are my spouse, my dove,’ and other flattering words”) and messages about future events and others’ secrets. They see saints and angels who turn into horrible demons, as well as human and animal figures who entice them to fornication. They feel burning in their hearts and pains in their sides, crave communion as their only food, and think they understand the most difficult passages in Scripture and the highest mysteries of the faith. Sometimes the devil enables them to perform false miracles, as in the case of a deluded friar who persuaded himself and many others that touching his belt eliminated all sexual temptation.⁵¹

For Grattarola, all manifestations of pretended holiness are the devil’s work. Unlike Gerson and Pérez, he does not raise the possibility that in some instances self-delusion or natural physiological problems might be responsible. He is particularly interested in the techniques and materials employed by the devil in his campaign of disinformation—among them the lives of the saints, whose “rare and heroic virtues” the devil misleadingly presents as imitable by “every little woman.”⁵² Nonetheless, exorcism is never mentioned in the *Pratica*. Grattarola prescribes other remedies, including the by now familiar insistence that those aspiring to holiness must entrust themselves completely to a competent spiritual director.⁵³ Beneath his most urgent recommendation, humility, lies a social subtext. Do not presume to be an intimate friend of God, for “this is not appropriate for a low, vile person, but stay on your own level.”

Remember that the Virgin Mary did not consider herself a peer of the angel Gabriel. “Without a doubt, those who aim to raise themselves higher than their status permits will slip and fall.”⁵⁴

A third provider of advice to devout readers was the Observant Franciscan Antonio Pagani, founder of the Dimesse: a “secular company” of women who lived in common but went out into their communities to do charitable work and provide catechetical instruction.⁵⁵ Two of Pagani’s handbooks for devout people show how the author’s message about the traps of spirituality varied according to the audience he was addressing. In his rule for the Dimesse, he expresses confidence that to them “the false suggestions, appearances, or illusions of the Enemy” do not present a serious threat. Should a Dimessa be tempted “to do anything according to her own opinion or inclination or for some temporal or spiritual gratification,” or should she be moved to tell others about spiritual graces she thinks she has received, there are simple remedies. She must persevere in her spiritual exercises, listen to the advice of her superiors, strive to mortify her will, and above all, resist the notion that she is in any way special.⁵⁶

Writing for a less select group in his *Breve somma delli essercitii de’ penitenti*, Pagani conveys a sterner warning. He equates simulation, the third “daughter” of pride, with hypocrisy: “the covering of hidden vice with a certain art and simulation of virtue.” Following the lead of the thirteenth-century theologian William of Auvergne, he identifies three types of hypocritical simulators. Some “feign holiness in public, but in secret pursue evil-doing.” Other servants of Satan, those who do good deeds in private as well as in public for the illegitimate purpose of gaining esteem, are able to fool simple people. In both cases, their unrestrained pride and ambition will eventually come to light. Such hypocrites should remember Saint Jerome’s dictum: “Of the two evils, it is less wicked to sin openly than to simulate holiness.” The third sort practice a reverse form of hypocrisy, concealment of their good works. These resemble the Pharisees and hypocrites whom Matthew calls wolves in sheep’s clothing. Sooner or later, Pagani insists, their simulation, too, will be unmasked.⁵⁷

PÉREZ’S, GRATAROLA’S, AND PAGANI’S handbooks undoubtedly influenced some devout layfolk and their spiritual directors. How much impact they had beyond their intended audiences is difficult to tell. At the end of the sixteenth century, stimuli that contributed more directly to a juridical concept of pretense of holiness came from other directions. Dis-

turbing evidence of the dangers posed by aspirants to holiness was rapidly accumulating. Members of the Society of Jesus, who operated as spiritual directors to women and men throughout Catholic Europe and the New World, were particularly attentive to the possibility that female visionaries could seriously compromise the souls and professional standing of their male guides.⁵⁸

In his *De temporibus novissimis libri quatuor* (1590), an account of God's actions in the New World, the Jesuit José de Acosta conveyed to an international audience the cautionary tale of a disastrous relationship between a "little woman" and her confessor. Some years earlier in the viceroyalty of Peru, the learned and pious Dominican Francisco de la Cruz had allowed himself to be duped by a woman who feigned raptures during which, she alleged, an angel instructed her. The deluded friar widely broadcast her prophecy that the Spanish general Don Juan of Austria would be defeated by the Turks in a naval battle, after which Philip II would depose Pope Gregory XIII and relocate the empire and the papacy in Peru. He publicly endorsed her proclamations that she was holier than the angels and the apostles, that he was the new Christ, and that under their new dispensation all the old rules—including, ominously, monogamy and clerical celibacy—were abolished. At the conclusion of a long trial before the Peruvian Inquisition, the unrepentant de la Cruz persisted in defending these propositions in a two-day debate with the archbishop of Quito, after which he was burned at the stake. The moral drawn by Acosta had little directly to do with the female protagonist, whose name and fate he did not mention. His purpose in telling the story was rather to demonstrate that experienced clerics overconfident about their learning can fall prey to the wiles of false visionaries.⁵⁹

Because Acosta's book was widely read, the sad story of Francisco de la Cruz contributed to shaping the concept of pretense of holiness. Its currency was enhanced by inclusion in a major work more immediately relevant to that subject: the Jesuit Martin Antoine Del Rio's massive study of occult phenomena, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex*, first published in 1599–1600 and reissued several times thereafter. A native of Antwerp who spent much of his career teaching theology at the University of Louvain, Del Rio organized his magnum opus on scholastic principles.⁶⁰ He placed the incident related by Acosta in book 4, devoted to prophecy and divination, chapter 1, question 3 ("By what means can prophecy or divine revelation be determined to be of divine or diabolical origin?") under the subheading "Concerning the revelations of laywomen." By

consulting the detailed table of contents, readers interested in lay female ecstasies could easily locate the information they required.

Drawing extensively on pertinent literature ancient and modern, Del Rio sets the incident in context. He begins by rehearsing the conventional wisdom on gender. Other things being equal, the revelations of men are more worthy of credence than those of women, which explains why so few prophetesses are mentioned in the Bible. The reason lies in fundamental physiological and psychological differences between the sexes. Not only are women physically weaker than men; because their constitutions are “damper and more viscous,” their passions are more violent. They are therefore more likely to confuse dreams with visions and to succumb to suggestions from the devil. Besides, women are mentally hazy, garrulous, inclined toward crime, all too eager for praise, and prone to insanity—traits that fully justify their exclusion from preaching and administering the sacraments. Thus anyone who trusts in “the visions of little women” is bound to fall “into the most absurd errors.”⁶¹

Del Rio then adduces what he considers the most telling modern example, the case presented by Acosta, whom he cites. Demonstrating somewhat more interest in the woman, he raises the issue of whether she was deluded by the devil, “which seems more probable,” or simulating, “as some prudent men concluded.” Whatever the explanation for her behavior, she managed to fool Francisco de la Cruz and win the admiration of some of the most prominent men in Peru. This incident clearly demonstrates that “imprudent conversations with little women on the pretext of confession” can all too easily lead learned men to forget everything they know, including the tenets of the Christian faith, and threaten the foundations of both church and state.

To hammer home his point, Del Rio mentions two other recent instances: the nun Magdalena de la Cruz, convicted by the Inquisition of Cordoba in 1546; and an unnamed woman of Hainaut in the southern Low Countries, who had gone so far as to consecrate a host, thereby “daring to usurp the priestly and masculine office.” Before moving on to consider the revelations vouchsafed to canonized nuns and laywomen, he commends Gerson’s “golden words” on the subject of “little women” and reiterates Saint Jerome’s ranking order of females. In the race toward inclusion on the calendar of saints, virgins outstrip widows, and married women run a distant third.⁶²

During the next three decades, theologians writing for their peers made extensive use of the exemplary story to distinguish between gen-

uine and fraudulent manifestations of female spirituality. Two examples illustrate their procedure. Federico Borromeo, archbishop of Milan from 1595 to 1631, was tangentially involved in the notorious case of Isabella Berinzaga and the Jesuit Achille Gagliardi.⁶³ He also had intense but highly ambivalent personal relationships with several devout women, including Caterina Vannini, a repentant courtesan.⁶⁴ These experiences undoubtedly influenced the views expressed in four learned treatises on the subject. Issued, like most of his works, in a sumptuous folio format, they were presumably intended for limited circulation in his diocese and presentation to friends.⁶⁵

Following previous authorities, Borromeo maintains that revelations come from God, the devil, or “the natural operations of the spirit” and that their occurrence exhibits marked gender differences.⁶⁶ In contrast to a long roster of men, only the occasional woman, Catherine of Siena, for instance, has proven able to withstand diabolical temptation.⁶⁷ Exorcism, however, finds no place in Borromeo’s discussion, for, like Pérez, he firmly maintains that most so-called revelations have nothing to do with the devil. Rather, prompted by vanity, they arise inside visionaries’ minds.⁶⁸ Because their “animal spirits” operate more actively and because they are vain, women (particularly those between the ages of thirty and forty) exhibit a greater susceptibility than men to delusion and a greater propensity to fabricate visions.⁶⁹

Like Gerson and Pérez, Borromeo is inclined to look for psychosomatic and physiological precipitants of spiritual maladies. As the recent instance of a “little woman” who fell in love with her confessor illustrates, females are less able than males to resist attacks of melancholy, a malady at the root of many problems, including visions and temptations.⁷⁰ Women, furthermore, are more prone than men to such apparently miraculous somatic phenomena as prolonged abstention from food. Dubious about the possibility of a total fast lasting for months or years, Borromeo opines that the Desert Fathers (examples traditionally cited in support of this pious hypothesis), though certainly prodigies of abstinence, must have taken occasional nourishment. Usually, as in the case of a woman unmasked in Milan during the episcopate of his saintly cousin Carlo Borromeo, inedia turns out to be faked. On rare occasions it can be traced to a glandular imbalance, which physicians treating a girl in Speyer seventy years earlier had succeeded in doing.⁷¹

Extensive reliance on exemplary stories also marks the work of Emanuel do Valle de Moura, a theologian who served as consultant to the Por-

tuguese Inquisition. In his treatise on paranormal phenomena, *De incantationibus seu ensalmis* (1620), the chapter entitled “Concerning internal visions and external apparitions” begins with “the case of a notable woman of Evora,” based on an account of her life which she submitted to the archbishop of that city. Unlike Teresa’s *Life*, this one did not ring true: it served as prime evidence in her trial and conviction by the Inquisition.⁷² Reiterating what was by now a commonplace—that visions originate from God, the devil, or nature—Valle de Moura credits “Mother Teresa” as the major authority on determining their source.⁷³ He cites Del Rio’s treatment of the Peruvian incident in support of his argument that the visions of “little women,” appallingly numerous in recent times, are almost inevitably a product of “hypocrisy and fiction.” Given the strong sexual component in the majority of such cases, ill-educated and incautious confessors should beware of their female penitents. On the other hand, since the stimulus to simulated ecstatic behavior sometimes comes from a priest, popes and inquisitors are quite right in paying close attention to the problem of solicitation in the confessional, which recently led astray a Portuguese nun who reported visions. While conceding that the visions of Hildegard of Bingen, Bridget, and Teresa may be adduced as counter-examples, Valle de Moura is less confident than his fifteenth-century predecessors about the divine origin of revelations committed to writing. These, he insists, need to be examined just as carefully as those reported orally before being accepted as genuine.⁷⁴

BETWEEN THE EARLY FIFTEENTH and the early seventeenth century, writers in several genres identified the components of false or pretended holiness.⁷⁵ Although they differed on how much weight should be assigned to various factors, they agreed on what these were. Foremost among them was gender. With the single exception of Pagani, theologians argued that women are much more likely than men to report strange spiritual encounters inspired by the devil or their own imaginations rather than by God. The reason lies in the basic inferiority of female nature. Women’s bodies and brains, inherently cold and damp, are susceptible to internal disturbances and invasions from malign forces that the subjects in most cases are too feeble and foolish to fight off. The concomitant of physical “otherness” is moral weakness. Naturally inclined to all seven deadly sins, women not only prove unable to withstand the onslaught of temptation. On many occasions, they actively pursue criminal projects, for which they seek to enlist male collaborators. This last point needs emphasis. In gen-

eral observations as well as examples provided as supporting evidence, men are bit players, presented as victims of women's wiles who can be blamed for gullibility. Only once, in Grattarola's example of the friar with the miraculous chastity belt, does a man feature as the main perpetrator of false or pretended holiness.

As the theologians' frequent use of the term "little women" suggests, a second factor, less clearly delineated but nonetheless visible to modern eyes, is class. In the learned Latin tomes and semipopular vernacular handbooks we have examined, ignorance, volubility, and self-promotion in pursuit of gain are not posited as universal female traits. Rather, they are attributed to adult women in the lower orders of society. These writers implicitly distinguish between "little women" and other members of their sex: such recipients of genuine divine revelations as Hildegard, Bridget, and Teresa. None of the theologians makes explicit, though Pérez and Grattarola come close to suggesting, that the social and economic standing of women in this second group enables their entry into a convent. There alone, the analysts and advice givers clearly believe, does the project of overcoming the grave handicaps of female nature and becoming worthy of receiving genuine messages from heaven have any real possibility of success—hence the relative optimism of Pagani in regard to his *Dimesse*.⁷⁶

This consensus on female propensity for false visions, revelations, and physical manifestations is not paralleled by agreement on other important matters. Opinions vary widely as to the degree to which women, and the occasional man, who report such experiences are to be considered responsible for their behavior. Grattarola, on one end of the spectrum, sees these people and those who believe in them as victims deluded by an omnipresent and very ingenious devil; although he recognizes that their pride and presumption give the Evil One an opportunity to act, he barely mentions pretense on their part. Pagani and Valle de Moura, who stand at the opposite end, argue that in most cases, the protagonists are consciously and deliberately feigning holiness. Somewhere in the middle are Gerson and Borromeo, who stress physiological explanations.

All the writers surveyed focus exclusively on prevention and detection. To a man, they make clear that the confessor or spiritual director plays a key role in the discernment of spirits, and some instruct the director's clients in how to avoid the snares of delusion. On what to do after the patient is infected—that is, whether to punish "false saints," and if so, how—none of these physicians of the soul has much to say. To be sure,

those who refer to cases that ended up in Inquisition tribunals imply that justice was done when the defendants were convicted. They do not, however, counsel their peers to proceed to prosecution, either of the devil via exorcism or of the “false saint” via a trial. Now let us turn to the second stage, in which pretense of holiness finally made its way into the courtrooms of the Roman Inquisition.

From Study to Courtroom

THE DEVIL'S HOOFPRIENTS mark the life histories of holy people both "false" and "genuine," as well as works in several genres which sought to establish the difference between them. According to many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authorities, the initial hypothesis to be tested on "little women" and nuns who reported visions and revelations is that somehow or another they have fallen into Satan's clutches. Even those writers who emphasize such alternative explanations as psychosomatic precipitants and fraud concede that, with God's permission, the devil not infrequently recruits human subjects. With or without their active collaboration, he induces them and their spiritual advisers, friends, and neighbors to believe that God has granted them special privileges. Thus he furthers his nefarious purpose of introducing confusion and error into the *corpus Christianum*.

Alessio Porri, a Venetian exorcist writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, conveys conventional wisdom on why God allows the devil to take possession of a human subject. First of all, God uses the devil to punish that person's sins or those committed by his or her relatives, thereby demonstrating his power "in the variety of punishments that He can justly inflict on us." The devil's operations, furthermore, illustrate the excellence of a created universe in which nothing goes to waste. Because Lucifer since his fall cannot perform good actions, God finds work for him as "an agent of evil, that is, of punishment and torment." Finally, the devil serves the essential religious and social function of promoting belief in an afterlife in which good deeds will be rewarded and evil actions punished. Seeing the torments suffered by those whom he possesses gives others a preview of hell and thus dissuades them from consorting with the powers of evil.¹

A new arena of the devil's activities was identified in western Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Traditional practices of rural people, formerly considered relatively innocuous, gradually assumed

a more ominous configuration. Enforcers of orthodoxy began to insist that women and men who employed spells to harm their neighbors' bodies, livestock, and crops and spoke of nocturnal journeys to gatherings at which they danced and feasted with a deity posed a serious threat. Not merely ignorant, incompletely Christianized folk, these witches were heretics: they had renounced God and joined forces with Satan, making an explicit pact to serve him. Members of the devil's cult traveled by paranormal means of transportation to periodic reunions known as the sabbath, where they honored their master in blasphemous, obscene rituals.²

This paradigm of diabolical witchcraft achieved official status in Innocent VIII's bull *Summis desiderantis affectibus*, issued in 1484. Very shortly thereafter it was fully delineated and given an explicit operational profile in the *Malleus maleficarum* (*The hammer of [female] witches*). Heinrich Krämer, a German Dominican who had gained extensive experience with witches in his work as inquisitor, was the primary author of this manual for prosecutors of and preachers against witchcraft. His brother in religion Jakob Sprenger, professor of theology at the University of Cologne, saw to its publication there in the winter of 1486–87.³ Throughout northern Europe and in New England, the *Malleus maleficarum*, reissued at least twenty-seven times between 1487 and 1669, consolidated the conception of witchcraft as a prosecutable heresy and decisively influenced ecclesiastical and secular authorities' responses to the phenomenon. The mentality shaped by this manual was in large part responsible for frequent witch-hunts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

On the Iberian and Italian peninsulas, however, the impact of the *Malleus maleficarum* was minimal. Although favorably received in the early sixteenth century by the Italian Dominicans Bartolomeo Spina and Silvestro Priero, it was not issued in Italy until 1576. Editions published elsewhere had little or no influence on reference books prepared for the personnel of the Roman Inquisition. With a single exception, the Dominican Bernardo da Como, authors of influential manuals glossed over or ignored the sabbath, keystone of the hypothesis that witches were apostates. Instead they endorsed the *Canon episcopi*, believed until the late sixteenth century to be a ruling by the Council of Ancyra (314), which dismissed the sabbath as an illusion, a distant memory of ancient mother-goddess cults.⁴

Serious students of witchcraft have long acknowledged that southwestern Europe in the early modern era was relatively immune to popular hysteria about and large-scale persecutions of Satan's alleged servants.

Recent investigations have furnished a convincing explanation of this regional difference: the skeptical, moderate attitude toward witchcraft articulated and put into practice by Spanish and Italian inquisitors. An epidemic of persecution in the Basque country between 1609 and 1614, as Gustav Henningsen has shown, was the last major episode of its kind in Spain. Responding to the arguments of the courageous and articulate “witches’ advocate” Alonso Salazar, the Suprema issued detailed guidelines drastically curtailing the activities of prosecutors inclined to mount witch-hunts.⁵ A similar result was achieved in Italy through a complex series of negotiations between theorists, prelates, and inquisitors reconstructed in persuasive fashion by Giovanni Romeo.⁶

Until the ninth decade of the sixteenth century, Romeo argues, Italian inquisitors’ handling of witchcraft was hesitant and inconsistent. To be sure, some witch-hunts occurred. In Reggio Emilia in 1522–23 and 1539, Vercelli in 1536, Siena in 1569, Lecco in 1569–70, Rome in 1572, the Val Mesolcina in 1583, Triora in 1588, Mantua in 1595 and 1600–1601, and Reggio Emilia again in 1595–1600, groups of alleged witches were brought to trial and given harsh sentences, in many cases death by fire.⁷ On the whole, however, the actions of the ecclesiastical authorities seem to have been motivated “more by obscure demonological disquietude than by specific attention to the sabbath.”⁸ By the 1560s, most inquisitors and bishops, while admitting the theoretical possibility that witches might make pacts with Satan and travel to the sabbath, had begun to question whether the individuals who came before them were apostates or rather victims of diabolical illusion.⁹

Inquisitors’ uncertainty was reflected not only in the varying outcomes of prosecutions they conducted but also in the published literature. Between 1575 and 1585, the eminent canonist Cardinal Francisco Peña, a Spanish Dominican based in Rome, prepared editions of and commentaries on numerous manuals and treatises concerning heresy. A member of the Congregation of the Holy Office who knew well the theoretical and practical dilemmas involved in prosecuting witchcraft, he was potentially capable of resolving them in a definitive fashion but did not do so. On the issue of whether the sabbath was real or illusory he maintained a prudent reserve. In his treatment of procedural questions—which forum (secular or ecclesiastical, episcopal or inquisitorial) was competent in various types of cases and what use should be made of alleged witches’ testimony against accomplices—Peña was somewhat more forthcoming, but he stopped short of taking a definitive stand.¹⁰

Lacking clear directives, inquisitors were ill equipped to resolve witchcraft cases on their own, and their superiors in Rome proved unwilling to let them do so. Since theologians and canonists had failed to furnish unequivocal guidance, the Congregation of the Holy Office was forced to make case law. Until scholars have been able fully to explore what remains of that body's records in the recently opened central archive of the Holy Office, the roles of the protagonists and the degree to which they pursued conscious objectives will remain unclear. Nevertheless, by utilizing correspondence between the Congregation and local inquisitors preserved outside Rome, Romeo has constructed a plausible scenario. About 1588, he argues, an internal struggle in the Congregation between intransigent true believers in the modern witchcraft paradigm and moderates who were skeptical about it ended in a compromise. Though many years would pass before the Congregation's new position was promulgated in explicit, authoritative form,¹¹ it was promptly implemented. Roman rulings on trials conducted in outlying tribunals reveal its main outlines. The virtual exclusion of torture as an instrument for obtaining confessions, a ban on prosecuting alleged accomplices named by those on trial for witchcraft, and an approach toward sentencing which treated convicted witches as deluded souls capable of rehabilitation rather than apostates meriting harsh punishment amounted, as Romeo puts it, to "a partial depenalization of the sabbath."¹²

WITCHCRAFT WAS NOT the only kind of unorthodoxy which perplexed the Congregation of the Holy Office and its agents in the field during this period. The absence of "a coherent model of judicial procedure" for handling "false saints," Romeo suggests in passing, must have been equally troubling.¹³ Close examination of inquisitorial manuals and cases validates his insight. Although, as we have seen, references to prosecution of pretense of holiness by the Spanish Inquisition are relatively numerous in sixteenth-century Italian treatises on discernment of spirits and guides to the devout life, the problem was very slow to make its way into works concerned with the operations of the Holy Office. Of the many works on heresy directed toward inquisitors which went into circulation before the fourth decade of the seventeenth century, only one touched on the subject. The Spanish bishop and canonist Diego de Simancas's *De catholicis institutionibus*, first published in Valladolid in 1552, was issued in revised and expanded form in Alcalá in 1569. When its author came to Rome, Pius V (who, it will be remembered, was a for-

mer inquisitor) invited him to prepare a condensed version of his manual. Enthusiastic reception of the epitome motivated Pius's successor, Gregory XIII, to sponsor a Roman edition of the larger work, which appeared in 1575.¹⁴

In *De catholicis institutionibus*, toward the end of a section devoted primarily to sorcerers, Simancas briefly considers those "who affirm or pretend that they have divine revelations." Such claims "must be held vehemently suspect, for they are not in fact revelations from good angels but illusions from most wicked demons." A prime instance is "that girl from Cordoba," a nun in one of the most prestigious convents in the city, who managed to fool "wise and cautious men" all over the Christian world for more than thirty years. When at long last, during an illness, her simulation came to light, the Inquisition transferred her to another convent, where she returned to leading "a pious and religious life." Then, after rehearsing standard physiological and moral explanations for the fact that most recipients of revelations are "foolish and sinful women," Simancas lists a few sources (notably Deut. 13:1–6 and 18:20–22) on recognizing false prophets. He concludes by stating that inquisitors must examine and punish those who report frequent revelations.¹⁵ That is all: raising and disposing of the problem in two pages, Simancas offers no concrete suggestions about how the Holy Office is to conduct inquiries into pretense of holiness and proceed to trial and sentencing.¹⁶

Uncertainty about the procedural status of pretense of holiness is manifested not only by the Venetian Inquisition's decision not to prosecute Narcisa in 1618 but also by the inconsistency with which ecclesiastical authorities elsewhere in Italy handled similar cases. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the ecstasies, revelations, and spiritual lifestyles of five Neapolitans prompted investigations of various kinds, with mixed consequences. In 1581, when the well-born visionary Orsola Benincasa traveled to Rome in order to persuade Gregory XIII that a new general reform was necessary, she was interrogated and subjected to exorcism by a specially appointed papal commission, which ruled favorably on the sources of her inspiration. Although the authorities continued to monitor Benincasa's activities after her return to Naples, she encountered no serious obstacles to her project of founding a new religious order.¹⁷

Humbler Neapolitans met a less favorable but not entirely uniform reception. In the same year that Benincasa was investigated in Rome, Alfonsina Rispolo, a Franciscan tertiary who reported visions and exhib-

ited the stigmata, was arrested by order of the vicar general of Naples and confined in a convent. After she had languished there for more than a decade, the Congregation of the Holy Office informed the archbishop of Naples that although the vicar general's investigation, improperly conducted, provided no grounds for an inquisitorial prosecution, Rispoli's internment should continue.¹⁸ Fra Ludovico di Monte Faito, a charismatic hermit operating in Castellamare di Stabio, was sent to Rome for trial in 1586. The only accessible information about the friar and his disciples is the record of a probe conducted two years later by the Carthusian monks of San Martino in Naples, who raised the possibility that fra Ludovico might be deluded by the devil but expressed a generally favorable opinion of his preaching and conduct.¹⁹ In 1611 the Neapolitan tribunal prosecuted the visionary widow Maria Sparano and sentenced her to seven years in jail as vehemently suspect of feigning holiness.²⁰

By far the most complex instance of pretense of holiness in Naples during the early seventeenth century was the bizarre amalgam of spirituality and sexual libertinism promoted by a Franciscan tertiary, Giulia Di Marco, and her two accomplices, the priest Aniello Arciero and the attorney Giuseppe De Vicariis. Because the trio managed to recruit numerous followers, some of them in the upper social strata, and because their activities evoked bitter quarrels between receptive Jesuits and hostile Theatines, this case took local inquisitors and the Congregation of the Holy Office eight years to resolve. Finally the chief perpetrators and several of their disciples were extradited to Rome, where on 12 July 1615 Di Marco, Arciero, and De Vicariis were condemned to life imprisonment.²¹ These Neapolitan examples suggest that the local tribunal of the Inquisition was less than confident in handling pretense of holiness. Not all cases were prosecuted by inquisitors, whose working relationship with the archiepiscopal curia was far from harmonious.²² Hence responsibility for making difficult decisions was often passed to, or assumed by, the Congregation in Rome.

Perplexity on the local level is even more evident in the contemporaneous case of Benedetta Carlini, the nun of Pescia made famous by Judith C. Brown.²³ Although Brown does not cast Carlini's spiritual adventure in terms of the discourse on pretense of holiness, the record of probes into her activities conducted in 1619–20 and 1622–23 reveals that the clerics who had to deal with her viewed the problem in that light. Two documents in the Carlini dossier, "Segni delle vere visioni et revelationi" and "Modo di conoscere le divine dalle diaboliche rivelationi,"

are particularly relevant in this regard.²⁴ These working papers, it would appear, were drafted by one or more of the following: Paolo Ricordati, Carlini's confessor; Stefano Cecchi, provost of Pescia, who conducted the initial investigation; and Lorenzo Geri da Pistoia and Michelangelo da Soragna, the two Capuchin friars dispatched by the papal nuncio in Florence to reexamine the situation.²⁵

Clearly the author or authors had burned the midnight oil in a library poring over all the pertinent volumes at hand, scrupulously cited. "Segni delle vere visioni et revelationi" is based entirely on three chapters of a treatise by the Spanish Jesuit Melchor de Villanueva.²⁶ "Modo di conoscere le divine dalle diaboliche rivelationi" contains a more extensive bibliography, including the works of several authors now familiar to us (Gerson, Vincent Ferrer, Torquemada, Savonarola, and Del Rio) and four others: Henricus de Frimaria, Gilles Charlier, Giovanni Francesco Pico, and Pedro de Rivadeniera.²⁷ These research efforts indicate that Carlini's spiritual adviser, the provost of Pescia, and the emissaries dispatched from Florence to look into her troubling behavior did not know exactly how to handle it. The works they consulted sufficed to support the conclusion finally reached in 1623: she had been deluded by the devil or misled by her own imagination so thoroughly that she had fabricated evidence of her holiness. What the learned tomes did not outline was a course of action to be followed. Whether the case was submitted to the Holy Office in Florence or directly to the Congregation in Rome remains uncertain.²⁸ It appears that the authorities and Carlini's sisters in religion, drawing on disciplinary provisions in the rules of female orders, improvised a solution. The errant nun was confined to prison in her convent, which served to silence though probably not to rehabilitate her.²⁹

THE ROMAN INQUISITION'S stance on witchcraft, as we have seen, evolved through epistolary exchanges between inquisitors in the field and the Congregation of the Holy Office and debates within that body. Case law, rather than the published results of theologians' and canonists' research or papal promulgations, drove the process. Development of a definitive position on pretense of holiness appears to have proceeded in the opposite direction. Unlike the numerous prosecutions for witchcraft, the rare instances of feigned holiness which came to the attention of the Holy Office in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth do not constitute a series. Although Rome intervened in at least four of the Neapolitan cases, the brief glimpses afforded by the documentation are

insufficient to permit either a circumstantial account of or a plausible surmise about what members of the Congregation were thinking. Authoritative instructions for handling “false saints” in an inquisitorial prosecution emerge, abruptly or so it seems, from the study of a scholarly prosecutor of heresy and the office of an eminent cardinal-inquisitor.

Early in 1636 an important manual of inquisitorial procedure, Cesare Carena’s *Tractatus de Officio Sanctissimae Inquisitionis et modo procedendi in causis fidei*, was published in Cremona.³⁰ Its author, a native of that city, had studied theology at the Jesuit Collegio de’ Nobili in Parma and the University of Padua and earned a law degree from the University of Pavia. Sponsored by a powerful patron, Cardinal Pietro Campori, who had served on the Congregation of the Holy Office before being named bishop of Cremona, Carena was appointed by Urban VIII as consultant to the Cremonese Inquisition in 1626, and a year later he was named that tribunal’s *avvocato fiscale*.³¹

Promoted on the title page as “extremely useful and necessary to all bishops, to inquisitors and their subordinates, and also to confessors, especially in the illustrious state of Milan,” Carena’s manual lives up to its billing as far as pretense of holiness is concerned.³² In the section on miscellaneous matters pertaining to the Holy Office, Carena prescribes a precise routing for cases of “women who purport to have revelations from God, the saints, and angels.” Those whose revelations contain “nothing superstitious, erroneous, rash, or heretical” are to be handled in the episcopal court. If the revelations have any suspicious characteristics, “without a doubt such women fall under the jurisdiction of the inquisitor.”³³

To support this two-track procedure, Carena cites as his only authority Del Rio’s account of the Peruvian incident. In a subsequent edition of his manual he buttresses his position by providing references to other pertinent works: those of Gerson, Simancas, and Valle de Moura.³⁴ That Carena’s sources, with the single exception of Simancas, are studies of discernment of spirits and occult phenomena suggests that he had neither participated in nor acquired information about recent Italian cases. On the other hand, since through Campori he probably had connections with the Congregation of the Holy Office, his approach to pretense of holiness raises questions about how the problem was currently viewed in Rome. A partial answer is provided by a second influential work, Cardinal Desiderio Scaglia’s “Prattica per procedere nelle cause del S. Offizio” (Handbook for proceeding in cases before the Holy Office). This guide freed inquisitors from undertaking a review of the literature

every time the specter of pretense of holiness arose and provided them with even more explicit instructions on the disposition of such cases.

Born in Brescia, Scaglia joined the Dominican Order in Cremona. After completing his theological studies at the University of Bologna, he pursued the career of inquisitor in Pavia, Cremona, and Milan. Paul V named him commissioner of the Holy Office and in 1621 raised him to the cardinalate.³⁵ John Tedeschi has demonstrated that Scaglia's "Prattica," composed in the mid-1630s, circulated widely in manuscript among inquisitors. Along with his "Instructio pro formandis processibus in causis strigum, sortilegorum, et maleficiorum" (Instruction for proceeding in cases of witches, sorcerers, and casters of spells), written a decade earlier and disseminated in the same way, it belatedly elucidated the Roman Inquisition's skeptical attitude toward witchcraft.³⁶ As Albano Biondi and Adriano Prosperi have shown, the "Prattica" did likewise with the Holy Office's stance on pretense of holiness.³⁷ Indeed, on this problem the impact of Scaglia's treatment was even more decisive, for unlike the practitioners of witchcraft and sorcery, "false saints" had not been discussed thoroughly and usefully in inquisitorial manuals previous to Carena's.

In two copies of the "Prattica" examined by Biondi, chapter 21, "Degl'avvertimenti generali," concludes with two sections entitled "Delle monache" and "Della santità affettata."³⁸ Here Scaglia identifies three problems that arise in female religious houses. First, a woman forced to become a nun or maltreated by her superiors sometimes falls into desperation so deep that she comes to doubt central doctrines of the faith. When this occurs, the convent's designated confessor, directly or via the ordinary, should notify the Holy Office and request papal permission to absolve the nun, which will be granted provided that she has no accomplices or disciples. If she does, she must be put on trial.³⁹

The second, more common occurrence—a natural consequence of "womanish competition and rivalry"—is a nun's coming to believe that she is bewitched or possessed by the devil, a possibility about which Scaglia is obviously skeptical. With pungent sarcasm, he reveals how ineptly such cases are normally handled. The superiors call in exorcists, whose ministrations serve only to spread the malady among the affected woman's fellow inmates. Then they conduct a trial, in which, by suggestive questioning and torture, they obtain spurious confessions. Inevitably and most unfortunately, the convent and the entire city are turned topsy-turvy. Scaglia recommends a more effective procedure: isolating the affected sisters (making sure, however, that they are always accompa-

nied by a reliable companion) and bringing in a good confessor, who will reassure the other nuns and keep them occupied with the sacraments and prayer. Above all, the infestation must be kept secret, so that the nuns' and their relatives' reputations are not damaged. If the delusion is widespread, the chief perpetrators should be punished and the others reprimanded.⁴⁰

The third problem, which arises both in convents and among "pinzochere, tertiaries, and similar women who profess to be spiritual," invariably involves their confessors and spiritual directors as well. Scaglia masterfully sketches the scenario: "Through weak-mindedness, through pretense motivated by the prideful ambition to be considered holy and dear to God, and sometimes through [diabolical] illusion, they say that they have received revelations from God concerning the condition of the Church, revolutions in states, [and] the status of persons living or dead; that they have been favored by celestial visions; and that God and the saints speak to them. And if anyone in doubt consults them about whether [particular] human actions are sinful, they claim to pray over the matter and then give their ruling." A "simple and ignorant" confessor or spiritual director will believe all this, commit it to writing, and broadcast the woman's prodigies. One who is "learned but naive and given to a certain kind of spirituality unregulated by sound judgment" will not only accept what she says but set out to defend it.⁴¹

Not infrequently this pattern of behavior is accompanied by "concupiscence and carnality." Either the woman will claim that sexual acts are meritorious, or the priest will encourage her to think so and to put the idea into practice. Confessors and spiritual directors who are learned but "wicked and malicious" will attempt to justify illicit sexual conduct by furnishing a theological rationale for it. When they are called to account, they will "play simple and ignorant and say that they really believed it." A confessor so ill educated and stupid that he is unaware of his fault, "which seems virtually impossible," must be reminded that in natural law ignorance is no excuse. In either case the priests—and, Scaglia implies, their lay female accomplices as well—are to be put on trial by the Inquisition, made to abjure, and condemned. If nuns are involved, however, the matter should be handled by the bishop rather than the Holy Office in order to avoid inappropriate publicity.⁴²

In the section on nuns, besides prescribing the judicial course of action to be followed in various situations, Scaglia expands the discussion by paying attention to their male advisers. He continues in the same vein in

the section on pretense of holiness. Among those who feign holiness, he explains, are “some male religious, hermits, seekers of alms, and similar vagabonds” who, in order to gain money, sexual gratification, or some other end, make the same kinds of claims as their female counterparts. As props in their charades, they employ allegedly miraculous images and crosses, as well as indulgences and other documents purportedly sent from heaven. Furthermore, they dress and act the part of holy men. “Composing their exterior appearance in such a way that both simple and prudent people believe them,” they give the impression of fasting continually, and they carry whips to indicate that they flagellate themselves. Very often they recruit a supporting cast of nuns and laywomen. When put on trial, they can usually be brought to the point of confessing that “all this is fiction, hypocrisy, and artifice.”⁴³

Scaglia insists that both male and female perpetrators of such frauds must be prosecuted. Failure to do so “would result in grave prejudice and disrespect toward genuinely good people, religious orders, the Christian life, and the faith itself.” Once the exercise of discerning spirits has established “evidence of such affectation and pretense,” a man tried and found guilty is to be sentenced to exile, imprisonment, or service on the galleys. A convicted laywoman should be confined in the prison of the Holy Office, her own home, or “some other respectable place.” In addition, if she is “of vile condition” and her offenses are notorious, she is to be publicly whipped.⁴⁴ For reasons of propriety a guilty nun cannot be given these kinds of punishments but must be disciplined according to the provisions of her order’s rule. Whatever the status of convicted pretenders to holiness, bishops and inquisitors should keep them under surveillance, assign them “good and prudent confessors,” and prohibit them from talking about “their so-called revelations.”⁴⁵

Prevention, according to Scaglia, is the best cure for pretense of holiness. Confessors and directors of spiritual people, “especially women,” man the front lines in this campaign. Since they need to be reminded of what “the masters of the spiritual life” have written on the subject, he ends with a discussion of discernment of spirits, illustrated with long quotations from Gerson and Rafael de la Torre, a Spanish Dominican commentator on Thomas Aquinas.⁴⁶ By paying heed to these authors, directors will learn how to meet the challenge posed by aspirants to the devout life. The task, however, is by no means an easy one: “Given the devil’s deceits and subtle stratagems, it is very difficult to determine which ap-

partitions and revelations are divine and which are [diabolical] illusions, and similarly, [to tell] which ecstasies are caused by God, distinguishing them from that lulling of the senses brought about by the devil, [natural] indisposition, or the imbalance of tempers termed ‘ecstasy’ [extases] or ‘rapture due to weakness’ [raptus ab aegritudine].”⁴⁷

That Carena’s *Tractatus* and Scaglia’s “Prattica,” put into circulation almost simultaneously, sent the same message about the procedure to be followed with “false saints” was surely no coincidence. Almost certainly the Dominican cardinal knew the Cremonese jurist. Before being called to Rome, Scaglia worked in Cremona, Pavia, and Milan, cities associated with the background and career of Carena. More important, he and Campori, Carena’s patron, protégés of the Borghese family, were in Rome in Inquisition circles during a period when Carena was perhaps present in the Holy City as well.⁴⁸ After Scaglia’s death, furthermore, Carena published a commentary on his other set of directives for inquisitors, the “*Instructio pro formandis processibus*.”⁴⁹ Hence the probability of a coordinated strategy for handling pretense of holiness in the tribunals of the Holy Office, an effort parallel to and no doubt connected with the compromise solution on witchcraft and superstition, appears high.

With Carena’s manual and Scaglia’s “Prattica” on their bookshelves, inquisitors—as well as bishops, who bore responsibility in the first instance for nuns—were reasonably well equipped to treat juridically the cases of pretense of holiness which crossed their desks.⁵⁰ These two sets of instructions were both precise and authoritative. Prosperi rightly emphasizes that Scaglia’s widely distributed treatise publicized “a strategic choice by the cardinals on the Congregation of the Inquisition,” a contention supported by Tedeschi’s and Romeo’s findings.⁵¹ Carena’s manual, re-issued at least six times, almost certainly enjoyed a similarly authoritative reputation.⁵² Yet as users of these two works soon discovered, mastering programmatic statements about pretense of holiness was easier than putting them into practice in specific cases.⁵³

Scaglia’s and Carena’s cautious, moderate approach proved difficult to maintain in the tense atmosphere of a courtroom, and even more so in intimate conversations between spiritual advisers and their most assiduous clients. Their focus on the final, prosecutorial stage did little to inform those responsible for dealing with a self-proclaimed ecstatic how to determine initially where the problem lay. Were they confronted with a willing collaborator of the devil, a “weak subject” who had succumbed

to diabolical illusion, an ambitious and cynical faker, or a person suffering from some combination of mental and physical illness? To these questions, as we shall see in Chapters 7 and 8, two groups of professionals frequently drawn into the judicial ambit, exorcists and physicians, offered answers.

Refashioning “True” Holiness

WHILE THEOLOGIANs and prelates were articulating the concept of pretense of holiness and devising a procedure for punishing perpetrators, they were also redefining the criteria for “genuine” sainthood and modernizing the mechanism for applying them. These efforts formed part of a massive campaign conducted throughout western Europe by ecclesiastical and secular authorities both Protestant and Catholic which modern scholars call “confessionalization” and “social discipline.”¹ Although in hindsight it appears probable that the discourse of pretense of holiness and the discourse of “true” holiness ran on parallel tracks, historians have only recently begun to investigate whether contemporaries consciously and explicitly made more direct connections between them. In this chapter, after having shown why and how the new model of sainthood and the means of implementing it were crafted, I reflect briefly on this problem. Then I turn to a set of exemplary stories: brief lives of some Venetian aspiring saints who were considered by contemporaries to have achieved their objective.

To set the stage, some general observations may be useful. From the point of view of scholars in the human sciences, sainthood is an eminently social phenomenon. Saints are made, not born: holy people in any time and place are products of a historically specific milieu in which certain models of behavior, out of a much larger repertoire theoretically available in their religious tradition, recommend themselves for imitation. As Pierre Delooz puts it, they become “saints for others”—that is, they achieve positive recognition from their contemporaries—if they are perceived to embody the religious and social values considered most important at that moment and to meet urgent needs.² Conversely, if they appear to pose some challenge or threat to these values and needs, they are accorded negative recognition, frequently expressed in exemplary punishment. To employ the parlance of Peter Burke, “It is impossible to

explain the achievement of sanctity entirely in terms of the qualities of the individual, or even by the qualities which witnesses saw in each individual. The imputation of sainthood, like its converse, the imputation of heresy or witchcraft, should be seen as a process of interaction or ‘negotiation’ between centre and periphery, each with its own definition of the situation.”³

Contemporary examples illustrate this generalization. Non-Catholics probably consider Teresa of Calcutta more central to the concerns of our era, and hence more “saintly,” than such ecstatic bearers of the stigmata as the Italian Capuchin friar Pio da Pietrelcina, recently beatified. We, however, stand on the “periphery”: we can engage in informal saint making, but we cannot elevate some to the honor of the altars and block the ascent of others. In the Roman Catholic Church, broad popular acceptance of holy people, though necessary to a certain extent, is not sufficient to make them saints. Formal, official recognition that legitimizes public veneration (*dulia*) of such people as “possible channels of grace from God” comes from the “center,” through the process of canonization overseen by the papacy.⁴

Established by Urban II in the late eleventh century and refined by several popes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the bureaucratic procedure for making official saints underwent significant modifications at later points. One well-known feature of this procedure deserves emphasis: from the very beginning, papal certification of sainthood has been a postmortem operation. As Burke provocatively observes, the Catholic Church evidently considers holy people “more powerful, more valuable dead than alive.”⁵

Roman Catholic sainthood, then, is a consequence of “pressure from others”—specific others.⁶ Since both the prominent devotees of dead holy people who propose them for consideration (rulers and members of the religious orders to which they belonged) and the popes and cardinals who make the final decisions are social animals, patterns in sainthood change from one era to the next. Medievalists, who conceived and pioneered in exploring the sociology of sainthood, have identified the most important factors to consider when developing a profile of sainthood in a particular period. These include the characteristics of individuals put forward for promotion to the rank of saint: social status, occupation, place of residence, gender, age, patterns of holy behavior. Given that these persons are “saints for others,” the sources and strength of sup-

port for them, as well as the timing and rationale involved in canonization, deserve attention as well.⁷

AN IMPORTANT PARADIGM of holiness on the “periphery” in early modern Italy—one that was never accepted by the “center” and provided a negative stimulus to post-Tridentine theologians and ecclesiastical legislators—has been identified by Gabriella Zarri, who brings to light the phenomenon of “living saints.”⁸ In a period of crisis roughly corresponding with the Italian wars (1494–1530), northern and central Italy pullulated with prophets, particularly women who manifested extraordinary evidence of divine favor.⁹ Many of them bore on their bodies such visible signs of their resemblance to Christ as the stigmata: bleeding wounds on their hands, sides, and foreheads. Some, they themselves and their contemporaries believed, were endowed with the privilege of surviving on no sustenance other than the Eucharist. From frequent ecstasies in which they communicated with God, Christ, the Virgin, and the saints, they derived the power to predict developments in the ecclesiastical and political realms and the ability to provide counsel on matters both spiritual and mundane. They also performed thaumaturgic miracles of various kinds.

Female “semireligious” (tertiaries or freelance holy women of modest social origins and limited education), along with some nuns, constituted the overwhelming majority of “living saints.”¹⁰ Their comportment immediately evoked comparison with certified saints: Colomba da Rieti, for instance, was called “the second Catherine of Siena,” the Bolognese Elena Duglioli “another Cecilia.” Italian princes and governors maneuvered and competed to secure their presence in courts and cities. In this period, indeed, a “true prophetess” was at least as valuable an acquisition for a ruler’s entourage as a renowned astrologer. The patrons of “living saints” supplied funds to aid them in founding convents, so that the prayers and holy lives of assembled pious women, including the daughters and widows of the authorities, would help to ward off plague, war, Turkish incursions, and other disasters.

The appellation “living saint” was much more than a metaphorical token of respect and reverence. By writing and publishing accounts of their lives, revelations, and miracles, their spokesmen—mainly friars in the orders with which the women were affiliated—furthered the efforts of devotees from all social ranks to establish their cults. The vitae of

Arcangela Panigarola and Caterina de' Ricci went into circulation during their lifetimes.¹¹ In many cases, campaigns to initiate processes of canonization began the moment holy women died. That Rome was slow to grant official approval of locally venerated charismatics, and in many instances never did so, in no way diminishes the social and religious significance of “living saints.” Nor does a certain amount of suspicion, acute in the careers of Chiara Bugni and Paola Antonia Negri but evident in many others, about the source of their revelations and miraculous powers.¹²

The “living saints” day in the sun soon passed. By about 1530, as the political situation in Italy stabilized, rulers were showing less interest in holy mascots. At the same time, high ecclesiastics and theologians, concerned about the possibility that the Lutheran menace might cross the Alps, were increasingly inclined to equate prophets and their messages of reform with northern dissidence. Enclosure of surviving “living saints” in convents severely curtailed their contacts with supporters in the outside world. Of the male religious who had promoted them, some turned violently against forms of spirituality which now appeared suspect; others assumed a stance of prudent, perhaps hypocritical reserve. Only in certain restricted circles, notably among those Dominicans and their adherents who cherished the memory of Savonarola, did the cults of “living saints” persist in semi-clandestine form.¹³

RISE OF SUSPICION of “living saints” coincided almost exactly with popes' reluctance to elevate deceased holy people to saintly status. Between 1523 and 1588 there was not a single canonization.¹⁴ Then the process of saint making resumed: Diego of Alcalá was officially recognized in 1588, Hyacinth Odrovaz in 1594, Raymond of Peñafort in 1600, Gregory VII in 1606, Francesca Romana in 1608, and Carlo Borromeo in 1610.¹⁵ Five of these six were figures out of the distant past; only the archbishop of Milan had operated within the lifetime of his canonizer, Paul V. The canonization of Borromeo constituted the first direct statement in this ambit affirming the values and achievements of the Counter-Reformation. That endorsement was reiterated in 1622, when four other paladins of the new Catholic regime—Teresa of Avila, Ignatius Loyola, Filippo Neri, and Francis Xavier—were elevated to sainthood.¹⁶ After the recognition of two medieval Iberians, the Spanish peasant Isidore (also in 1622) and the Portuguese princess Isabel (1625), another hiatus in canonizations ensued until 1658.¹⁷

In January 1588 the former inquisitor Sixtus V, as part of a major reorganization and modernization of the papal curia, put the canonization process into the hands of a new commission of cardinals, the Congregation of Sacred Rites and Ceremonies.¹⁸ As Romeo De Maio has demonstrated, this move did not precipitate an immediate change in the standards for canonization. Until the early years of the seventeenth century, saint makers continued to apply rather elastic criteria, “excellence of virtues” and “multiple excellence of life,” the clearest evidence of which was miracles. In 1602, theologians of Salamanca who were preparing a case for the elevation of Teresa introduced a quite different standard: the humanist notion of “heroic virtue.”¹⁹

“Heroic virtue” involves, in the first place, “the glory of grace,” which makes possible undertakings surpassing normal human capabilities. Significantly, the prime example is not the kind of miracle so highly prized under the previous system (the performance of cures, levitation, and the like) but rather such full participation in Christ’s Passion as to receive physical marks identical to his wounds. The excruciating pains that ensue, as well as the torments of final illness, are borne with “heroic endurance.” Well-intentioned advisers’ disapproval of what in their judgment are excessively severe penitential practices and extravagant vows is countered with “heroic resistance.” Saints exhibit heroism not only in the struggle against their own human nature but also in combats with the devil and other adversaries of the church, including heretics and infidels. On foreign missions and in service to victims of the plague, they sacrifice themselves for others and joyfully embrace martyrdom. Their main goal is “the glory of the Church,” manifested above all in unquestioning obedience to the pope and their immediate superiors.²⁰

Rapidly gaining currency, the concept of heroic virtue was first applied in the *processi* of the Counter-Reformation figures canonized in 1622.²¹ It was articulated officially by Urban VIII in 1629.²² This pope undertook a series of major reforms in the procedures of canonization, which he promulgated between 1625 and 1634.²³ For holy people who survived initial scrutiny by the Congregation of Rites, he introduced a new category, “blessed” (*beatus/beata*), which permitted devotees in the region, city, or religious order from which they came to honor them within explicitly stated limits pending further investigation and promotion to sainthood. In the interest of rendering cases historically solid, he ordered that investigators rigorously verify the heroic exploits of prospective saints, making certain that these were neither perpetrated by the pro-

tagonists nor invented or embroidered by their promoters.²⁴ To prevent informal saint making, he prohibited the initiation of local cults without explicit papal authorization. Finally, to circumvent the danger that political and personal pressure and temporary waves of enthusiasm for certain charismatic figures might result in imprudent elevations to sainthood, he ruled that although gathering of evidence might commence immediately following a holy person's death, half a century must pass before he or she was canonized.²⁵ After his successors had made additional refinements in the new system, it was fully articulated in *De Servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione* (1734) by Cardinal Prospero Lambertini, a canon lawyer elevated to the papal throne six years later as Benedict XIV.

Documents gathered and assessed by the Congregation of Rites, many of which are preserved in the Vatican Archives, show clearly that as a consequence of Urban VIII's reforms the road to official sainthood came to resemble a series of trials conducted by the Inquisition, a form it has maintained until the present.²⁶ In the first phase, leading to beatification, the ordinary of the diocese in which a recently deceased "servant of God" worked is ordered to collect the candidate's writings and conduct two investigations: a *processo informativo*, in which witnesses are interrogated about his or her life, virtues, and death; and a *processo de non cultu*, designed to confirm that public veneration has not begun. (For candidates who died before 1534, where the existence of a local cult is crucial, the procedure is different.) The information gathered is carefully evaluated in Rome. If the Congregation's finding is favorable, the ordinary is instructed to conduct a second investigation, the *processo apostolico*, which focuses on the candidate's reputation for holiness—which must be widespread (*communis opinio*), not restricted to particular constituencies—and miracles. The Congregation then examines evidence relating to the candidate's virtues. Provided that the pope, who attends the last of its three meetings, finds the case for heroic virtues persuasive, he confers upon the holy person the title of "venerable."

The second phase involves another round of meetings. With the assistance of medical experts, the Congregation evaluates the candidate's miracles. If these are held to be genuine, the pope in a public ceremony raises him or her to the status of "blessed," which authorizes a local cult. In many instances the process terminates at this point. For the initiation of the third phase—canonization, or promotion to full sainthood—additional miracles and a new series of trials are required. Only when a holy

person has been canonized may he or she be called a saint and honored in public rituals throughout the Roman Catholic world.

There may appear to be a major, obvious difference between *processi* conducted by the Congregation of Rites and those overseen by the Congregation of the Holy Office, namely, that, unlike living people tried for heresy, deceased prospective saints cannot be summoned for questioning in court. Absence of a defendant resulting from his or her flight to avoid prosecution or death, however, was (and may still be) no bar to a full-scale inquisitorial prosecution.²⁷ This difference between the two processes is outweighed by the similarities. Both are bureaucratic operations relying heavily on the work of ecclesiastical authorities on the local level, whose work is closely monitored by their supervisors in Rome, standing committees of cardinals. Final deliberations by the two Congregations take place in the presence of the pope, whose approval is required to make their decisions official and binding. In the promotion of "true saints" and the condemnation of "false saints," therefore, action at the "center" decisively shapes and ultimately controls what occurs on the "periphery."

Assessing the degree to which revised criteria for sainthood and more rigorous, increasingly centralized control over their implementation were influenced by concern about pretense of holiness, and vice versa, is at this point a speculative enterprise. As we have seen, the fact that the two discourses evolved and took definitive form at approximately the same time in the same circles constitutes strong circumstantial evidence. Cesare Carena's *Tractatus* and Desiderio Scaglia's "Prattica," issued in the 1630s, followed by less than a decade the first canonizations of Counter-Reformation heroes. Both writers were in contact with Urban VIII during the years when he was working out the new procedures for canonization. Another indicator is the prominence of Teresa of Avila in seventeenth-century writings on pretense of holiness. Her life was held up as a counterexample to the comportment and claims of "false saints," and her writings were cited as a prime source of information on how to unmask them.²⁸ More intensive exploration of Teresa's and other new-model saints' posthumous reputations might yield additional insights into the connections.²⁹

FOR ASCERTAINING the profile of true sainthood, subjects of the Venetian state during the seventeenth century had resources other than published papal pronouncements. Many positive examples of genuine

prospective saints could be found nearby, in their own churches and convents. A pertinent guide to local holy people is the list made by a man who had extensive experience with pretenders to holiness: Andrea Vescovi, longtime chancellor of the Venetian Holy Office. Vescovi's "Catalogo de' santi, beati, venerabili e servi di Iddio venetiani," which he worked on during the last two decades of the seventeenth century and completed in 1698, represents a much expanded version of an earlier list compiled by Giovanni Tiepolo, patriarch of Venice from 1619 to 1631, in the very years that the outlines of true and false holiness were being delineated.³⁰ In the preface to the "Catalogo" Vescovi states his main purpose: to demonstrate that Venice, which was born Catholic and has never deviated from the faith, deserves precedence over all other Christian cities.³¹ Since scholars have devoted much effort to cataloguing Venetian men of arms and letters, he explains, he wishes to do the same for a much more important group, "those admitted to the citizenship of heaven."³² Like all hagiographers writing after the new norms for canonization were issued, he makes the required disclaimer. He will not presume to accord the title "saint," "blessed," or "venerable" to anyone not designated as such by the church; for holy people who have not been officially recognized, he will employ the appellation "servant of God."³³

The first section of Vescovi's "Catalogo" lists 150 holy people born in the Republic of Venice; the second is devoted to 80 saintly "foreigners" who spent some time in or passed through Venice. At the end of each entry the compiler provides a brief bibliography. Many of the works he mentions are manuscript vitae, preserved in his time in monasteries and convents, which have since disappeared. Given the absence of sustained, adequately financed campaigns in their favor, the majority of those he commemorated left no traces in official annals, for the Congregation of Rites neither accorded them interim sanction as *beati* who could be publicly venerated in Venice nor promoted them to the status of saint.³⁴ Vescovi's compilation is therefore an unusually valuable source for informal saint construction on the periphery.

The "Catalogo" is significant for another reason: in contrast to official rosters, it can be considered relatively gender-balanced. Between 1588 and 1767, according to Burke's calculations, only 12 (22%) of the 55 people whom the Congregation of the Rites promoted to full honors of sainthood were female.³⁵ Among the 230 people on Vescovi's list, which, of course, covers a much longer period of time, 85 (37%) are women, many of them from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In two other

respects, however, this Venetian profile of early modern holiness corresponds roughly to the official one designed in Rome. An overwhelming majority (89%) of the people listed by Vescovi were members of the secular clergy or regular orders (mainly the latter), as were the canonized saints.³⁶ Many of them, furthermore, made their way into the “Catalogo” in “families,” small groups of people who worked together. While official saints tended to cluster around a charismatic figure (Ignatius Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Carlo Borromeo, Filippo Neri) who inspired and directed the activities of both men and women and helped to draw some of them toward canonization,³⁷ the Venetian networks incorporated almost exclusively women engaged in a common mission: the establishment of a new convent. For the most part, the seventeenth-century male saints, *beati*, and “servants of God” whom Vescovi honored operated alone.

The saintly Venetians mentioned in the “Catalogo” whose life stories follow—three women, founding mothers of Theatine and Capuchin family groups that included other female “servants of God,” and one man—do not constitute a random sample. Rather, I have selected them because they crossed paths with one or more of their contemporaries tried by the Holy Office for pretense of holiness. For most of them, Vescovi’s thumbnail sketch can be supplemented by the account on which he drew. One of these is an individual *vita*; others are found in a prosopography, Benedetto Mazzara’s *Leggendario francescano*. But before we turn to these stories, some reflections on the genre of saints’ lives are in order.

To the twentieth-century eye, much of what is recounted in saints’ lives appears utterly fantastic. The recurrence of certain incidents in one story after another enhances the impression of implausibility; skepticism is further heightened by the hagiographers’ propensity to point out parallels with the lives of certified saints. Must we therefore reject *vitae* as in any sense accurate “histories” of the subjects’ lives and demote them to the status of “inventions”—“fictions” of a stereotypical and inferior kind?

Though the issue of facticity in saints’ lives is genuine, resolving it in such a radical fashion amounts to posing a false antithesis. Unquestionably, seventeenth-century hagiographers followed models, the *vitae* of certified saints. They made no effort to conceal their *modus operandi*; on the contrary, as we shall see, they drew attention to it. Given their objectives, to edify readers and to promote their subjects to the honors of the altar, they could hardly have done otherwise. Because they knew

that their two intended audiences, devout people on the periphery and the Congregation of Rites at the center, expected a particular form of presentation, that was precisely what they provided: accounts of a prodigious childhood and a course from adolescence through maturity strewn with obstacles heroically overcome, followed by a topically arranged demonstration of virtues, a moving evocation of a pious death, and a presentation of selected prodigious accomplishments that might qualify as miracles.³⁸ That these writers made up tales out of whole cloth or allowed their fantasy free rein in embroidering on an exiguous factual base is most unlikely. They knew the rules of the game promulgated by Urban VIII. Evidence presented in a *processo* of beatification would be carefully checked, and if witnesses closely acquainted with a candidate did not confirm what was presented in his or her *vita*, the case would probably be shelved.

That, by their own standards, early modern hagiographers aimed at and succeeded in “telling the truth” need not constrain twentieth-century historians to accept *vitae* as totally accurate accounts. Our conception of the historical process leads us to reject the premise that individual human actions and general developments are directed by a divine hand. Although, unlike our positivist predecessors, we do not dismiss all psychosomatic phenomena (the stigmata, for instance) as pious frauds, we do not assign them extraterrestrial causes. Furthermore, because we recognize that “truth” is socially conditioned, we can appreciate how powerfully the form and content of previous saints’ lives operated among their contemporaries both to shape and to validate (or invalidate) the experiences of early modern aspirants to holiness. Although the contents of these texts are only conditionally and partially “true” in the positivistic, “scientific” sense of that word, *vitae* that were “true” in all senses for their producers and consumers in the seventeenth century provide us with valuable evidence about the society that generated them.³⁹

NEAR THE BEGINNING of Vescovi’s list, which is arranged in approximate alphabetical order by first name, he records “the venerable Angela Maria Pasqualigo, Venetian noblewoman, founder of the convent of Augustinian nuns [entitled] Giesù Maria, who died in the year 1652.” His bibliographical note refers readers to two guidebooks that mention the convent and a recently published life of the holy woman.⁴⁰ Vescovi’s calling Pasqualigo “venerable” indicates that a campaign to win her official recognition had been launched. Although no *processo* in her favor sur-

vives in accessible records of the Congregation of Rites, this inference is supported by his main source, the vita by the Veronese Theatine Giovanni Bonifacio Bagatta, which was clearly designed to pave the way for her beatification.⁴¹ In his dedication to Elena Labia Foscarini, Bagatta argues that Pasqualigo’s life conveys a “true idea and expressive exemplar in these chilling times of those ancient and heroic Christian virtues that flower in the hearts of fervent lovers of God.” While applauding his dedicatee’s desire “to emulate the virtues of great heroines” such as Pasqualigo, he warns that she and other readers must refrain from venerating the holy woman until the ecclesiastical authorities grant permission to do so—a development to which he hopes his “narration” will contribute.⁴²

Born in Venice on 29 September 1562, Angela Maria, daughter of the patrician Antonio Pasqualigo (Bagatta does not give her mother’s name),⁴³ was set on the right path by her pious wet nurse, who prayed that if her charges were not destined to become good Christians, God take them before they lost their innocence. As soon as she reached the age of reason, the girl began to pray often and eschew vanities, and by the age of nine she was fasting three days a week. The devil, who soon took notice of her, insinuated she should weep over the pains of the damned rather than those of the crucified Christ, a suggestion she resisted. One day during Lent, when she stayed away from the dinner table to pray, she fell head-first into a fireplace—perhaps, says Bagatta, who is wont to pair natural and supernatural alternatives, because she fell asleep or was overcome by her “customary illness” or more likely because the devil pushed her. The Moorish slave who ran to her rescue was certain that he would find her dead or badly disfigured, but much to the surprise of everyone in the household, she emerged without a single singed hair—exactly like Catherine of Siena, her biographer points out. From then on, it was clear to all that she was destined for great things. Every so often, as a test, her father would pretend that he was about to chastise her for some nonexistent fault. When she escaped to the little altar in her room, Antonio would joke lovingly, “Run, run into the Savior’s arms, so that I cannot punish you.”⁴⁴

On the death of her parents when she was only eight years old, Angela Maria and her older sister, Lucia, were taken in by a maternal aunt. Because this surrogate mother was preoccupied with her own children—or else because, in contrast to most Venetian matrons, she was not attentive “either to the glory of God or to that of the world”—she neglected the two orphans, failing to teach them “women’s work,” train them in

Angela Maria Pasqualigo. From Giovanni Bonifacio Bagatta, *Vita della serva di Dio M.re Angela Maria Pasqualiga* (Venice: Giovanni Francesco Valvasense, 1680).

virtue, or send them to confession. The young sisters nonetheless persevered in the pious practices inculcated by their parents. Engaging frequently in mental prayer, leading the other girls around the house chanting litanies, and disciplining herself with homemade whips, Angela Maria equaled such newly minted holy women as Rose of Lima and Maria Villani.⁴⁵ Without any aid from a human teacher, she learned how to read, write, sew, and embroider.⁴⁶ While plying the needle and doing other household chores, she thought and talked only about God, to whose glory she dedicated all her work.⁴⁷

After three years Angela Maria and Lucia were rescued by a paternal uncle, Girolamo Pasqualigo, who permitted them to go to church.⁴⁸ At this point the budding saint put herself in the hands of an attentive spiritual director, who restrained her fervent desire for the Eucharist by lim-

iting her to one communion a week. When Girolamo Pasqualigo was named governor of Candia, he took his nieces along. To protect the growing girls, he confined them at home, which served only to fuel rumors about their beauty and considerable inheritance. A noble gentleman of Candia asked for Angela Maria’s hand in marriage, an offer she rejected because she had already promised herself to her “celestial spouse.” Warned by her uncle, who was in favor of the match, that he might die and leave her unprotected, she adamantly adhered to her refusal. After consulting sorcerers, the importunate suitor sneaked into her bedroom in order to put a magic bundle under her pillow. Providentially, he was struck with paralysis and apprehended.⁴⁹

When Girolamo Pasqualigo was about to return with his household to Venice, he fell ill and died. To protect herself from the suitor, whose divine chastisement had not dampened his ardor for her body and dowry, Angela Maria and her sister sought refuge in a Franciscan convent, whose members urged her to join them. The incentive the nuns offered, a promise to elect her abbess as soon as she professed, was sweetened by the archbishop of Candia, who agreed to advance the sum on deposit in Venice for Lucia’s dowry. Because she knew that her mission was in Venice, Angela Maria declined these bribes. Finally, after fifteen years on the island, she took advantage of the opportunity to go home with a patrician couple. Their ship was attacked by the Turks, who were foiled by the women’s prayers. On reaching Venice, she and Lucia discovered that relatives had appropriated their inheritance. Retiring to a small house, they supported themselves by needlework and lived happily in a frugal manner resembling a conventual regimen.⁵⁰

With the help of her spiritual director, the *pievano* of San Basilio, Pasqualigo fended off one last effort by the persistent suitor, who had come to Venice disguised as a friar. Her growing reputation for holiness attracted to her home many women, girls, and impoverished nobles to whom she gave spiritual advice and alms drawn from her meager earnings and what she was able to beg from friends. Consulting with her confessor, she increased her fasting until in 1605 she was able to survive the entire forty days of Lent on communion alone and a single modest meal on Sundays, a practice she continued for the rest of her life. Since many Venetians—ignoring precedents in the lives of other saintly women, which Bagatta duly cites—believed that this prodigy was some sort of fraud suggested and abetted by the devil, a substitute confessor decided to put her to the test. He ordered her to abstain from food during other

holy seasons, which she managed to do even when the papal interdict of 1605 prevented her from taking communion. Her fasts were soon rewarded: every Friday, for the three hours of Christ's Passion, she suffered acute pain in various parts of her body. These divine torments, as well as continual attacks from the devil, she bore with a smile, emerging from them with renewed energy to do God's will.⁵¹

The work that God had in mind for her, helping unfortunate girls whose poverty put them in danger of attacks on their purity, required funds far beyond Pasqualigo's modest means. Assisted by the pievano of San Basilio, she undertook a long, difficult legal battle against her paternal relatives to recover her and Lucia's inheritance. Even before the suit was decided in their favor, she approached the *Provveditori sopra Monasteri* and the Theatine general in Rome for permission to found a convent affiliated with that order—a move that her sister and the Theatines at San Nicola de' Tolentini, who had become her main supporters, strongly opposed. A Theatine confessor, angered by Pasqualigo's expelling from her informal group of aspiring nuns a young woman whom he had recommended, tried to lure her recruits into a new Capuchin foundation sponsored by a Venetian gentlewoman. His attempt was foiled by the fidelity of her followers and the death of the other aspiring foundress.⁵²

Through lengthy, astutely conducted negotiations with members of various Venetian magistrates, the doge, and the Theatine general, Pasqualigo was able to achieve her aim. When she acquired suitable premises for her convent in Campo della Lana, those who had other plans for the property spread the word that her real intention was to open a brothel. For this slander, Bagatta notes, they were punished by financial ruin and premature death. On 21 October 1621 she and her charges moved into the new house. Disregarding the reservations of her cautious and easily discouraged sister, she immediately constructed a chapel. Twelve years later, after many further difficulties, her foundation received interim sanction from the appropriate authorities in Rome and Venice. At this moment Lucia Pasqualigo went to her heavenly reward. Although Bagatta makes no effort to conceal Lucia's less than enthusiastic support of the convent-founding project, he dutifully records her heroic virtues and prodigious fasts, no doubt in the hope of bringing about her beatification on the coattails of Angela Maria.⁵³ In July 1647, shortly after Pasqualigo had been stricken by the illness that would eventually cause her death, the nuns of Gesù Maria finally received papal authorization to go

into full enclosure. On Bagatta's list of supporters who paid the clerical expenses for the bull are the names of four Venetian noblewomen and one man, our episcopal "false saint" Pietro Vespa. Since the nuns had adopted Augustinian constitutions, they were required to select a superior from a previously existing convent following that rule. Their choice was Cherubina Balbi, abbess of Sant'Andrea, who also appears on Ves-covi's list.⁵⁴

Of the many other trials and tribulations in the life of Angela Maria Pasqualigo adduced by Bagatta in support of her heroic virtues and apparently miraculous powers, two are particularly significant. The first is an experiment in the discernment of spirits in which she was the guinea pig. While she was struggling to establish the convent, opponents approached Cardinal Patriarch Federico Corner to express doubts about the source of her ability to undertake prolonged fasts. When Corner shared this problem with the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in Rome, he was ordered to undertake a thorough investigation, which he entrusted to Giorgio Polacco, the vicar responsible for female religious in the diocese.⁵⁵ Pasqualigo was examined several times by competent theologians, the inquisitor, and Polacco. Her humility and obedience impressed everyone but Polacco. In order to ascertain whether her fasting was a diabolical trick, he deprived her of both normal food and communion for a week. Though she survived this ordeal, Polacco was determined to seek further proof. In a preemptive strike, Pasqualigo called on the inquisitor, who was so thoroughly persuaded by the genuineness of her abstention from food that he lobbied successfully with Cardinal Patriarch Corner and the papal nuncio to exempt her from further tests and urge Urban VIII to let the regularization of her foundation proceed.⁵⁶

Immediately following his account of this incident, Bagatta tells another exemplary tale designed to demonstrate that Pasqualigo herself was capable of penetrating the disguise of the devil masquerading as an angel of light. In 1637 all Venice was enthralled with a young woman who seemed to have reached a precocious state of perfection. She often went into what appeared to be ecstasy, said that she was given communion by Christ in person, claimed to have fasted totally during Lent, and showed marks on her hands which looked like the stigmata. Since Bagatta rather surprisingly gives her first name, there is no question that this seeming prodigy was Cecilia Ferrazzi. In order to remove Ferrazzi from the public eye "until her spirit was discovered," Cardinal Patriarch Corner requested that Pasqualigo take her temporarily into Gesù Maria. Because

the reports she had heard made Pasqualigo virtually certain that Ferrazzi was deluded by the devil, she respectfully declined. Therefore the young woman was confined in the convent of the Cappuccine near San Girolamo. With considerable reluctance, Pasqualigo obeyed Vicar Polacco's order to visit Ferrazzi there. One look at the self-proclaimed holy woman, attired in an all too attractive Carmelite habit and suspiciously vivacious, was enough to confirm Pasqualigo's worst fears. In the acrimonious interview that followed, Ferrazzi further manifested her pride and insolence. When Pasqualigo reported her negative findings, Polacco expressed gratitude for her expeditious, authoritative fulfillment of an assignment that had daunted the most expert confessors and theologians.⁵⁷

Bagatta concludes with a description of Pasqualigo's pious death, a topical discussion of her virtues, various examples of her curative and predictive powers, and an attestation to the general esteem in which she was held. In form and content, this *vita* exemplifies the genre of hagiography in the making, the promotional biography of a "servant of God." A condensed version of the same approach is taken by the Reformed Franciscan Benedetto Mazzara, whose *Leggendario francescano* includes brief lives of several founders of Capuchin convents listed in Vescovi's "Catalogo."⁵⁸ Among them are two women whose careers closely parallel Pasqualigo's: Graziosa Cecchini of the Eremite Francescane in Padua and Maria Felice Spinelli of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Venice.⁵⁹

CECCHINI, BORN IN 1586, was the second of seventeen children in a Venetian *cittadino* family. Graziosa showed precocious signs of devotion to chastity, refusing to be unswaddled in her father's presence. At the age of seven she consecrated her virginity to Christ and withdrew into an attic room, where, forgotten by her parents, she went without food, except scraps of bread surreptitiously furnished by neighbors, for seven years. (This period of isolation probably accounted for gaps in her education, remedied at the age of thirty, when, according to Mazzara, she miraculously learned how to write.) When she came down from the attic, her mother entrusted her to a spiritual director, the pievano of Santa Maria Mater Domini, who was so impressed by "the perfections of this creature" that he could not refrain from talking about her "for the edification of devout persons."⁶⁰

Graziosa's desire to become a Capuchin nun was fulfilled when her parents placed her in a recently established house of that order in Padua. Immediately "the infernal dragon" went to work: she fell ill, was removed

to a private home for medical treatment, and never returned to that convent. (Although Mazzara does not say so, it seems likely that her illness gave the nuns reason to think that she was possessed by the devil and would therefore be a troublesome inmate.) Providentially, a pious Paduan widow gave her three adjoining houses suitable for a new convent. She and two companions moved in on 13 December 1612. Protracted difficulties in gaining authorization for her foundation, which necessitated appearances before Venetian magistracies and a trip to Rome, were finally resolved in 1646, when the convent of the Eremite Francescane, now housing many women from noble Venetian families, went into full enclosure.⁶¹ A branch house in Cittadella which she founded was put under the direction of one of her original companions. After many physical sufferings (she spent the last fifteen years of her life in a wheelchair), Cecchini died on 1 February 1655 in odor of sanctity for her visions and revelations as well as for her practical accomplishments.⁶²

ANOTHER CAPUCHIN FOUNDESS memorialized by Mazzara is Bianca (in religion, Maria Felice) Spinelli.⁶³ Born in Venice on 30 March 1621 to Giuseppe and Barbara Spinelli, she was one of seven children, only three of whom survived infancy. Bianca's childhood, like those of all “genuine” and most “false” saints, was marked by prodigies: a fall into the fireplace from which she emerged unharmed, miraculous recovery from an illness, and the expulsion of devils from a possessed servant. Although her prosperous merchant father hired a female teacher for his daughters, Bianca neglected her lessons in order to pray; Mazzara claims that she learned how to read, write, and sew without instruction. Following the death of her parents, relatives, disregarding her vow of virginity, arranged a suitable marriage for her. Too frightened to say no at the altar, she confessed to her husband on their wedding night that she was already committed to God. Since he, too, wanted to become a religious, they lived as brother and sister until he died from penances too severe for his weak constitution. For having pushed this marriage, her older sister, Santina, was punished by death in childbed—just like the sister of Catherine of Siena, Mazzara rather inaccurately observes.⁶⁴

From her Capuchin spiritual director Spinelli “learned the rules of the spirit” and obtained permission to set up a chapel in her home, but he and other confessors opposed her intention to become a nun. So did her relatives and several greedy suitors, one of whom tried to rape her in her bedroom but desisted when she began to blister her flesh with

melted candle wax. Devoting herself to charitable work, she tended the most loathsome cases at the hospital of the Incurabili and spent so much money supporting repentant prostitutes and other unfortunates that her servants locked up her cash box. At length she obtained admission to Santa Maria del Redentore, the Capuchin house near San Girolamo. On account of her humility, she specified that she wanted the status of *conversa* (a second-class nun who performed menial chores) rather than that of *professa* (choir nun), to which her social standing and financial resources entitled her. Before entering the convent, she traveled to Rome with her sister Caterina to take part in the Jubilee of 1650. En route, while praying in the chapel of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi, she heard a voice instructing her to found a convent of the same name in Venice. On her return, however, she made her profession in Santa Maria del Redentore in the presence of our acquaintance Giorgio Polacco, taking the name Maria Felice.⁶⁵

With a sister in religion whom she had met in Bologna on the journey to Rome, Giovanna (Maria Orsola) Ricoli, Spinelli began to consider how to carry out God's will by founding a new convent. Her plan was vigorously opposed by the devil, who employed a stunning variety of tricks and temptations, and by a series of confessors, who treated her with harshness bordering on sadism. They denounced her to the patriarch, Giovanni Francesco Morosini, on the grounds that she was possessed by the devil. After interviewing her, he rejected this diagnosis, calling her "a great servant of God, whom I would compare to the holy mother Teresa."⁶⁶ Hence Morosini and other enthusiastic friends supported her purchase from the Venetian government of Santa Maria delle Grazie, a monastery recently vacated by the suppressed order of San Girolamo di Fiesole, on the small island of the same name south of the Giudecca. On 19 March 1671, when renovation of the building and negotiations about enclosure were well advanced, she, Maria Orsola, and ten novices bade a tearful farewell to their sisters at Santa Maria del Redentore and set off in gondolas for their new abode.⁶⁷

Like other female "servants of God," Spinelli in her last years was plagued with multiple ailments: severe headaches, high fevers, fainting spells, asthma, erysipelas, and dropsy. With "holy hatred toward herself," she bore her suffering humbly and patiently, commenting that her sins merited "much worse than this." Thanks to frequent visits from her "special angel," she was able to cope effectively with the practical demands of convent life and carry on her devotional regimen. She performed

numerous thaumaturgic miracles, predicted deaths and recoveries from mortal illnesses, and knew the destinations of recently deceased souls. Following a stroke, she died on 24 January 1683. In the coffin, all signs of her travail having disappeared, her body recovered its youthful beauty.⁶⁸ On more than one occasion, Mazzara, a gifted narrator, evidences discomfort with the constrictions imposed by the genre. In the "virtues" section of this vita, for example, he apologizes for having to reiterate incidents already recounted.⁶⁹ Striking out on a new creative path and telling stories of the "servants of God" in his own way, however, was obviously a risk he could not afford to take.

ALTHOUGH THIS SERIES of brief female lives could easily be extended, it is not necessary to do so because the stories of Angela Maria Pasqualigo, Graziosa Cecchini, and Maria Felice Spinelli are thoroughly typical of their kind. Burke has identified five main "saintly roles, or routes to sanctity" available to Catholics of the Counter-Reformation: founder of a religious order, missionary, charitable activist, pastor, and mystic/ecstatic.⁷⁰ Clearly these women come closest to fitting into the first category, but their activities extended into others. All of them were to some extent charitable activists and ecstasies. They did not, and could not, however, serve as pastor, a role reserved for men. In other ways as well these three Venetian "servants of God" conform to contemporary patterns of sainthood. The relative homogeneity of their socioeconomic status is noteworthy: noble origins on at least one side of the family in the case of Pasqualigo, solid and prosperous "middle-class" standing for Cecchini and Spinelli. The same is true of the canonized saints studied by Burke, more than half of whom came from the noble and upper-middle ranks of society.⁷¹

Even more striking are the similarities in the patterns of their lives. At a very early age all three took up exceptionally pious behavior: prayer, fasting, other forms of mortification, and commitment to remaining virgins. Despite the fact that their families had adequate resources to provide for their education, in several cases their biographers claim that they were miraculously endowed with the ability to read and write. Their resolute pursuit of a spiritual vocation evoked opposition from the devil in all cases and from their families or their religious advisers, or both, in most. Like Teresa of Avila, they managed to outflank their opponents by ingenious and resourceful maneuvering, creatively combined with humble obedience to the constituted authorities; when necessary, God dis-

armed their enemies in monitory or permanent fashion. Although all experienced a variety of serious accidents and ailments, they survived to a ripe old age. In their struggles and physical sufferings they were sustained by expressions of support from on high, which came in two forms: on the one hand, private messages of consolation and direction; on the other, empowerment that enabled them to manifest their divine mandate through somatic signs, the gifts of clairvoyance and prophecy, and the ability to perform miracles.

FOR REASONS DIFFICULT to determine, Venetian men of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are less numerous than their female contemporaries in Vescovi's "Catalogo." Three ecclesiastics with whom he worked closely—the patriarchs of Venice Giovanni Tiepolo and Giovanni Francesco Morosini, whose vitae he himself wrote, and the pievano of San Giovanni Elemosinario, Antonio Grandi—find a place on his list. Since Morosini had extensive experience with both "genuine" and "false" saints and Grandi played an important role in the career of Cecilia Ferrazzi, it is unfortunate that the sources of information about them cited by Vescovi are not available for inspection.⁷² As our masculine sample of one, let us examine Cardinal Gregorio Barbarigo, bishop of Padua. His is an unusual case: Vescovi included his name but provided no bibliography for the very good reason that Barbarigo died only a few months before the list was completed.⁷³ In the context of the "Catalogo," therefore, Barbarigo is a "living saint." To reconstruct his career, we must rely on later sources, among them a manuscript vita by his collaborator Giuseppe Musoco and another by the Dominican Tommaso Agostino Ricchini, published at the time of his beatification in the mid-eighteenth century.

Born on 16 September 1625 in Venice to Gianfrancesco Barbarigo and Lucrezia Lion, Gregorio was raised for a brilliant career. Following the early death of his mother, his father devoted himself to charitable and devotional activities, which no doubt influenced Gregorio's precocious piety. After spending some years at the University of Padua studying civil law, he embarked on his political apprenticeship by accompanying the Venetian ambassador Alvisé Contarini to Münster to observe the negotiations concluding the Thirty Years' War. Here he encountered the papal ambassador, Fabio Chigi, whose influence on him would prove decisive.

A gift from Chigi, François de Sales's *Introduction to the Devout Life*, led Barbarigo to reconsider the course his life should take. On return-

ing to Venice, he was elected to his first political office, Savio agli Ordini—and formed lasting friendships with several “spirituals,” including Cecilia Ferrazzi.⁷⁴ Soon he realized that a secular career was not for him. After pondering a future as a Discalced Carmelite, Camaldolensian, or Somaschan, he was persuaded by his parish priest to enter the secular clergy. In December 1655, following a period at Padua during which he completed requirements for his degree and gained some acquaintance with canon law and ecclesiastical history, he was ordained to the priesthood.⁷⁵

Not long thereafter, Barbarigo’s mentor Chigi, now Pope Alexander VII, summoned him to Rome. In short order he was rewarded for his high birth and promise by being appointed canon of the cathedral of Padua, *referendarius* in the Segnatura, and domestic prelate to the pope. During an outbreak of the plague he distinguished himself by courageous service and charity to the victims. When Alexander VII named him bishop of Bergamo in July 1657, he immediately betook himself to his backward and troubled diocese. There he quickly earned a reputation as a model bishop—a second Carlo Borromeo as Ricchini puts it—by undertaking a visitation aimed at identifying and correcting incompetent priests and combating several varieties of heresy. On his brief stop in Zorzone, he met Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, an encounter alluded to in veiled terms by Ricchini.⁷⁶

In April 1660 Alexander VII elevated Barbarigo to the cardinalate at the early age of thirty-five. After a second brief period in Rome, he bowed reluctantly to pressure from the pope and the Jesuit general and accepted a transfer to a more prestigious but less challenging diocese, Padua, in April 1664. Except for trips to Rome to participate in papal conclaves, during several of which he was a candidate for election, he spent his remaining years there. Among his chief concerns were the improvement of the parish priesthood, which he accomplished by frequent visitations and close attention to the diocesan seminary, and the condition of poverty-stricken women.⁷⁷ He died on 14 June 1697. Although Vescovi and others who knew him were certain that his soul had flown straight from his deathbed to heaven, official recognition of his saintliness was long in coming. He was beatified by Clement XIII in 1761 and canonized by John XXIII (also a onetime bishop of Bergamo) in 1960.⁷⁸

BARBARIGO IS ALONE in our sample in having been accorded honors by the Congregation of Rites. His social profile, however, is remarkably sim-

ilar to Pasqualigo's, Cecchini's, and Spinelli's. That all five were born and raised in at least comfortable, if not patrician, families confirms the impression that, for holy people, thoroughly respectable to high social rank constituted an important determinant of credibility among contemporaries. It also suggests that the lack thereof was a serious drawback. Unlike his female counterparts, Barbarigo was able to fulfill the role of pastor: a route to official sainthood epitomized by Carlo Borromeo, the paradigmatic figure for men aspiring to holiness in this era, just as Teresa of Avila was the preeminent model for women. The childhood prodigies, ecstatic experiences, and somatic signs of holiness which feature so prominently in the vitae of the holy women are nowhere to be found in his biography. Nonetheless, Barbarigo's curriculum, like theirs, is studded with tangible, durable accomplishments. In the seventeenth century, actions that could be subsumed under the categories of heroic virtues and institutions that outlived their creators—the nuns' new convents, the bishop's revived seminary—may well have spoken louder than the visions, revelations, and somatic miracles that were the only stock in trade of the "false saints."⁷⁹

Sorceresses, Witches, and Inquisitors

THE MODERATE APPROACH to witchcraft adopted by the Congregation of the Holy Office in the late sixteenth century did not lead to its complete disappearance from the Italian scene. Inquisitors conducting trials constructed the vast majority of those accused of utilizing spells and rituals, believed by theorists to draw at least indirectly on the assistance of infernal powers, as practitioners of sorcery. Only occasionally did prosecutors treat a defendant (almost always a woman) in terms of the classic paradigm of witchcraft: formal allegiance to the devil, participation in the sabbath, and therefore apostasy from the true faith. To deal with both sorcery and witchcraft, superficially different from but on closer examination strikingly similar to suspicious holiness, ecclesiastical judges employed two main strategies.¹

First and foremost, investigations conducted by bishops, sometimes eventuating in trials, and inquisitorial prosecutions aimed at ascertaining to what extent satanic influence was involved and whether suspects had consciously and actively collaborated with the Evil One. This strategy will concern us here. In some instances, furthermore, during or in lieu of a trial, bishops and inquisitors called on expert support personnel: physicians to diagnose and prescribe for “natural causes” of suspect religious behavior or exorcists to confront directly and attempt to vanquish the powers of evil, or both. The operations of these professionals, who make walk-on appearances in this chapter, move to the center of the stage in Chapters 7 and 8.

FROM THE 1580s on, sorceresses (*fattucchiere*)—and to a lesser extent male practitioners of learned magic (*maghi*)—supplanted indigenous philo-Protestants, whose ranks by this time had become very thin, as prime objects of the Holy Office’s attention.² A statistical summary of cases handled between 1663 and 1670 by the Venetian inquisitor Agapito Ugoni (see table) vividly illustrates this shift.

Ugoni's caseload, similar to that of colleagues in other Italian tribunals, bears witness to more than a change in the types of offenses most often prosecuted by the Venetian Holy Office from the late sixteenth century on. It also signals a dramatic reversal of the gender balance among defendants. As long as philo-Protestantism absorbed most of the Vene-

tian Inquisition's time and attention, the overwhelming majority of those investigated and tried were men: about 95 percent between 1542 and 1583.³ In prosecutions for sorcery during the same period, however, female defendants had predominated: some 91 percent in Venice between 1542 and 1599.⁴ Once native Protestant sympathizers had for the most part disappeared from the scene by dying, retreating into Nicodemism, or fleeing across the Alps, the Inquisition's prime targets (44% of those prosecuted) became people allegedly engaged in sorcery or magic. Concomitantly, Italian "heresy" was feminized.

To understand fully this double transformation of the Inquisition's caseload, we must explore further the evolution of policy revealed in interactions between the Congregation of the Holy Office and inquisitors in the field. From the thirteenth century, when the papal Inquisition was founded, until the latter half of the sixteenth, responsibility for handling occult practices was shared, at least in theory, by the Holy Office and the ordinaries. Secular rulers all over Europe, jealous of their jurisdictional prerogatives and concerned to protect the rights of their subjects (not only those on trial but also those who believed that they had been harmed by witches), contested the ecclesiastical courts' monopoly in this area. In Venice, the challenge was expressed in 1410 by the Grand Council in a law specifying that cases involving abuse of the sacraments—employment of consecrated materials for illicit purposes—were the church's business but other forms of magic and sorcery fell within the purview of secular courts.⁵

Venetian assertion of lay control over some occult practices, attacked by the Holy See on several occasions, was reiterated in the early seventeenth century in Paolo Sarpi's *Capitolare*, the Venetians' bible on jurisdictional issues.⁶ Unlike other planks in Sarpi's platform, which served effectively to exclude inquisitorial intervention in cases concerning foreigners and lifelong Jews, this one had weakened some decades before he wrote. Erosion of both episcopal and secular jurisdiction over "simple sorcery" began in 1586, when Sixtus V in the bull *Coeli et terrae* assigned the prosecution of all occult practices to the Inquisition.⁷ Before long, even in Venice, the Holy Office's hegemony in the prosecution of these cases became virtually complete.⁸

As Giovanni Romeo has demonstrated, the Holy Office's conception of "superstition" and the appropriate means of combating it differed significantly from the one held by such reforming bishops of the early sixteenth century as Gian Matteo Giberti and the few ordinaries who

followed their example immediately after the Council of Trent. These prelates had sought to correct both lay and clerical promoters of “superstitious” beliefs and practices that directly contradicted or diverted attention from central Catholic doctrines.⁹ In the mid-1580s, however, the Congregation and its personnel adopted a much broader definition of *superstition*: any manifestation of “religious sentiment that was expressed spontaneously, outside the ecclesiastically sanctioned times and places.” In combating such “vain presumption” they applied a double standard. What was forbidden to layfolk—healers who employed remedies handed down in the tradition of popular medicine, pious people who on their own initiative promoted new devotions, and recipients of visions and revelations—was permitted to priests, monks, and friars. Although the Roman authorities and their subordinates energetically disciplined the former, they tolerated and sometimes actively encouraged similar projects undertaken by the latter.¹⁰

The Roman campaign against lay “superstition,” as Romeo makes clear, was a logical replacement for the more or less abandoned crusade against sabbath-oriented witchcraft. Available evidence suggests that the Congregation of the Holy Office may have opted deliberately for this alternative. Sorceresses, however, were not treated as substitute sacrificial victims in the literal sense. Though the Inquisition of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries prosecuted a massive number of *fattuchiere* and *maghi*, along with a handful of “real witches” and “false saints,” almost never were defendants in any of these categories condemned to death or perpetual imprisonment. Particularly in cases of sorcery, as we shall see shortly, judges assigned comparatively mild penalties.¹¹ In all three kinds of prosecutions, it would appear, their objective was not primarily to punish those convicted but rather to issue a warning designed to deter them from committing the same offenses in the future.¹²

That most of these defendants were female and those who judged them male is not irrelevant. Although trials of sorceresses do not exhibit the fierce misogyny so evident in disquisitions on discernment of spirits, they are permeated with a subtler form of antifeminism. Inquisitors, like theologians in their studies, took it for granted that women were “weak subjects” prone to error. Only when females brought to trial proved reluctant to admit their fault did the prosecutors, surprised and angered by the defendants’ unwillingness to behave in an appropriately submissive manner, abandon their patronizing paternalistic stance and react with rigor.¹³ Male practitioners of learned magic, on the other hand, were

in many instances assigned stiff penalties. Although the men convicted of feigning holiness or colluding with female “false saints,” as we shall see later, did not necessarily receive harsher punishments than their female counterparts, they were invariably subjected to sarcastic, humiliating tongue-lashings for having behaved in a manner ill befitting members of the first sex.

ROMEO’S OBSERVATIONS, based primarily on evidence from Naples and Udine, are confirmed in Venetian trials for sorcery, as the examination of a few representative cases that crossed the desk of the inquisitor Ugoni will show.¹⁴ The first features Lucia *schiaivona*, with whom the Inquisition dealt on 20 December 1667.¹⁵ The trial record consists only of a denunciation and the interrogation of the woman who made it; Lucia was never called to testify. In some respects Lucia is a typical sorceress. Like many prosecuted for this offense, she was a servant from the eastern fringe of the Venetian empire. Part of the reason why Slavic and Greek women, even those who had lived for years in the metropolis, were often denounced for sorcery was that they were perceived to be “outsiders.” Closely tied in some cases to their rural roots and to Orthodox Christianity, they were less fully socialized than native Venetians into the patterns of religious behavior imposed by the Counter-Reformation church. The fact that among themselves, and sometimes in the spells they cast, they spoke languages incomprehensible to their neighbors contributed to suspicion of them.¹⁶ Furthermore, these immigrants were poor. Unlike impoverished Venetians of Italian ancestry, they had limited access to the network of social services provided by the state and to ecclesiastical and private sources of charity. Sorcery, practiced full-time or in addition to low-paid occupations, helped them to make ends meet, as well as to cope emotionally with marginalization.

Lucia, a widow well along in years, was ugly. In the denunciation we read that “one look at this woman is enough to scare you.” In this regard, however, she was by no means representative of the entire population of sorceresses. Many of them—the widow Eufemia, who came to the attention of the Holy Office one month later, for instance—were “young and fresh.”¹⁷ Like Isabella Veseschin, denounced in July 1669 by her husband, some had living spouses and were sexually active outside the marriage bed.¹⁸ A considerable number, those who supported themselves by full-time or occasional prostitution, were presumably not elderly.

Not surprisingly, during the seven years under examination here, there

are few allusions to the Evil One.¹⁹ One comes from the proceedings against Africa Speranzini, a native Venetian whose father was a Flemish Protestant. According to a witness, Speranzini, who had allegedly contracted to make a man fall ill, claimed, "I'm three-quarters devil."²⁰ The other concerns the young widow Eufemia, accused by the woman who denounced her of having boasted about flying at night to the witches' sabbath.²¹ Since Ugoni, like inquisitors before and after him in Venice and elsewhere, chose not to pursue most accusations of sorcery, he never interrogated Lucia *schiaivona*, Veseschin, Speranzini, or Eufemia.²² All the evidence about them comes secondhand, in denunciations or from witnesses. Without the opportunity to listen to the defendants, we cannot gain a full understanding of sorcery and its practitioners. It is necessary, therefore, to examine some complete trials in which defendants took the stand and attempted, with or more often without the help of legal counsel, to project an image of themselves which would win them acquittal or at least mitigate their punishment.²³ I have selected three, two featuring common patterns of sorcery and the third rather unusual.

Marietta *greca*, eventually identified as Marietta Grimani, is mentioned in several trial dossiers. When she was finally brought into court, Grimani was quick to make clear that she was not technically a Greek but a native Venetian of Cypriot ancestry. Born around the turn of the century in the parish of Sant'Antonin, baptized and married in the church of San Giorgio de' Greci (her husband, Zanne da Zante, had died in military service ten years before the trial), she had then lived in San Giovanni in Bragora and San Martin²⁴—all parishes heavily populated by speakers of Greek. Accused of practicing various forms of sorcery and teaching them to others, Grimani responded at first with a flat denial of the charges, alleging that she was not a sorceress but a beautician: "I pluck eyebrows and remove facial hair." Among her clients, she explained, were "whores and good women, but mainly whores, because in my neighborhood there are only three houses inhabited by honest women."²⁵ Her defense, conducted by a court-appointed lawyer, was premised on the malice of certain prostitutes who had denounced and testified against her.

Before the trial entered the defense phase, Grimani had tried two other tactics to exculpate herself. First she stressed her professional identity. "I'm a healer, that's all I do," she insisted, explaining how she went about her work: "I mull rue and other herbs with incense and amber and give it to people to drink in dandelion water. I get the herbs from the women who sell greens and the dandelion water from the friars at San

Francesco [della Vigna]. I do this all the time. I make house calls, and some patients come to me. For the herbs, you have to go to the greengrocers early in the morning, because later on there's nothing left."²⁶ Then she claimed that she was the victim of mistaken identity: "Look here, I'm Marietta *cipriotta* Grimani, not Marietta *greca*; there must be someone else."²⁷ This ploy failed when witnesses picked her out of a lineup including two other women elderly and short of stature like her.²⁸

Grimani's willingness to share her recipe and describe her practice is not uncommon. Indeed, Inquisition records constitute excellent sources for the study of popular medicine in early modern Italy. Many trials for sorcery reveal how the Inquisition managed to identify a whole range of folk remedies involving natural substances often enhanced by exposure to religious rites and materials, to label them heretical, and to prosecute the practitioners, most of whom were women.²⁹ That the Holy Office rejected Grimani's credentials as a healer and her right to pass on her expertise is not surprising. Judged "gravely suspect as a teacher of heretical spells," she was condemned to spend a morning in the stocks in front of the church of San Marco and a year under house arrest.³⁰

GRIMANI'S UNWILLINGNESS immediately to admit her guilt no doubt prompted the Holy Office initially to assign her a relatively harsh sentence, soon revised.³¹ In the case of Caterina Erba we encounter more deferential comportment, which inquisitor Ugoni clearly preferred.³² Conducted during the late summer of 1669, this trial for sorcery sheds additional light not only on the survival strategies but also on the emotional life of women in the lower classes.³³ Born in Milan twenty-five years before her trial, Erba had run away from home with a Piedmontese ensign, whom she married on the Lido before he shipped out for Crete to fight the Turks. She followed him as far as Split; then, pregnant, she returned to Venice. After being delivered of a stillborn baby girl, she found employment as a wet nurse in the house of a noble family. Soon she became the concubine of the master's son, Andrea Renier.³⁴

It was her lover who denounced her to the Inquisition. Informed by Erba's servant that in her house he could find knotted cords, wax figurines stuck with pins, and other objects employed in occult practices against him, Renier left Erba in his country house and went into town with his gondolier to search the place. Once he had found the articles, he talked with his confessor, who advised him to go to the Holy Office "to unburden [his] conscience and liberate [himself] from sorcery." This was prob-

ably not friendly spiritual counsel but an order. From the late sixteenth century on, as we saw in Chapter 2, a considerable part of the Inquisition's caseload was generated by confessors' denying absolution to their penitents unless they made "spontaneous appearances," either to confess their involvement in unorthodox activities and name their accomplices or, as in this instance, to denounce others for some offense against the faith.³⁵ When asked "about the status and reputation of the said Caterina," Renier stated, "She's been my woman, but I believe that while I was involved with her, she had other friendships." To make clear that he was not a perpetrator but a victim, he added: "It's true that, from what I've seen, she isn't very devout. I repeatedly reprimanded her for not wearing holy medals but sticking them under the tablecloth."³⁶

After interrogating Erba's servant and Renier's gondolier, the Inquisition ordered a search of Erba's house. The compromising materials were found, and she was arrested.³⁷ When she was brought before the tribunal, she did not wait for the inquisitor to ask questions but spoke right up: "I'll tell you the honest truth. This gentleman who kept me, Andrea Renier, who lives in Calle de Meio at San Stae, after he'd kept me a year and got me pregnant, left me with not a thing except a little money for the delivery. I gave birth in the house of the midwife Andriana, where that gentleman had put me until I delivered." At this point Caterina, "complaining and crying because he'd abandoned [her]," found support in a female network. The midwife's daughter, Betta, a prostitute, told her not to worry because a solution to her problem could be found. Betta invited to the house one Marina, wife of a boatman, who "promised to bring it about that the nobleman wouldn't abandon [Caterina] but would come back, and not send [her] out to [domestic] service."³⁸

Caterina and Betta paid close attention to Marina, who for two weeks gave them lessons in such techniques of sorcery as "throwing the cord" and sticking pins into wax figurines.³⁹ She also taught them how to recite certain spells: "She told me to say the Our Father up to the words 'in temptation' and then these words: 'I call upon you, Judas, who live in the devil's house; you're condemned to hell; you must leave there, go into Andrea's heart, and make him come here.'"⁴⁰ This "rosary of Judas," like most magic formulas, is in rhyme (unfortunately lost in translation), which made it easy for illiterate people to memorize.⁴¹ As a precaution against committing a prosecutable offense, diluting the potency of the spell, or both, Marina cautioned her pupils not to mix it with authorized forms of devout behavior. Before saying it, Erba explained, "I had to take

off the scapulars I was wearing.” The formula, in this respect unusual, invokes and seeks to put into service a loser from sacred history against the exploitation suffered by the powerless.

Trembling, Caterina recited the “rosary of Judas” and employed most of the other techniques Marina had taught her, refraining only from administering to Andrea a magical powder that she feared would poison him. It appears that they worked, but not perfectly. Renier, who acknowledged his responsibilities only intermittently, rendered her unable to support herself: “He made me stay first in one house, then in another, and I had four children with him. After the first birth, he sent me into service, but when people found out about our relationship, they fired me. I went to the gentleman and begged him to take care of me. He kept me there for two nights, and I got pregnant. After more of the same, he’s kept me until now, and I think I’m pregnant again.”⁴²

Erba’s ability to articulate her plight and conform to a stereotype of subordination served her well. Taking into account her prompt admission of guilt, promise never again to engage in sorcery, renunciation of the right to mount a defense, and poverty, the Holy Office assigned a lenient penalty. She was merely required not to leave the city, to perform salutary penances, and to report once a month to the tribunal with a certificate of good conduct from her parish priest.⁴³ Three days later, in response to her petition, the judges decided that if on account of common knowledge about her liaison with Renier she was unable to find work as a servant in Venice, she could move to Padua.⁴⁴

THE THIRD CASE, the anomalous one, opened on 18 January 1667, five days after the conclusion of Marietta Grimani’s trial.⁴⁵ Lunardo Collatoni, first priest in the parish church of San Stae, came to the Holy Office to report having found a little bundle sealed with red wax containing two afterbirths.⁴⁶ An altar boy had admitted putting it under an altar cloth at the request of a woman unknown to him, who had given him a small tip for this favor. After some research, Collatoni identified her as Apollonia Bruni, an unmarried woman of thirty-seven from Schio (near Vicenza), who had recently arrived in the parish.⁴⁷ Two weeks later, having heard that she had been denounced, Bruni presented herself at the Inquisition’s headquarters. She told a disconnected, implausible story about when and where she had found the packet and why she wanted the potency of its contents enhanced by having a mass said over it. At this point she was jailed.⁴⁸

Called to testify, Bruni “said a great deal that was irrelevant to the matter and appeared to be half-witted or out of her mind.”⁴⁹ Uncertain whether she was insane or only pretending to be, the inquisitor sought information from Pasqualin Spada, captain and jailer of the Holy Office. For a week, the witness reported, Bruni had been behaving like a madwoman. After a physician confirmed that she was both mentally and physically ill, the tribunal ordered that she be taken home “without being required to post bond, since she is in no condition to take an oath or find someone to vouch for her.”⁵⁰ Spada was instructed to seek a person to whom Bruni could be entrusted. If he failed to do so, he was “to advise the father inquisitor, who would find an appropriate solution.”⁵¹ As in the other cases, the trial record does not reveal what became of the defendant thereafter.

IN TERMS OF their social status, their motives for pursuing careers, and the treatment accorded them by the Holy Office, sorceresses bear a rather close resemblance to “false saints.” There is, however, one very important difference between them. The overwhelming majority of the latter, like all those who aspired to sainthood, dealt with one problematic aspect of the human condition, sexuality, by striving to renounce it. Following the models of certified saints, they dedicated themselves at an early age to celibacy in the hope that their private promises to God would eventually be translated into official vows of chastity. Some of them, men who became priests and friars and women whose families could afford a monastic dowry, were able to achieve this ambition. Others who did not nonetheless persisted in seeking a way to survive in the world without marrying.

For the socially heterogeneous women forced to elect other options, in contrast, male companionship, sexual satisfaction, wealth, and adventure were objectives to be attained. Those prosecuted as sorceresses sought these benefits in the here and now. Those termed witches pursued their goals in the realm of fantasy, as two examples will show. The first is the case of Angela, in religion suor Mansueta. On 24 January 1574 the Conventual Franciscan fra Serafino da Montalbano, minister of his order’s province of Sant’Antonio, was called to the convent of San Francesco della Croce in Venice. As he informed the papal nuncio and the patriarch, he had been summoned by the house’s confessor, fra Pietro da Venezia, who was responding to a plea from the abbess, to interview Man-

sueta, a professed nun about thirty years old. She had admitted a shocking sequence of actions: giving herself in body and soul to the devil, doing violence to communion wafers, and throwing holy images into the privy. Summoned before the Holy Office on 26 January, fra Serafino formalized his denunciation, whereupon two lay deputies of the tribunal were ordered to go immediately to La Croce with the *Provveditori sopra Monasteri* (lay magistrates who oversaw religious houses) in order to interrogate the abbess and the other nuns.⁵²

The information furnished by Mansueta's sisters in religion made it clear that the accused nun herself had to be heard. Given her cloistered status, she could hardly be summoned to appear at the headquarters of the tribunal. After much discussion, the judges ordered that she disguise herself in secular clothing and meet them in San Simeone Piccolo, a parish church near her convent. There, on the afternoon of 31 January, they heard her story. About twelve years earlier, after she had reluctantly consented to enter La Croce, she had fallen in love with a young grain merchant. They had a sexual encounter that, she specified, did not culminate in penetration. Although they wanted to marry, she considered herself bound by her promise and proceeded, much against her inclination, to fulfill it. Her lover came to the convent and urged her to flee, but she refused. When he died shortly thereafter, she was overcome by despair.⁵³

"With my body in the convent and my heart in the world," suor Mansueta explained, life in La Croce was a living hell. Because God did not answer her prayers to release her, she gave herself to the devil, who promised liberation. Sexual congress with her diabolical partner, "the Hermit," which she described in vivid detail, was so pleasurable that she willingly obeyed his every command. Under his tutelage she committed sacrileges and prepared unguents for use in sorcery, activities that she refrained from mentioning in confession. In return, he gratified her fantasies of escape by escorting her to the sabbath. Only intermittently did she regret the loss of her soul. If her interlocutors did not set her free so that she could seek a human husband or at least live partially in the world as a *conversa* or *pinzochera*, she asserted, she would commit suicide.⁵⁴

After several days in the convent prison, Mansueta was interrogated again on 4 February in the convent church. The inquisitor, who showed no interest in her trips to the sabbath, pressed her to choose between two alternatives: either she had actually communicated with the devil, or else

(as he put it) “this was [your] fantasy, as happens to all who think about what they desire and seek ways and means to obtain it.” Insisting that the account she had given was no fiction, the nun begged the judges to liberate her. Once she realized that they did not intend to do so, she threw a fit. Uncertain whether she was possessed or insane (the possibility that she was faking was not considered), the ecclesiastical members of the tribunal exorcised her. Before long the positive effect of the first treatment wore off, and therefore the rite was twice repeated by a professional exorcist. At the end of the third exorcism on 17 February, with Mansueta’s spiritual health apparently restored and her will obviously broken, the inquisitorial dossier closes.⁵⁵

Although Mansueta never explicitly mentioned having been pressured by her family to take the veil, she was almost certainly a victim of forced monachization, a pervasive practice designed to preserve patri-monies and enhance families’ honor.⁵⁶ Once she had foregone the difficult options of retracting her vow or running away with her suitor, her sexual yearnings found an outlet presented by her culture: the fantasy of possession by the devil, which (as her testimony makes clear) she actualized through masturbation.

Reports on the activities of the Holy Office reveal that in the early eighteenth century witchcraft still served as a last-ditch alternative for women incapable of finding socially acceptable outlets for their sexuality and their emotional need to be recognized as important and special. It remained “real” to some ecclesiastics as well. In 1721, for instance, a Forlì-based team of Fathers of the Mission, an order founded by Vincenzo de’ Paoli in 1625 to engage in internal evangelization in the rural areas known to missionaries as “our Indies,” was hard at work in the Tuscan Romagna. They learned that the inhabitants of a convent in Maradi had begun to suffer from strange maladies. When neither medical treatment nor exorcism sufficed to cure the affected sisters, the bishop of Faenza, Cardinal Giulio Piazza, appointed one of the missionaries as extraordinary confessor to the nuns and ordered him to make a thorough investigation. This credulous emissary soon discovered to his horror that the infestation was due to the machinations of “an out-and-out witch” (*una solenissima strega*) inside the convent.⁵⁷

Most copies of an account of the case while it was still in progress, written most likely by the missionary, do not identify the nun but provide abundant details about her. Only the records of the Congregation of

the Holy Office give her name: suor Maria Deodata Fabri.⁵⁸ When she was questioned, the woman revealed that at the age of nine she had been introduced by a witch servant to the devil in the guise of a handsome young man. He took her as his wife, appointed her “second queen of the nether regions with the name Asmodea,” and endowed her with powers in the upper world as well: every month she could cause eleven people to fall ill and one to die.⁵⁹ When she reached the age at which her parents had to decide whether to find her a husband or make her a nun, her satanic spouse persuaded her to enter the convent in Marradi. Responding to her objection that she would prefer some religious house in Florence, the devil assured her that she would not find confinement in Marradi difficult to endure, “for he would take her anywhere she wished.”

The Evil One lived up to his promise. In her imagination suor Maria Deodata, alias Asmodea, was escorted on an itinerary recalling that of a twentieth-century fictional traveler, Virginia Woolf’s Orlando: “She had herself transported to Naples, to France, and then to Constantinople, where she saw everything that was great and beautiful in those courts, learned about treaties concluded in ministers’ cabinets, and fomented great discord among potentates. Having attracted the attention of the Grand Turk, she joined his seraglio, became one of his concubines, and satisfied her insatiable lust with him. As evidence of this, she claimed that he had given her a superb tapestry, which in fact was found in her house.” On other excursions, she attended the coronation of the emperor at Frankfurt in the guise of a handsome little dog, killed the emperor’s son, witnessed the battles of Temišvár and Belgrade, and took a hand in causing an outbreak of plague in Marseille.

Not all of Asmodea’s journeys were deluxe tours of major cities. She also traveled to the same destinations as ordinary, lower-class witches. On more than one occasion, she confessed, she had gone to the Walnut Tree of Benevento, a classic site of the sabbath.⁶⁰ There, in the company of twenty thousand witches and five thousand warlocks, she had received royal honors. Closer to home, she had visited all but two of the houses in Marradi in order to provoke abortions, hurt children, and cause other kinds of harm. During her long career as a witch, suor Maria Deodata alleged, she had killed nine thousand babies and caused injury and death to several clerics. As the investigator reported, her claims were confirmed by the discovery in townspeople’s beds of witchcraft materials, enough to fill four sacks, which were burned in the main square of Marradi.

Meanwhile, to all appearances, suor Maria Deodata remained behind convent walls, living a life so exemplary that the other nuns believed her to be a budding saint.⁶¹ Little did they know that she secretly refrained from consuming communion wafers, which at the devil's order she crushed under her feet or conserved for use in casting spells. At first, despite their puzzlement when they saw her in two places at one time and observed a good-looking young man with a peculiar wig wandering through the convent, her sisters, convinced of her holiness, discounted such odd occurrences. After they stationed themselves outside her cell at night and heard her saying "words of affection, as between husband and wife," and other "dirty things," they decided to inform their superior. The nuns' report, however, was dismissed as the product of "illusions and hypochondriacal afflictions" on the part of those who furnished it.⁶²

All this information emerged during the investigator's interrogation, conducted in strict secrecy. When he conveyed his findings to the bishop, he was authorized to strip suor Maria Deodata of her habit, put her in chains, and have her watched constantly by the only two nuns in the convent whom she had not yet managed to bewitch. Once the Holy Office was informed, she was taken to its jail in Faenza. Until then, she had remained "contumacious and obstinate in the horrendous promise that she had made to the devil, who had marked her as his own on several parts of her body." Her demonic consort urged her to cut out her tongue and did everything in his power to keep her out of the Inquisition's hands, but to no avail. Now that she was in a place where he could not penetrate, according to the author of the account, everyone was hoping and praying that she would be illuminated by a ray of divine grace and persuaded to confess her many sins and crimes.

Clearly suor Maria Deodata had been forced into the convent, an experience so devastating that she seems to have repressed all memory of the actual circumstances.⁶³ These she replaced with a complex fantasy built on two elements. First, using traditional lore of witchcraft probably imparted to her by a female servant, she imagined not the usual ceremony of homage and fealty to the devil, which would have rendered her just one of his many followers, but an exclusive marital pact with him made freely in childhood. Through this alliance she gained a new identity independent of family and convent, signaled by a name different from the ones given her at baptism and assumed when she made her religious vows.⁶⁴ Second, drawing on familiarity with recent historical events and

foreign customs gained from conversations with visitors at the grate in the convent parlor and very likely also from reading, the nun envisioned vastly expanded possibilities for mobility and status. Although the imaginary world she inhabited was geographically broader and politically more sophisticated than Mansueta's, it served her in similar ways. From her fantasy she obtained what was unavailable to her in real life: the emotional gratification of being cherished by an attractive and wealthy male, sexual satisfaction, and above all power.

For suor Maria Deodata, access to power appears to have been particularly important, and its range is much broader than that exercised by suor Mansueta. Not only, she believed, did her special relationship with the devil enable her to escape from the narrow confines of the convent and make an impact on world affairs. It also empowered her to take revenge on her enemies—in her mind, practically everyone in her immediate environment. With her family, who had refused to marry her and then ignored her preference for a Florentine convent, she symbolically cut all ties by taking a new name. On her fellow nuns, who had spied on and denounced her to their superior, she wreaked bodily harm and mental confusion. Against the layfolk of Marradi, who enjoyed the privileges of marriage and parenthood denied to her, she retaliated by killing their progeny. And against the local clerics and missionaries who claimed control over her, she not only exercised her privilege of causing illness and injury but also challenged their monopoly on the chief sacrament by finding alternative uses for consecrated communion wafers.

Except perhaps for profaning the host, all these exercises of power were products of suor Maria Deodata's imagination. The inquisitor of Faenza, almost certainly a less credulous and more skillful interrogator than the missionary who conducted the preliminary investigation, apparently did not succeed in breaching her defenses and eliciting her version of her story, as his Venetian predecessor had been able to do with Mansueta. Unfortunately the missionary's report on her is not as informative as the transcript of a complete trial, for the defendant's statements are filtered through the perspective of the author, a less than disinterested participant-observer. Minutes of the Congregation of the Holy Office's biweekly meetings, however, enable us to follow further dramatic developments in Fabri's case. In the Inquisition prison of Faenza she was raped by the jailer, who probably made her pregnant. Then the archbishop of Florence arranged for her to be transferred to the Florentine house of

the Oblates of Santa Maria Nuova. It is impossible to determine whether she made the move or if her trial was formally concluded. We never hear her speak in the first person.

FROM A MODERN point of view, sorceresses, witches, and female “false saints” were sisters under the skin. By making contact with supernatural beings more powerful than their earthly superiors, they sought to overcome the handicaps of economic, social, and sexual subordination. To a limited extent, erudite contemporaries took cognizance of their plight. The credulity of “little women,” as we have seen, is a leitmotif of treatises on discernment of spirits and paranormal phenomena and guides to the spiritual life. Such light sentences as Caterina Erba’s and the decision not to bring Apollonia Bruni to judgment, furthermore, indicate that on occasion inquisitors were willing to make allowances for defendants’ social and psychological vulnerability.

Nonetheless, magical healers, casters of spells, self-proclaimed sexual partners of the devil, and “unworthy” recipients of revelations were brought to trial and sentenced by the Inquisition. For personnel of the Holy Office, whose views were shaped by theological discussions of witchcraft and pretense of holiness, the difficulties of these defendants’ life situations might partially explain but certainly did not excuse their “vain presumption.” In practically all these trials, the verdict of guilty was a foregone conclusion; mitigating factors, if any, affected only the nature of the punishment assigned. Reaching a verdict, however, was much easier in some types of cases than in others.

Most sorceresses readily admitted what they had done. Sincerely or with mental reservations, they claimed to be penitent and promised to refrain in the future from engaging in “superstitious” activities. Thus the typical trial for sorcery was concluded quickly and easily. As the examples presented in this chapter suggest, witches were somewhat more difficult to handle. To break the will of suor Mansueta, repeated exorcisms were required. Suor Maria Deodata seems to have remained unrepentant for at least four years. “False saints” of both sexes, firmly committed to their interpretation of their experiences and convinced that their relationship with divine powers was real and wholly legitimate, posed an even greater challenge to prosecutors. Many of them mounted defenses. Their trials dragged on for months or years before inquisitors succeeded in making them admit that they had erred.

Particularly with witches and “false saints,” inquisitors faced a prob-

lem on which the various genres of literature examined thus far did not provide sufficient guidance: identifying the root cause of error. How did investigators and judges determine that some of the people who came before them were fully responsible subjects who had made a conscious decision to collaborate with the devil or to perpetrate a fraud? On what basis did they conclude that others—suor Mansueta, Apollonia Bruni, and Maria Pellizzari, for instance—were passive objects, incapacitated not only by their sex and socioeconomic position but also by some form of diabolical illusion or madness? In order to understand how inquisitors made these decisions, we must turn to the theory and practice of exorcism and medicine.

Healers of the Soul

WHEN INVESTIGATORS and prosecutors dealing with suspected “false saints” deemed it necessary, they consulted support personnel: above all exorcists and physicians, experts respectively on maladies of the soul and body. The division of responsibilities between these two professional groups was by no means clear-cut. Exorcists began by considering somatic manifestations of what appeared to be disturbance of the soul; physicians often took into consideration mental precipitants of physical illness.¹ Such an overlap had the potential for generating conflict not only between professional curers but also between them, their patients, and inquisitors.

Some twentieth-century students of early modern Europeans (notably witches) considered by their contemporaries to be deviant have posited steady progress from superstition to enlightenment, in which the fraternity of exorcists fell increasingly into disrepute and the corporation of physicians took its place.² A decisive shift in mentality, and consequently in the pecking order of professional credibility, may have occurred in England, France, and central Europe during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In Italy the situation is more complex. From the late sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth, working relationships between inquisitors, exorcists, and physicians remained for the most part reasonably tranquil and collaborative. Only in the early eighteenth century did the church begin to call first in certain instances on medical men and to make a concerted effort to rein in experts on the soul.

This chapter focuses on exorcists and their involvement in pretense of holiness cases. Despite many contemporary writers’ strong reservations about employing physicians of the soul in the diagnosis and treatment of subjects who reported visions and locutions and exhibited strange behaviors, professional exorcists, most of them friars, participated early (sometimes even before a person was denounced to the Holy Office) and fairly often in inquisitorial trials.³ On occasion, an exorcist called on by an

inquisitor for assistance did not remain in his place as a hired hand who understood his subordinate role in an Inquisition trial and did not presume to move beyond it. Indeed, inquisitors found some exorcists much more troublesome than physicians.

PECULIAR EATING HABITS, to which we will turn in the next chapter, rarely appeared on exorcists' lists of maladies calling for expert intervention, but they drew attention to a panoply of other behaviors. All writers on the subject enumerated prominent somatic signs indicating a most improbable "good" possession by God, a much more likely "bad" possession by the devil, bewitchment by a human agent, or a physical illness; they rarely recognized the possibility of fraud.⁴ In his *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, the prolific and influential sixteenth-century exorcist Girolamo Menghi distinguished between signs of apparent possession and indications of possible bewitchment.⁵ Subjects' ability to speak foreign tongues, discuss learned matters that they had had no opportunity to study and master, and reveal hidden things or distant occurrences unknown to them by ordinary means might be gifts of God but in most instances signaled diabolic possession. Reacting with horror to sacred words or things, blindness, deafness, inability to speak, apparently unmotivated screaming, tooth grinding, self-mutilation, and aversion to human contact strongly indicated either diabolic possession or bewitchment. Additional signs particularly suggestive of bewitchment by a human agent consciously leagued with the devil included disturbances of the heart, stomach, and womb.⁶

In the early church, exorcist had been one of the four minor orders preceding ordination to the priesthood.⁷ An early modern exorcist, however, was at least in theory a mature priest with an unsullied reputation who possessed solid theoretical and practical knowledge of his craft. To practice his profession, he required a license from the local bishop.⁸ People believed to be suffering from diabolic possession constituted a small minority of an exorcist's clientele. More typical patients were sick people who suspected that they been bewitched and could not afford to consult, or had not been helped by, physicians. For these sufferers, rather than conducting a full-fledged exorcism, an exorcist performed a brief ceremony (making the sign of the cross, blessing the patient, and reading a prayer)—exactly the same service available from unlicensed and presumably even more affordable health care providers, women healers.⁹

When a sufferer or someone else on his or her behalf (a relative, a priest lacking the credentials to perform exorcisms beyond those in the

rite of baptism, an inquisitor) summoned an exorcist to diagnose and treat the problem, he was supposed to follow officially prescribed procedure. Until the early seventeenth century, he could pick and choose among a plethora of manuals like Menghi's, some in Latin and others in Italian,¹⁰ and four ritual compilations then in circulation: the Dominican Alberto Castellano's *Liber Sacerdotalis* (1523), the *Sacerdotale Romanum* (c. 1554), Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro's *Rituale* (c. 1575), and the *Ordo Baptizandi* (1575).¹¹

Among these, the *Sacerdotale Romanum*, of which at least sixteen editions had appeared by 1597, presented particular problems in regard to exorcism. For decades, some particularly vigilant bishops had recognized that this tome was contributing to the abuse of the rite and provoking a veritable epidemic of possessions, especially in female religious houses.¹² To eliminate abuses, Federico Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, among others, had proposed stationing "public exorcists" in churches dedicated to saints specializing in liberating the possessed.¹³ But during the late sixteenth century, the "center," the papacy and the Holy Office, did little systematically to monitor the activities of exorcists or their female competitors. When exorcists overstepped the poorly defined boundary between correct and "superstitious" practice, they might be disciplined by particularly attentive bishops. Only on rare occasions were they investigated by the Inquisition, which usually went no further than to prohibit them from performing exorcisms.¹⁴

By the time pretense of holiness appeared on the inquisitorial scene, however, the church had made an attempt to curb abuses of exorcism. The *Rituale Romanum* of 1614, prepared at the order of Paul V and meant to supersede previous manuals and ritual compilations, spelled out official procedure for conducting all ecclesiastical rites. Titulus 12 of the *Rituale Romanum* addresses exorcism. Chapter 1, "De exorcizandi obsessis a daemónio" (On exorcising those possessed by the devil), begins by stating that the exorcist must be a pious, prudent, mature man of impeccable morals who is motivated not by the prospect of gain but by the desire humbly to practice charity. It goes on to make clear that he should not "easily believe that anyone was possessed by the devil." Only after looking for indications of physical illness should he attend to behaviors indicating possession; here the *Rituale Romanum* offers the standard list of symptoms mentioned above. The more he finds, the more likely it is that the person is indeed possessed.¹⁵

The Evil One, this chapter explains, employs innumerable tricks to

throw the exorcist off the track. Even if the patient appears to be almost free of diabolic vexation, the doctor of the soul must not jump prematurely to the conclusion that he or she is cured but dig deeper for lingering hidden causes of possession. After each exorcism, he should interrogate the subject about his or her physical state and feelings in order to learn which words he had pronounced disturbed the devil most; these he should utilize in subsequent administrations of the rite. Never should he seek aid from magicians and “cunning women” or resort to their superstitious remedies; instead, he should utilize the proper remedies, prayer and fasting. Exorcism should take place in a church or in some other “religious and honorable (*honestum*) place” unless the patient is so ill or of such high rank that the exorcist needs to make a house call. On no account should it be staged as a public spectacle. In exorcising women, the exorcist should ask some “honorable people (*honestas personas*)” known to the patient and himself to hold the subject still during paroxysms of possession. These female helpers must swear to maintain confidentiality about what happens during the session.¹⁶

Before beginning to administer the rite, the exorcist should instruct his subject to pray, fast, confess, and (provided that the patient’s parish priest agrees) take communion, as well as encouraging him or her to have no doubt that God can and will help to cure the affliction. A crucifix or relics should be at least in sight if not in the subject’s hands and at some point should be placed on his or her breast or head; use of the Holy Sacrament for these purposes is inadvisable because something untoward might happen to it (*ob irreverentiae periculum*). The exorcist must leave the administration of medicine to physicians.¹⁷

At all times the exorcist should speak, read, and act “in a confident and authoritative fashion (*cum imperio et auctoritate*) with great faith, humility, and fervor.” He should refrain from lengthy, curious interrogations, especially about hidden and future matters not pertinent to the matter at hand. Citing appropriate scriptural passages, he must ask the spirits their names and number, when they entered the subject, and why. If they claim to be saints, spirits of the dead, or good angels, no competent practitioner will believe them. Once the subject is liberated, he or she should be warned to eschew sin and give the devil no opportunity to return, lest a new and worse possession ensue.¹⁸

Chapter 2 of the section on exorcism outlines in detail the procedure that the exorcist must follow. Beforehand, he should confess, say mass if possible, and pray for divine aid. Then he should don a surplice

and a purple stole, the end of which he is to wrap around the neck of the subject, who should be tied up if in any danger. Facing his subject, after having made the sign of the cross and sprinkled holy water, he begins by reciting part of the litanies. In a prescribed order, the *Rituale Romanum* specifies the passages he should recite from the Psalms, Gospels, and Athanasian Creed.¹⁹ Noticeably absent from this set of readings are the abstruse words and formulas in ancient languages other than Latin featured in some previous manuals on exorcism and many single-sheet guides designed for use by amateur exorcists and magicians.²⁰

Publication of the *Rituale Romanum*, however, succeeded neither in closing discussion on the subject of exorcism nor in preventing abuse of the rite. Guides to exorcism and treatises bearing on the rite continued to appear. Not all of them simply reiterated the officially prescribed guidelines. Writing in the mid-seventeenth century, the Reformed Franciscan Ignazio Lupi raises curious questions beyond the framework established by the *Rituale Romanum*, even if his answers seem not to contradict it. Can a demon send a human into the state of ecstasy? No, Lupi replies, but he can produce a fair imitation of it. The only way of identifying a “genuine” ecstatic is to determine “whether because of his most vehement love of God he almost does not feel the wounds of pain, reproof, poverty, and so forth.”²¹ Operating in the same “yes/no but” mode, Lupi explores the thin line between superstition and orthodoxy in the practice of exorcism. Is it superstitious to claim that one exorcist is better than another? In one sense, yes, for there is only one rite of exorcism; but exorcists who pray and fast assiduously are feared more by demons than those who do not.²² Do pious, able exorcists possess the power to expel demons? In one sense, yes: like other sacramentals, exorcism works *ex opere operando*. But since God may have some reason for wanting demons to remain in a possessed person, the church cannot guarantee that an exorcist will be able to effect their immediate expulsion.²³

CANDIDO BRUGNOLI, Lupi’s contemporary and brother in religion, also contributed to the literature on exorcism.²⁴ Born in 1609 in Sarnico on the Lago d’Iseo, he joined the Reformed branch of the Franciscan Order in 1625 and took degrees in philosophy and theology. After serving as a teacher and preacher in several cities, including Padua, he settled in Bergamo in the early 1650s. Here he published his first and most influential book, *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum*.²⁵ Widely read in writings on demonology, magic, and exorcism by theologians and human-

ists, Brugnoli showed particular interest in integrating current medical knowledge into the diagnosis and treatment of those suffering from diabolic possession.

In the introduction to his *Manuale*, Brugnoli states his purpose: to sort out the respective powers and responsibilities of exorcists and physicians in the contested territory of illness.²⁶ To address the thorny issues involved, he explains, he has chosen a three-part presentation: he will deal first with “spiritual physicians” (exorcists and parish priests, his main audience), then with possessed persons, and finally with remedies for their afflictions.²⁷ Each section of the manual is organized in terms of human faculties and powers both mental (intellect and will) and physical (sensitive, appetitive, and vegetative). Under each heading he distinguishes behaviors stemming from natural causes from those of unnatural—that is, diabolic—origin.²⁸

At some points Brugnoli exhibits an ambivalence similar to Lupi’s. In the section “On whether it is useful to ask demons what their names are,” for example, he concedes that almost all the authors reply in the affirmative.²⁹ Following Peter Lombard, he proceeds to outline received wisdom on these names, explaining what they indicate about the nature of a subject’s possession. Lucifer, chief of the infernal legions, represents and provokes the deadliest of deadly sins, pride; responsibility for the others is distributed among Mammon (avarice), Asmodeus (lust), Satan (wrath), Beelzebub (gluttony), Leviathan (envy), and Belfagor (sloth). Since the exorcist already knows this, questioning the demons further once they have furnished their names is superfluous. Indeed, it may prove dangerous to the possessed person and embarrassing to the exorcist and others present, for demons say things in foreign languages which sound ridiculous or obscene to members of an Italian-speaking audience.³⁰

Like the manuals by Girolamo Menghi, Zaccaria Visconti, Valerio Polidoro, Floriano Canale, and some other writers, Brugnoli’s were eventually condemned in the crackdown conducted by popes of the early eighteenth century on works not in conformity with the *Rituale Romanum*.³¹ As a practicing exorcist, Brugnoli ran afoul of the Holy Office much earlier, in the trial of Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti. At that time he was living in Venice at San Bonaventura, the Reformed Franciscan house. On 19 July 1668 he came of his own accord to the chapel of San Teodoro to tell his acquaintance Agapito Ugoni, the inquisitor, about his previous contact with Francesco Vincenzi, *pievano* of Santa Ternita.³² A year earlier, he said, Vincenzi had requested his assis-

tance in a difficult case: a woman of the patrician Longo family, whom the pievano had been exorcising for two years. According to Vincenzi, she was possessed by a “good devil,” who was in her body for the purpose of protecting her virginity and making her into a prodigy of holiness. He wanted the Franciscan exorcist to help him evaluate what the “good devil” had to say. “At which,” Brugnoli stated, “seeing his naivete and ignorance, I admonished him as I saw fit.”³³

As Brugnoli reported and additional evidence from this and other Inquisition trials confirms, Francesco Vincenzi himself practiced exorcism. In the late spring of 1665, his parishioner Marina, daughter of the late Marino (a carpenter in the Arsenal), denounced another Marina for bewitching her; she reported having been “liberated three or four times by the pievano of Santa Ternita.”³⁴ A year later, Vincenzi sent Ventura Palmesani da Murano to the Holy Office to denounce Africa Speranzini for having bewitched a sibling, the glassworker Giovanni Battista. Vincenzi had diagnosed the bewitchment and instructed the Palmesani family to look for nails and thorns in the afflicted man’s bed. When these incriminating materials were found, he blessed and kept them. Ventura later reported that since a physician had proved unable to cure Giovanni Battista, he was going once or twice a week to the pievano to be signed—therapy that had only a temporary effect.³⁵

Vincenzi, it appears, had some reputation as an exorcist, though not a very effective one. Brugnoli was called back into the case not to evaluate the pievano’s work in exorcism but to treat his codefendant, Pesenti. On 23 August 1668 Pesenti came before the tribunal for her first thorough interrogation.³⁶ Asked to repeat what she had said earlier, she sobbed and made signs indicating that she could not speak: all that came out of her mouth were incoherent sounds “like ah ah, ah, vu vu.” Threatened with torture unless she responded, she remained mute. At this point the members of the tribunal decided to jail her and make an “experiment” to determine whether she was really unable to speak or only pretending.³⁷ To conduct this test, the Holy Office engaged the expert exorcist Brugnoli.³⁸

A week later the Inquisition’s chancellor entered into the trial record a letter from Brugnoli to Inquisitor Ugoni. The holy name of Jesus, the exorcist reported, had made Pesenti speak. Because she was not being tormented by a demon, she was not technically possessed; but “an accompanying demon” (*un demonio assistente*) had complete charge of her. He was giving her “carnal desires” for the pievano, of which the object of

her lust was aware, and she was “full of pretense and feigned holiness.” The inquisitor, Brugnoli suggested, could find information on similar cases in his most recent publication, *Alexicacon*, to which he provided page references.³⁹ In the end, he said, he had succeeded in convincing Pesenti to tell the tribunal the truth. In a postscript he added that she did not know the demon’s name.⁴⁰

From their jailer, Pasqualin Spada, and his wife, Angela, the Holy Office learned more about the interview between Brugnoli and Pesenti and her behavior before and during it. Three or four days earlier, they had found her unable to speak and crawling around her cell licking crosses on the ground and the lid of the privy. (A voice, she later told the Spadas and the Holy Office, had told her not to speak and instructed her to “sign” the ground with her tongue.)⁴¹ After only fifteen minutes, Brugnoli had brought her around: she began to shout and then calmed down and explained that when Vincenzi had come to exorcise a neighbor of hers in the sestiere of San Polo, “she had developed so much affection for him that she decided to go to his house and make confession to him.” After some time there, when she was sent home, she found that her legs were paralyzed; but as long as she stayed at the pievano’s, she had no trouble moving. Ever since the interview with the exorcist, the jailer and his wife reported, she had been talking normally. To them she had expressed her pleasure at his discovering the cause of her muteness, “for thus,” she asserted, “it could be seen that she was not practicing deception.”⁴²

On 4 September 1668 Brugnoli appeared before the Inquisition to be questioned about his letter and to present a fuller written account of the interview with Pesenti. According to the written account, he had determined from what she had said that the woman was not possessed “but had commerce with a demon incubus called Asmodeus, whom she obeyed in what he commanded.” The relationship with Asmodeus had begun when she was under house arrest in her father’s residence. How, Inquisitor Ugoni inquired, had he discovered that Pesenti had an “accompanying demon” named Asmodeus? Neither she nor the demon told him so, he replied. He had deduced it from the “general rule” that Asmodeus is the demon specializing in lust.⁴³

The “experiment” conducted by Brugnoli served its purpose. From her next interrogation, on 6 September, until the end of the trial, Pesenti responded readily and volubly to the inquisitor’s questions. Although Ugoni may have appreciated the fact that the exorcist had loosened her tongue, he took a dim view of the experimenter’s methods. On 21

December 1668 the inquisitor summoned Brugnoli to his study in the convent of San Domenico. He castigated the exorcist severely for conducting the interview—termed an exorcism, which technically it was not—“with uncalled-for means and baseless questions” and arriving at conclusions “invented out of his own head.” From now on, Ugoni ruled, he was prohibited from performing exorcisms; if he disobeyed the order, he would be demoted in rank in his order. First Brugnoli tried to justify using the methods he considered necessary to liberate Pesenti from the demon, but he eventually signed the order.⁴⁴ Whether he obeyed it is unclear. That his last book appeared in 1669 suggests that at the time he was reprimanded his life as well as his career was drawing to a close.

PERFORMING A TEST to determine whether a defendant was possessed by the devil, as Brugnoli was asked to do, was the main task for which exorcists were engaged by the Holy Office. Perhaps the most ingenious experimenters summoned to assist in a case of pretense of holiness appear in the case of Caterina Rossi of Poschiavo, tried by the Inquisition of Brescia in 1642–43. Rossi, a repeat offender, had previously been condemned for the same offense by the Holy Office of Como. Although neither trial record seems to have survived, a summary of her sentence in Brescia was copied into both the records of the Venetian Inquisition and a miscellany of materials on pretense of holiness.⁴⁵

As we saw in Chapter 1, Rossi made numerous claims to holiness, refused to recant them during the first phase of the trial, and opted to mount a defense. Physical evidence, the flesh-colored letters discovered under her left thigh during a physical examination by “honorable and wise persons of her sex,” gave rise to the suspicion that she had made a pact with the devil. When Rossi denied having done so and declined to offer any explanation for the mysterious letters, the question as to whether she was indeed possessed had to be pursued.⁴⁶ Therefore the inquisitor called in several exorcists.⁴⁷ During the first few sessions they conducted, Rossi “knew so well how to feign with words, movements, and gestures that she was considered not only by most of the observers but by also some exorcists actually to be possessed.” Further experimentation was obviously required.⁴⁸

First the exorcists performed tests with objects, placing in one small bag some relics and in another a watch. Applying the first bag to her body, which if she were possessed should have elicited a reaction from the demon or demons within her, produced none. When she was touched

with the bag containing the watch, however, “she behaved like a possessed person.” To verify this finding, the test was repeated substituting a piece of tile for the watch; again, she responded to the mundane stimulus but not to the holy one. Then the exorcists proceeded to test Rossi with words: “When many exorcisms from the *Rituale Romanum* were read over her and the demon was adjured several times to reveal himself, she gave no sign; but when Plato’s *Republic* was read over her, she started to bark like a dog and act like a possessed person.” These tests not only convinced the court that Rossi was feigning diabolic confession; they persuaded her to give up. She threw herself on her knees, begged pardon, “and confessed openly that these [behaviors] had all been her own inventions to fool the judges and elude the sentence of the Holy Tribunal.”⁴⁹

AT LEAST TWO secular priests dealt in print as well as in practice with diagnosing and curing possession. One was the Milanese Zaccaria Visconti, whose *Complementum artis exorcisticae* (Complement to the exorcistic art) appeared in 1600.⁵⁰ A generation later, the career of another, the Venetian Giorgio Polacco, vividly illustrates the close and perilous conjunction between discernment of spirits and exorcism.⁵¹ In 1638 Polacco introduced the latest of his many books, *Pratiche per discernere lo spirito buono dal malvagio e per conoscer gl’indemoniate e maleficiate* (Instructions for distinguishing the good from the evil spirit and for recognizing possessed and bewitched women):

At the urging of certain devout and religious souls, I have put together these few instructions. . . . I hope to God that when they are read carefully, people will not fall so easily into those whirlpools that have shipwrecked many more souls than the ancient Scylla and Charybdis. And what souls! Those among the most holy and learned in the Church, as you will see below. From now on, therefore, let no one dare to enter this swamp of discernment of spirits without an experienced pilot, who keeps his eye fixed on its banks so as to arrive safe and sound in port.⁵²

Learned prelates, friars, and priests who read Polacco’s preface would hardly have found his message new, but novelty was not his objective. As his preface indicates, he had in mind a particular market niche for this and several other works he issued in the vernacular: the vast majority of priests and friars with no systematic training in theology and barely enough Latin to perform their liturgical functions.⁵³ These clerics, he

knew, were dangerously ill equipped to cope with penitents, the vast majority of them women, who ingenuously believed or falsely claimed that they were in frequent direct contact with supernatural powers, divine or diabolical. As Polacco perhaps realized, sixty-two years had passed since the appearance of Menghi's *Compendio* and thirty-seven since Porri's *Antidotario*. Poorly educated men of his own generation, he believed, desperately needed practical guidance in their mother tongue, unencumbered by theological subtleties and an intimidating apparatus of references.⁵⁴ Since his credentials included wide reading on and extensive experience with religious women, he considered himself well qualified to provide this kind of advice.

The *Pratiche* and Polacco's other published works on "ecstatic" and possessed women follow the paradigm of discernment examined in Chapter 3. Like the predecessors on whose work he draws, he espouses a one-sex model of human nature: the female is an inverted, imperfect version of the male. Women's bodies and brains, inherently cold and damp, are much more susceptible than men's to internal disturbances. These somatic dysfunctions prompt flights of pious fancy and invasions by malign forces that in most cases women are too feeble and foolish to fight off. The concomitant of females' physical and mental fragility is moral inferiority. Naturally inclined to all seven deadly sins, women rarely prove able to withstand the onslaught of temptation. Paradoxically, however, the vast majority of them are not mere passive objects of the devil's attention but cunning subjects who actively and willingly collaborate with the Evil One. Seeking fame and fortune, they fabricate encounters with divine powers and persuade naive confessors and spiritual directors to endorse and publicize their feigned holiness. Such men—not the "little women" who entrap and deceive them—appear in Polacco's works, as in previous treatises on discernment of spirits, to be helpless, if not entirely blameless, victims of forces beyond their comprehension and control.⁵⁵

BORN INTO A MIDDLE-CLASS Venetian family on 12 July 1570, Polacco trained for a clerical career not in a seminary or university but in apprenticeship to parish priests, as was typical in his era.⁵⁶ Not long after his ordination on 24 September 1594, he undertook a pastoral activity that became his specialty: confessing and advising women.⁵⁷ As spiritual director of "many gentlewomen among the most highly ranked and richest in the city," he soon earned a reputation for directing penitents toward the convent, considered in this era the sole secure venue for a woman's

religious aspirations.⁵⁸ His notable success attracted the attention of his superiors and prospective female clients. In 1600, Patriarch Matteo Zane appointed him extraordinary confessor to a convent, ordering him to go inside the cloister to counsel a nun “in certain spiritual miseries.”⁵⁹ Then he was named regular confessor to the nuns of Sant’Anna and the young women kept safe from threats to their chastity in the Zitelle.⁶⁰ Because he was rather young to be confessing cloistered women, he took up these assignments with some trepidation.⁶¹ His performance must have been judged highly satisfactory, for in 1607 the nuns of Santa Lucia elected him confessor and secured his appointment as curate of the surrounding parish, a position he held for thirty-six years.⁶²

By his own account, amply confirmed in patriarchal records, Polacco was an exemplary manager of the convent-parish church complex and the nuns’ spiritual welfare.⁶³ In 1631, recognizing his expertise, Cardinal Patriarch Federico Corner named him vicar of the nuns for the entire diocese. Polacco served in this capacity until Corner’s retirement in 1643 and then occasionally under his successor, Giovanni Francesco Morosini.⁶⁴ In moments snatched from his multiple assignments, he composed treatises on a wide range of subjects.⁶⁵ By his late seventies he seems to have gone into partial retirement. The last of his books issued during his lifetime appeared in 1652.⁶⁶ Not long thereafter, he was laid to rest in Santa Lucia.⁶⁷

In the circumscribed environment of the convent, maintaining discipline—enforcing the rules for nuns’ behavior laid down by the Council of Trent and the cardinals on the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars—was normally a straightforward assignment. But from time to time Polacco faced a problem, as an exemplary story recounted in one of his works reveals:

In one convent it happened that some nuns, for certain purposes of their own, pretended to be possessed. Because I had experience in the art of exorcism, practiced for charity’s sake in my early years, I immediately recognized their subterfuge and therefore refused to assign them an exorcist. Hence practically everyone in the city called me inhumane and cruel. In the end, however, the truth came out, and the convent was freed from its great predicament. One of these wretched women had the following message sent to me. “Go to Monsignor the Vicar and tell him that I’m the one he exorcised all those years ago, and I won’t go away until the nuns say a thousand Hail Marys for three days before the exposed sacrament, and then I’ll leave for hell. My

name is Grison, the greatest demon there is for possessing them all. You'd better believe it!"

Concluding his account, Polacco exclaimed, "O God, to what lengths female malice and cunning can go!"⁶⁸

This cautionary tale contains practically all the elements of Polacco's approach toward women who believed or disingenuously claimed that they were in intimate contact with supernatural powers. The first thing that strikes the eye is the writer's confident tone. He projects the image of a man in control, one who knows exactly what his place in the scheme of things allows him to do and is fully equipped to cope with even the most bizarre of problems. The account also reveals his method of discipline. In this case, as in many others, the prime weapon in his arsenal is deprivation. He forbids the nuns access to something they want and expect the church to provide: the services of an exorcist who would spend hours, days, weeks inside the cloister taking them seriously—in modern terms, watching and listening to them act out, in the culturally sanctioned language and behavior of diabolic possession, frustrations stemming from a variety of causes.⁶⁹ The exorcist would engage them as subjects by conversing directly with their projection, Grison, a devil whose name invokes the specter of Protestant heretics just beyond the confines of the Venetian state.⁷⁰

Polacco, however, elects to treat these nuns as objects. He makes no secret of the reason why: they are females. Educated clerics know that the vast majority of women habitually lie, feign, and do their best to deceive men. Yet misunderstanding and criticism of his actions reveal that few in the general population possess this insiders' knowledge. Writing many years later in order to justify his conduct before a broad audience, Polacco chooses not to review the published literature on discernment of spirits. Instead, immediately following the passage just quoted, he calls upon a single potent authority whose work had recently become available, in manuscript, to insiders like himself: the "Prattica per procedere nelle cause del S. Offizio" prepared by Cardinal Desiderio Scaglia. As we have seen in Chapter 4 and Polacco explains, Scaglia makes clear that when an epidemic of what appears to be diabolic possession breaks out in a convent, recourse to an exorcist almost always does more harm than good, for it exacerbates "womanish wars and rivalry" among the nuns.⁷¹ Polacco's citing Scaglia's "Prattica" serves not only to remind his readers that he himself is a qualified evaluator of alleged supernatural phenom-

ena but also to hint broadly that a dreaded force majeure, the Holy Office, may be called on to intervene in such cases.

IN THE WORLD outside convent walls, discerning spirits and disciplining errant spiritual women proved much more difficult. When laywomen claiming otherworldly inspiration came to his attention, Polacco found himself on treacherous terrain. Here is his characterization of one such individual:

Not long ago there was a woman, known to almost everyone, who in the area of raptures, visions, and revelations appeared to be competing with Catherine of Alexandria, Catherine of Siena, and other ecstatic and illuminated female saints—but she ended up condemned by the Holy Office. Word spread that she could cure the sick in an instant. . . . She asserted and repeated many times that whenever she said that someone would become a saint, she must be believed.⁷²

I know [he wrote, referring to the same person] of a young woman of otherwise praiseworthy behavior who was marked with five wounds by the devil, as she herself confessed, adding, however, that all this happened at the command of Jesus Christ.⁷³

This woman was Cecilia Ferrazzi. Polacco's encounter with her was the most disturbing incident in his long career of dealing with religious women. In the passages just quoted, which he committed twice to print, he gives a brief, reticent version of her story designed for public consumption. He provided a more circumstantial account in reports to his superior, Cardinal Patriarch Corner, which were copied in 1664 into the transcript of her trial. In the spring of 1637, the Carmelite friar Bonaventura Pinzoni, who was preaching during Lent in the convent of Santa Lucia, told the nuns' confessor about his prodigious penitent. Skeptical, Polacco immediately informed the patriarch, who ordered him to place the woman temporarily out of the public eye in the convent of the Capuccine of San Girolamo, where she could be monitored closely. Following Polacco's instructions, the abbess called in a physician to treat the wounds on Ferrazzi's hands, which healed within a week. On 25 April she was interrogated by the inquisitor.⁷⁴ To his amazement, she refused to answer his questions; all he could elicit were "outrageous boasting and ideas full of pride." During this interview, the convent was hit by "a storm of wind and rain so sudden and severe that it appeared that the

convent building would collapse.” This occurrence reinforced Polacco’s suspicion that Ferrazzi was working hand in glove with the devil.⁷⁵

On 4 September Cardinal Patriarch Corner ordered the transfer of “this daughter” to “some secure and secret place” where she could be examined “by a good friar experienced in these matters.”⁷⁶ Polacco selected the convent of Santa Maria Maggiore, to which Ferrazzi was escorted on 15 December by a group of noblewomen “as if she were the first young lady in the city.” In his interview with her the next day, he was shocked to find that she was wearing a Discalced Carmelite habit. When he ordered her to remove it, she retorted: “I’ll take it off if you wish, but believe me, I must observe what I have promised God.”⁷⁷

Three days later, the abbess of Santa Maria Maggiore, alarmed by her unwanted guest’s screaming all night, called Polacco back to the convent. In tears, the young woman begged for his help. He responded by threatening to send her straight to Rome for trial by the Inquisition.⁷⁸ This, she told him, was not part of God’s plan that she found a Discalced Carmelite convent in Venice. Her stigmata, she conceded, had been imprinted by the devil, “but on Jesus Christ’s orders.” Polacco then had her examined—no doubt deliberately, he does not employ the term *exorcised*⁷⁹—by several learned and pious men, who concurred that she had been deluded by the Evil One.⁸⁰

On 16 January 1638 Cardinal Patriarch Corner handed down his verdict, reached in concert with the inquisitor. The rags used to stanch the blood from Ferrazzi’s so-called stigmata, unwisely preserved by her confessor, Pinzoni, were to be burned; she was to be assigned a new confessor; the ring that she falsely claimed had been miraculously placed on her finger was to be returned to its owner. She was to be stripped of the Carmelite habit she had illegitimately adopted and imprisoned if she dared to don it again. Her new home would be either the Zitelle or the convent of Gesù Maria. Should the patriarch hear that she and her supporters had once again let themselves be “tricked by the infernal enemy,” he would remand them all to the Holy Office.⁸¹

In this patriarchal script, Polacco’s handling of Ferrazzi accords perfectly with the course of action he recommended to others in his treatises. The female perpetrator, whom he dubbed “Cecilia with the Stigmata,” stands at center stage; Pinzoni, the credulous confessor who had encouraged and promoted her, is merely a bit player.⁸² At certain points, the team of highly qualified male agents coordinated by Polacco and

superintended by the patriarch makes instrumental use of but does not rely solely on the inquisitor.

As we saw in Chapter 5, however, these men had help from a woman: Angela Maria Pasqualigo, founder of the convent of Gesù Maria, who had earlier been tested by Polacco to determine the validity of her prolonged fasts. It was Pasqualigo who arrived at the conclusion that Ferrazzi's pride ruled out the possibility that she was divinely inspired.⁸³ But clearly Pasqualigo's assessment of Ferrazzi did not fit into Polacco's versions of the drama. Although in his treatises he was willing to accept and pass on guidance from the writings of a canonized dead woman, Teresa of Avila, admitting that he had consulted a living female would have contradicted the principles he publicly espoused. Neither in his reports to Cardinal Patriarch Corner nor in his published works did he name Pasqualigo or even allude to her role in the Ferrazzi affair.

On trial by the Inquisition more than a quarter of a century later, the "little woman" in this case seized the opportunity to tell her own story. In Cecilia Ferrazzi's autobiographical account, the events of 1637–38 assume a shape significantly different in several respects from the ones presented by Polacco and the author of Pasqualigo's *vita*, Giovanni Bonifacio Bagatta. By the time her trial by the Holy Office began in mid-June 1664, Polacco had lain in his grave for almost a decade. Hence, as Inquisitor Ugoni caustically remarked, the vicar of the nuns could not be summoned as a witness to confirm, or more likely contest, her assertions about what he had said and done to her.⁸⁴ Since Ferrazzi's version of her own story supplements more than it contradicts Polacco's, it is worth considering here.

In the first place, Ferrazzi's account suggests that Polacco's role in her life was more prolonged and substantial than he was willing to admit. According to her, he became her spiritual director at an early date but soon passed her on to another superior. Five or six years before placing her in custody with the Cappuccine, she explains, "Signor Vicar Polacco assigned as my confessor the Carmelite Father Master Bonaventura [Pinzoni]."⁸⁵ Although the chronology she reconstructed many years after the period in question is not easy to follow, it seems clear that when, during Lent of 1637 at Santa Lucia, Pinzoni told the nuns' confessor about the spiritual adventures of his penitent, Ferrazzi was by no means unknown to Polacco.

More important than amending the sequence of events, evidence

offered under oath by Ferrazzi indicates that, contrary to what Polacco wished his superior and the public to believe, not all the responsibility for promoting her as a living saint can be assigned to Pinzoni. Nor does her version support the image of himself he tried to convey: the astute, unruffled manager of “difficult” women. Particularly instructive in this regard is Ferrazzi’s account of her sojourn in the convent of Santa Maria Maggiore in December 1637. When the nuns objected to Polacco’s order that they take her in, she recalls, “He started shouting at them, saying, ‘I’m putting in a saint, one who lives on communion, one who has the stigmata!’ Since they wouldn’t obey, he told the nuns, ‘Unveil the abbess, remove her from office!’ but the nuns still wouldn’t obey. Finally he began throwing some little slips of paper into the convent, saying ‘I’m excommunicating you!’ and the nuns threw them out, saying that they wouldn’t accept his excommunication and that he had no authority to excommunicate them.” To Polacco’s calling the abbess “‘hussy,’ ‘rash,’ ‘insolent,’ and other similar terms,” the nuns responded in kind: “You old madman, go learn how to dust your books!”⁸⁶ The next day, after Ferrazzi’s inner voices had counseled her to obey her superior no matter how inappropriate his behavior might seem,⁸⁷ the vicar of the nuns showed up to offer a backhanded apology: “Signor Polacco came to the grate at Santa Maria Maggiore and wept and drenched three or four handkerchiefs, telling me, ‘I’ve betrayed you, assassinated you! I know I’ve done wrong, but bear with me, because you are possessed.’”⁸⁸

Ferrazzi’s account strongly suggests that in his promotion of her as a living saint, Polacco made claims in flagrant contradiction to the position he very soon took in print. So-called stigmata, he writes in his *Pratiche*, are usually imprinted by the devil, either directly or by a subject in collusion with him.⁸⁹ The ability to live without food other than consecrated bread and wine, he maintains, is so rare that it should always be held suspect.⁹⁰ Yet in Ferrazzi’s version of her story, after she had told Polacco that her difficulty in holding down food was a congenital disability and not a divine privilege, he continued to spread the word that she lived on communion alone.⁹¹ Instead of conducting rigorous tests, as he had previously done on Pasqualigo, he resorted immediately to exorcism, about which he expressed serious reservations in print⁹²—first by a sole practitioner, whose ministrations did not satisfy him, and then by a four-man team in a marathon session.⁹³ The second treatment obtained the result he wanted, obedience. Kneeling at Polacco’s feet, Ferrazzi told him, “‘Sir, this spirit of mine wants Most Holy Communion every day

to deliver me from this torment.' He gave me the benediction, saying 'The Lord bless you, I understand everything.'"⁹⁴

Very likely Polacco's response was Machiavellian. Requests for daily communion, he insists in his published works, stem almost always from unworthy motives and should therefore be turned down.⁹⁵ During the second exorcism, Polacco's agents, following his instructions, may well have deliberately led Ferrazzi into the trap of asking for something he could refuse to grant. Once again he used his favorite weapon, deprivation. He forbade Ferrazzi, she tells us, to receive communion and even to pray.⁹⁶ In this regard, at least, he practiced what he preached.

POLACCO'S *Pratiche* appeared in the very same year that Cardinal Patriarch Corner handed down his ruling on Ferrazzi. It is not a product of calm reflection but rather a heated effort to justify himself in the face of mounting criticism. Recent experience had taught Polacco that ecstatic women could call upon powerful patrons willing and able to challenge his authority. By appealing to the inquisitor, the high-born Pasqualigo had obtained relief from his assiduous attempt to discern the provenance of her inspiration. Ferrazzi, albeit a "little woman," was sufficiently well known in Venice to attract interest and support in the patriciate: among others, the gentlewomen who escorted her to Santa Maria Maggiore, the equally well born nuns of that convent, and some of their relatives. Indeed, soon after she was disciplined by the patriarch, Ferrazzi recalls, the noblewoman Marietta Morosini Cappello managed to liberate her from Polacco's clutches and find her a more sympathetic confessor.⁹⁷ The records of Santa Lucia add a small but significant detail. In the early 1640s Polacco's relationship with the nuns turned sour. Through their procurators, they accused him of embezzling convent funds to purchase books for his personal library.⁹⁸ Disconcerted by growing hostility, Polacco may have thought that publishing a book that contained thinly veiled negative references to Ferrazzi would serve to counter growing opposition to him.

Sometime in the late 1630s or early 1640s the first edition, no longer extant, of Polacco's *Antidoto contro le velenose illusioni del nemico infernale in materia di estasi, ratti e rivelazioni* (Antidote against the poisonous illusions of the infernal enemy in matters of ecstasy, raptures, and revelations) appeared.⁹⁹ This handbook evidently included a brief but highly critical account of the Ferrazzi incident and other examples of misguided ecstasies whose identity members of his reading public could easily guess.

Some of his readers must have been sympathetic to Ferrazzi. The *Antidoto* elicited attacks on his harsh methods of discipline which, compounded by tensions at Santa Lucia, led him to prepare not only a scientifically oriented treatise short on evidence drawn from recent local cases but also a self-congratulatory account of his tenure at Santa Lucia, both published in 1643.¹⁰⁰

A year later, Polacco decided to issue a revised version of the *Antidoto*. In dedicating the book to the recently installed patriarch of Venice, Giovanni Francesco Morosini, he states his principal aims: preparing Morosini for the problems with religious women the prelate will face and making a sort of confession to his new superior “to unburden [his] conscience and for [his] necessary defense.”¹⁰¹ Recycling phrases and entire paragraphs from his previous works, he tries to cast them in somewhat gentler terms. He reiterates, for example, that confessors and bishops must do their utmost to identify and correct ecstatic women, proceeding if necessary to trial before the Inquisition—“with charity, however, and without noisy judgment.”¹⁰² Despite what critics say, he protests, his alleged harshness has always served the interests of his female clients. “I call God to witness,” he exclaims, “that I do everything in my power to liberate these poor deluded and tricked women from the hands of the infernal enemy.”¹⁰³ Disinclined to edit out his hostile account of Ferrazzi, he tries halfheartedly to make amends. He never intended, he claims, to expose particular individuals; readers all too eager to identify the women he mentioned have jumped to the wrong conclusion.¹⁰⁴ He concedes with obvious reluctance that one must not take skepticism to the point of doubting the holiness of women such as Mary the Egyptian, Catherine of Siena, Catherine of Genoa, “and especially that woman they claim I was talking about in my *Antidoto*.”¹⁰⁵

FOR INQUISITORS and those suspected of feigning holiness, as well as for exorcists, the rite of exorcism was a double-edged sword. From the inquisitor’s perspective, the employment of an exorcist could smooth the way toward achieving the results he hoped to obtain. A defendant unable to speak could hardly be interrogated; Candido Brugnoli managed to loosen Antonia Pesenti’s tongue. Defendants disingenuously claiming that someone other than themselves—namely, the devil—was to blame could be unmasked as fakers and held responsible for their words and actions, as in the case of Caterina Rossi. In both instances, as we have

seen, exorcism was an important step toward eliciting a confession of guilt and proceeding to pass a sentence.

From the defendant's perspective, removal of the devil from the picture through exorcism may not have been an unmixed blessing. Cecilia Ferrazzi and others had undoubtedly internalized the theological dictum that God does not allow the devil to afflict people more than they can bear—that this kind of testing by the Evil One in fact indicates that God is refining the spirit of someone particularly precious to him.¹⁰⁶ The assiduous ministrations of an exorcist, like the close attention paid by a spiritual director, may have functioned like a drug to which they became more and more pleasurably addicted. Being abruptly forced to go cold turkey and admit that they had fabricated evidence of contact with extramundane powers must have come as a terrible shock. Now that their inner lives were emptied, filling them with the methadone of ordinary spirituality, as their sentences mandated that they do, could not have seemed an entirely satisfactory substitute.

To an exorcist, an invitation to practice his art and science on the inquisitorial stage may initially have appeared to be the highest form of recognition he could attain. The stakes, however, were very high. Even if he performed well in this situation, he would remain a supporting player who could never hope to take the leading role or gain public acclaim for what he had accomplished. If in the performance of his assigned role he made what the inquisitor, who had cast and now directed him, considered a mistake, he was subject to a humiliating reprimand and perhaps to exclusion from his profession. In the next chapter we shall see whether a similar relationship existed between physicians, patients, and inquisitors in trials for pretense of holiness.

Healers of the Body

FROM BOOKS READ or heard read, sermons, visual representations, and other sources, medieval and early modern Christians learned that the holy body was a suffering body. Some sought to interpret illness in religious terms; others went further by mortifying their flesh. On a particular aspect of suffering, food deprivation, the lives of fasting saints conveyed the impression that doing without sustenance was a particularly meritorious enterprise. As can be seen clearly in the records of prosecutions by the Holy Office of women and men accused of pretense of holiness, contemporary observers evaluated critically these projects of achieving a holy body. Not infrequently they concluded that since the inspirations prompting them clearly did not come from God, the aspiring saints who undertook them were either deluded or attempting to perpetrate a fraud.

In this chapter we will look first at recent approaches to “reading the body.” Next we will attend to inedia (the most neutral term available for noneating) in modern scholarship, among those accused of pretense of holiness and in early modern medical literature. Then we will examine the work of a pioneer in forensic medicine, Paolo Zacchia, who explored both simulated illness and a physical syndrome that produced many of the symptoms suffered by “false saints.” Finally, we shall try to determine why for the most part theological and medical discourses proceeded on separate tracks.

DURING THE PAST quarter century the body has played a starring role in the human sciences. Feminists first called this protagonist onto the stage by insisting that the body is not an immutable part of the natural world but a cultural construction, the “definition and shaping” of which constitute “the focal point for struggles over the shape of power.”¹ Since then, using concepts and terms drawn from the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, poststructuralists have explored the body across the

entire spectrum of its cultural manifestations. According to them, the body provides a key to reading a vast territory. Once it is opened to inspection, these critics insist, we shall be able to understand and perhaps even to cure all the ills of the human condition.

With few exceptions, “readers of the body” have concentrated on the modern era.² Thumbing through books bearing titles that promise to examine “Western culture,” a student of the premodern era usually discovers that they begin in the nineteenth century. At this point, according to the authors, the body had already been “medicalized.” As Susan Bordo puts it, “Since the seventeenth century, science has ‘owned’ the study of the body and its disorders. This proprietorship has required that the body’s meanings be utterly transparent and accessible to the qualified specialist (aided by the appropriate methodology and technology) and utterly opaque to the patient herself.”³ In this scenario, the physician dons the black hat. His patient, especially if she is female, is assigned one of two roles: either the passive victim whose body is merely a field of study or (much less plausibly) the rebel who strongly opposes all attempts to define not only her body but also her entire being. In fact, the word *patient* is understood as a sure sign of the objectivization and consequent dehumanization inherent in physicians’ hegemony over those they claim to cure.⁴

Defining in this way the relations of power in the practice of modern medicine seems completely valid, as well as heuristically and politically very useful in the continuing battle for equality between the sexes. On the other hand, when scholars take for granted that such a relationship, which developed in the nineteenth century (not the seventeenth) and has been “perfected” in the twentieth, can be automatically projected backward, they produce grotesquely distorted representations of the past. Making such an assumption amounts to abandoning a fundamental premise of most contemporary research: that gender and all other formulations of “reality” are constructed—that is, they are artifacts of a particular cultural moment with its own peculiar concentration of forces. Historians know very well, though some practitioners of cultural studies tend to forget, that neither the relations of power nor the terms of discourse rooted in a specific historical context can possess a universal, univocal meaning.

“Medicalization” works for studies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but it is far from being a universal hypothesis. What can we

put in its place? In order to operate in the late Middle Ages and the early modern era, we must find both a paradigm and a constellation of terms appropriate to our needs.

FOR THOSE CONCERNED with late medieval and early modern Europe, the bodies of aspiring saints pose daunting interpretive problems. Vigorous debates on inedia clearly illustrate the range of difficulties. Unlike visions and locutions, accessible only to those who experience them, inedia can be observed and monitored by others. Historians must therefore ask themselves whether inedia is “real.”⁵ Can a human being survive for long without nourishment? Is it possible, for example, that Maria Janis lived for several years on the bread and wine of communion alone?

More than fifty years ago Thomas Pater asserted that certain prolonged fasts, inexplicable in natural terms, must be judged “preternatural,” that is, “miraculous.” “When we have solid evidence,” he wrote in the introduction to his book, “that . . . a canonized saint gave his word that he lived for a stated time without food or drink, we can conclude with certainty to the reality of the fast.”⁶ Lay historians confronting inedia today operate differently. Taking for granted that no one can live for long without nourishments, they seek to understand what else might have been involved in one or more cases of so-called inedia. They do not aim either to validate miracles or to unmask impostures. Rather, they seek to explore “a world we have lost”: the noneaters’ intellectual, religious, and social universe. In addition, they ask themselves why so many of the fasters’ contemporaries considered inedia *religionis causa* not only a possibility but a probable indication of divine grace.

Two American scholars have endeavored to map the territory of religious inedia. In *Holy Anorexia*, the social historian Rudolph Bell adopted a strategy used by many scholars in the human sciences: he chose a modern syndrome, anorexia nervosa, identified and given a name in the mid-nineteenth century,⁷ as a heuristic lead for investigating inedia in an earlier period. Bell maintained that in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, many young women found an ingenious way of rebelling against family and social pressure to marry and have children. Their strategy was to seize power by assuming control over their intake of food, a commodity almost always prepared and served by women. Refusing to eat, a project they conceived and justified in religious terms, resulted eventually in the annihilation of their bodies.⁸ In *Holy Feast and Holy*

Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women, the historian of religious thought Caroline Walker Bynum took another tack. Medieval women who fasted, she argued, were by no means rejecting and trying to destroy their human flesh. Rather, they were attempting in a positive and creative way to incorporate it into the body of Christ.⁹

Numerous readers have assumed that Bynum read Bell's book, strongly disagreed with it, and took it upon herself to confute his interpretation. Given that the two historians embarked simultaneously on their research, neither initially aware of the other's project, this was not the case.¹⁰ For various reasons, many scholars have praised Bynum's approach as "correct" and damned Bell's as "wrong." Articulating and accepting medieval women's explanations of what they were doing and why, these critics maintain, Bynum rightly represented women of the past as active subjects. Bell, on the other hand, committed serious errors. Considering the rejection of food as the essence of medieval fasting women's being, he equated them in a grossly reductive manner with twentieth-century sufferers from anorexia nervosa.¹¹

This mode of dismissing Bell's work presents problems. First of all, it is based on careless reading of his book, in which he stated explicitly that he had no intention of conflating "holy anorexia" and anorexia nervosa.¹² Under the surface of such condemnations, furthermore, lurk strong prejudices regarding who has the right to study the history of women, how one should go about working in this field, and at what conclusions one should arrive. Even more serious, the brusque rejection of *Holy Anorexia* betrays a very restrictive conception of the historian's task. If we must limit ourselves to re-presenting the justifications offered by historical actors for their behavior and abstain from using modern explanatory paradigms, how can we advance our discipline? In this case, given that the phenomenon of religious inedia was identified and assigned a name in the early modern period, is it fair to accuse Bell of flagrant anachronism?¹³

Clearly historians must proceed with circumspection in using, as well as in evaluating the use of, any paradigm borrowed from the social or natural sciences. What counts are the results gained by employing them. How adroitly has a historian deployed analytical tools in interpreting the ideas and experiences of people in the past? Do his or her "translations" of a "foreign" language, mode of thinking, and style of life strike readers as precise and convincing?

Confronted with questions such as these, neither Bell's study nor Bynum's remains above criticism. Some reviewers of *Holy Anorexia* faulted

Bell for having neglected the central role of fasting in Christian asceticism and having failed to forge a strong “explanatory link” between women’s search for power and their rejection of food.¹⁴ In a perspicacious review of both books, Ann Carmichael noted that Bynum ignored recent work by anthropologists and historians of medicine and “missed the secular context of food practices that were not dominated by women.”¹⁵ Others observed that by putting too much faith in structural anthropology and concentrating exclusively on inedia among elite women, Bynum arrived at conclusions lacking the validity across the social spectrum which she seemed to be claiming for them.¹⁶

Bell and Bynum correctly maintained that their studies were complementary.¹⁷ For our purposes, however, Bell’s approach is more useful than Bynum’s. Few of the women and men tried for pretense of holiness were acquainted firsthand with the mystical tradition that had so much influence on Bynum’s educated, socially privileged nuns—a tradition to which these nuns were able to contribute. Virtually all the “false saints” were subject to social and intellectual forces that they could influence only involuntarily, indirectly, and after the fact, as objects of study. In contrast, those before whom they came in the tribunal of the Holy Office, judges who participated fully in the high culture of their era, could utilize the sciences of theology, jurisprudence, and potentially medicine.

Nonetheless, Bell’s approach does not fully serve the purpose of elucidating inedia in cases of pretense of holiness. The women and men whom we met in Chapter 1 were hardly “rebels.” On the contrary, as Fulvio Tomizza has rightly observed, they considered themselves and sought to be exemplary Christians. Unfortunately for them, they understood only imperfectly the new Counter-Reformation criteria for holiness. Little did they realize that they were following a medieval model of the holy body which had become obsolete at least a century earlier.¹⁸

In contrast to Bell, who examined saints’ vitae, and to Bynum, who studied mystical writings, the main sources for pretense of holiness are not books but records of *processi* in both senses of the Italian word: trials and operations conducted over a period of time. In the records of an inquisitorial trial we can listen not to the voice of a single person, the author, but to several voices in a prolonged conversation. Because these are not “free” and “spontaneous” conversations, as we saw in Chapter 1, Andrea Del Col objects to calling them dialogues. Yet unlike trial records generated elsewhere during this period, in which we get only third-person summaries of suspects’, defendants’, and witnesses’ testimony,¹⁹

they can be considered dialogues of a particular asymmetrical type. The inquisitor bears some resemblance to Socrates in Plato's dialogues: although he directs the discussion toward a particular end, it is a conversation, not a monologue. In an inquisitorial exchange, however, only to a very limited extent does the recorder's pen shape what other participants in the trial said.²⁰ For studying exchanges between inquisitors and those who came before them, therefore, I choose to follow whenever possible a method different from Bell's and Bynum's—an elementary form of "discourse analysis" focusing on talk about the body.

IN TRIALS FOR pretense of holiness, discussion of the fasting body, though unbalanced on account of the judicial circumstances in which it occurred, was not a hegemonic monologue like that between today's physicians and the vast majority of their patients but a conversation in which it is possible to identify many voices. Moving from bottom to top, let us listen first to the voices of patients, suspects or defendants, perched on an uncomfortable bench. Many but not all of them were women. Few had the time or means to prepare a defense; under the pressure of interrogation, they had to improvise. They tried desperately to describe and legitimize the project of making their bodies holy.

In 1632–33, Pietro Vespa, bishop of Paphos, told the Holy Office of Venice about an illness he had suffered in Messina. Here in a nutshell is what he said over and over again: "For more than a week I was desperately ill. I had a high fever; I was delirious; I wasn't eating. But to the best of my recollection, I never claimed to live on communion alone."²¹ Three decades later, Maria Janis spoke. "Having heard in readings from the lives of the saints that some of them didn't eat," she said, "one day the idea came into my mind not to take food anymore." "Yes," she admitted, "every so often at table I pretended to eat, but only to avoid scandalizing my tablemates." "Once again I tell you," she insisted, "that I haven't eaten."²² In the following year, Cecilia Ferrazzi explained her alimentary habits to the inquisitor: "Since birth I've had digestive problems. Although I eat very little, never, never have I bragged about living on communion alone. Fra [Bonaventura] Pinzoni and Giorgio Polacco, vicar of the nuns, spread that lie."²³

What did witnesses have to say? Two priests from Messina informed the Congregation of the Holy Office that Vespa had boasted of having been miraculously enabled to go without eating and having received other divine privileges.²⁴ Called down from the village of Zorzone to Bergamo

to testify, Maria Janis's former neighbors—as well as Pietro Morali, her codefendant, and Pietro Palazzi, their companion on a trip from Zorzzone to Rome and then to Venice—insisted that for at least five years they had never seen her eat.²⁵ Two priests who had spied on her in Zorzzone, however, swore that they had heard from her room the unmistakable sound of teeth chewing.²⁶ Through a crack in the door of Janis's apartment in Venice, a neighbor had seen a fork and a slice of salami which Maria lifted toward her mouth.²⁷ According to her chief accuser and two former inhabitants of her houses of refuge for “girls in danger,” Ferrazzi claimed to have born with greens in her mouth and to subsist on nothing but raw vegetables, coarse bread, and water.²⁸ Young women who had been in her care, on the contrary, reported having glimpsed plates of appetizing food on her table.²⁹ Antonia Pesenti's accuser and another witness in her trial testified to having heard her say that she could eat only when God or the Virgin Mary commanded that she do so. They claimed that God even prescribed her diet: one day he instructed her to buy some milk and make a sweet pudding. But others, they said, reported Antonia's eating normally.³⁰

These testimonies, many of them contradictory and second- or third-hand, do not constitute proof beyond a shadow of a doubt as to whether the defendants had undertaken prolonged fasts. Yet they help us to understand something important: it was not only a handful of aspiring (or falsely self-promoting) holy people, a small group of extreme cases, who believed in the possibility of surviving through divine assistance without eating. In contrast to atheism, impossible in the sixteenth century according to Lucien Febvre, inedia for religion's sake seemed possible to many in the seventeenth century—not all, as we are about to see, in the lower classes.³¹

Were inquisitors among them? Surely they were very well informed from the theological perspective about physical illnesses linked with spiritual problems. In the course of their studies and subsequent assignments, they had certainly read and thoroughly digested the manuals of inquisitorial procedure and treatises on discernment of spirits and exorcism which we examined in Chapters 3 and 4. In part because Inquisition records reveal almost nothing about the bases on which judges of the Holy Office made their decisions, it is difficult to tell whether they had undertaken a broader program of reading. From the mid-sixteenth century on, the body of medical literature potentially relevant to the cases

that came before them expanded rapidly. To set inquisitors' views of physical phenomena in context, we need to explore the larger medical universe of the early modern period.

IN THE LATE FIFTEENTH and early sixteenth centuries writers all over western Europe began to collect and publish evidence of strange occurrences. Some catered to the lay reading public's appetite for sensational but true stories; others sought to ascertain the religious significance of God's operations in the natural world. Writers' choices of language and format, influenced no doubt by their publishers, provide some indication of their purpose and intended audience. As soon as possible after a strange occurrence, a person engaged in the early modern equivalent of tabloid journalism rushed into print with a short report of it. Such a broadsheet or pamphlet, usually written in the vernacular, bore a title containing at least one adjective calculated to pique potential purchasers' interest: "marvelous," "shocking," "strange," "unheard-of," "prodigious." Often illustrated with one or more woodcuts, this type of publication sold for a modest price. When crafting his title, a writer in the second category, anxious to score points against his religious opponents, was likely to choose from a different constellation of words ("divine," "miraculous," "judgment of God"), but in other respects his book closely resembled one written by a journalist intent on making a profit.³²

Around the middle of the sixteenth century a mania for collections overtook practically all sectors of the book market. This tendency, particularly marked in vernacular publications on strange natural phenomena, is best exemplified by a very popular work, Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses*. First published in 1560, it was reissued sixteen times in French before the end of the century, from 1571 on in editions expanded by several continuators. Versions of Boaistuau's compilation appeared in Spanish and English, but it never came out in Latin.³³ Presumably editors and publishers had correctly identified its natural market niche: the lay public.

About the same time, physicians and their subordinate colleagues, barber-surgeons, began to make available in print individual case studies and collections of strange occurrences in the field of medicine. Inedia, a subject virtually ignored in the genres previously discussed, attracted their attention, as three Italian examples will show. Simone Porzio, a Neapolitan physician and natural philosopher, was among the first contributors

to the discussion. His *De puella germanica quae fere biennium vixerat sine cibo* (1551) concerns Margaretha Weiss, whose prolonged inedia about a decade earlier had provoked much discussion in central Europe.³⁴

Born near Speyer around 1531 to a peasant couple, Margaretha took little milk from her mother's breast. Once she was weaned, she often went three or four days without eating. After a bout of high fever at age seven, during which she took no nourishment, she consumed even less. Following another illness when she was ten, she stopped drinking, and then eating, for two years. Still, although she was rather pale and thin, she grew at a normal rate. At the imperial diet held in Speyer in 1542, Ferdinand, king of the Romans, joined the crowd of tourists around the patient's bedside. Fascinated by but skeptical about her fast, he placed her in the custody of his physician, Gerhard Bucholtz, in whose household she was kept under strict surveillance. When her host tempted her with tasty morsels, she politely declined, saying, "I don't need it now, but I do hope that the time will come when I will eat." Forced to drink, she vomited up the liquid; her only bodily excretions were tears prompted by homesickness. At the end of the forty-day experiment, Bucholtz's report persuaded Ferdinand "that this was not a faked or contrived thing." Sent home with money "to marry or do whatever she liked," Margaretha resumed taking food and water, though in small quantities. At last report, according to Porzio, she was still alive.³⁵

Like Jean Coras's *Arrest memorable* (1561), a legal professional's account and analysis of a strange case of pretense made famous by Natalie Zemon Davis, Porzio's is "an innovative book of contrary images and mixed genres."³⁶ The physician did not confine himself to retelling Margaretha's story as found in his source, Bucholtz's report to Ferdinand.³⁷ Instead, as he explained in the dedication of his treatise to Pope Paul III, he immediately asked himself "whether such a thing was to be attributed to God, or rather to a benefit of Nature." Turning to the Bible, he found numerous examples of people who had fasted for forty days, but none of survival for years without any nourishment.³⁸ Then he proceeded to search the medical literature for possible explanations. Following an orthodox Aristotelian line, he outlined and dismissed Galenic assertions that certain reptiles—and hence perhaps humans as well—could live on air, as well as Averroistic speculations about creatures other than bears hibernating.³⁹

Only by focusing on the distinctive character of female physiology and considering the influence of climate, Porzio argued, could he plausibly account for Margaretha's prolonged survival without nourishment.

All women are “most frigid in nature.” According to Albert the Great and Pietro d’Abano, northern women are particularly phlegmatic and full of “crude humors.” Margaretha, therefore, must have fallen into “a universal spasm” in which her quiescent stomach “cooked” just enough phlegm to keep her alive, with none left over to be excreted. In this natural but most unusual somatic state, he concluded, she could not have survived much longer.⁴⁰

Porzio’s Latin treatise crossed the linguistic frontier more rapidly than publications in the vernacular were likely to do. An Italian translation, issued in the same year as the Latin original, made his work accessible to a wider and more diverse readership.⁴¹ Both professional and lay readers could begin to weigh three alternative explanations of inedia: the supernatural (God or the devil), the natural (disease), and the fraudulent.⁴² Since the story of Margaretha’s experience contained no explicit religious subtext, Porzio paid little attention to the first hypothesis. Following the lead of their celebrated German colleague Johann Weyer, later medical writers supplied more diverse material lending itself to exploration of all three possibilities.⁴³

Among them was the Italian-Swiss physician Paolo Lentolo. To frame his report on Apollonia Schreier, a Bernese peasant girl whose inedia he and a surgeon had determined to be genuine, he assembled an anthology published in 1603, which he dedicated to King James I of England. Lentolo’s collection included several other complete accounts of women and men who had suffered from inedia and numerous excerpts on the subject drawn from a wide variety of sources.⁴⁴ Like the contemporaneous French and English instances of possession and exorcism, some of Lentolo’s cases had precipitated religious controversy and impelled the secular authorities to intervene.⁴⁵

In 1585 in the village of Schmidweiler (Palatinate), for example, the seven-year inedia of Catharina Binder, a Lutheran in her mid-twenties, drew large crowds. Among her many visitors were priests, Jesuits, and nuns from the nearby archbishopric of Trier, who proclaimed her “practically a holy virgin, inspired by a divine spirit,” and tried to convert her to Catholicism. To thwart the Catholic propaganda campaign, the elector palatine Johann Casimir appointed a team—two physicians, the regional superintendent of the state church, and the governor of Kaiserslautern—to investigate Binder’s fast. Monitored closely for two weeks, she passed the test with flying colors: in fact, she took no nourishment. In their written report submitted to the elector, the commissioners con-

cluded that her subsisting so long without food and drink was neither natural nor fraudulent but an instance of “the singular and unfathomable grace and favor of omnipotent God.”⁴⁶

Functioning solely as an editor, Lentolo drew no general conclusions from the reports he presented. In a collection issued eight years later, the physician and natural philosopher Fortunio Liceti took another approach.⁴⁷ After presenting a series of inedia cases arranged in order of duration, from four months to ten years, he analyzed the phenomenon. Most purported long-term fasters, he noted, were poor young girls with ample experience in surviving on short rations and obvious motives for pretending not to eat, principally the desire to attract attention and make money. The fourteen-year-old Tuscan peasant Maria, for example, may have begun with a genuine fast that she and her mother prolonged by fraudulent means once they realized how much they were profiting from it. Why, Liceti wondered, did physicians, natural philosophers, and theologians at the University of Pisa take so long to discover the means of her imposture: powdered meat concealed in the seams of her garments? They must have been misled by such reports of bona fide inedia as the one presented in the vita of Catherine of Genoa.⁴⁸ Although he made the obligatory affirmation of full adherence to church doctrine, Liceti nonetheless concluded that in the vast majority of cases pretense rather than divine or diabolical intervention constituted the best explanation for prolonged inedia.⁴⁹

HAD INQUISITORS of the seventeenth century perused studies of inedia by Porzio and Lentolo, they might have been receptive to the possibility that “the knot of noneating,” as one of them called it, could be untied in various ways.⁵⁰ It appears, however, that they did not consult this variety of medical literature. On the other hand, they may have known of a pioneering effort to bring medical knowledge to bear on legal problems, Paolo Zacchia’s *Questionum medico-legalium*.⁵¹ An eminent practitioner of as well as an authoritative writer about medicine, Zacchia (1584–1659) served as chief physician of papal Rome in the 1640s and 1650s during the reign of Innocent X.⁵² Frequently asked to furnish *consilia* (expert opinions submitted in writing) to courts, he included some of them in his *Quaestionum*.⁵³

Drawing on extensive reading in the theological and medical literature and personal experience, Zacchia employed his analytical powers to distinguish between natural and supernatural phenomena and between

genuine and faked physical syndromes. Not surprisingly, inedia attracted his attention. In book 4, title 1, question 7, “On the long fast,” he begins by stating that a week or so seems to be the maximum possible time that a human can do without nourishment. Then, in good scholastic fashion, he reviews some of the “thousand, nay innumerable” examples of fasts enduring “not only forty days but several months, even several years, or even a lifetime.” Among the cases he includes (always citing his references) are those of Margaretha Weiss, Catharina Binder, the Tuscan peasant girl Maria, and a nun of Rieti who found normal food disgusting and survived for long periods on communion alone, the last of which he discusses at considerable length. Contrary to the assertion of Liceti (his main antagonist in this section), he concludes that a person can in fact live without sustenance by natural means as long as heat and moisture are present and balanced in the body.⁵⁴

In considering inedia, Zacchia confines himself to what is naturally possible, never raising the possibilities of divine intervention and fraud. On other subjects he explores all three hypotheses. In book 3, title 2, “On simulation of illness,” he first identifies the reasons for faking disease: fear, shame, and monetary gain. Diseases with “certain and evident signs” apparent to the senses, especially fever, are very difficult to fake; a wide range of pains in internal organs as well as dementia, on the other hand, can easily be simulated.⁵⁵ When a physician suspects feigned pain, he should propose the most drastic and unpleasant remedy that comes to mind, which will cause the perpetrator of fraud to desist. In the case of insanity, the most frequently simulated illness, the physician can arrive at a judgment as to whether the subject is genuinely deranged by considering his or her behavior, appearance, sleeping habits, and appetite; the sudden onset of apparent madness strongly indicates simulation.⁵⁶

Zacchia goes on in the same section to evaluate apparent ecstasy, a much more challenging assignment. Various motives, particularly the wish to avoid torture or punishment and the desire to win a reputation for holiness, can prompt a person to simulate ecstasy. Such fakers are hypocrites in the original sense of the word: actors who try to fool others, especially members of the lower classes. He adduces a personal experience of the latter. A Sicilian woman he knew was wont to frequent churches and other holy places in Rome. For hours she stood immobile with her arms stretched out as if she were on the cross and her eyes fixed, dead to the world; she appeared to float above the ground; her face seemed to be glowing with divine radiance. “Little women and men”

(*mulierculae et homunciones*) venerated her as a saint and snatched pieces of her garments. He himself silently laughed at this spectacle of simulation and credulity and was sure that the perpetrator was doing the same.⁵⁷

In book 4, title 1, "On miracles," Zacchia turns again to ecstasy, maintaining that it comes in two varieties, natural and supernatural. The first type results from a voluntary operation of the human intellect: fixing the imagination so firmly on an object—a human beloved, an angel, a saint, the devil—that the animal spirits flow away from the senses into the brain. Neither lauding nor condemning natural ecstasy, he refrains at this point from exploring the possibility of fraudulent motives for seeking to induce it. Supernatural ecstasy, in contrast, has nothing to do with the human will: only God can cause the imagination to fix "above nature" on him. Because the physical manifestations of natural and supernatural ecstasy are identical, distinguishing between them is extremely difficult. Torpor of the mind and body and changes in skin color usually but not infallibly point toward self-induced, therefore natural, causes. The surest indication of supernatural ecstasy is what it produces: supernatural effects, namely, miracles.⁵⁸

In prosecuting the case against the Conventual Franciscan Giuseppe Riccardi (1650–51), Inquisitor Clemente Ricetti paid passing attention to a possible natural explanation for the friar's frequent "ecstasies." Several witnesses attested to having seen him slipping into fainting spells with his arms spread as if he were on the cross. One had begun to doubt whether the "ecstasies" were genuine when he saw Riccardi making swallowing motions; when he recovered consciousness, the friar claimed to have been nursing at the Virgin's breast.⁵⁹ In response to the inquisitor's question, Riccardi stated firmly that he did not suffer from "the falling sickness" (epilepsy) or any other disease.⁶⁰ A week or so later, he suggested that his "raptures" stemmed "either from bad dispositions of the body or from vehement application of the soul and intellect" and claimed to have preached that ecstasy was not an infallible sign of holiness. When Ricetti inquired whether he had sought medical attention for his fainting spells, he replied in the negative.⁶¹ Presumably because the inquisitor was increasingly persuaded that Riccardi was a consummate fabricator of his own and others' holiness, he pursued the medical line of inquiry no further.

Another work by Zacchia, *De' mali hipochondriaci libri tre* (Three books on hypochondriacal ills), might have proved particularly useful to inquisitors because it focused on a sector of the population heavily involved in

seeking to become holy, women in early middle age. To early modern physicians, the term *hypochondria* did not denote imaginary illness as it does today. On the contrary, they took the Greek word in its literal sense: the part of the stomach lying below (*hyppo*) the short ribs (*chondros*). Here, Zacchia states, “natural heat” is often “converted into a non-natural and foreign heat,” a process that may be complicated by the intrusion of “vicious humors.”⁶²

According to Zacchia, hypochondria first appears in patients between thirty and thirty-five and abates after age fifty. Its manifestations are legion: fainting fits, convulsive vomiting, lack of appetite, stomach upsets that mimic kidney stones, spots on the skin, paralysis—and worst of all, melancholy (an effect, not a cause) leading to the loss of reason and delirium, that is, madness.⁶³ Lacking beneficial monthly evacuation of “superfluous humors,” men are more subject to the affliction than women. But when women become hypochondriacal, recovery is particularly difficult, “for those who have less prudence easily fall into the deliria that I have described earlier, and even worse.” When, as often happens, the uterus is affected, “the poor sick women exert themselves in such a way that it is very painful to hear them and most marvelous to see them, for effects appear that have more to do with the miraculous and supernatural than with the natural. Hence most of them are judged to be in the prey of unclean spirits, and they themselves, alas, easily persuade themselves that this is the case.” Running from doctor to doctor without finding any relief and telling their troubles to anyone else who will listen, they become worse and worse.⁶⁴

Hypochondriacs, Zacchia maintains, can cure themselves by following a temperate natural regimen. They should not fast but consume moderate amounts of easily digestible foods, which he enumerates in great detail.⁶⁵ They should strive for regular bowel movements and urination, belch and spit when excessive gas and saliva build up, do everything possible to encourage normal menstruation, and (if married) rid themselves frequently of “superfluous semen.”⁶⁶ They should sleep only on their side, eschew extremes of temperature but get plenty of fresh air, and refrain from wearing tight belts.⁶⁷ As much as possible, they should avoid sadness, anger, desperation, and fear, especially right before bedtime.⁶⁸

ZACCHIA’S ANALYSIS of hypochondriacal ills not only covers the multiple maladies afflicting Maria Janis and Antonia Pesenti. It sounds uncannily as if it were based on the complicated medical-spiritual history

of Cecilia Ferrazzi. In the evidence she offered during her first four interrogations and in the autobiographical statement she dictated to a scribe, Ferrazzi described having suffered from every single one of the symptoms Zacchia enumerates. Indeed, one might retitile her inquisitorial ego document “a portrait of the holy woman as a young hypochondriac.” Fifty-five when she went on trial, she had overcome—Zacchia would probably have said outgrown—most of her physical ills. She was no longer tormented by demons and fits of despair or marked with spots. After ten years of suffering from kidney stones, she had passed the last of them in a cathartic episode that she recounted very vividly.⁶⁹ Her sole remaining symptom was a lack of appetite—but that, she claimed, dated from early childhood.⁷⁰

If Agapito Ugoni, who handled the last stage of Janis’s trial and bore sole responsibility for the cases of Ferrazzi and Pesenti, had read and profited from medical writings on inedia and the two works by Zacchia discussed above, he would have requested that physicians examine the defendants, submit their opinions in writing, and then present themselves for interrogation. He did not do so. Although, as we saw in Chapter 6, he called in a physician to determine whether Apollonia Bruni were mentally fit to stand trial, he elected not to request medical assistance in evaluating Pesenti’s equally bizarre behavior. In fact, the only medical men to be found in the records of trials for pretense of holiness conducted by Ugoni, his predecessors, and his successors in Venice are three physicians who had treated Ferrazzi earlier and were called to testify in her trial⁷¹ and a few other medical men who provided affidavits in support of jailed defendants’ petitions for postponements or modifications in the conditions of their imprisonment.⁷²

Nothing in the writings we have surveyed suggests that medical men were putting forward a “natural” paradigm as an alternative to theological explanations. Nor were they claiming to be better qualified than churchmen to diagnose and treat psychophysical disorders. On the contrary, all expressed their willingness at least to consider seriously and sometimes to accept divine or diabolic underlying causes of these maladies. They had experience in conducting tests much like those inquisitors occasionally asked exorcists to perform which could have helped to distinguish genuine from simulated or fraudulent illness, especially in cases of apparent inedia. Regimens such as the one outlined by Zacchia could have proven very helpful in improving the physical condition of defendants and thereby dispelling their religious delusions.

Since inquisitors, diffident as they were about both the underlying premises of exorcism and the abuses that could and did derive from the practice of it, nonetheless called occasionally on physicians of the soul, why did they avoid employing physicians of the body? Neither fear of being eclipsed by members of another professional group nor conscious rejection of medical diagnostic paradigms seems to be involved here. A more likely explanation is tunnel vision: inquisitors simply had not bothered to acquaint themselves with parallel and potentially complementary developments in medicine. As learned and widely read as they were, their mental universe did not extend beyond their own disciplines of theology and canon law.

Even within their professional sphere, inquisitors' use of material they had undoubtedly read was highly selective. As we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, many writers on discernment of spirits up to and including Cardinal Desiderio Scaglia, albeit with different emphases, explored three hypotheses: the supernatural (God or the devil), the natural (disease), and the all too human (fraud). Agapito Ugoni and his inquisitorial peers, however, seem almost never to have considered either the first or the second. That "little men" and "little women" could be specially favored by God struck them as so unlikely that it could be rejected out of hand. That the devil had taken complete control of defendants' lives without the subjects' consent they were unwilling to concede. That persons accused of pretense of holiness might be, or once have been, physically ill they usually discarded as irrelevant. When Maria Janis dared the inquisitor to test her claim of living on communion alone by subjecting her to torture, Ugoni did not take up the challenge, nor did he consider the possibility of conducting an experiment in food deprivation like the ones we have examined earlier.⁷³ In cases such as these, the sole explanation that he and other seventeenth-century inquisitors normally elected to pursue was fraud.

Only one exception may be found to this generalization: the case of Maria Pellizzari, known to neighbors in her home town as "the *beata* of Bassano" on account of her claims to divine inspiration. In June 1686 she was denounced to the Venetian Inquisition for another reason: the father of a young man asserted that she had succeeded in making his son marry an ugly, aging prostitute by employing witchcraft. From the beginning, the Holy Office paid more attention to the accuser's framing of the case as a matter of witchcraft (which, as we saw in Chapter 6, they did not take very seriously) than to the possibility that Pellizzari was feigning

holiness. In September of the same year, after having interrogated many witnesses and the suspect, Inquisitor Giovanni Tommaso Roveto and his colleagues determined not to proceed further.⁷⁴ Since Pellizzari's own testimony as well as that offered by witnesses indicated that she was "more weak in intellect" than consciously malicious, a conclusion that apparently did not require a physician's corroboration, they sent her home to Bassano with a stern admonition to cease disturbing people by babbling about matters suggesting her "false or pretended holiness."⁷⁵

To us, whose sympathies inevitably lie with the prosecuted rather than the prosecutors, the inquisitorial judges' propensity to concentrate on just one of three possible causes may seem shortsighted. But given the forensic context in which they were operating, their opting for fraud makes perfect sense. If persons had been prompted by God, the devil, or illness to experience visions and believe that they had been granted special privileges, they could hardly be held legally responsible for their words and actions. If, on the other hand, they had consciously practiced to deceive others about their holiness, then they were fit candidates for prosecution and conviction. Whether inquisitors systematically reviewed all possible explanations before settling on the only one with promising judicial implications the sources do not permit us to discover.⁷⁶ Very likely they felt no need to do so. For judges of the Holy Office, fraud was almost always the only right choice.

WHEN SOMEONE suspected of pretense of holiness did not become the subject of formal proceedings before the Inquisition, investigators not constrained to proceed toward a verdict might explore several possible explanations for his or her behavior. Such was the case with Lucrezia Gambarà, whose claims to having experienced visions and locutions, living on communion alone, and bearing the stigmata were intensively probed between December 1728 and May 1729. As we saw in Chapter 1, this young peasant woman, born in 1704, resided in Alfianello, a village in the diocese of Brescia.⁷⁷ At a very early age, like so many female aspiring saints, she undertook a severe penitential regimen and vowed to dedicate her virginity to Christ. In adolescence she began to encounter spiritual difficulties: visions of being lured into sexual sin by young men and horrible animals. Giuseppe Simoni, *prevosto* of Alfianello, who served as her confessor, arranged for her to be exorcised repeatedly by an expert from nearby Verola. His ministrations proved only temporarily helpful. At some point Simoni turned to the inquisitor of Brescia, who after inter-

viewing Gambara surmised, uncharacteristically, that “everything [she was experiencing] was a natural effect.”⁷⁸

Shortly after talking with the inquisitor, Gambara began to suffer from physical illness. She was plagued by general weakness, pain and paralysis in her hands and feet which kept her from working and necessitated her spending long periods in bed (particularly during the winter months), and vomiting that led her to abstain from food as much as possible. Since physicians gave her up for dead, she went again to visit the exorcist in Verola. After making “various experiments,” he decided that she was not bewitched and confined himself to reciting a few prayers over her.⁷⁹ In the spring of 1728 her spiritual and physical maladies converged in dramatic form. On 2 May, after she had subjected herself to unusually harsh penances, her habitual prayer for the privilege of participating in Christ’s suffering was answered by the vision of an old man bearing a cross, with which he touched her chest. From then on, for at least three hours a day she felt in her heart Christ’s cross and the instruments of his passion. Three or four days after the feast of Saint Francis (4 October), when she prayed at home before a crucifix for additional wounds, this petition, too, was promptly answered. A cruciform wound in her side began to exude blood and water that left marks on her nightgown and bedclothes, and wounds on her hands bled profusely as well.⁸⁰

Somehow Lucrezia managed to keep these extraordinary maladies secret from all but a few other spiritually inclined young women until, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 December), she found herself unable to walk out of the parish church. Against her will, her friends carried her to the prevosto’s house and informed him of her condition. In less than an hour, word of the prodigies had spread throughout the village. People from near and far flocked to see her and to obtain “relics”: pieces of cloth imprinted with bloody crosses and water collected from the wound in her side.⁸¹ At that point Simoni belatedly informed Leandro Chizzola, vicar general of the diocese of Brescia, about his troubled penitent. Acting on behalf of his bishop, Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini, who was in Rome, Chizzola immediately set out to investigate what he suspected was some sort of pious fraud.⁸²

Even before Chizzola proceeded, Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni of the Congregation of the Holy Office had been informed of Gambara’s troubles by Abbot Filippo Garbelli.⁸³ When he forwarded Garbelli’s letter to his colleague Cardinal Giovanni Antonio Davia, Ottoboni insisted that the Gambara affair be discussed in the very next meeting of the Con-

gregation, “so that it [the Congregation] can procure the information, particularly in regard to the circumstance and the place, that is so necessary in a matter of such delicacy.”⁸⁴ Within a few days the Congregation gave Cardinal Bishop Querini detailed instructions on handling the case. He must appoint a new spiritual director to question Gambara in detail about her spiritual condition and especially its physical manifestations, her alleged inedia and stigmata. The latter were the key issue: “Being the greatest gift that God gives a creature, it is difficult to believe that they have been given to one who does not enjoy perfect union with God, with all the virtues and purgations that must precede it.” An “expert surgeon” should be engaged to treat the so-called stigmata and then seal up the wounds with “Spanish lacquer” so that the patient could not interfere with them. Should investigators on the spot encounter any difficulty, they were to consult the inquisitor of Brescia, who knew well “the style of the Holy Tribunal and the diligence to be used in cases like this.” Once the investigation was completed, Cardinal Bishop Querini should transmit the record to the Holy Office.⁸⁵

At the very beginning, then, the Congregation of the Holy Office assumed overall charge of Gambara’s case, showing particular interest in its medical ramifications. For unknown reasons, the cardinal-inquisitors never mandated the opening of a trial against her: the inquisitor of Brescia appears in the records only occasionally as a consultant.⁸⁶ Gambara’s parish priest and confessor, Simoni, was soon relegated to following Chizzola’s orders on handling Gambara. Unlike Pietro Morali and Francesco Vincenzi sixty years earlier, he was neither indicted nor disciplined as a co-conspirator—only given a tongue-lashing by the vicar general for having acted incautiously and having failed to seek advice from the episcopal curia in a timely fashion.⁸⁷ Management of the investigation remained in the hands of Vicar General Chizzola, who, as he told Querini, was bypassing “the ordinary juridical approach and pursuing a middle course on extrajudicial information.”⁸⁸

In late January 1729 Chizzola appointed the new spiritual director whom the Congregation had ordered his bishop to find: the Benedictine monk Agostino Randini, then serving as curate of a church in Brescia, who, as we have seen, had previous experience with a case of pretense of holiness in Reggio Emilia.⁸⁹ Randini was charged with doubling as spiritual adviser to and investigator of Gambara. Between 12 and 25 February he interviewed her five times in a private home in Brescia, to which Chizzola had moved her on instructions from the Congregation

and Cardinal Bishop Querini in order to isolate her from the fevered spiritual climate of Alfianello.⁹⁰ In his final report, submitted in May, Randini explained that he had begun his inquiries into her condition “with complete Christian impartiality [*indifferenza*] and readiness to laud the divine mercies if those grades of sublime virtues and those most arduous necessary purgations that must precede the infusion of great gifts, and particularly the greatest [gift] of the stigmata, were found in Lucrezia.”⁹¹

Openness to considering all possible explanations characterizes both Randini’s final report and the frequent letters and accounts of colloquies with Gambarà which he sent to Chizzola during the course of his investigation. Since he did not cite his sources, it is impossible to know whether he had read Zacchia’s works, but he was clearly well informed about psychosomatic medicine. While not dismissing out of hand the possibility that Gambarà’s “great gifts” were of genuine divine origin, he considered her physical condition the key to determining her spiritual state. Hence he focused his attention on observing and treating her.

On his first visit to the young woman, Randini attributed the difficulty in walking which kept her in bed for weeks at a time in the winter to knotting of the nerves in her feet. Getting out of bed, moving around, and keeping busy, he suggested, would do her good.⁹² A few days later, he was happy to see her at her loom, and he continued to comment on her performance of women’s work.⁹³ He also practiced physiognomy. As he told the vicar general, he was scrutinizing her very carefully, his sight sharpened by eyeglasses, “not only to ascertain whether she will look at a male face but also to observe internal commotions, changes in color, etc.”⁹⁴ He noted her that her drinking “water of St. Ignatius” blessed by priests, which had formerly precipitated a serious bout of obsessive behavior, now had no negative consequences.⁹⁵ Recourse to professional medical men formed part of his program: he called in physicians to examine and bleed her, offer advice on her diet, and recommend ways of evaluating her stigmata.⁹⁶ He also planned an exorcism under carefully controlled conditions, which may not have been carried out.⁹⁷ Raising his mind above daily developments, he once characterized her vivid recollections of visions in language strongly reminiscent of John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* as “the effect of the sensible impression made on the fantasy, even if they are infused and not produced by the simple imagination.”⁹⁸

Anxious as Randini was to ascertain the applicability of modern med-

ical hypotheses to Gambarà's case, he did not neglect the other part of his assignment, giving her spiritual direction. Technically speaking, he did not confess her; if he had, the seal of the confessional would at least in theory have prevented him from reporting what she said. During these lengthy colloquies he employed all the techniques available to a spiritual director. For the most part, he played "good cop." Showing an interest in what she had to say, he encouraged Gambarà to talk freely, interrupting only occasionally to seek clarification, furnish instruction on some point, or reassure her that she would soon be cured of her physical and spiritual maladies. He found her very voluble and, for a peasant, surprisingly well informed.⁹⁹ At times, he reluctantly assumed the role of "bad cop," reproving her when she seemed reticent or disingenuous, dismissing as incredible her claim to know nothing about Francis of Assisi's stigmata, and accusing her of having received more divine favors than any canonized saint.¹⁰⁰

Although Vicar General Chizzola, uninterested in the medical hypothesis, operated on the premise that the manifestations of Gambarà's apparent holiness were "fables or effects of her imagination or [the results of diabolical] illusion,"¹⁰¹ it was he who devised a scheme of curing her by mundane means: persuading her to marry. After some hesitation, Randini enthusiastically endorsed and implemented this plan, which he believed would "put her on a safer road to health and liberate her from so many illusions." Doing housework, he maintained, would leave her little time for fantasizing. In addition, her marriage would show the credulous inhabitants of Alfianello that there was an ordinary way of becoming holy.¹⁰² After all, as Chizzola and Randini patronizingly observed, peasant women who had to work in the fields could hardly expect to preserve their chastity; a life of perpetual virginity was suitable only for gently born nuns.¹⁰³ The only obstacle they faced was convincing her that an official dispensation from her vow could be obtained and that her elderly father could be persuaded to do without her full-time domestic service. Reassured on both counts, Gambarà eventually acquiesced.¹⁰⁴

In his preoccupation with the medical and social aspects of Gambarà's case, Randini by no means dismissed its spiritual dimensions. In his final report he concluded that her "habitual indispositions," "internal sensible appetites," and imagination had contributed to her problems. The original cause, however, was that she was obsessed, perhaps even possessed, by the devil. (Claiming not to know or care much about the fine distinctions an exorcist might make, he doubted their applicability to

“deluded women.”) But she had not simply been overwhelmed by diabolical force majeure; she had also colluded with the Evil One. Disobeying her father, letting other “spiritual girls” feed her secretly while pretending to live on communion alone, and attempting to deceive the investigator by lying demonstrated that she was not a helpless victim of but an active collaborator with the devil.¹⁰⁵

Although Randini found Gambarà responsible for her behavior, she was not held to account for her errors in an inquisitorial proceeding. Brought to the point of accepting the cure he and the episcopal vicar prescribed, marriage, she may or may not have taken it.¹⁰⁶ Nor can we gain any insight into what this patient thought about the course of treatment to which she was subjected, for in the numerous letters and reports about her, her voice comes through only rarely and unreliably when Randini casts what she said to him in the first person. Given the involvement of the Holy Office and the conclusion reached by the investigator, the case of Gambarà cannot be considered a step toward enlightenment in the handling of aspiring saints. Rather, this exception proves the rule: physicians and medical means of accounting for extraordinary claims to holiness played a minor role in a phenomenon that continued at least through the nineteenth century to be framed by the Roman Inquisition as pretense of holiness.¹⁰⁷

Rings and Other Things

THUS FAR we have concentrated on documented relationships between people, alleged relationships between individuals and divine or diabolical powers, and the interaction of ideas and actions. Now we turn to what might be called the paraphernalia of holiness: physical objects. In most of the cases under consideration in this study one or more objects featured prominently. They fascinated those put on trial, troubled some witnesses, and horrified representatives of the Holy Office. Inquisitors not only inquired minutely about the appearance of these objects and the uses to which they had been put. Whenever possible, they located and entered them into evidence. In the discourse of pretense of holiness, objects were central to determining the difference between “orthodox” and “superstitious” devotion and therefore between “true” and “false” holiness.

The physical evidence encountered in these prosecutions includes paintings, rings, handkerchiefs, garments, boxes, rosary beads, relics, a paten, and a vase. Since several trials featured more than one object, it seems preferable first to examine the cases in the order in which they occurred and then to construct a typology. The chronological approach will not reveal a progressive trajectory, in which users and prosecutors moved over time toward a different, more “enlightened” approach to the use of devotional objects. Instead, we shall discover a synchronic pattern. At least in the realm of “things,” participants in inquisitorial confrontations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fought the same battle over and over again.

THE VENETIAN PATRICIAN Alvise Balbi and his spiritual companion, the artisan Marietta Zavana, were tried and given a light sentence for pretense of holiness by the Inquisition of Treviso in the fall of 1629. In the spring of the following year, having heard that the two were persisting in the behavior prohibited by their sentence, the inquisitor of Treviso

asked his colleague and superior in Venice, Girolamo Zapetti, to investigate.¹ The probe yielded considerable information about Balbi's and Zavana's activities and those of their supporters, some of which will be considered later, but very little about objects. In fact, the only ones mentioned were a portrait of Zavana depicting her as a saint and some Agnus Dei, wax figures of the Lamb of God commonly used as aids to devotion. The inquisitor of Treviso requested that his Venetian colleague collect as much physical evidence as possible, including letters and Agnus Dei.² Apparently neither the portrait nor any of the wax figures turned up in Venice. Zapetti did, however, gather some evidence about the Agnus Dei. Interrogated at the grate of her convent, Balbi's and Zavana's devotee suor Benetta Girardi, a Hermitess of San Marcuola, admitted to having used scissors to cut off bits of Marietta's hair while the woman was in ecstasy. One of these clippings she fetched from her cell and presented to the inquisitor. Another, she said, she had made into an Agnus Dei, which she had given to a sick person.³ Zapetti also obtained a manuscript summarizing the prodigies of Zavana which had been compiled by suor Benetta and suor Gabriella Malipiero, abbess of the Benedictine convent of San Girolamo in Bassano. Among the many "miracles" recorded in this volume were several cures effected by Agnus Dei containing Zavana's hair.⁴

Although these tantalizing references tell us little about the production and distribution of the Agnus Dei, they reveal a pattern that we will encounter in other trials. Aspirants to holiness and their followers often employed improvised *sacramentalia*. Officially speaking, physical sacramentals are things blessed, consecrated, or exorcised in approved fashion by priests. In these cases, they were items found or manufactured by unauthorized persons for use in illegitimate ways.⁵ To highly educated opponents of "superstition," such things fell outside the realm of orthodox religious practice. Pseudosacramentals such as Zavana's Agnus Dei were intended to bear witness to the holiness of "living saints," who by the very fact of their being still on earth could hardly be proper objects of others' reverence.

ONE OF THE LARGEST and certainly the most spectacular collection of objects featuring in a trial for pretense of holiness may be found in the prosecution of Pietro Vespa, conducted in 1633–34. First is the alabaster vase he apparently believed and claimed had once been Mary Magdalen's. Virtually all the many witnesses called to testify against or for him had

heard about it, and many had seen it. So did Vespa's judges, for when he appeared of his own accord in the chapel of San Teodoro on 30 August 1633, he brought with him what remained of the vessel: "And he spontaneously presented in deposit the said vase, broken into larger and smaller fragments of alabaster, nineteen in number, which fragments he carried wrapped up in a white linen handkerchief inside a small closed wooden box. And these nineteen fragments were weighed on a scale at three ounces and five drams. The napkin was returned to him; the aforementioned fragments were kept in custody in the box in order to protect them."⁶

Two days later, at the request of the Holy Office, Vespa submitted a written statement providing his version of how he had acquired the vase. One day, he wrote, he was in the Capuchin church of Nicosia "reconciling certain renegades [Christians who had turned Muslim] and baptizing their children." A rabbi named Melchizedek, who was taking instruction in the Christian faith, heard him inspiring the "new Christians" with biblical examples of repentance, including Mary Magdalen. The Jew expressed regret that he no longer owned a certain alabaster vase, once the property of the Magdalen, which had been found by the *cadì* of Bethany in an iron box at the bottom of a deep well. After the *cadì* had the vase repaired, Melchizedek had stolen it and then sold it to a merchant in Constantinople. Some time thereafter, the bishop and the rabbi met again in Candia, where Vespa baptized him in the church of San Francesco. Strangely enough, the merchant who had bought the vase was now in Candia, too. When Melchizedek introduced the two men, the merchant showed Vespa "all those things he had brought from Constantinople," an inventory including the vase. Since it matched the Jew's description, the bishop of Paphos bought it without bargaining.⁷

Almost immediately, Vespa continued, the vase began to demonstrate its powers by healing a possessed man, a prodigy repeated over and over again during his subsequent peregrinations. When he reached Naples, he found that the vase's reputation had preceded him. The Carmelite fathers insisted on filling it with water, which cured many; the viceroy, who touched it, recovered from a serious illness. Therefore the archbishop of Naples permitted him to display the vase. The same sequence of cures and official permissions occurred in Messina and elsewhere. Back in Naples, where he had gone to seek financial assistance from his brother, he was riding in a carriage to the governor's house when the vase fell out and disappeared. In response to his offer of a reward for its

recovery, soldiers brought it to him in pieces. Since then, he claimed, he had not shown it to a soul. Now that the vase was in the Inquisition's custody, he hoped that it would never leave the Most Serene Republic of Venice.⁸ Along with his letter, he submitted affidavits from Naples and Messina attesting to the archbishops' authorization to use the vase and listing the people whom it had healed. These, too, were entered into the trial record.⁹

According to the letters denouncing Vespa, sent to the Congregation of the Holy Office almost a year earlier and eventually forwarded to the Venetian tribunal, he had not only made dubious use of the allegedly miracle-working vase.¹⁰ He had also deployed objects of another sort: two letters supposedly dictated by the Virgin Mary to his penitent Rosa Comminale, a novice in the Carmelite convent of Santa Barbara. One, addressed to the people and Senate of Messina, stated that Christ wanted to make Messina "the first city in the world," instructed them to build a new convent for female Carmelites within the year, and predicted the imminent arrival of the king of Spain, who would establish his headquarters in the city until the pope crowned him emperor of the world in 1660. The other, addressed to Vespa, gave more detailed instructions about the construction and staffing of the convent and ordered him to present the vase to the Spanish monarch. In a faked ecstasy staged in a crowded church, he had pretended to converse with the Virgin, who had assured him that the messages were authentic.¹¹

After an unnamed authority forced suor Rosa to confess that Vespa had intimidated her into copying the "Virgin's letters," which he himself had composed, the bishop of Paphos took to his bed. Doctors who examined him found nothing wrong, but he claimed to be near death. On the following Saturday at the fourteenth hour, he promised, "there will be a major miracle in heaven and on earth." Then he went into delirium. Given the last rites, he began praying to God, calling himself Lazarus and asking to see Martha and Mary Magdalen. "I come, I come, you call me!" he cried. On Saturday at the designated time he arose from his bed completely recovered, put on his vestments, sung the *Te Deum*, and went to church, where the people acclaimed his recovery as a miracle. During his illness, as he had predicted beforehand and now boasted, God had enabled him to live for a week or more on communion alone. At this point the Inquisition of Messina prohibited him from using the vase and talking about his revelations. Nonetheless, according to his accuser, "that fellow filled Venice, Padua, and Vicenza with similar foolishness."¹²

From the beginning, then, the story of the vase was intertwined with two other allegations of strange and reprehensible behavior on Vespa's part. In questioning the alleged perpetrator, Inquisitor Clemente Ricetti focused first on his illness in Messina, pressing him hard on whether he had committed the gross error of taking communion while in delirium.¹³ Then he pursued the issue of the vase. During five sessions of interrogation stretching over almost three months, he inquired in excruciatingly repetitive detail about where and how Vespa had first heard about the vase, from whom and under what circumstances he had acquired it, why he had not obtained a certificate of authenticity from the seller, what he thought the vase was and represented it to be, who had authorized him to display it, how and where he had used it, and whether he had charged money for doing so.¹⁴ Whenever the inquisitor brought up a detail about the vase furnished by the original accusers or the witnesses whom he was simultaneously hearing, Vespa countered that it was a fabrication concocted by one or more of his many enemies.¹⁵

Ricetti managed to track down the dealer, characterized by several witnesses as an inveterate practical joker who had pulled an amusing trick on the gullible bishop of Paphos.¹⁶ Alessandro Billio, a forty-eight-year-old painter, was now back in his native city, Turin. At Ricetti's request, he was interrogated in early January 1634 by the inquisitor of that city, Girolamo Rebiolo. During the holy year 1625, he said, he had set off from Rome to visit Jerusalem but for fear of Muslim corsairs had detoured to Constantinople: "And there I bought various sorts of stones, particularly a vase of precious stone very similar to Mary Magdalen's, gray in color with some spots, well made, with its cover, and it had a good odor. If I remember correctly, I bought it from a Hebrew, who told me that it was one of the Magdalen's vases and that if one put water in it, drinking the water would help many infirmities, but I didn't believe him. But since it was a very beautiful vase, I put some relics in it with a little musk, and it absorbed the fragrance."

From Constantinople Billio had gone to Candia, where some years later he encountered Vespa in the archbishop's palace. When he displayed the vase, Vespa had fallen in love with it. Repeating what the Jew from whom he had purchased it had claimed, the dealer had refrained from expressing his own skepticism, "for if I had believed him [Melchizedek], I wouldn't have give up the vase for anything." In exchange for Vespa's episcopal ring, he had turned over the vase, throwing in a few other small items. A year ago, he had called on Vespa at the latter's house in Venice.

The bishop of Paphos had explained that his vase had shattered and asked if Billio had any others. When the artist offered to glue the vessel back together, Vespa replied that it was too badly damaged to be mended. In response to questions, Billio denied having identified his source as a Jew of Bethany. "I didn't think," the shrewd dealer concluded, "that the bishop would believe that that vase was the Magdalen's, but that he wanted it for its beauty."¹⁷

Perhaps on orders from the Congregation of the Holy Office, Inquisitor Ricetti refrained from questioning Vespa about the Virgin's letters.¹⁸ In the course of hearing witnesses, however, he ran across yet another object of which the suspect had made questionable use, an image. After his return to the Venetian republic, Vespa spent some time in Brendola, southwest of Vicenza, where he had founded a Carmelite monastery. When a Dominican who had preached in that area during Lent of 1633 denounced him to the Inquisition for dispensing "holy oil" from the vase,¹⁹ Ricetti began to interrogate witnesses from the diocese of Vicenza, whose ordinary was the former nonresident archbishop of Candia, Luca Stella. Several years earlier, when the bishop of Paphos was his vicar general in Candia, reports had led Stella to form a negative impression of him, which never changed. At a dinner party in Brendola he regaled his tablemates with tales of Vespa's vase and other incidents in Candia.²⁰ Stella's bitter remarks prompted priests and friars in the diocese of Vicenza to recall, or perhaps to invent, an incident from Vespa's earlier career as a friar. To support his claim that an image of the Virgin known as the Madonna del Prato in the church of Brendola worked miracles, he had attached a manufactured star to a cord and pulled it across the darkened church. The abundant alms given by members of the crowd who flocked to see this spectacle he had kept for his own use.²¹

Taken together, these objects allegedly employed by Vespa to accomplish what he called "miracles" contributed to forming an image of the defendant as a knowing and incorrigible manipulator of the holy intent upon presenting himself as a living saint and filling his pockets. Yet whatever Inquisitor Ricetti and the bishop of Paphos's antagonists may have thought, members of the Congregation of the Holy Office were not persuaded that the case against him was watertight. Before proceeding, they ruled, they must obtain further evidence from Messina. Extant records do not indicate that this was ever done. Whether the Congregation hesitated to find a bishop guilty of pretense of holiness and whether members of the Venetian government exerted pressure on behalf of a *cit-*

tadino holding a diocese they had helped him to procure we can only guess. In any event, the case against Vespa went no further, and he was never removed from his episcopal office.

MULTIPLE OBJECTS linked with dubious behavior were also involved in the prosecution of the Conventual Franciscan friar Giuseppe Riccardi, conducted in 1650–51. According to his accusers, the wool merchant Zuan Francesco Leoni and his superior at the Frari, the Reverend Father Master Marino Cavaletti, Riccardi dispensed allegedly miraculous rosary beads linked with an extraordinarily generous packet of indulgences, distributed portraits of a fellow Sicilian whom he promoted as a living saint, went frequently into ecstasy, and preached extravagant sermons.²² We looked briefly at his “ecstasies” in the previous chapter and shall examine the content of his sermons in the next. Here our primary concern is the objects that featured in his trial.

The first charge levied against Riccardi was his distribution of rosary beads. Leoni had received some about three years earlier, together with a list of the extensive indulgences one could tap into by using them, a manuscript copy of which he submitted to the court.²³ A coterie devoted to Riccardi in the parish of San Tomà surrounding the monastery of the Frari had eagerly collected the beads. In a search of Riccardi’s cell conducted two weeks after he was denounced, a gold-embroidered cloth bag containing beads and medals was seized and entered into evidence.²⁴ Some months later, when Leoni was questioned, he turned over one of the beads; the chancellor of the Holy Office attached it with string to the record of his testimony.²⁵

Once Riccardi, who had been arrested on 22 September, came before the court for interrogation in January, Inquisitor Ricetti naturally inquired about the beads. The defendant asserted that the indulgence had been approved by the archbishop and inquisitor of Palermo and printed. Why, then, the inquisitor wondered, had the friar distributed the indulgence in manuscript form? Riccardi replied that he had left Sicily with a group of political exiles in such a hurry that he had not been able to bring printed copies with him.²⁶ A few days later he confirmed what witnesses had reported his having said: he had received the rosary in Sicily from the holy Franciscan tertiary Francesca Tusa of Caccamo, and while in Rome he had enhanced its power by touching it to the principal relics of the Holy City. He denied having claimed that the rosary had been to heaven thirteen times.²⁷

Riccardi had met and become a devotee of Tusa in their native Sicily.²⁸ Her portrait, along with her rosary, accompanied him to Rome and then to Venice. Almost everyone called to testify in the trial had seen one or more versions of it. They agreed that it depicted a woman about forty years old wearing the habit of a Franciscan tertiary and having some sort of obstruction, identified by most of them as a thorn, in her left eye. In other respects the portraits differed: some showed her bearing the cross on her shoulder and holding nails in her hand, but others lacked these instruments of Christ's passion.²⁹ Riccardi's confrere Michele Stella stated that the Sicilian friar was selling copies of the portrait for one ducatone and that almost all his supporters had purchased one.³⁰ In mid-December the disillusioned Zuan Francesco Leoni donated his copy to the Holy Office.³¹ Alerted by a witness,³² Inquisitor Ricetti managed to locate the producer of the multiple copies, Giovanni Battista Rossi, nicknamed "il Gobbino" (the little hunchback). Rossi told the inquisitor of Verona that he and Riccardi had met when the friar was preaching Advent in San Fermo, the Veronese monastery of the Conventual Franciscans. At Riccardi's request, he had made one copy of the portrait and then about sixty more, for which he charged ten lire each. Those who had heard Riccardi praising Tusa had ordered additional copies.³³

Even before having learned much about how Riccardi had lauded the woman, the Holy Office referred to the painting as "the portrait of the falsely claimed beata Francesca siciliana."³⁴ That Ricetti and his colleagues already knew of Tusa is doubtful, even if, as Riccardi's defense attorney later stated, she was famous throughout Sicily.³⁵ The island lay under the jurisdiction of the Spanish Inquisition, and the trial record contains no reference to an inquisitorial prosecution of her by a Sicilian tribunal. Instead, they were reacting in accordance with published guidelines to the very idea of a portrait promoting holiness that had not been officially recognized. Ricetti undoubtedly owned and consulted frequently the collection of pronouncements on beatification and canonization issued during the papal reign of Urban VIII, mentioned in Chapter 5. The first document in this volume summarized two decrees of the Holy Office prohibiting the display of images "with laurel leaves or rays or glowing lights" suggesting that the subject depicted had performed miracles and could intercede in heaven on behalf of devotees. Analogous restrictions, which prohibited giving a holy person any title that had not been officially conferred by the Congregation of Rites, applied to printed books. If "theologians and other pious and learned men" suspected that

“fraud or error or anything new and unauthorized had been committed in such a serious matter,” they were required to inform the Holy See immediately and follow its instructions on how to proceed. Priests and members of religious orders who violated these decrees faced automatic removal from office and other punishments to be determined by the Holy Office and the ordinary; offending artists and printers were liable to financial or corporal penalties.³⁶

Following Ricetti’s instructions, the inquisitor of Verona asked the painter Rossi whether Riccardi had called Tusa “blessed.” Rossi carefully specified that the only adjective the friar had used was “miraculous,”³⁷ just as illegitimate a term. According to witnesses in Venice, Riccardi had made many extravagant claims about Tusa’s holiness: for instance, that she had raised three people from the dead, that angels came several times a year to transport her soul to heaven, and that her miracles were recorded in a big book.³⁸ Under interrogation, he flatly denied having said such superstitious things. When shown the portrait, he acknowledged having had copies made in order to fulfill the great demand for them and provided the names of recipients. Tusa’s left eye, he explained, was in fact “dimmed”; the cross and nails merely indicated her devotion to Christ’s passion.³⁹ His attempt to cast the issue of the painting in matter-of-fact terms and his defense attorney’s protest that it was “a simple portrait without a halo, without rays and glowing lights” convinced neither Inquisitor Ricetti nor his successor, Ambrogio Fracassini, who concluded the trial on 7 November 1651.⁴⁰ Among the many activities his unusually severe sentence prohibited him from continuing was the distribution of Tusa’s portrait.

A GARMENT played a central role in the prosecution of Pietro Morali and Maria Janis. Along with their other possessions, it was seized on 28 January 1662 by an agent of the tribunal, brought to the chapel of San Teodoro, and described in the inventory as “a white dress in nun’s style with a hat for the head and another [hat?] of the same color and two strips of the same color made like stoles, but longer on one side.”⁴¹ Questioned for the first time two days later, Janis recognized the garment and briefly explained how she had acquired it: “I had the white dress with the stoles to tie around me made in Rome to use at the end of the road I had to travel.”⁴² In a subsequent interrogation, she added that the Virgin Mary had ordered her to have it made, presumably specifying the material (silk) and the pattern.⁴³ Her codefendant, Morali, identified the

Roman seamstress, a married woman named Anna Maria Casolina, whom he claimed the devil had tried to impede in her work.⁴⁴ Although the Virgin intended that Janis don this special garment only when her privilege of living on communion alone became generally known and she attained public recognition as God's favorite, she occasionally wore it under her regular clothing while traveling in order to avoid paying customs duties on a luxury item.⁴⁵

Janis's dress concerned the Holy Office for two reasons. First, it suggested to Inquisitor Fracassini that she was trying to introduce a "new [form of] holiness and new dogmas."⁴⁶ His colleague in Bergamo, Vincenzo Maria Rivale, thought he knew what these "new dogmas" were: he took it for granted that Janis and Morali were Pelagini, members of a heretical group that only recently had been rooted out of the region from which they came.⁴⁷ In prosecuting the case, neither Fracassini nor Agapito Ugoni, who took over as inquisitor of Venice early in 1663, followed this lead.⁴⁸ Indeed, nothing in the trial record indicates that the two defendants had adopted the prime characteristic of Pelagini spirituality, an exclusive emphasis upon mental prayer.⁴⁹ Still, from the inquisitors' point of view, "novelties" in religious belief and practice introduced without formal authorization from the church were just as dangerous as heterodox opinions on officially promulgated doctrine.

Janis's sentence, issued in mid-March 1663, highlights a second set of reasons motivating the inclusion of the white dress among the charges on which she was condemned. On occasion, the Holy Office had discovered, she had dressed partially in male garb. According to her, this was simply a matter of convenience. Presumably the travel equipment at her, Morali's, and Palazzi's disposal did not include a sidesaddle; putting on men's trousers under her dress, she said, had made it easier for her to ride on horseback on their long trip to Rome via Loreto and their subsequent journey to Venice.⁵⁰ The mere hint of cross-dressing seems to have disturbed the inquisitor and his colleagues, for it suggested that she might have been attempting to move beyond her sex. To them, the white dress clearly indicated that she had also dared to breach boundaries of class and profession. As they put it in the sentence, she had worn "unusual clothes, indecent for secular men, not to mention women, with stoles similar to priestly ones, the entire [outfit] made of precious fabric not consonant with [her] birth and condition."⁵¹

Though never worn in public, Janis's special white dress provided evidence of her coming close to usurping priestly functions. So did another

object that drew even more attention during the trial: a small silver box in a bag hung on a string around her neck—or, as the inquisitor insisted on putting it, between her breasts. The improvised pyx and bag were seized along with the dress and various manuscripts during the search of the defendants' Venetian apartment.⁵² The box contained little consecrated hosts, which Morali had prepared by using scissors to cut a large priest's host into pieces. These he employed in the heavenly supper he administered to her every day in the privacy of their apartment so that she could continue to exercise her privilege of living on communion alone. This irregular rite, glimpsed through a crack in the door by their neighbor Antonia Bellini, led to their being denounced to the Inquisition. When first summoned before the court, Janis was shown the bag containing the box, recognized it, and tried to kneel in reverence before it.⁵³ The communion wafers it contained seemed too contaminated and dangerous to be conserved as evidence. Therefore the inquisitor took them immediately to his convent of San Domenico, where he and his confreres celebrated communion and consumed them.⁵⁴

In interrogating both defendants repeatedly and at length about the box, Inquisitor Fracassini insisted that everything about it was highly irregular and scandalous. Morali had no authorization to celebrate mass in churches outside his own diocese of Bergamo, much less in a secular setting, where a box covered with a white tablecloth substituted for a consecrated altar. In violation of long-established rules, Janis did not make confession before taking her daily private communion.⁵⁵ Consecrated wafers should be stored in a pyx locked inside a tabernacle on the altar of a church, certainly not on a woman's body.⁵⁶ Here, the sentences against them eventually proclaimed, was another perilous novelty—one even more clearly illegitimate than the white dress because it “contravene[d] the rites and ceremonies prescribed and commanded by Holy Church.” That Morali, a priest, should have known better than to innovate in this way rendered him vehemently suspect of heresy. Since Janis, a mere woman of low social status, was implicitly considered somewhat less culpable, she was found only lightly suspect.⁵⁷

TWO IMAGINARY OBJECTS were among the objects considered in the trial of Cecilia Ferrazzi, conducted in 1664–65. Like so many female aspirants to holiness in medieval and early modern Europe, Ferrazzi was especially devoted to Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the early Christian martyr whom Jesus wed in a mystical marriage ceremony.⁵⁸ Time and

time again, Ferrazzi and her contemporaries read or, if they were illiterate, listened to this story, as well the legends of other saints favored by mystical marriages.⁵⁹ They also had frequent opportunities to see it with the eyes of the body. Images of Catherine kneeling at the side of the Virgin and Child with her hand extended toward the infant Christ, who places a ring on her finger, could be found in many churches.⁶⁰

For a woman with an active imagination and high spiritual ambitions, the step from hearing about and seeing rings placed mystically on women's fingers to believing that she herself received the same favor was short. Like many others before and after her, Ferrazzi took it.⁶¹ As she explained in her inquisitorial autobiography, while she was in ecstasy in San Giovanni di Rialto a week before the feast of Saint Catherine, the saint placed on the little finger of her right hand "a most beautiful ring with thirty-three diamonds, one more beautiful than the next, embedded in it." Most other people could not see it. A few days later, however, a girl in the church espied the ring and pointed it out to her friends. Embarrassed, Ferrazzi went into the confessional and reported the discovery to the *pievano*, Antonio Grandi, who reproved her for misusing the sacrament of confession to relay others' gossip.⁶² A more sympathetic confessor to whom she showed the ring, Alvise Zonati of San Severo, resolved her problem:

He told me that I should make a promise to God that when obedience demanded, wherever I might be, I would give it to Him. During communion, when I was in rapture and he [Father Alvise] was celebrating Mass, He ordered me to present the ring to the celebrant. I'm in no position to know whether I gave it to him. It's true, however, that I saw it on the altar near the chalice on top of the corporal, and the whole altar shone. When I had come out of rapture, he called me into the confessional and asked whether I had obeyed. I replied that I had, and he added that I should thank God that obedience had been executed. And so I did.⁶³

During her trial, Ferrazzi took care not to claim that she had been mystically married to Jesus.⁶⁴ Only she and Saint Catherine were parties to this transaction; she wore the ring for just two weeks. Yet her description of the ring has clear Christological undertones: thirty-three diamonds, presumably representing the years of Christ's life on earth. She may have believed and/or intended subtly to convey the impression that it was Saint Catherine's wedding ring, temporarily on loan to her. From a human helper she received another physical aid to devotion, also imag-

inary from our point of view but clearly real to her. Just before discussing the ring, she mentioned that in her youth, a female recluse living across the street had given her a toothed chain. If her confessor granted permission, the recluse said, she should fasten it around her waist as a form of mortification which would help her to obey her parents. Unbeknownst to anyone else, she wore the chain for many years until a perspicacious confessor, the Jesuit Girolamo Chiamonte, found out about it. Shortly thereafter, it mysteriously disappeared, along with the ulcerated sores it had left on her waist.⁶⁵

Ferrazzi requested and was granted the favor of dictating her inquisitorial autobiography in order to demonstrate to the Holy Office that she had always been a deferential daughter of the church. Not surprisingly, therefore, she set the ring and the chain in a particular context. Only secondarily did she intend them to indicate that she was especially favored by God. Her primary purpose in mentioning them was rather to illustrate her unquestioning obedience to confessors' orders. When Zonati told her to place the ring on the altar, she did so; when Chiamonte learned about and evidently disapproved of the chain, it too vanished.

Although Inquisitor Ugoni showed little interest in Ferrazzi's imaginary ring and chain,⁶⁶ he was very much concerned with real objects of which she had apparently made illegitimate use. According to several former residents of the establishment at Sant'Antonio di Castello, she had had two portraits of herself recycled into images of the Madonna of the Seven Sorrows and Saint Teresa.⁶⁷ The addition of attributes relating to the Virgin and the saint, however, did nothing to conceal the fact that the face was hers.⁶⁸ At the inquisitor's order, an agent of the Holy Office confiscated the paintings, and on 3 July 1664 Ugoni interrogated Ferrazzi about them.⁶⁹ The first portrait, she said, had been made by Nicolò Renieri and two of his daughters at the initiative of her supporter Sebastiano Barbarigo while she was running the house at San Lorenzo. The second, which dated from her time in Cannaregio, had been painted by Ermanno Stroiffi at the urging of her confessor at the time, Giovanni Andreis. Six months earlier, she explained, she had commissioned Giacinto Cornacchioli, chaplain in the house at Sant'Antonio, to have them retouched to resemble Saint Teresa and the Madonna of the Seven Sorrows, respectively.⁷⁰

At the instance of Ferrazzi's defense attorneys, Ugoni summoned Stroiffi, Renieri, and Cornacchioli for questioning. The first two acknowledged having painted her portrait but stated that the pictures they were

shown differed from the originals. Renieri was particularly emphatic: “That’s not the portrait I painted,” he protested.⁷¹ In his initial appearance before the court Cornacchioli was uncertain, if not evasive, about who had “fixed” the portraits. First he mentioned a French lay brother in the Dominican convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo; then he corrected himself, averring that he had paid a young man in Calle Lunga Santa Maria Formosa twelve lire to do the retouching.⁷² Called back during the defense phase, he was pressed by the inquisitor about contradictions in his previous testimony.⁷³

Both in the second interrogation of Cornacchioli and in the sentence, Ugoni stressed the stigmata on the hands of the figures in the paintings.⁷⁴ Despite Renieri’s and Stroiffi’s testimony to the contrary, he apparently suspected that these were features of the original portraits, not later additions. If so, the portraits would, of course, have violated the spirit, if not the letter, of Urban VIII’s legislation on paintings of holy people.⁷⁵ In addition, they would have contradicted Ferrazzi’s repeated insistence that she had never claimed to have the stigmata.⁷⁶ Even if the inquisitor knew that such elite women of the period as Vittoria della Rovere, grand duchess of Tuscany, were having themselves painted as Mary Magdalen,⁷⁷ he may have reasoned that a “little woman” like the defendant being depicted in the guise of two nonsinner saints amounted to presumption ill befitting her social condition.

Another set of objects in Ferrazzi’s life also disturbed Ugoni. According to her former charge Fiorina Forni, the original source of much damaging information, she had used her bare hands to carry around consecrated altar furnishings—chalices, silver vases, and a paten—which only priests should touch. The paten she had employed as a plate for cookies (*bucellati*) offered to her favorite among the girls, the two-year-old Mariettina, who some believed was her biological daughter.⁷⁸ Ferrazzi admitted handling consecrated vessels, but always with gloves or a handkerchief between them and her skin; the only one she had touched barehanded was a deconsecrated chalice. Never, she protested, had she used a paten for serving cookies.⁷⁹ Unlike the paintings, these items were not entered into evidence, and only one other witness was questioned about them.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, they found a place among the charges in her sentence.⁸¹

A FEW YEARS LATER, the trial of Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pেসenti began on account of a picture. As described by their accuser, Gio-

vanni Daviano, it was a Madonna *alla greca* (in the Byzantine style) with side panels that could be closed over it, which the pievano had received a few years earlier from a woman instructed by the Virgin Mary to donate it to the church of Santa Ternita. In itself, this painting was not at all unusual; innumerable similar ones, produced in quantity by minor artists for sale at modest prices to devout people, hung in homes all over Venice and elsewhere. For a while, Vincenzi kept it in the sacristy. Then Pesenti reported that in a vision she had been informed “that this image would perform miracles, and at Antonia’s persuasion he hung it in the church at the altar near the sacristy.”⁸² Almost immediately, according to well-informed witnesses, the painting began to attract great crowds of sufferers hoping for relief. From the pievano they obtained oil from a lamp hung in front of the image and carnations from a vase on its altar; touching these allegedly sanctified materials to the body, the credulous believed, would cure infirmities and improve weak sight. Reproductions of the image were being sold by a man in the *campo* in front of the church, who marketed his wares by crying, “Who wants the miraculous Madonna of Santa Ternita?”⁸³

At least one member of the tribunal already knew about the painting. Shortly before Vincenzi and Pesenti were denounced to the Holy Office, the pievano had submitted a written report about it to Patriarch Giovanni Francesco Morosini. His account paralleled what witnesses were soon to allege and added further details. A poor, sick woman named Cecilia, widow of Pietro Bevilacqua, had given him the painting, which he hung first in the sacristy and then over the baptismal font. On 7 June Antonia informed him that until it was relocated in a more prominent position, above a specially constructed altar, she would be paralyzed and lose the power of speech. Because she did indeed become incapacitated in exactly these ways, Vincenzi solicited a pious donation to build the new altar, a job accomplished in record time.⁸⁴

Whether the pievano saw his report as a preemptive strike that might fend off a denunciation to the Holy Office or was simply doing his duty by reporting a noteworthy development to his superior is unclear. Given his unquestioning acceptance of Pesenti’s direct access to the divine, the latter explanation seems more probable. In any event, once the picture had become a piece of evidence, the Inquisition immediately took possession of it. On the very same day they heard the testimony cited above, the papal nuncio and the patriarch went in person to Santa Ternita, took down the painting, and removed it to the patriarch’s residence.⁸⁵ Then

they proceeded to question additional witnesses about the image. Soon the focus of interrogation shifted to the main actors in the drama. No matter what witnesses' attitudes toward them were, they concurred that Pesenti was behaving like an ecstatic and Vincenzi was enthusiastically promoting her as a holy woman.⁸⁶

Once the interrogatory phase of the trial concluded and Pesenti and Vincenzi were placed under arrest in mid-August, Inquisitor Ugoni continued for some months to concentrate on Antonia's actions and the pievano's reaction to them. Then a new object, a ring, came belatedly to his attention. On 20 November, Vincenzi presented to the court a memorandum composed several months earlier, toward the end of which, almost as an afterthought, he mentioned the spiritual marriage between him and his penitent: "I've also remembered that one morning the said Antonia made me give her a gold ring on her finger, but first she said, 'Father, bless this ring, and in honor and reverence of the Most Holy Trinity as a sign that Our Lord has married my soul with yours, put this ring on my finger,' which I did. . . . And at that function my sister, Sant[in]a, was present."⁸⁷ This piece of jewelry, undoubtedly of no great monetary value, bore a portrait of Saint Charles Borromeo.⁸⁸ Under ordinary circumstances, wearing a ring with a canonized person's image, a common practice, was simply a way of honoring that holy figure. But like the painting before it, this particular ring, borrowed by Vincenzi from his sister, acquired sinister significance on account of the use to which it had been put.

From late November 1668 until early March of the following year, when Vincenzi and Pesenti waived their right to mount a defense and threw themselves on the mercy of the tribunal,⁸⁹ the inquisitor and his colleagues paid almost exclusive attention to this shocking new element in the case. In interrogating Vincenzi a week after receiving his memorandum, the inquisitor immediately asked him whether he had considered it proper for a priest to give a woman a ring as a token of marriage. The defendant replied that he had done it primarily "in the manner of a vision." This explanation struck Ugoni as a feeble excuse. Clearly the marriage had taken place. What concerned the inquisitor, however, was the priest's considering it legitimate, not its possible sexual consequences.⁹⁰ In Ugoni's view, this spiritual marriage fitted into the pattern of Vincenzi's publicizing Pesenti as a living saint, already established by previous testimony. The pievano had told people to conserve as potential relics the handkerchiefs used to mop the sweat from her brow during her

ecstasies; he had pricked her with a pin to show others that while in ecstasy she was insensible to pain; and he had invented a ceremony for other young women staying in the “hermitage” in front of his house, in which they paraded around saying nine *Salve Reginas* and nine *Gloria Patris*. Vincenzi protested that Pesenti’s behavior had led him to think that she was a great servant of God, but he was ready to concede that the devil might have led him astray about the possibility of a spiritual marriage. Regretting his error, he was now prepared to disavow it.⁹¹

With the key Vincenzi had given him, Chancellor Andrea Vescovi went to the pievano’s residence, where he found a box containing a bunch of flowers wrapped in paper and two gold rings, one a wedding band and the other with the image of Saint Charles Borromeo. These he brought to the tribunal and entered into evidence.⁹² Interrogated about the marriage ceremony, Pesenti explained that the idea had come to her in a vision that she had one day during the mass while she was adoring the Host: “I went away with my mind, and I seemed to see Christ Our Lord as a baby, who took my hand and joined it to the pievano’s and wrapped around our hands the maniple the pievano had on his arm, and it seems to me that the same child said something about marriage, but I don’t remember.” A friend in her home parish of San Polo sent her a white dress, veil, and gold bracelets; the priest’s sister lent her a ring. She donned her bridal attire and knelt before the priest, who put the ring on a finger of her right hand. Although she claimed not to recall exactly what he had said, she remembered vividly her response: “Now I claim to be the Lord’s spouse in body and soul.” Under pressure, she was able to retrieve from her memory the pievano’s words: he was marrying his soul to her, just as he had previously done with Rosanna, another young woman in his “hermitage.” He had then given her several bouquets of flowers, saying, “This, I believe, is your wedding.” Shown the ring, she was reduced to gesturing, making inarticulate sounds, and banging her fist on the table. Finally, having recovered the power of speech, she ventured the opinion that the ring with which she had been married was larger and thicker.⁹³

At that point, the judges summoned attorneys to assist Pesenti.⁹⁴ Since neither defendant opted for a defense, the proceedings moved with all deliberate speed toward a conclusion. The spiritual marriage between them and the ring, bridal gown, and flowers so central to the ceremony featured prominently in the sentences rehearsing their crimes against the faith. To prevent the relationship from continuing in any form, the two were prohibited from having any further contact. What they had done,

the Holy Office ruled, was “totally superstitious”⁹⁵—so much so that the judges had already decided to preserve no remnant of it. Several months earlier, when the physical evidence of the spiritual marriage was seized, the court had ordered that once the trial was over, the flowers were to be burned and the rings melted down, with the equivalent in gold returned to their owners.⁹⁶ Like Morali’s and Janis’s irregular communion wafers, these objects inspired in the judges a visceral horror of what in their judgment were more than merely superstitious aids to misdirected devotion used by the ignorant. Having been employed knowingly by a priest in an impious perversion of the sacrament of marriage, the flowers and the rings were so unholy that they must be destroyed.

IN SEVERAL WAYS the trial of the Minim friar Giacomo Ladicosa in 1693–94 differs from those discussed earlier. For one thing, as we shall see in Chapters 10 and 11, it is replete with references to books, beliefs, and practices demonstrating that the defendant was not simply an aspirant to holiness who in the view of the Holy Office employed illegitimate means to achieve it. He was also a knowing adherent of the principal “new” heresy of the late seventeenth century, Quietism. More relevant to our purposes here, the trial record contains many mentions of “relics.” To the amazement of twentieth-century scholars who came across them, several—a small cross of dark brown wood with a figure of Christ, the inscription INRI, and a skull and crossbones in brass, which according to witnesses sometimes bled; a white linen handkerchief trimmed with lace, supposedly part of the Virgin’s head covering; two pieces of rope belt and a fragment of a habit allegedly belonging to Saint Francis of Paola, founder of the Minims—remain in the dossier.⁹⁷ Seized from the friar’s cell in the monastery of San Francesco di Paola, these objects were soon woven by two inquisitors, witnesses, and the defendant into a complex web of fraud and credulity.⁹⁸

Once the “relics” were found, they moved into the limelight of a trial that had at first focused on other matters. According to the defendant, Marietta Bon Erizzo had given them to him some three years before, presenting them as gifts to her from Saint Francis of Paola. The collection included a vial containing a drop of milk that had flowed from a statue of the Virgin and some little whips, with which she said the saint had chastised her and the friar should do the same. “Believing her crazily,” he complied. About a year before the trial began, however, Bon Erizzo had changed her story about the provenance of the relics. That the lace-

trimmed cloth was a piece of the Virgin's veil, she admitted, was a joke; the rope belt of Saint Francis of Paola had actually been the property of her late son Francesco, a confrere of Ladicosa.⁹⁹

Yet another gift from Bon Erizzo discovered in Ladicosa's cell was a piece of stone. It came, the donor had assured him, from the column on which Christ was flagellated. He had used it as the consecrated stone in the makeshift altar he set up in Marietta's apartment to celebrate mass, and it had performed many miracles.¹⁰⁰ In contrast to the other "relics," the Holy Office decided, the genuineness of this one could be authoritatively assessed. Claudio Somariva, an expert on minerals, was summoned to the tribunal to examine it. The stone, he determined, was malachite, of some use in such medical procedures as bloodletting and curing dizziness "but inferior in strength because it is from Germany and not oriental."¹⁰¹

When asked how a mature, learned, experienced confessor like himself could have given credence to an uneducated woman's manifestly absurd claims about the so-called relics, all Ladicosa could say was that he had prayed hard over the matter and believed that Bon Erizzo's increasingly devout behavior validated her claims. Her telling him that the "relics" were false he considered to be a diabolical temptation.¹⁰² For what the Holy Office considered an incredibly grave combination of errors, he was condemned in the chapel of San Teodoro as vehemently suspect of heresy before a large audience including "many noble and citizens."¹⁰³ His extraordinarily harsh sentence prescribed permanent suspension from exercising priestly functions and ten years' confinement in "a close and formal prison," which he managed to survive.¹⁰⁴

ALTHOUGH THE CASE of Lucrezia Gambarà never developed far enough to generate a collection of objects entered into evidence, it threatened initially to do so. For a few brief weeks in December and early January 1729, handkerchiefs applied to the cruciform wounds on her body and impregnated with bloody crosses became collectors' items.¹⁰⁵ Once Leandro Chizzola, vicar general of the diocese of Brescia, assumed management of the situation, these potential "relics" were driven out of circulation. Following Chizzola's instructions, her parish priest and spiritual director, Giuseppe Simoni, ordered the villagers of Alfianello who had acquired these objects to destroy them by fire.¹⁰⁶ One that he forwarded to Brescia disturbed the vicar general so greatly that he could not con-

trol himself. He wrote to his superior that he had thrown it immediately into the fire without even unrolling and inspecting it.¹⁰⁷

OBJECTS IN THESE PROCEEDINGS contributed in four different ways to the cases against their possessors, producers, and distributors. Some mentioned but never entered into evidence—the Agnus Dei containing Marietta Zavana's hair, Antonia Pesenti's sweat-soaked and Lucrezia Gambarà's blood-impregnated handkerchiefs—served indirectly in the first two instances to fill out a pattern of superstitious promotion of a living person's holiness and in the third to establish the accused as a weak subject whose formal prosecution and sentencing would serve no purpose. Those in a second category were actually brought before the court: Giuseppe Riccardi's rosary beads, the portraits of Francesca Tusa he commissioned and distributed, Maria Janis's white silk dress, and the portraits of Cecilia Ferrazzi recycled into images of Saint Teresa and the Madonna of the Seven Sorrows. These were treated as important pieces of evidence supporting the accusations of conscious pretense of holiness on the part of the perpetrators and collusion by their supporters, who were usurping the church's right to determine, post mortem, who deserved the honor of the altars.

The fragments of Pietro Vespa's alabaster vase and the "relics" allegedly passed by Saint Francis of Paola to Marietta Bon Erizzo and given by her to Giacomo Ladicosa, the genuineness of which both men accepted, constitute a third group. As opposed to illegitimate promotion of a living individual's holiness, the charge at issue in the second category, these constituted fabrication of the holy: the use of objects claimed to have belonged to canonized saints. Although they did not say so explicitly, inquisitors may well have thought that the circulation of false relics not only fostered superstition but also called into question the Congregation of Rites's prerogative of recognizing saints in the first place and authenticating their physical remains and tangible reminders of their earthly careers in the second. Here again, obscure layfolk, priests, and friars were implicitly challenging an organ of the visible church by attempting to preempt its officially sanctioned rights and responsibilities.

Objects in the fourth and most culpable category, also available for inspection and recognition in the courtroom, seem to have horrified inquisitorial judges even more than the testimony of witnesses and defendants describing highly questionable actions. They also served the

court's purposes especially well. The wafers with which Pietro Morali gave Maria Janis her irregular daily communion, the silver box containing them, the bag in which it hung between Janis's breasts, Ferrazzi's paten converted to use as a cookie plate, and the flowers and ring used in the celebration of Antonia Pesenti's spiritual marriage to Francesco Vincenzi could be linked to crimes even more clear-cut and easy to prosecute than pretense of holiness: abuse of the sacraments of communion and marriage.

Many scholars have observed that sacramentalization was a key component of Catholic confessionalization. By ruling that a forthcoming wedding must be publicized by the posting of banns, that the ceremony itself must be conducted in (not merely in front of) the church with the priest officiating, and that it must be recorded in the parish register, the fathers at the Council of Trent transformed marriage from a primarily secular arrangement into an important, celebrated sacrament. By providing that the host be conserved in churches on properly maintained altars with special lights and by initiating and promoting ceremonies and processions honoring the body and blood of Christ, bishops and other agents of the Counter-Reformation church reaffirmed the Tridentine doctrine of transubstantiation and permanently located the sacrament of the altar at the center of Catholic devotion.

In the sixteenth century the Holy Office had prosecuted many philo-Protestant dissidents for insufficient reverence for or direct insult to the consecrated host. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, other forms of abusing the sacraments attracted inquisitors' attention. Among these were the "perversions" of marriage and communion practiced by those prosecuted for pretense of holiness.¹⁰⁸ For inquisitors, objects attesting to such sacrilege were not merely bizarre accessories to devotion, as they may seem to us now. On the contrary, they provided physical evidence that could be used to convict perpetrators of crimes against the faith.

Time and Space

STRICTLY SPEAKING, a trial record of the Roman Inquisition provides direct evidence only about a determinate sequence of judicial proceedings: one or more court sessions held over a few days, weeks, months, or years in a single place, the headquarters of the Holy Office. To determine whether crimes against the faith had been committed, however, judges and those whom they interrogated had to range further back in time. At the very least, when a suspect first appeared before the court, the inquisitor began by establishing his or her approximate birth date, birthplace, parentage, and occupation. At most, as in the trials of Pietro Vespa and Cecilia Ferrazzi, the suspect was asked or volunteered to furnish a biographical statement covering an entire life course up to and including the acts he or she was accused of committing. Both interrogations and various kinds of documents gathered in the course of most prosecutions supplied evidence about events that had taken place several or many years before. "Real time" in which the actions being assessed had occurred, revealed indirectly in the records, differed markedly from "court time."

Naturally, the space traversed during a trial was also more extensive than the confines of the courtroom. In the trials for pretense of holiness conducted in the Venetian state, it ranged from a church and its immediate environs to a considerable part of the southern Mediterranean world. Here again, some of the evidence about what had happened in other places emerged during questioning in the courtroom. Additional elements arrived there in the form of transcripts of interrogations conducted elsewhere and in other written materials gathered by the judges.

When a person being questioned recalls or a document received into evidence reveals what had happened long ago in another place, the other time and space move into the present, not only for those involved in the trial but also for the historian. Surely Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood were right in maintaining that all real history, as opposed to

mere chronicle, is contemporary history by the very fact that the historian, using documents, summons it back to life.¹ In a sense, then, for this writer and those readers who have become engaged in the processes she is attempting to re-create in this book, the time and space of early modern pretense of holiness are here and now.

The dimensions of time and space cannot easily be separated. An event, either an individual's private thought or an action visible to others, occurs at a chronological moment and in a geographical space both of which are critical to remembering and talking about it, however accurately or inaccurately, at a later point in another place. Events accessible to more than one person the occurrence of which is contested certainly participate in these two dimensions. To put it in the form of an equation, person A states that event E took place at time T in place P; person B recalls T and/or P as different; person C, who denies A's and B's assertions that E occurred, is in effect saying "not E, not T, and not P." All three, even implicitly C, are concerned not only with the event but also with the time and the place of its alleged occurrence.

In the case, relatively rare in the proceedings under consideration here, of a thought-event neither visible nor communicated to anyone else at the time, when and where the defendant had it concerned both that individual and the judges. One example will suffice. After Marietta Bon Erizzo had admitted lying about the so-called relics of Saint Francis of Paola, Inquisitor Giovanni Tommaso Roveto asked Giacomo Ladicosa why he persisted in treating them as genuine and her as a bona fide ecstatic. Clearly implied in the inquisitor's question and the defendant's response are the time and place in which Ladicosa evaluated Bon Erizzo's admission, as well as the nature of the friar's reasoning process.²

Unlike the preceding discussion of objects, which demanded a chronological principle of organization, addressing time and space necessitates our moving from the limited to the expansive. Usually, though not invariably, a prosecution exploring a long stretch of time also extends widely over geographical and spiritual space. Not only do trial records permit us to reconstruct the itinerary covered by the defendant or defendants, a route retraced summarily for each case below. They also enable us to explore in detail a variety of religiously significant spaces, from the relative privacy of the confessional and bedroom to public places (the church, the *campo*, the *calle*, and so forth), in which the alleged offenses against the faith occurred.

FIRST, IT MAY BE HELPFUL briefly to examine relevant considerations of time and space in modern scholarship on early modern Italy. Comparatively few studies address time; those that do are mostly oriented around the life cycle. Social class seems to have been the prime determinant of an Italian man's life course. If he was born to peasants or artisans, adulthood arrived very early, at the moment when he entered the workforce, usually after little, if any, formal schooling. That is not to say, however, that he never experienced childhood or youth or that his elders did not recognize these early stages of life.³ Once engaged in income-producing employment, a lower-class man was expected to marry and sire children. When, no matter at what age, illness or waning strength drove him permanently out of the workforce and he became dependant on his children or public assistance, he was no longer an adult but an old man.

The life of a boy born in more elevated circumstances took a different course. From both the formal and the practical standpoint, he remained an adolescent at least through the period in which he attended school, and in some cases much longer. A youth who decided of his own accord or was pressured by others to become a priest, monk, or friar presumably achieved adult status when he was ordained (at age twenty-five) or professed (usually several years younger). In Venice, a male patrician's achieving adulthood depended not on his marrying (many never did) nor on his beginning to earn income but rather on his winning election to government office, which might not occur until he was in his thirties or even older,⁴ or embarking upon an ecclesiastical career. Only when he was ordained to the priesthood at age twenty-nine did the adult life of Gregorio Barbarigo, whom we encountered in Chapter 5, really begin. Although an elite man who became a cleric or entered political life could not hold back the hands of the biological clock, he was never forced into retirement and thereby consigned officially to the subordinate category of the elderly.⁵

In reality as well as theory, biology played a larger role in most women's life course than in men's—certainly in the higher social strata, perhaps to a lesser degree in the lower.⁶ As soon as an elite girl reached menarche, she had to be married or placed in a convent. Usually her family had determined her destiny much earlier after making careful calculations about how best to preserve the lion's share of the patrimony for male heirs. Otherwise, the girl was in imminent danger of having her own and her family's honor snatched away by a seducer or rapist. How-

ever young she was at the moment of marriage or monachization, she then immediately became an adult. For a nun, the biological clock then ceased to have any social relevance. A married woman or widow, once her childbearing years were over, entered a new life stage, old age.⁷ An anomalous woman, one who stayed “in the world” but through choice or force of circumstance never married, remained in some senses a “girl” forever.⁸

Like the study of time in men’s and women’s lives, the exploration of space is in its infancy. Recent analyses of early modern Venice suggest that place, as Edward Muir and Ronald Weissman put it, is “a cultural artifact, embedded in a grid of other meaningful objects and locales. . . . Places are spaces with names, spaces with evocative, multidimensional identities.” The neighborhood, coterminous with but not in all respects identical to the parish, constituted the basic unit of spatial organization. Men, of course, lived and often maintained workplaces there; the more prominent among them served in neighborhood-based political offices and sat on that distinctive Venetian body the parish council, which elected the *pievano*. They also moved freely about the city into other spaces. These included Piazza San Marco for business and rituals connected with the government, the *campi* in front of churches and convents for marching in and observing processions, the Rialto for transacting commercial affairs and perusing official announcements, the *scuole grandi* and *piccole* for meetings and religious observances, and taverns for refreshment and recreation. In all these places they could gather news, do business, and see and be seen by their peers.⁹

For the majority of women, on the other hand, Dennis Romano has shown that the neighborhood was the prime space: the one in which they spent almost all their time and to which they devoted most of their attention. Respectable women had no legitimate reason for wandering around Venice, and few for venturing beyond their neighborhoods. Unless they happened to live near San Marco or the Rialto, women seen there were almost certainly perceived to be up to no good. Much more than men’s, women’s social identity was intimately connected with household, neighborhood, and parish church.¹⁰ Wills demonstrate that through neighborhood networks of patronage, women made alliances across class lines.¹¹ The parish church may well have been their main point of spiritual reference.¹²

As is well known, those who implemented the decrees of the Council of Trent sought to make parishes and parish priests the focus of the

laity's religious life. By the end of the sixteenth century, especially in cities, this objective had been largely achieved.¹³ Parishes, of course, centered on parish churches, accurately described by Muir and Weissman as "not so much sacred spaces as shelters for holy objects" to which "reverence was conveyed by the performance of prescribed gestures." When these objects were transported in processions, conducted in most cases by priests, holy space moved with them.¹⁴ Although sacred space, as Mario Rosa has perceptively observed, was increasingly ecclesiastical space, or space controlled by ecclesiastics, clerical domination was not uncontested. The devout sometimes sought to create alternative spaces "corresponding to a different model of interior life and Christian experience."¹⁵

Only rarely and for the most part implicitly have most scholars of early modern Italy linked time and space in men's and women's lives.¹⁶ Those concerned primarily with the functions of ritual in the body politic have not paid much attention to these dimensions of ordinary people's lives.¹⁷ An examination of some "false saints'" movement through time and geographical and spiritual space may help to fill this lacuna.

IN BOTH TEMPORAL and geographical terms, the investigation of Narcisa is the most constricted. It lasted from 4 September 1618, when the inquisitor Giovanni Domenico Vinuccio received a letter from the Somaschan priest Adriano suggesting that he seek information from the sacristan of San Gregorio about what his penitent Paola had told him, to 8 October, when Narcisa's neighbors and cousins Marina and Lucietta were interrogated by the Holy Office. According to Paola and Marina, Narcisa had entered the picture a few years before when she moved into their *contrada*, San Gregorio, located in the parish of San Vio. Some months before the denunciation, she had reformed her life and begun to make disturbing claims such as being the mother of God.¹⁸ Since Narcisa was not summoned before the tribunal, the record reveals neither her age—that she was a widow does not necessarily mean that she was well along in years, especially given the fact that both her parents were alive—nor her previous history.

The physical geography of this fragmentary case covers two Venetian neighborhoods and one church. Paola wrote that Narcisa had previously lived, as her parents still did, in or near Ca' Miani in the parish of San Felice, a journey of at most twenty minutes on foot or gondola (or both) across the Grand Canal. Why she moved is unclear. Paola's and Lucietta's testimony that until recently she had led a "lascivious" and "worldly"

life suggests that she may have been supporting herself by prostitution. Following her change of attitude, Narcisa's cousins directed her toward a compatible spiritual adviser, Padre Lorenzo, chaplain of the Benedictine church of San Gregorio, who heard her confession and gave her communion every Sunday.¹⁹

If what Paola stated in her letter to the Holy Office is accurate, San Gregorio does not seem to have been the spiritual center of Narcisa's newfound religious enthusiasm. She claimed the right to refrain from baring her soul fully to padre Lorenzo, whose feet she said she had bound with an invisible chain tied to her neck, and communicated directly with God, who allowed her to have visions and caressed her. On the actual relationship between confessor and penitent, we have only Paola's secondhand report, which is difficult to interpret: "Padre Lorenzo [her nephew] has told me that that woman pleases him because he doesn't like obedience."²⁰ Paola, in contrast, obeyed orders: she considered herself bound by insistence of her confessor, the sacristan of San Gregorio, that she denounce Narcisa. If she told him about Narcisa in confession, he broke the seal of the confessional by sharing the information with padre Adriano. For obvious reasons, the Holy Office did not prosecute priests who violated the confidentiality of this sacrament, nor is it likely that confessors leaked secrets only to fellow priests. Padre Lorenzo, not God, may well have revealed to Narcisa what other penitents told him in confession.

Tantalizingly fragmentary evidence indicates that Narcisa, Marina, and Lucietta had formed in the sisters' home an informal spiritual center alternative to the monastic church of San Gregorio and the local parish church, San Vio.²¹ According to Marina, "the matters she discussed with me were devout things and doing the will of God and reading the life of Saint Catherine of Siena, with which we helped each other in order to understand some chapters."²² Lucietta expressed confidence that the spiritual bond between them was so close that since Narcisa had not told them, her cousins, about her visions, she certainly would not have revealed them to anyone else.²³ This brief glimpse of a small group of female readers meeting in a private home suggests that there must have been many such secluded, informal spiritual spaces, about which sources other than inquisitorial records are practically silent.²⁴

ALTHOUGH THE RECORD of the prosecution of Giacomo Ladicosa is much fuller than the slim dossier on Narcisa, the cases bear some resem-

blance in chronological and geographical scope. We know nothing of the male defendant's life from his birth (c. 1638) until some three years before Marina Bon Schiavo denounced him to the Inquisition in July 1692.²⁵ According to Marina's sister Marietta Bon Erizzo, whom Ladicosa had confessed for fourteen or fifteen years, the Minim friar had begun about three years earlier to practice a new form of spiritual direction. Part of it involved teaching his penitent to read, write, do arithmetic, and recite the Great Office. When she made mistakes, he punished her in a manner about which she was initially reluctant to talk. Putting pen to paper, she explained that he whipped or spanked her on her bare buttocks, a form of discipline he used also for religious purposes on her, her sister, and other women.²⁶

The timing of Ladicosa's shift in method can be explained conjecturally. As we shall see in greater detail in Chapter 11, he had come into contact with and endorsed the tenets of Quietism. Of the several books and manuscripts found in his cell, the only one dated in the inventory was *Lettere spirituali composte da una persona religiosa ne quali si mostra la vera via di unirsi in Dio* (Spiritual letters composed by a religious person showing the true way of uniting oneself with God), published in Venice in 1679.²⁷ As he later explained, he had been told by Jacopo Vianoli, bishop of Torcello, who had given him the book, that its author was Maria Arcangela Biondini, formerly a nun in the Venetian house of Santa Maria delle Grazie and now abbess of a convent she had founded in Arco, near Trent.²⁸ Although this was not the only Quietist text the friar owned, the fact that it was published and came into his possession about three years before he was denounced suggests that it may have been instrumental in transforming his attitude toward dealing with female penitents.

Like the case of Narcisa, this one touches on two neighborhoods: San Felice, near the geographical center of Venice, where Bon Erizzo had lived until a year or so before the trial began; and the area around Ladicosa's monastery, San Francesco di Paola, in the southeastern part of the city. Bon Erizzo may have moved to the attic of "that big house above the storehouse of San Francesco di Paola" in order to be closer to her confessor, but her main motive was financial.²⁹ Without the charitable support provided by the Minim friars, she acknowledged, she would have been destitute.³⁰ Neither a parish nor a convent church, however, played any significant part in the trial. Its main loci are Bon Erizzo's apartments, the third of which Bon Schiavo described as a "hermitage." There Ladicosa read spiritual books and recited the Great Office with his female

coterie, as well as saying mass and administering communion to the Bon sisters. In the bedroom, behind a closed door, he disciplined the women.³¹

Here again we encounter alternative spiritual spaces. As sites for devotional reading, Bon Erizzo's apartments resemble that of Narcisa's cousins, but in other ways they differ. What went on in the rooms of these dwellings was not merely extemporaneous religious reading and conversation among three cousins. Ladicosa, a cleric, assembled and directed a larger group according to principles he knew to be at odds with orthodox theology and practice. To acquire the texts on which he based his form of spiritual governance, he had (or so he claimed) obtained a license from Rome to read prohibited books.³² In effect, the friar was running a conventicle with a fixed, secret meeting place.

On one occasion Ladicosa, Bon Erizzo, and another member of the group, Dolfina Taulignan, ventured briefly outside the Venetian apartments to his brother Zuanne's villa near Mestre.³³ For the most part, however, their activities took place in small spaces behind closed doors. That no extraneous prying eyes had observed them seems clear, for neither neighbors nor others outside the group appeared "spontaneously" before the court or were summoned to testify. Indeed, late in the trial ten Minims presented written testimonials to their confrere's exemplary conduct.³⁴ In early modern Venice, privacy—a concept so foreign in Italy even today that there is no Italian word for it—was almost impossible to achieve. Yet Ladicosa and his penitents managed to find and maintain a secret room of their own for three years until a onetime insider who had been expelled from the group, Bon Schiavo, decided to present her denunciation.

ALTHOUGH THE TRIAL of Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti lasted almost a year, the events on which it focused occupy a very narrow time frame. Pesenti had met Vincenzi no earlier than 18 February 1668, the beginning of Lent, only four months before Giovanni Daviano denounced them. The pievano of Santa Ternita had come to "sign" her sick friend Caterina Orese in Rio Marin, not far from her home in San Polo. When they met again at Orese's house a few days later, he made a strong impression on her.³⁵ In one respect, the fact that at age thirty-four she was unmarried and living with her parents, Pesenti was anomalous. From the spatial point of view, however, she was a perfectly normal "good woman" who did not usually stray far from home. Her first journey across the city

to Vincenzi's parish in the company of a Dominican friar may have been the longest trip she had taken, for she had to seek instructions on how to return home.³⁶ She returned frequently during Lent to confess to the pievano. After Easter (1 April), a voice in her heart began to tell her that she should become a Capuchin nun and whispered in her heart, "Santa Ternita! Santa Ternita!" Thus impelled to move there, she settled with other young women in a "hermitage" in front of Vincenzi's house.³⁷

Before Lent of 1668, the trial record and other sources reveal nothing about Pesenti and very little about Vincenzi except their birth dates. From then until the denunciation in mid-June, all the events on which Daviano's accusation and numerous witnesses' testimony were based took place. For the most part, they occurred in a very restricted space, in and around the church of Santa Ternita. This large parish, containing 1,980 souls in 1642 (and undoubtedly more a generation later, after the plague-depleted population had replaced itself), was inhabited largely by artisans and workers employed in the Arsenal.³⁸ Women parishioners in particular kept a close eye on what went on at the church, about which they had a proprietary attitude. When summoned to testify and asked whether they knew why they had been called before the court, most of them knew had no trouble guessing. As the witness Bartolomea put it, "I don't know, but I suppose it's about my church." She went on to mention almost everything alleged two weeks earlier in Daviano's denunciation.³⁹

Bartolomea's detailed account, based partly on firsthand knowledge and partly on hearsay, concentrated on movement through space in the zone around Santa Ternita. Having heard someone yelling that the miraculous painting of the Madonna had liberated a possessed crippled man, she had leaned out her window above the *campo* and seen him leaving the church without his crutch. She had been able to view the miraculous image, but only from afar because the church was so crowded. Her daughter Antonia had seen Pesenti in a trance, hard as a rock with sweat running down her face. The daughter wiped it off with a handkerchief, which Vincenzi told her to keep because it would perform miracles—a claim about which Bartolomea was skeptical. Bartolomea had heard about but never been inside the pievano's house and "hermitage," but with her own eyes she had observed Antonia's pattern of behavior in church. Before entering through the large front door, she was blessed by Vincenzi, wearing his cope and stole. Then she knelt on the stairs before the main altar, kissed the earth, and made crosses on it with her tongue.⁴⁰

Several witnesses had observed additional particulars. Some had seen Vincenzi holding Pesenti's hand or her garment as he escorted her from his house to the church. As she ascended the steps, they said, he held up the hem of her dress.⁴¹ Others had watched a ceremony choreographed by the pievano which involved Pesenti and eight other young women. Following communion, he had them recite the *Salve Regina* nine times and after each recitation place a coin in a box.⁴² A few priests had been invited by the pievano into the "hermitage" to see Pesenti in ecstasy.⁴³ Sometimes he pricked her with pins to show that she was actually insensible and then demonstrated how he alone could rouse her from her trance.⁴⁴

All the testimony furnished by witnesses in this case makes clear that occurrences in and around the church of Santa Ternita had become common knowledge (*pubblica voce e fama*) in the vicinity because laypeople and clerics were gossiping avidly, and sometimes joking, about little else. According to Daviano, for example, Vincenzi's sprinkling flower petals on Pesenti while she was in ecstasy "caused many to laugh about it and make fun of him."⁴⁵ In conversation they assessed the character of the two defendants, arriving at various conclusions. When the inquisitor asked Bartolomea's daughter Antonia about Pesenti's reputation, she responded, "By the people she's called sometimes 'saint' and sometimes 'blessed.' In the house of the signor pievano they say she's a good soul of God, and the signor pievano calls her a good creature."⁴⁶ Others added to this list the adjective *crazy*.⁴⁷ The priest Andrea Fava provided a particularly full survey of opinions on Vincenzi: "Before, the signor pievano was respected and considered impartial. . . . [Now he is making] many murmur, saying that [he is acting] through self-interest, and in addition they are murmuring about how many women he keeps in his house. . . . In addition, some say the signor pievano is ignorant, that he's half crazy, and that he's sinning more through ignorance than through malice."⁴⁸

On occasion, Vincenzi conducted field trips to convents and monasteries in or near the city. In September 1667 he accompanied Osanna Longo, whom he was exorcising, to visit the Cistercian nuns of Ognisanti at Sant'Elena and the Cappuccine of Santa Maria delle Grazie.⁴⁹ In April 1669, he, Pesenti, and a widow who was his penitent called on the Reformed Franciscan friars at San Francesco del Deserto.⁵⁰ On the whole, however, this was strictly a parish affair. Unlike the private residences examined earlier, Santa Ternita and environs lay within the public domain. Lay people and clerics in the neighborhood, assuming that what the

pievano and his extraordinary penitent did in public spaces was everyone's business, were more than willing to tell the Holy Office about it.

GIUSEPPE RICCARDI had traveled north from Sicily, where he had met his spiritual idol, Francesca Tusa, to the Frari in Venice. During his seven- or eight-year stay there he moved about the city and as far away as Verona on preaching assignments. As in the case of Vincenzi and Pesenti, however, most of the action described in Riccardi's trial record took place in a geographically limited zone, the parish of San Tomà surrounding his monastery. His activities made him *persona non grata* in the Frari to such an extent that his superior, guardian Marino Cavaletti, suspended him *a divinis* for neglecting his monastic obligations and denounced him to the Holy Office,⁵¹ and several other confreres testified against him. For an entire year he slept outside the monastery in the home of Zuan Francesco and Caterina Leoni.⁵²

Riccardi had high ambitions for moving onward and upward. He apparently believed the prediction of suor Bianca, a nun in the Benedictine convent of San Maffio on Murano, that he would eventually become general of his order, then cardinal and pope.⁵³ Yet he gave every indication of loving his monastery, the "big house," and his adopted city. According to fra Marino and other friars, he had preached from the pulpit and stated in other public places that the Holy Spirit, who wore high clogs (*zoccoli*) and a stole like a Venetian gentleman, "is more at the Frari than any other place." He had further asserted that "no one could go to paradise, living or dead, unless he first passed through Venice" and that "God before the creation went about in a gondola."⁵⁴ These claims fitted into a pattern of "extravagances" in his sermons. According to his confreres, he preached such "apocryphal things" from "unapproved sources" as Judas's having betrayed Christ in order to get money to buy his wife a dress and the high priest Caiaphas's having worked on the side as a merchant. These details, he protested, he had gleaned from research in the Vatican Library.⁵⁵

Had Riccardi's own large, influential monastery not been located in this particular neighborhood, the Holy Office's prosecution might not have been conducted so vigorously and ended in such a harsh sentence. Speech and behavior that his fellow Franciscans and other clerics considered irresponsible and culpable struck some of his neighbors very differently. None of the lay witnesses from the parish of San Tomà said a word against his efforts to put the Catholic faith into a familiar mercan-

tile context and depict Venice as God's and the Holy Spirit's favorite city. On the contrary, they had taken notes on his sermons and other declarations and assembled them in a manuscript tome entitled "Le devotioni del Padre Maestro Iseppo d'Alcara," which devotees copied and had bound in red or white leather.⁵⁶ As we saw earlier, they eagerly collected Riccardi's rosary beads and the indulgences that went with them, along with portraits of suor Francesca Tusa. The Sicilian friar was apparently providing religious "extras" that had considerable appeal to a clientele comprising not poor, uneducated women as in some of the cases examined previously but financially comfortable and literate people of both sexes in the middle sector of Venetian society.

ALVISE BALBI and Marietta Zavana operated over a period of several years in various parts of the Veneto. It was God's will, said their devotee suor Benetta Girardi, that Zavana follow Balbi wherever he went.⁵⁷ In violation of the sentence issued in Treviso in the fall of 1629, which forbade their consorting further with each other, she persisted in accompanying him. Their itinerary both before and after the first trial reflects the movements typical of a Venetian patrician such as Balbi, with one significant exception: it seems to have centered on female religious houses. Suor Benetta mentioned having written about them to nuns of the convent of Ognissanti in Treviso,⁵⁸ but the investigation conducted in Venice yields no additional information linking them with that city. In Venice, Zavana had once lived and still occasionally stayed overnight at Balbi's house in Campo Rusolo, just north of Piazza San Marco.⁵⁹ Until they quarreled with Angela Maria Pasqualigo, whom we met earlier, they had frequented Gesù Maria, the convent she had founded.⁶⁰ Much of their time in the dominant city, it appears, they had spent at the house of the Augustinian Hermitesses of San Marcuola. There suor Benetta, with her confessor's permission, had recorded "the graces, favors, [and] raptures of the said Marietta and signor Alvise."⁶¹

Several witnesses made passing mention of Balbi's and Zavana's visiting his country villa at San Giorgio near Castelfranco Veneto, a short distance from San Floriano, which may have been Zavana's hometown.⁶² By no coincidence, the villa lay on the road to Bassano del Grappa. The recently founded Benedictine convent of San Girolamo in Bassano was the second focal point of their lives, for its abbess, Gabriella Malipiero, was their second amanuensis. According to suor Benetta, "she wrote down the things that happened there, and I wrote down the things here." The

two nuns exchanged manuscripts, and suor Benetta traveled to Bassano on one occasion to comfort Zavana during an illness.⁶³

In the convents of San Marcuola and San Girolamo, Balbi and Zavana had clearly attracted followers, including young suor Giovanna Maria Bonomo in the latter house.⁶⁴ No wonder, for when they left, the abbess's fever went up and the convent's hens stopped laying. "Blessed are those who live under the banner of signor Alvise and Marietta, who are truly three and one, the two of them united in one," wrote suor Benetta.⁶⁵ When speaking to the inquisitor, she was more prudent: "I do not, however, hold that these [prodigies recorded in the "Compendio di miracoli"] are miracles as long as they [the protagonists] are living, and after death, if they are approved by the Church, I will consider them such."⁶⁶ The female protagonist of the account evidently hoped to expand the circle of their supporters. Balbi's sons told a servant that Zavana planned to have published the account of their extraordinary graces and favors, which was already circulating in manuscript.⁶⁷

Like most of the other aspiring saints, Balbi and Zavana disappear from the prosecutorial scene when the inquisitorial documentation ends. In more important ways, however, their case is distinctive. For one thing, the limited available evidence does not make it certain that the Holy Office put paid to their spiritual adventure. The high social standing of Balbi, who lived on for almost forty years, may explain the Venetian investigation's petering out. Although their following seems to have been small, Zavana apparently intended to expand it through print.

Here, in contrast to the situations previously discussed, it is appropriate to speak of an incipient cult with two geographical bases, the convents in Venice and Bassano, and two prime promoters other than themselves, the nuns Benetta and Gabriella.⁶⁸ The protagonists considered Benetta in particular a true believer. One witness reported Balbi's reassuring Zavana that "'as long as Benetta remains firm, we shall be all right,' speaking of suor Benetta of San Marcuola. And Marietta replied, 'she'll stay firm because she knows that I belong to God.'"⁶⁹ Giovanna Maria Bonomo's subsequent difficulties with ecclesiastical superiors, including the Holy Office, about her insistence on abandoning oneself to God suggest that Balbi's and Zavana's influence may have continued for decades to shape the spiritual climate in the convent of San Girolamo.⁷⁰

FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, both holiness and heresy were largely urban affairs. Few convents, the prime nurseries of female holiness eventually

recognized by beatification and canonization, were located in the villages of the rural hinterland. Towns and cities, on the other hand, contained concentrations of people who would notice and react to an individual's admirable or suspicious religious behavior, as well as the authorities qualified to promote the case of a holy person or prosecute a deviant. Hence the investigation of Lucrezia Gambarà, suspected of pretense of holiness, represents an anomaly. About twenty-four years of her spiritually eventful life she passed in Alfianello, a small agricultural center far from the cities of Cremona to the southwest and Brescia to the northeast. For most of that time she lived in the home of her father, a peasant. In early December 1728, Giuseppe Simoni, her parish priest and spiritual director, took her into his house.⁷¹ Two months later, acting on instructions from the Congregation of the Holy Office and Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini, bishop of Brescia, Leandro Chizzola, his vicar, had her moved to Brescia for expert evaluation.⁷² When the investigation ended in mid-May, she was sent back to her native village.⁷³

Between Gambarà's twenty-four years on the periphery in Alfianello and her four months in the urban setting of Brescia there is obviously an enormous contrast in temporal terms, but less than one might expect as far as space is concerned. Until 8 December 1728, when word of the stigmata she had acquired two months earlier began to spread through the village, she had operated in three relatively private spaces. At home and, when she was not confined to her bed, at work in the fields, she seems to not have told family members about her spiritual travails. In the parish church, she confided in confession to *prevosto* Simoni—probably not in a confessional booth, for Alfianello was too small and remote to have up-to-date ecclesiastical furnishings, but presumably out of others' sight and hearing.⁷⁴ On occasion, Simoni took her to nearby Verola to be exorcised. If the exorcist operated according to the rules examined in Chapter 7, he performed this rite in a secluded setting.

Once the inhabitants of Alfianello heard about Gambarà's stigmata, her life became a matter of intense public concern, very much like that of her predecessors Riccardi in the neighborhood around the Frari and Pesenti and Vincenzi in the parish of Santa Ternita. Crowds flocked from the village and even from Brescia to gaze on her and obtain handkerchiefs soaked with her blood.⁷⁵ Since she was not put on trial before the Holy Office, spectators' voices reach us only through Simoni's and vicar general Leandro Chizzola's references to what the latter termed "this ill-considered and inopportune credulity" on the villagers' part.⁷⁶ Through

another observer's eyes, we get only brief glimpses of "some spiritual girls" who assisted her.⁷⁷ Thus this picture of suspected pretense of holiness and the possible promotion thereof on the village level remains blurry.⁷⁸

In early January 1729, after Chizzola had reprimanded Simoni, security precautions surrounding Gambara were tightened. The prevosto stopped visits to her bedside, ordered his parishioners to burn any "relics" they had acquired, and followed meticulously the vicar general's instructions in examining her.⁷⁹ As soon as the furor in Alfianello had abated, her transfer to Brescia took place in the greatest secrecy Chizzola could possibly arrange. Only the inquisitor of Brescia, the matron in charge of her, a priest (apparently not Simoni) who helped persuade her to move, and the monk appointed to examine her, don Agostino Randini, knew where she was.⁸⁰ Confined in this safe house, she was subjected on an almost daily basis to Randini's close scrutiny, questioning, and counseling. After four months of Randini's brainwashing, she submitted to the "judgment of her superiors" by agreeing to marry.⁸¹ Whether she found a husband on her return to Alfianello is uncertain. Very likely, however, she followed the instructions that prevosto Simoni was ordered to give her, which included eschewing "extraordinary work[s] of piety" and confining herself to "only those that her [social] equals customarily do."⁸² Thus reduced to the condition considered appropriate for a peasant woman, Gambara moved at last out of her special private spiritual space.

MARIA PELLIZZARI'S CASE occupies a long period of time, the better part of her adulthood up to the time of the trial, and three cities in the Veneto. It begins in a small space, her house in Bassano del Grappa, with the chair she had built for Baby Jesus,⁸³ then shifts to Padua and Venice, and presumably ends back in Bassano after she was ordered by the Holy Office to return home. Pellizzari had moved to Padua and obtained a license to beg in order to support her lame son and two unmarried daughters. There, she told the Holy Office, she had met the widowed former prostitute Betta Borella, who took her in,⁸⁴ and persuaded her hostess to marry her young lover, Giovanni Battista Filomena.⁸⁵ The bride kept a boardinghouse in the parish of San Paternian in Venice, to which the newlyweds and their matchmaker soon moved.

Although the groom's father claimed that "everyone" considered Maria, Betta, and Betta's late mother, Antonia, to be witches, this legal professional conceded that reputation did not amount to conclusive

proof.⁸⁶ He was right. Witnesses possessing firsthand information about the charges represented not entire neighborhoods, as in the cases of Riccardi and Vincenzi and Pesenti, but small groups of Borella's and Filomena's present and former servants in Venice and Padua and one or two people who lived across the street from them in Venice. Of those in close proximity to the principals in the story, just one, a servant of Giovanni Battista, had seen signs of witchcraft in his master's behavior.⁸⁷ Within the domestic walls and through facing windows, the others had heard only Maria's claims that she conversed with God and the saints and Betta's expressions of belief in her holiness.⁸⁸ Betta, who was not called in for questioning, seems to have been Pellizzari's sole devotee.

BORN IN THE DOMINANT CITY, which remained her base, Cecilia Ferrazzi lived in a wide variety of neighborhoods and situations. The first twenty-one years of her life she spent in the homes of her father, a prosperous artisan, in the parishes of San Lio and Santa Marina. Following the death of her parents and most of her numerous siblings in the great plague of 1630–31, she moved from one house to another as the guest of a succession of protectors: her maternal uncle Defendi Polis, Francesco Maffei and his sister Ippolita, and the prosperous Cuccina family in the *contrada* of Sant'Aponal; the widow Modesta Salandi near the Carmini; the noblewoman Pizzamano near San Barnaba; and the patrician couple Marietta and Paolo Cappello, who maintained residences in the *contrade* of Santa Giustina and San Severo. Andriana Cuccina took her on at least one excursion to the family's villas near Mirano and Treste. With Marietta Cappello she visited Este as well as the home of the noblewoman's brother Giovanni in Padua.⁸⁹

Ferrazzi's sojourns in private homes were punctuated by brief stays in convents, most of them involuntary. In 1637–38, vainly endeavoring to keep the increasingly notorious ecstatic out of the public eye, her confessor Giorgio Polacco placed her first with the Cappuccine of San Girolamo, then with the Dominican tertiaries at San Martin, and finally with the Franciscan nuns of Santa Maria Maggiore near Sant'Agnese.⁹⁰ To escape from the increasingly oppressive attentions of Marietta Cappello and the confessors she selected, Ferrazzi sought refuge in the Carmelite convent of Santa Teresa, founded by her sister Maria in 1643. There she hoped to profess as a nun—an objective that her illnesses, and perhaps also her sister's reservations about her spiritual condition, rendered unattainable.⁹¹

Most of the information about Ferrazzi's peregrinations around Venice, and occasionally outside the city, comes from her responses to questions posed by the inquisitor and her autobiographical deposition.⁹² Once she came into her own in the early 1650s as director of refuges for "girls in danger," the documentary picture changes. Hundreds of witnesses—her charges, protectors, confessors, physicians, and some of the merchants who commissioned needlework produced by the inhabitants of her houses—testified about her operation of the "places" near San Lorenzo, San Giovanni Evangelista, Cannaregio, and Sant'Antonio di Castello, as well as a branch operation of the same kind she set up in Padua in the early 1660s.

Before her arrest in June 1664, Ferrazzi had lived in five sestieri of Venice. The trial brought her into the sixth, San Marco: to the headquarters of the Holy Office in the chapel of San Teodoro, just behind the ducal church and around the corner from the political center of the dominant city. In the literal sense, the courtroom and the Inquisition jail nearby at San Giovanni in Bragora were restricted spaces, inaccessible to all but authorized personnel and those they summoned or incarcerated. In broader terms, however, the courtroom functioned as a site for exploration of a much wider territory: everywhere Ferrazzi had been and everything she had done throughout her life.

The defendant's movements between the prison and the courtroom resembled processions, during which she was observed and commented on as she passed by.⁹³ The fifteen-month period of her trial, however, was not the first time she had been the central figure in a ceremonial passage through public space. Another procession she herself choreographed. When she returned from a morning at the card table with Venetian noblewomen⁹⁴ or a journey outside the city, one "girl" said, they were required to meet her gondola on the *fondamenta* and escort her into the house chanting the *Te Deum*.⁹⁵ Inside, another ceremony regularly took place. Several times a day, especially when visitors arrived, the young residents had to sing a hymn in honor of Saint Cecilia addressed to their "holy mother," Ferrazzi.⁹⁶

Ferrazzi's name and fame traveled far beyond Venice and the Veneto, not only to the Congregation of the Inquisition but into the public domain. Preserved in the correspondence of the papal nuncio to Venice, Jacopo Altoviti, are two *avvisi* (news sheets) circulated in Rome which reported on the early stages of her trial. In late June 1664 Roman readers were informed that "the whole city [Venice] has begun to whisper about the imprisonment by the Holy Office of a certain woman uni-

versally known for having 300 girls put under her governance, so that when she was taken to be interrogated on Thursday, an enormous group of people followed behind just to see her, most of them speaking critically about her behavior.” Two weeks later, another *avviso* bore news of the Senate’s decision to close the house at Sant’Antonio di Castello.⁹⁷ Such publicity about a person accused of pretense of holiness, unique among the group considered here, even made its way to England. In order to illustrate Italian moral corruption, Jean Gailhard made use of a collection of Inquisition sentences to construct a garbled account of her trial focusing on how cruelly she treated her charges and how many of them—so he claimed—were impregnated by Venetian noblemen.⁹⁸

PIETRO MORALI and Maria Janis ranged farther than Ferrazzi. In Zorzone, a hamlet in the mountains north of Bergamo where they lived for many years, the two were very much in the public eye. Everyone in the village and surrounding area knew or had heard about them; many were called to testify before Vincenzo Maria Rivale, the inquisitor of Bergamo. Although few witnesses from Zorzone were certain that Janis actually lived on communion alone, all except her sister Caterina spoke at least neutrally and in most instances favorably about her and the priest’s character and activities. Clearly the two were the main religious providers in the village. Morali preached, administered the sacraments, signed the sick, and ran a popular confraternity.⁹⁹ Janis, too, signed the sick, as well as teaching Christian Doctrine, causing storms to cease, revealing the present whereabouts of dead souls, and offering a personal example of the ascetic life.¹⁰⁰

Then they set out on pilgrimage. First they spent two weeks as guests of Count Agostino Vitali, who had previously come to Zorzone seeking their help for his blindness and childlessness, in his villa at Botta, north of Bergamo. Some information about this first stop on their journey made its way to the Holy Office in Venice.¹⁰¹ At the most distant points on their itinerary, we do not know whether many people were aware of and interested in their activities. That only the two defendants and their companion, Pietro Palazzi, provided information about their visit to Loreto and stay in Rome is a function of the fact that Inquisitors Fracassini and Ugoni did not ask colleagues in those cities to examine witnesses.

Once Janis and Morali reached Venice, the pool of witnesses contracted. Strangers in the city, the two kept mainly to themselves in their

apartment in Calle della Stua, located in a zone of ill fame near the Rialto. Of the few people who knew or at least had seen them in Venice, virtually all were called in for questioning: the priest Iseppo Rizzo, who had denounced them; Antonia Bellini, who had alerted Rizzo to their private and irregular communion service, along with her mother and sister, Caterina and Meneghina; the Inquisition's chancellor, Antonio Vescovi; and several natives of the valleys above Bergamo who worked in Venice and had lent Janis and Morali a hand.¹⁰² Thus what they had hoped would be a secluded spiritual life emerged into public view in the courtroom.

ANDREA SCOLARI's professional career began in his home territory on the Riviera di Salò, where he served for about a decade as private chaplain to Angelo Donati in Tremosine.¹⁰³ In 1740 he became an Oratorian in Vicenza but left the order after two years because, he told two of his associates, "he had no means of maintaining himself in the Congregation of the Filippini" and had to support his aged father and ailing sister back home in Bogliaco.¹⁰⁴ From about 1743 until 1745, he lived in Venice, part of that time in the home of the noblewoman Elisabetta Minio near San Trovaso.¹⁰⁵ For the next year or so he divided his time between Padua, the hermitage of Monte Froppa near Domegge di Cadore, and the convent of Capuchin nuns in Cologna, southeast of Gemona del Friuli.¹⁰⁶ In July 1747 he was named confessor to the nuns of Santa Maria della Visitazione, a house of the Visitandine (Salesian) Order in San Vito al Tagliamento. After four months, his three-year appointment was terminated by the bishop of Concordia, Giacomo Maria Erizzo.¹⁰⁷ He withdrew to Castions, east of Pordenone, and then returned to the Riviera di Salò. In late February 1748 he was arrested in Tremosine in the house of his sister, Oliva, and taken to Venice for trial. There he languished for almost four years in the Inquisition jail before being released on instructions from Rome and escorted home.¹⁰⁸

Of the many spaces Scolari occupied, the most richly documented is the convent in San Vito, where he spent much of his time between July and October 1747.¹⁰⁹ His appointment as confessor to the nuns had been arranged by his friend and supporter Giovanni Talamini, curate of Perarolo di Cadore. Talamini, who corresponded frequently with the superior of the house, suor Maria Margarita Ronconi, had a proprietary concern for "my dear Salesians" and wanted them to live up to the standards established by order's founder, Saint François de Sales. Scolari, he said,

would be their angel Raphael.¹¹⁰ The new confessor immediately began limiting relatives' visits to the *parlatorio*, bringing outbuildings within the precinct of convent walls, and taking in hand the spiritual lives of the nuns and their *educande*.

Accomplishing these objectives required Scolari to spend a great deal of time in the convent. Since he was not a monk or friar who had to be accompanied by a confrere, he came alone. After his expulsion, many of the nuns were questioned first by their extraordinary confessor, the Dominican friar Leonardo Maria Cantarutti, and then by the inquisitor of Aquileia and Concordia, Carlo Ippolito Baratti. Most expressed reservations about his omnipresence, especially in the *parlatorio* and within the convent. Several conceded that since he was deaf in one ear, they had to speak louder than usual in confession; the voices of both penitents and confessor were easy for others to overhear.¹¹¹ To talk privately with his charges, he needed to operate in less confined spaces.

Scolari's impaired hearing may have had something to do with another mode of communication between him and the nuns, letters—but certainly not everything. Even though he seems to have been in the convent every day, these fully literate women frequently wrote to him about their spiritual scruples, and he almost always replied. In some instances, letters probably supplemented conversations; in others, they must have provided a vehicle for expressing sentiments difficult to voice. Correspondence between spiritual directors and their advisees was neither unusual nor irregular.¹¹² The investigators, however, were understandably anxious to examine Scolari's letters. Thirteen of them, which the nuns had conserved rather than burning, they turned over to Cantarutti, who submitted them along with the transcript of his interrogations to Baratti. Marked with underlinings by the Dominican friar or the inquisitor, the missives were included in the dossier forwarded from Udine to Venice.¹¹³

What did Scolari's letters and the nuns' testimony reveal about the nature of their relationship? Unquestionably it was spiritually intimate. The confessor claimed that with the assistance of the sisters' guardian angels, he could see into their souls and discern things they had not expressed either orally or in writing. In many cases this intimacy was enhanced by a written vow he encouraged the nuns to read aloud, copy, and sign. Some were reluctant to do so. Suor Giovanna Francesca Pasquolini, for instance, told Cantarutti that Scolari, disregarding her hesitancy, had forced her to recite at the high altar a formula he had prepared before giving her communion.¹¹⁴ According to suor Maria Vittoria Bot-

toglia, the vow included “a promise never again to reveal to others my inner state without his permission.” Subsequently, when she talked with an extraordinary confessor, he expressed his displeasure.¹¹⁵

Most of the nuns were anxious to take the vow because they believed that it would facilitate their quest for spiritual perfection. Since on confessing they had vowed obedience to their superior, a second renunciation of their freedom did not seem like an extraordinary sacrifice. The vow of exclusive allegiance created a special bond between Scolari and his penitents. As he wrote to suor Maria Emanuela Antonini, “Now you and I are one in will, solicitude, desire, and love.” Since he knew the state of her soul, she need not worry too much about what or how often she confessed.¹¹⁶ In a letter to a nun in despair, Maria Costanza Ortes, he exclaimed, “No, my dear daughter, it isn’t true that hell is your cell; it isn’t true that you’re in the devil’s hands; no, no, it isn’t true that you are abandoned by God. I possess your liberty and will not let the devil get you.”¹¹⁷ More than willing to share spiritual experiences, he confided to suor Maria Costanza that he, too, was acquainted with the wiles of the devil, who had hit him on his good ear in the hope of reducing him to total deafness.¹¹⁸ During confession, a nun and two novices testified, he wept in compassion on hearing of the slightest sin.¹¹⁹

Intimacy so fervently expressed in written and spoken words found tactile expression as well. Suor Maria Costanza testified that she spontaneously kissed Scolari’s hand, “sacredly anointed with the sacred chrism, which touches the most holy body of Christ.” Once he gave her a sugared almond, “saying that it [represented] spiritual marriage, without touching my hand.”¹²⁰ On that particular occasion, perhaps, no physical contact occurred. One of the nuns’ main complaints about their confessor, however, was the frequency with which, at his initiative, his hands and theirs reached through the grate of the *parlatorio* and were kissed.

Despite many nuns’ concern about hand kissing, only a few expressed serious reservations about Scolari’s brief tenure as their confessor. Not a one fully accepted Cantarutti’s insinuation that he was hypocritically projecting a false image of his own holiness. Even though they knew by the time Baratti interrogated them that he had been jailed by the Holy Office in Venice, information they evidently found disquieting,¹²¹ most concluded that he had done an extraordinary job of helping them to achieve their spiritual potential. As the superior, Maria Margarita Ronconi, put it while he was still in office, “I am even more of the opinion that if at present we are not becoming true daughters of the Visitation, we never

will.”¹²² All but one regretted his forced departure.¹²³ Many nuns had hoped to die under his care, for he had promised “that he would make them go immediately or at least quickly to heaven.”¹²⁴ Scolari felt just as warmly about his charges. “He said,” reported suor Maria Elena Vezzi, “that he called staying with so many little angels his consolation, and that when he left he was deprived of this pleasure.”¹²⁵ For four short months, many of its inhabitants, as well as their spiritual director, considered the small space of the Salesian convent in San Vito a paradise on earth.

FROM VENICE TO CYPRUS, Candia, Messina, Naples, Rome, and back to Venice: in the four years preceding his appearance before the Holy Office, Pietro Vespa covered a great deal of ground. From 1621 until departing for his diocese of Paphos in 1629, furthermore, he had ranged around the central Veneto, serving as prior of the Carmelite monastery in Vicenza and founding houses of his order in Brendola and Bassano. Thus he was the most widely traveled of the sixteen Venetian subjects accused of pretense of holiness. In an autobiographical statement presented spontaneously to the Venetian Holy Office before that body got around to calling him in, he supplied his version of his eventful journey around the Mediterranean.¹²⁶ Additional details about his journey, as well on his earlier life as a Carmelite friar and his behavior after he returned to Venice, emerged in documents forwarded from Rome and interrogations of the suspect and witnesses.

Vespa's career pattern differed significantly from those of the other ecclesiastics tried for pretense of holiness. Giuseppe Riccardi's unrealistic dreams of advancement were based only on a nun's predictions. Pietro Morali, who deserted his post as untenured priest in the remote parish of Zorzone, pinned his hopes for fame on eventual recognition of Maria Janis's “privilege.” By late middle age, Francesco Vincenzi had reached a position of modest prominence in the Venetian church as pievano of Santa Ternita but had no prospects of rising further except possibly as Antonia Pesenti's promoter. The ambitions of Giacomo Ladicosa, who had already served several times as prior of his monastery, seem not to have extended beyond the narrow circle of his devotees. Although Andrea Scolari operated in several geographical areas, his career moved horizontally rather than vertically. Vespa, on the other hand, was well launched on what promised to be a brilliant ecclesiastical trajectory. Possessing a doctorate in canon law and administrative talent, he had shown willingness to go wherever he was called, even to such sites of “evident

danger” as Ottoman-ruled Cyprus.¹²⁷ Already a bishop at thirty-seven, he had every reason to anticipate moving up even higher to a more important see in “this most happy state,” the Republic of Venice.¹²⁸

In the early stages of the trial, it appeared that Vespa’s problems had begun in Candia. There the use he made of the alabaster vase began to evoke controversy. In addition, the way in which he exercised his mandate as vicar general to reform the local clergy antagonized them and alienated the nonresident ordinary, Luca Stella. Only after the trial was well under way did his former confreres and others—no doubt prompted by Stella, who now governed the diocese of Vicenza—offer evidence about how Vespa had earlier gone about enhancing the fame of the image of the Madonna del Prato in the Carmelite church of Brendola, of which he had been named pastor.¹²⁹ Even more noticeably in this prosecution than in others, the sequence of events in the courtroom did not follow their occurrence in “real time.”

Although the prosecution of Vespa ranged over many geographical locations, in few of them did it generate enough evidence to enable a thick description. His initial encounter with Melchizedek in the Capuchin church of Nicosia yields a tantalizing vignette of interaction between people of different faiths, but we have only his word for it. On what happened in Alessandro Billio’s antique shop in Candia, where Vespa acquired the vase, both parties to the transaction provided accounts of it which differed not so much about what was done as about what was said or implied. In Messina the letter of accusation and his own testimony take us into both a public space, the church in which the bishop of Paphos read the Virgin’s letters and celebrated his remarkable recovery from illness, and a private one, the bedroom where he went into delirium or ecstasy.

The moving star in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine was a different matter. As we saw earlier, accusations about Vespa’s behavior in Brendola during the mid-1620s emerged in the course of interrogations conducted in Vicenza about his dispensing oil from the vase in that diocese after his return to Venice. The first person to mention the star was Bishop Stella’s secretary. Pietro Maria Ferrari had learned from the Carmelite friar Giovanni Patrizio Gattoni of Vespa’s spreading word about the miraculous image of the Madonna in the church, arranging for the star to move on a cord across the darkened church, and pocketing the alms brought by pious visitors.¹³⁰ Bishop Stella, whose source was also Gattoni, repeated the story.¹³¹ When Gattoni was questioned, he ex-

plained that he had not actually seen the star move because he had been in Udine at the time. On his return, he had challenged Vespa's claim that it was a miracle: "I replied, 'I believe that this is a trick and an invention to get money,' and the bishop retorted, 'You're petty and brainless.'" ¹³² Two Carmelites tracked down in the diocese of Verona attested to having heard rumors about the star as they went on their begging rounds near Brendola. ¹³³

Finally someone who had actually been in Brendola then appeared before the Holy Office of Vicenza to testify about the star. Nicolò Randonio, however, was not exactly an eyewitness. When rumors about extraordinary events in the Carmelite church of Brendola had begun to circulate in 1626, he recalled, he had made a special trip there, but neither he nor anyone else in his group could see the star. Hence, he testified, "I believed that it was an invention." "Who," the inquisitor inquired, "do you believe was the inventor who made that star appear?" Randonio replied that it was the prior of Brendola, now a bishop, whose name he did not know. Nor did he have any idea how the trick had been staged. ¹³⁴

With this information in hand, inquisitor Ricetti interrogated Vespa on the subject. Asked why he had been in Brendola, the bishop of Paphos responded that he was serving as prior of a church that had been granted to the Carmelites and assigned to him during his lifetime. In response to the question whether he heard anything about a miraculous image, he cautiously replied that he had been told that the Madonna of Brendola had performed "graces and miracles, loosely speaking, because I don't want to err in [using] the term miracles." He did not recall what they were, had not kept a record of them, and claimed never to have heard of the appearance of a star above the Madonna's head. Ricetti then rehearsed in detail the testimony previously gathered. Again and again Vespa protested that everything alleged about his conduct in Brendola was a lie concocted by his many enemies, one or more of whom might have been suborned to give false evidence. ¹³⁵ Bishop Stella, members of his staff, and various friars whom Vespa had reprimanded during his career as a Carmelite superior headed the list of names he gave; ¹³⁶ most of them had, in fact, testified about the star. Because Gattoni had wished to obtain the church of Brendola for himself, Vespa correctly surmised that he was primarily responsible for this set of charges. ¹³⁷

Frontal opposition between witnesses' and the defendant's testimony makes it impossible to know what, if anything, actually happened in the church of Brendola in the mid-1620s. The contested contours of the

event, however, reveal a good deal about the sort of clerical infighting that complicated Vespa's case. In the more geographically limited trial of Riccardi, his Franciscan confreres' vociferous opposition to his preaching may have masked other, unstated grounds of discord inside the Frari. Here, in contrast, we see in considerable detail how the efforts of an ecclesiastic with the authority to exercise discipline could cause lasting bad feeling that would come back to haunt him years later in an entirely different place and context. Stella stated directly what his onetime vicar general had done in Candia that he disapproved of: granting dispensations for marriages within prohibited degrees with too liberal a hand.¹³⁸ Perhaps disingenuously, Carmelite friars projected lingering resentment of their former superior's energetic disciplining onto an incident purporting to provide yet another instance of his cynically manipulating the sacred for pecuniary purposes.

WE HAVE SEEN that aspiring to holiness could be a project undertaken at an early age or a resolve made in adulthood as a consequence of an inspiration or an extraordinary encounter with a person or object. Its duration depended upon both the circumstances in which the aspirant lived and the reactions of observers. Hence time was closely connected with space. In theory, if someone pursuing a career of holiness could manage to operate in a secluded environment, one not penetrable by prying eyes and open ears, he or she might lead an entirely private spiritual life, undisturbed by followers' or opponents' intrusions. For three years Giacomo Ladicoza and his female coterie achieved that objective. In none of the cases considered here, however, did permanent spiritual privacy prove possible. Sooner or later, by chance or conscious intention to disseminate the good news, a personal quest entered the public domain.

As we have seen, all the numerous and varied spaces of holiness were at least potentially public. Even the seal of the confessional did not guarantee permanent confidentiality. Priests not only gossiped among themselves and with penitents; they were required to report confessional revelation of an unusual and suspicious kind to the Holy Office. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same was the case with lay neighbors. Once an individual's spiritual life became the Inquisition's concern, those who had in any way been party to it were summoned to give evidence about when, how long, and where, as well as how, it had been led.

To conclude that vigilant agents of ecclesiastical discipline and layfolk brainwashed by a successful campaign of confessionalization vio-

lated the aspiring saints' spiritual privacy would be anachronistic. In early modern Catholic Italy, knowing in one's heart that one was specially favored by God did not suffice. Others' attention to the project of personal sanctification was absolutely necessary, first to validate inner conviction and then to move along the road toward unofficial and eventually official recognition of one's status. Being considered holy (*santo/santa*) constituted the first step toward postmortem acclamation as a member of the heavenly choir, a saint (*un santo/una santa*).

In all cases of alleged pretense of holiness, time and space, so richly characterized in the course of judicial proceedings, come to an abrupt, artificial end at the conclusion of the trial. Dramatic life stories and even the tedious texture of everyday life evaporate once the inquisitorial documentation terminates. Other sources reveal when and where Alvisè Balbi, Pietro Vespa, Cecilia Ferrazzi, and Francesco Vincenzi died. For the other eleven defendants, not even bare necrological information is available. Did our aspiring saints persist in their quest? If so, did they meticulously follow orthodox guidelines on acceptable thought, behavior, and speech, as their sentences required them to do? Did inquisitors ever wonder what had become of the people they had judged? A historical novelist may speculate about these matters, but the historian can go no further.

Gender and Sex

SOME YEARS AGO Jean-Michel Sallmann inquired rhetorically whether there was such a thing as male “false holiness.” To answer this question, he examined the eight prosecutions for pretense of holiness conducted by the Roman Inquisition in Naples between 1581 and 1722, four clustered at the beginning and four at the end of this period. The two groups of Neapolitan defendants and their fate at the hands of the Holy Office present contrasting profiles. Three women and one man put on trial between 1581 and 1615 exhibited what Sallmann calls a “feminine” ecstatic and prophetic sort of holiness, which the embattled church of that era viewed with alarm and sentenced very harshly. In contrast, four men prosecuted between 1694 and 1722 who had reputations as thaumaturges display what Sallmann oddly terms a “masculine” form of holiness. By now triumphant over its external and most of its internal enemies, the church could afford to consider them relatively innocuous and therefore did not punish them severely.¹

In terms of gender, pretense of holiness in the Venetian state between 1618 and 1750 looks very different. Of the sixteen people investigated or put on trial, nine were women and seven men; no shift in the gender balance occurred over time. At all stages of trials—from denunciation through postsentence decisions—and at all times, furthermore, inquisitors in Venetian tribunals of the Holy Office treated women and men differently. Even when a female defendant had inspired a male who was prosecuted with her, men were judged more culpable than women and sentenced more harshly.

Of the women against whom proceedings were completed, Pellizzari was sent home with a warning; Gambara was considered “rehabilitated” by her discussions with Abbot Agostino Randini. Janis and Ferrazzi, judged “lightly suspect” of heresy, received indeterminate and seven-year prison sentences, respectively. Pesenti, “vehemently suspect,” was given an indeterminate jail term. Bon Erizzo, also “vehemently suspect,” was

assigned only salutary penances. Of the men whose trials were completed, all five were judged “vehemently suspect.” Riccardi was banished from Venetian territory under threat of a seven-year term on the galleys if he returned. Scolari, Morali, and Ladicosa were sentenced respectively to two, five, and ten years’ imprisonment, Vincenzi to an indeterminate period in jail. Ladicosa and Scolari, who actually served time in prison, were permanently suspended from exercising important priestly functions.²

If we shift the focus from prosecutions to the backgrounds of those prosecuted, Sallmann’s question suggests other lines of inquiry. Were “false saints” in the Republic of Venice distributed evenly across the social and professional spectrum, or were women and men in certain statuses of life particularly likely to seek holiness in ways that brought them eventually to the Inquisition’s attention? Were these women’s and men’s ways of conceiving and striving for holiness similar, or did they differ according to their gender identities as constructed in the early modern period?³ From the early seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, did the ways in which they aspired to holiness change or remain substantially the same?

In addition, we must address a cruder issue: “carnal congress.” To what extent did sexual relations between men and women feature in pretense of holiness? Did theologians and inquisitors correctly assume that those who considered themselves to have been sanctified had drawn the dreaded antinomian conclusion? Had such people reasoned that to them all was permitted—that indeed, by infringing divine and human laws regulating sexual behavior, they could demonstrate that God had freed them from the curse of ordinary human sensuality? Should all or most “false saints” be considered Quietists or—if they operated before this particular version of antinomianism had been formulated theoretically and acquired a name in the late seventeenth century—“pre-Quietists”?

NONE OF THE NINE WOMEN suspected of pretense of holiness in the Venetian state was married at the time when the Holy Office entered her life. About Zavana’s marital and sexual history we know very little, but lack of reference to a husband or her being a widow strongly suggests that she had never been married. The marriages of Narcisa, Rossi, Pellizzari, and Bon Erizzo lay in the past; their husbands (two in Rossi’s case) were deceased.⁴ The allegation that she had led a “lascivious” life suggests that one of these widows, Narcisa, may have been sexually active not long before she was investigated.⁵ Four, perhaps five, members of the group had deliberately opted against marriage. Early in life, it appears,

Janis, Ferrazzi, Pesenti, and Gambara had decided to preserve their virginity and dedicate it to God. Several of them mention a childhood vow not to look any man, even a relative, in the face. To maintain her resolve, Ferrazzi claimed, she had resisted heavy pressure from an uncle and the prospective mate he had picked out for her.⁶ Rossi's supposedly unconsummated marriages may point to a desire to lead a celibate life.

The social origins of these women, identifiable mainly by father's or late husband's occupation, range from modest to low. Janis, Ferrazzi, and Pesenti were artisans' daughters. Pellizzari had been married to a blacksmith. Gambara's father was a peasant. Their economic situations at the time they came before the Holy Office were in most cases less than secure. Only Zavana and Ferrazzi held steady jobs. Others practiced part-time occupations: Janis earned some of her keep by spinning and weaving, and Narcisa may have made ends meet by occasional prostitution. Until Betta Borella took her in, Pellizzari had been supporting herself and her children by begging. In the sense of earning money for services performed, Pesenti, Gambara, and perhaps Rossi seem not to have "worked" at all.

Three of these women had hoped to enter the convent. Ferrazzi's original objective of entering the Franciscan house of Santa Maria dei Miracoli had been frustrated by her parents' death from the plague. Subsequently the Virgin authorized her to found a Discalced Carmelite house (a project vetoed by the patriarch of Venice), and she made unsuccessful efforts to become a nun in several convents.⁷ Before setting out for Rome with Pietro Morali and Pietro Palazzi, Janis had been preparing herself under Morali's tutelage to go into a convent for poor women being organized in a town close by. Pesenti's inner voices, probably seconded by Francesco Vincenzi's, had been urging her to become a Capuchin nun.⁸ Since she was probably illiterate, she could at best have attained the rank of *conversa*. Indeed, without the financial resources necessary for a spiritual dowry, none of them could have expected to profess as a choir nun in a long-established, prestigious religious house.

Clearly, at the time these women came before the Holy Office, almost all clung precariously to positions below the middle range in their society—in part because they lacked living husbands to draw and keep them there. Widowhood certainly pushed Pellizzari, and may have shoved Narcisa and Rossi as well, down the social ladder. In socioeconomic terms, only Ferrazzi, whose invented profession of caring for "girls in danger" brought her into contact with elite, affluent supporters, might be con-

sidered upwardly mobile. Did being single, poor, and unable to become nuns impel these women to seek public recognition as favorites of God, as writers on discernment of spirits from Jean Gerson to Emanuel do Valle de Moura had suggested? Possibly, but this hypothesis cannot be supported without resorting to inappropriate psychoanalytic speculation. As we shall see in the concluding chapter, the records of investigations and trials furnish little evidence of such a motive operating anywhere near the conscious level, except perhaps in the minds of Rossi and Ferrazzi.

Turning the question around, we may inquire why no women in the upper-middle and upper ranks of society, and no nuns, were prosecuted for pretense of holiness in the Venetian republic. Elsewhere in Italy, elite women, nuns among them, attracted the attention of the Holy Office on account of their suspiciously high spiritual aspirations. In rare instances, to be sure, the Inquisition in Venetian territory investigated nuns, as the trial of Mansueta and experience of Angela Maria Pasqualigo show. Yet it seems to have been more reluctant than its counterparts in other Italian states to pursue highborn and cloistered women, probably because its operations were so closely monitored by the secular government. Surely the participation in all Holy Office proceedings of lay deputies served to discourage prosecutions of those belonging to the social elite, including nuns. Active surveillance of convents by a lay magistracy, the *Provveditori sopra Monasteri*, may have had the same effect in regard to cloistered women. Inquisitors in Venetian territory seem to have paid closer attention than their confreres elsewhere to Desiderio Scaglia's "Prattica per procedere nelle cause del S. Offizio." As we saw in Chapter 4, he recommended strongly that suspected heresy among nuns be dealt with in-house so that rumors about it would not spread and dishonor them and their highborn families.

Women investigated for pretense of holiness in Venetian territory, then, constitute a distinct sociocultural group: nonelite, in most cases determined from an early age to seek extraordinary holiness, unmarried, and influenced very little, if at all (as we shall see shortly), by direct contact with books. What about the men? Just one of the seven, Alvisè Balbi, was a layman. The others included two friars (the Conventual Franciscan Giuseppe Riccardi and the Minim Giacomo Ladicoza), a Carmelite friar become bishop (Pietro Vespa), and three secular priests (Pietro Morali, Francesco Vincenzi, and the former Oratorian Andrea Scolari). Excepting the patrician Balbi and the *cittadino's* son Vespa, the social and

professional standing of the male defendants seems relatively modest. True, all the religious and priests had acquired at least some training in theology and held the privileged position of membership in the clergy. Riccardi had earned a reputation as a preacher, and Vincenzi had risen to the rank of *pievano*. Still, none except Vespa could realistically have anticipated moving upward in the hierarchy of his order or the church—until God appeared to begin favoring him with special spiritual gifts or an associate who possessed them.

SIMILARLY, WE CAN discern two fairly clear gender-distinctive patterns of seeking extraordinary holiness. Given the women's relative lack of education and their lay status, it should come as no surprise that evidence of their reading, let alone writing, anything is very slim. Only Ferrazzi and Bon Erizzo could (or chose to) sign their names, indicating that they must first have learned to read and then received some instruction in writing.⁹ During childhood, Ferrazzi recalled in her autobiography, she listened to her mother read and engaged in some unspecified form of reading experience with her siblings. Thereafter, neither she nor anyone else mentioned her reading or writing, though others read saints' lives to her and her "girls."¹⁰ During her time at the house in Cannaregio, she had Giulia Franzoni conduct paraliturgical services that involved reading the Epistles and Gospels from a book by Cesare Franciotti and (assisted by her sister, Francesca) the mass, excluding the "secret," from the missal.¹¹ In Zorzone Janis taught Christian Doctrine, which may have involved the use of catechetical manuals, read or heard read the lives of the saints, and learned from Morali how to recite the Great Office in Latin, perhaps with book in hand. That is all. Unlike the trials of mostly male philo-Protestants in the sixteenth century, prosecutions of female "false saints" in the seventeenth and eighteenth had practically nothing to do with books.

Since these women did not peruse mystical treatises, they could not practice systematic meditation designed to lead step by step to union with the divine. Hence it makes no sense to call them mystics. Yet in all their lives visions played a central role. Most of them frequently went into ecstasy, during which they saw and spoke with Jesus, Mary, and various saints. These interlocutors, first of all, did favors for the women themselves. When, for instance, a priest refused to give Rossi communion, the host flew miraculously into her mouth. Janis received the privilege of living on communion alone and instructions on making a pilgrimage to

Loreto, Rome, and then Venice, where she had been promised that her privilege would be revealed to all. Ferrazzi's voices frequently reassured her that, no matter what unsympathetic confessors might say, she was on the right spiritual track. Gambarà's informed her that she would be allowed to participate physically in Christ's suffering.

In each case, the promises conveyed in visions were followed by signs clearly visible or at least perceptible to others. Janis did indeed appear to do without ordinary sustenance. Among many other things, Ferrazzi received a chain to aid in disciplining herself and obeying her superiors, as well as a ring that suggested a mystical marriage with the Lord. Physicians and others, she claimed, saw the marks made on her waist by the chain; one confessor believed or professed to believe in the invisible ring, which he instructed her to remove. Gambarà's parish priest, the group of "spiritual girls" who surrounded her, and visitors to Alfianello saw the blood that oozed from her wounds.

The visionaries also received messages meant to be forwarded. Narcisa, for example, allegedly passed on to her female friends the revelation that for God's chosen ones obedience to superiors was unnecessary. Zavana apparently enlisted Balbi, suor Benetta, and suor Gabriella in the production and distribution of *Agnus Dei*, and she may have prompted the two nuns to record her prodigies. Pesenti passed on instructions to Vincenzi about relocating the image of the Madonna *alla greca* above a prominently located altar constructed for that purpose. On request, several of them were willing to perform a valuable service: serving as conduits for messages sent from earth to heaven and back. Zavana, Janis, Ferrazzi, and Pellizzari consulted their divine contacts about the current whereabouts of dead souls and transmitted the answers to anxious survivors, in addition to predicting the postmortem destination of the living.¹² Pesenti, as we shall see shortly, predicted an exciting development in Vincenzi's earthly career.¹³

Of the nine, Pellizzari is in some respects the odd woman out. Besides being practically destitute and perhaps none too bright, she seems not to have had a particularly active or rich visionary life. She did, however, gather and pass on information about souls in purgatory; and like Janis, she occasionally performed thaumaturgic cures. The apparent spiritual difference between her and the others may be a product of the special circumstances in which she was denounced and put on trial. In her case, the corpus delicti was the misalliance between the aging former prostitute Betta Borella and the young Giovanni Battista Filomena, whom

according to his father Pellizzari had propelled into marriage by employing witchcraft. The inquisitor of Venice and his Paduan and Vicentine colleagues showed more interest in this strange event than in her inner life and its outward manifestations.¹⁴

THE RECORD of Ferrazzi's trial richly documents relations with members of her own gender, which appear to have been much more extensive and certainly more significant than those of the other women tried for pretense of holiness. Aside from Gambarà, she is the only one to mention maternal influence, which she credited with directing her toward piety. During the two decades following her parents' death, as we saw in the last chapter, she was taken in hand by a succession of more or less benevolent protectors, many of them women: Andriana Cuccina, Modesta Salandi, Marietta Cappello, and off and on her sister Maria. Once she had set herself up in business, she enjoyed both social contact with and financial support from noblewomen. According to one of her "girls," she often spent mornings with them at the card table.¹⁵ In 1661, while she was in Padua receiving medical treatment, the widow Faustina Basadonna Barbaro stepped in to supervise the house at Sant'Antonio di Castello.¹⁶ Following orders from her late husband conveyed from beyond the grave by Ferrazzi, Maria Zen Foscarini gave her one hundred ducats as a monastic dowry for one of her "girls."¹⁷ Andriana Mocenigo Foscarini and Lucrezia Trevisan Vendramin, wife of her major supporter Francesco, remembered her in their wills.¹⁸ Four noblewomen testified neutrally or enthusiastically about her during the defense phase of her trial.¹⁹

Ferrazzi's troubled relationship with the "girls" in her houses naturally played a major part in her trial. Her mode of supervising them appears to have been influenced by earlier experiences, not all of them happy, in being a surrogate mother. Several times in her autobiographical deposition she mentions having nursed children with problems that only she, through thaumaturgic intervention, could solve. By praying to the Virgin, she enabled Antonio Maffei's mute son to speak.²⁰ With pap made out of holy water she nourished Marietta Cappello's granddaughter, whose twisted leg she successfully prayed God to straighten out.²¹ The third incident ended differently. After she had assisted the wife of the papal treasurer, Antonfrancesco Farsetti, in a difficult childbirth, the parents entrusted the baby girl to her. Having kept the feeble infant alive with cooked apple and sweet almond oil until a wet nurse could be found,

she raised her successfully to the age of eighteen months, at which point the Fassetis decided to return to Rome. As the Virgin had predicted, the child did not survive the voyage. Several times thereafter, she appeared to Ferrazzi “as an angel in heaven, reciting the Hail Mary and sometimes the Magnificat.”²² Although Ferrazzi did not say so explicitly, this story conveys the strong impression that the little girl’s biological parents were punished for stealing “her” child, whom the Virgin restored post mortem to her “real” mother.

Eventually child care became Ferrazzi’s profession. She began around 1652 to look after a few charges in two small rented houses adjoining Paolo Lion’s palazzo near the Benedictine convent of San Lorenzo.²³ When the numbers of “girls in danger” entrusted to her care by their parents, patricians, and priests grew, she moved to a house adjoining the confraternal church of San Giovanni Evangelista, through the windows of which she and her girls could hear mass, where she operated between 1655 and 1657.²⁴ Again needing more space, she relocated briefly to a house in the low-lying sestiere of Cannaregio, where the water was bad.²⁵ In 1658 the patrician Francesco Vendramin purchased even larger quarters for her use: an enormous palazzo adjacent to the monastery of Sant’Antonio Abbate in the sestiere of Castello.²⁶ There she sheltered between two hundred and three hundred girls and young women.

Caring for several, then hundreds of *putte pericolanti* posed daunting logistical difficulties. Despite assistance from her patrician protectors and Bortolomio Ferlini, she was unable to surmount them.²⁷ Shortcomings in her administration came to the government’s attention in June 1661. When Alban Bertelli, an oarsman from Portogruaro, appeared at Ferrazzi’s house at Sant’Antonio di Castello with an order from the Avogadori di Comun which mandated the release of his niece Marina, the porter Lucietta, acting in behalf of her bedridden employer, declined to release the young woman. This was not the first time that Ferrazzi, who feared that her charges’ relatives intended to put them to work as prostitutes, had refused to yield them, nor would it be the last. Bertelli took the law into his own hands: on two successive evenings, he and a crowd of his friends gathered outside the building, shouting offensive words and battering on the door. The disturbance prompted an unidentified person, probably a neighbor, to petition the Heads of the Council of Ten for intervention by the Provveditori sopra Monasteri.²⁸

Until 1661, Ferrazzi’s successive houses had been private operations, run by her with assistance and funds furnished by her patrician support-

ers. As the Provveditori's report to the Heads of the Council of Ten explained, the house at Sant'Antonio di Castello housed about two hundred unmarried girls and young women, some forty noble and the rest from poor families. Although they appeared to be adequately dressed and cared for, the financial basis of the operation was shaky: it had no endowment and no means of obligating the girls' relatives to contribute to their upkeep.²⁹ Hence the Council of Ten voted to put the establishment in charge of the Provveditori sopra Monasteri, who began immediately to release inhabitants whose relatives demanded their return.³⁰

Two years later, in September 1663, the Provveditori reported that all was going well in the house. Only one thing was lacking: a set of rules that would spell out the criteria for admission to the house, the activities and conduct of girls and young women while they were housed there, the keeping of records about them, and the circumstances in which they could be released.³¹ These—along with an official name for the house, which until then had simply been called “signora Ferrazzi's place” (*luogo*)—the Provveditori provided. The lengthy “Distribution of the hours of the day for the virgins in the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin in Venice” was modeled on convent rules. In meticulous detail, this document mandated a daily regimen of services in the choir at the canonical hours, interspersed with periods of work for the older girls and instruction in reading for the younger, meals, recreation, and private prayers and examinations of conscience. On holy days, they were allowed an extra hour of sleep and a longer period of recreation; instead of working, they were taught Christian Doctrine.³²

Although her name, title, and duties were not mentioned in this rule, Ferrazzi thus became in effect the director of a public institution: a lay mother superior, like an abbess, a prioress, or the *madre* in charge of the Zitelle, a refuge for “girls in danger” established almost a century earlier.³³ According to many of her former charges who testified at her trial, she was a cruel mother. They launched a battery of accusations in this regard. Although she demanded the utmost deference from all her “daughters,” she nurtured and showed affection only to a few favorites. While denying herself nothing at table, she fed the others so inadequately that some of them starved to death. She struck and whipped them, cut off their hair, burned them with hot tongs, sentenced them to solitary confinement if they annoyed her in any way, and sold some of them to men who desired their sexual services.³⁴ In violation of the rule given the establishment by the Provveditori sopra Monasteri in 1663, she often made

them work on feast days to fill orders from the merchants who commissioned the lace collars and silk and gold flowers they produced.³⁵ When they became ill, so the girls claimed, she seldom provided adequate medical treatment.³⁶

Inquisitor Agapito Ugoni questioned witnesses on all these charges and included them in the sentence. He pursued even more vigorously another set of accusations probably closer to his heart as well as to his mandate: that in Ferrazzi's houses, grave irregularities in the sacrament of confession had occurred. The subject came to his attention at the very beginning of the case. In her denunciation, Chiara Bacchis alleged that the girls and young women in Ferrazzi's care were forced to live and die without confession. In order to conceal her cruel treatment of them, she trained them not to trust authorized confessors and assured them that there was nothing wrong with taking communion without having confessed. Worst of all, she forced them to confess to her.³⁷

On this subject Ugoni grilled scores of Ferrazzi's former charges and every priest who had been in contact with her since she began running houses for "girls in danger." The picture that emerged is not entirely clear. Most former residents of her establishments acknowledged that sometimes they had taken communion long after or entirely without having confessed. Some of the men who had served as confessors acknowledged technical difficulties in administering confession to such large numbers of young women, particularly at Sant'Antonio di Castello, but they insisted that they had done so on a regular basis. Asked whether Ferrazzi had confessed them, some of the "girls" replied in the affirmative, adding that her subordinates, the "mistresses," had also heard their confessions. A number further alleged that their "superior" had donned a Capuchin habit, pulled the hood over her head, and gone into the confessional box pretending to be a priest—or had lurked nearby so as to overhear what was being said and use this information to discipline them. Others, older and more theologically sophisticated, carefully distinguished between two different situations: "telling their faults" to Ferrazzi and the mistresses, followed by a blessing; and regular sacramental confession to a priest, followed by absolution. Again and again, Ferrazzi insisted that although she and the mistresses had indeed conducted "chapters of faults" (a practice so common in female monastic houses that she apparently did not consider it necessary to point out the resemblance), she had never arrogated to herself the priestly prerogative of administering sacramental confession.³⁸

Two features of the vexed issue of confession in this trial are evident.

First, many “girls” believed that Ferrazzi was requiring them to make confessions to her which were indistinguishable from sacramental confession to a priest. Second, she was acting *in loco confessoris*, if not technically as a confessor. Even more than demanding deference and obedience and enforcing her will through punitive measures, obtaining intimate secrets about her charges’ souls was essential to Ferrazzi’s aim of maintaining absolute control over them. As a woman, she could not become a priest. She never became a biological mother. Nonetheless, she exercised her agency to gain as much maternal and quasi-priestly power as possible over her dependents. Outside the little realm she created, she had to—and claimed she did—obey male and female superiors, both clerical and lay.³⁹ Within it, she was the sole superior.

UNLIKE MOST of the women, none of the men tried for pretense of holiness had set out early in life to attain extraordinary holiness. That prospect was suddenly presented to them in maturity, in almost every case by a woman. Balbi met Zavana. As well as acquiring Mary Magdalen’s alabaster vase, Vespa encountered Rosa Comminale. Riccardi’s life intersected in a crucial way with Francesca Tusa’s, Morali’s with Janis’s, Vincenzi’s with Pesenti’s, Ladicosa’s with Marietta Bon Erizzo’s, Scolari’s with Elisabetta Minio’s and then with those of the Visitandine nuns in San Vito al Tagliamento. Significantly, except for the layman Balbi’s spiritual companionship with Zavana, all these were confessor-penitent relationships. Each involved frequent, intense private colloquies in which the lines of authority rapidly began to blur. Beginning as the woman’s spiritual director, each man soon became to a greater or lesser degree her disciple, and in most instances her promoter and publicist.⁴⁰ In addition to the spiritual insights they had to offer, female penitents often gave or allowed their directors to collect tangible evidence—Comminale’s letters from the Virgin, Tusa’s portrait and miraculous rosary beads, Pesenti’s sweat-soaked handkerchiefs, Bon Erizzo’s “relics,” letters of the nuns of San Vito—which could be venerated, mentioned or shown to others, and perhaps disseminated.

Among the men, ecstasies figure prominently only in the cases of Vespa and Riccardi, visions not at all. None of them seems to have devoted himself to carrying messages between heaven and earth. With the partial exception of Vespa’s illness in Messina, signs of holiness did not mark their bodies, nor did they exhibit thaumaturgic powers. They could and did read, but only in Ladicosa’s case do books appear to have played

a formative role.⁴¹ Although their trials reveal a pattern in Venetian male holiness, it appears to a considerable extent a derivative one. Women—not God, Christ, the Virgin, the saints, or (except in Ladicosa’s case) books—impelled them toward extraordinary holiness. To appreciate that Vespa’s vase was a feminine agent, we need not invoke Freud and see a vagina in his vessel. The value and potency of the vase to him and others, after all, derived from their belief that Mary Magdalen had used it to contain the unguent with which she anointed the feet of Christ. Men, furthermore, seem to have found opportunities for religious sociability almost exclusively among women.

Women’s and men’s quests for holiness in the Venetian state, in contrast to Sallmann’s Naples, did not shift direction over time. Throughout the period under consideration, women were inspired by visions and men by women. Nor did the proportion of male to female defendants change between 1618 and 1750. In the territory of the Serenissima, pretense of holiness was a phenomenon of the *moyenne durée*, which lends itself not to diachronic treatment but to the synchronic approach followed here.

NOW LET US turn to sex. In more or less visible form, its shadow hovered over the cases of Balbi and Zavana, Morali and Janis, Ferrazzi, Vincenzi and Pesenti, Pellizzari, and Gambara. Sex featured directly and prominently in two cases, those of Ladicosa and Scolari. Italian inquisitors may have been intrigued by suggestions of sexual relations between men and women, a possibility foreclosed to them by their vow of celibacy.⁴² Their mandate, however, offered few opportunities to explore carnal congress in any depth. Augustine had long ago established that heresy was a sin of the intellect, not the body. As the Spanish canonist Diego de Simancas put it, “a heretic is not one who lives badly, but one who believes badly.”⁴³ Only on one charge, solicitation in the confessional, could Italian inquisitors directly interrogate defendants and witnesses about sexual behavior.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the ten Venetian cases in which sex reared its head can reveal much about the intersection of sex, gender, and holiness.

That the cases involving male–female duos had the potential to raise suspicion of sexual congress as well as spiritual collusion is obvious. The Venetian investigation of Balbi and Zavana is a fragmentary follow-up to their prosecution and sentencing in Treviso, of which no trace has come to light. Since it furnishes no concrete accusations or even explic-

itly stated concerns about what, if anything, besides spiritual affinity their relationship involved, it is necessary to read between the lines. The very fact that a mature patrician male with a living wife and numerous children was devoting so much attention to a female of vastly inferior social standing almost certainly struck everyone who knew about them as untoward, but not necessarily for sexual reasons. Although Zavana's exact age and marital status are unknown, she was evidently a mature woman who did not fit the profile of patricians' accustomed sexual prey: servant girls, prostitutes, courtesans, and occasionally nuns.⁴⁵ Marietta Balbi may not have minded her husband's attraction to the bedspread maker, who had assured her that when she died, she would go straight to paradise.⁴⁶

Balbi's spiritual director took a dim view of the relationship on social and religious grounds. "It has always disgusted me," he testified, "that this gentleman has to do with these crazy and brainless women," but he did not insinuate that they were sexually involved.⁴⁷ Nor did one of Balbi's servants, who described the pair's behavior on the night they were sentenced by the Holy Office of Treviso. Zavana, he said, came to Balbi's house at dusk; they dined together with his sons, and she slept "in a room beyond his." A few days later, she came back to remove her belongings.⁴⁸ This matter-of-fact account spoke to the couple's continuing association, which flew in the face of the prohibition against having anything further to do with each other,⁴⁹ rather than suggesting that there was a sexual side to their relationship. Neither Inquisitor Girolamo Zapetti nor the witnesses he questioned pursued the possibility of sexual intimacy between the defendants. The only explicit mention of sex in this case, a list of questions that the inquisitor of Treviso wanted his Venetian colleague to ask suor Benetta Girardi, concerns Balbi's and Zavana's previously mentioned quarrel with Angela Maria Pasqualigo, founder of the convent of Gesù Maria. Apparently Balbi and Zavana had removed from that house a young woman named Zanetta, known as Turchetta (the little Turk). Pasqualigo and her confessor were sure that Balbi intended to deflower her and then put her to work as a prostitute. Instead, he and Zavana placed Zanetta in the convent of the Capuchin nuns in Cittadella.⁵⁰

The record of Morali's and Janis's trial is equally thin on sexual innuendo. Only one hostile witness, a priest, pruriently suggested that the woman and the priest frequently withdrew to an upper room in his house, supposedly to engage in mental prayer—a charge the defendants and their former neighbors vehemently denied. Inquisitor Ambrogio

Fracassini showed some concern with the couple's living arrangements during their long journey from Zorzone to Loreto to Rome and finally to Venice. Both the witnesses who had information to offer on the first and last stages of the trip and the defendants insisted that they almost always occupied separate bedrooms; on the rare occasions when that was not possible, they slept in separate beds.⁵¹ As we saw in Chapter 9, one of the inquisitor's two main preoccupations in this case was the irregular manner in which Morali gave Janis her heavenly supper. Not only did he express horror about the silver box containing communion wafers being stored on a cord hung between Janis's breasts. In questioning the defendants, he pressed them repeatedly on exactly how and where Morali had touched her when removing and replacing the makeshift pyx.⁵² Neither in the interrogations nor in the sentence, however, did the Holy Office allege that the two had engaged in sexual misconduct.

At first sight, the spiritual marriage between Vincenzi and Pesenti would appear to furnish particularly fertile ground for speculation about a sexual relationship.⁵³ Such a possibility would not have been beyond Inquisitor Ugoni's ken. Almost certainly he knew the story of Francisco de la Cruz and the woman of Lima, first related by José de Acosta and retold numerous times in theological treatises and inquisitorial manuals.⁵⁴ Perhaps he had also read about a middle-aged Spanish priest, a doctor of canon law, who fell in love with a young nun in Rome. Reasoning that he and his beloved were both married to the church, he came to the conclusion that "groom and brides, that is, a priest and nuns, could have sexual congress without sin, and God had preordained it thus," whereupon he slept with his beloved and three other nuns.⁵⁵ Yet at no point in the trial did Ugoni pursue a line of inquiry designed to discover whether Vincenzi and Pesenti had engaged in sexual relations. Nor did witnesses' testimony point in that direction. The closest thing to a suggestion of illicit intimacy between Pesenti and Vincenzi was a thirdhand report that a neighbor looking through her window had observed the woman making the pievano's bed.⁵⁶

That Pesenti longed desperately for a sexual relationship with Vincenzi is abundantly clear, not merely from the exorcist Candido Brugnoli's hasty deduction about her being possessed by the demon of lust but from her own testimony. For her, it was love at first sight. During their initial encounter in a neighbor's house, Pesenti said, the pievano of Santa Ternita blessed her, putting his hand on her forehead, "and after he left, the impression remained so much on my mind that I continually

thought about how to go to him, for he seemed like a good priest." A few days later he came again and "began exhorting [us] to love God and despise the things of this world, at which I felt a certain *je ne sais quoi* in my heart, so I went and took his hand in mine and started kissing it three or four times."⁵⁷ In mid-June 1668, after she had spent the night in Vincenzi's "hermitage," she was struck by paralysis. It was God's will, the pievano decided, that she remain there.⁵⁸

Living temporarily close to Vincenzi transformed Pesenti's sexual attraction from "a certain feeling" and cold chills into more concrete "sensual tastes," which began to manifest themselves after the Inquisition sent her back to her father's house. Exorcist Brugnoli, who attributed them to the promptings of a "demon assistant" of Asmodeus, the devil of lust, stated that her yearnings focused mainly on the pievano.⁵⁹ When the inquisitor interrogated Pesenti, he insisted—using the form of questioning prescribed in confessional manuals—that she specify in what locations, how often, and where on her body the demon had touched her and what she had felt. She had the sensation, she replied, that hands and a mouth were touching her breast, which caused her to feel stirrings in her "hidden parts."⁶⁰ These touching were sometimes accompanied by such words as "Give me three or four kisses."⁶¹ That the demon in the form of the pievano (or occasionally of the Dominican friar Tommaso Villafranca, whom she had heard preach at San Polo) sought to deflower her caused considerable confusion: another voice, which she soon realized was the same one, had been urging her to devote her virginity to God and become a Capuchin nun.⁶²

Of all this, according to Brugnoli, Vincenzi was well aware. Once he warned her, "Tonight someone who has my shape will come visit you; don't believe that it is I, but it will be someone else."⁶³ The pievano himself claimed that on only one occasion had they discussed "things [that were] not spiritual, but worldly and immoral"; this conversation concerned the obscene propositions the demon had made to her.⁶⁴ He denied having any "tender feelings" toward Pesenti until the inquisitor reminded him that he had used precisely that phrase in one of his memoranda.⁶⁵ Although it seems most improbable that their spiritual marriage was carnally consummated, Vincenzi's attraction to Pesenti on another level was very strong. Not only did she herself and the miraculous image of the Virgin seem to furnish evidence that his church was the object of divine favor. She also made flattering predictions about his own future. When a voice identifying itself as "your Jesus the Nazarene" instructed her to

tell him that he was destined to become pope, she decided to address him henceforth as “Most Holy Father.”⁶⁶ For Vincenzi, the prospect of fame and power, not of sexual relations, was the ultimate aphrodisiac. In a reversal of male–female and confessor–penitent roles by no means uncommon in spiritual relationships, he received it from the hands of Pesenti.

TO A HIGH DEGREE, the testimony of Ferrazzi and Gambara, like that of Pesenti, reveals the combination of fear and avoidance of carnal commerce on the conscious level and emergence of sexual desire in visions so common in the careers of spiritually inclined women. Early on, both made a vow to preserve their virginity, supplemented around the age of twelve by the resolve to resist temptation by refusing to look men in the face. In Ferrazzi’s case, this self-imposed prohibition extended to her male relatives: “I was ashamed of serving my father and brothers, for it has always been my inclination to have nothing to do with men or even let them see me. And I tried to avoid my father and brothers as much as possible.”⁶⁷ Gambara, who had devoted herself to virginity at age seven or eight, stopped looking at men four or five years later.⁶⁸

Once they reached their mid-teens, however, diabolical agents inducing them to commit sexual sins began to people their imaginations. The devil appeared to Ferrazzi “either in the form of a frightening animal or as an ugly man breathing fire from his mouth,” who carried clubs, rods, or chains with which he beat her. Once he told her “that it would be better to consent to marriage than to lead the kind of life I was leading . . . and that he’d make me touch it all with my hand, and that I really should experience the taste of flesh.”⁶⁹ Later, a benevolent apparition in the habit of a Discalced Carmelite, after making visible the tortuous, stone-strewn path she must follow, showed her its opposite: “a city like Babylon, where a great number of people were doing bad things: men running after girls, looking as if they wanted to tear them to pieces; some of the girls fleeing and others running into the arms of the men, who undressed them immodestly.”⁷⁰ Time after time, always at night, Gambara envisioned young men—some handsome, others ugly with horses’ legs and feet—and “filthy animals” engaging in “obscene acts” and inciting her to join them.⁷¹

Like other ecstasies, Ferrazzi and Gambara interpreted such visions, at once frighteningly disgusting and perversely alluring, as tests administered by God which he knew in advance they could pass. From a modern perspective, these visions not only suggest deep ambivalence on the

seers' part about their commitment to chastity and their ability to persevere in the virginal state. They also indicate the extent to which in these women's minds, though not necessarily in their inquisitors', transgressions of a sexual nature were the worst of all possible sins. As anxious to pursue a holy life as their spirit might be, their flesh was all too vulnerable.

Running in a minor key through the record of Ferrazzi's trial are insinuations that she succumbed to this kind of temptation. According to many witnesses, her longtime friendship with Bortolomio Ferlini, the factor of Ca' Lion (known to most of the witnesses by his employer's surname), raised grave suspicions that they had been sexually intimate.⁷² One reported that when she saw them in bed together, Ferrazzi had introduced him as Saint Albert the Carmelite.⁷³ Some said that he had molested the girls in her houses and impregnated Ferrazzi, who had borne his child.⁷⁴

Ferrazzi vigorously denied these allegations. "I'm as clear and pure as a crystal and a virgin, too," she asserted in an early interrogation and maintained throughout the trial.⁷⁵ The mother of the foundling alleged to be her own daughter, she said, was a Flemish beggar.⁷⁶ Two of Ferrazzi's patrician supporters attested to Ferlini's good character. Paolo Lion, whose family had employed the factor for more than forty years, explained that before Ferlini met Ferrazzi, he had been "rather corrupt and not very God-fearing," but she had reformed him completely. According to Francesco Vendramin, no one had done more than Ferlini to assist her in running the houses, and his behavior toward her had always been beyond reproach.⁷⁷

Although Inquisitor Ugoni underlined references to Ferlini and questioned many witnesses about his frequenting Ferrazzi's houses, he seems to have seen the rumors about their possible sexual relationship as just one of numerous indications—and by no means a major one—that the woman was pretending to be holier than she was. Ferlini, alive and in Venice at the time of the trial, was never summoned to testify. Unlike practically all the other charges denouncers and witnesses made against Ferrazzi, the allegations about the factor of Ca' Lion and little Marietina were not included among the 131 points in her sentence.

ITALIAN INQUISITORS became preoccupied with the heretical implications of sexual relations only toward the end of the seventeenth century as a consequence of the emergence of a new form of antinomianism,

dubbed Quietism. Its name comes from the emphasis placed by certain mystical writers on a regimen of prayer and contemplation culminating in the “prayer of quiet,” in which the human will ceases to operate and the soul is infused with divine grace.⁷⁸ This position, stated in particularly attractive form by the Spanish theologian Miguel de Molinos in his treatise *Guia espiritual*, published in Italian translation in 1675 while he was living in Rome,⁷⁹ attracted much favorable attention in Italy. Before long, however, the Holy Office realized that Quietist views could easily lead, just as many earlier manifestations of antinomianism had done, to extremely dangerous conclusions. Believing that they were not bound by any of the church’s requirements, adepts might well infringe them in order to prove their elect status to themselves and others. In 1687, therefore, Molinos, his followers, and their tenets were definitively condemned by the Inquisition.

Thirty years ago Romeo De Maio observed that positing a long tradition of “pre-Quietism” paving the way toward Quietism proper is intellectually sloppy and counterproductive.⁸⁰ Trials for pretense of holiness in the Venetian state bear him out. Not until the case of Giacomo Ladicosa, tried in the early 1690s, did sexual behavior motivated by theological convictions move to the top of the inquisitors’ agenda. Ladicosa’s unusual method of administering discipline to Marietta Bon Erizzo and his other female penitents was to whip them on their bare buttocks. According to him, this was not a titillating experience. On the contrary, he felt “no movement of sensuality, which struck me as miraculous, especially since I considered myself a man of flesh, and further, I confirmed to myself that it was something ordained by God, as Marietta told me, because I recognized that these actions of managing women without any sensuality were supernatural things.”⁸¹ This penance took place on a “sanctified bed,”⁸² in which he, Marietta, and Marina sometimes spent the night together and took postprandial naps.⁸³

Ladicosa freely admitted that he gained inspiration and support not only from Bon Erizzo but also from reading books. These included an older text, the life of Blessed Henry Suso,⁸⁴ and several newer ones: the *Lettere spirituali* of Maria Arcangela Biondini;⁸⁵ Louis-François d’Argentan’s *Il Cristiano interiore*, translated from the French;⁸⁶ and guides to mental prayer by the Jesuits Fabio Ambrogio Spinola and Tomás de Villacastín.⁸⁷ The recently published works all stressed seeking to achieve the prayer of quiet; most of them were on the Index. Ladicosa claimed

that he had obtained permission from Rome, which could be found in his cell at San Francesco di Paola, to read prohibited books.⁸⁸ Whether such a license turned up the trial record does not reveal, but the possibility that he held one did nothing to modify Inquisitor Antonio Leoni's and his colleagues' scandalized reaction to his behavior.

In the voluminous record of Andrea Scolari's trial, conducted more than fifty years after Ladicosa's, the word *Quietism* crossed no one's lips. Clearly, however, the condemned doctrine was still known and feared. By the mid-eighteenth century it was associated with the notorious Giuseppe Beccarelli, a layman from the diocese of Brescia who in 1710–11 had been tried by both the Venetian Inquisition and the Council of Ten for promulgating Quietist tenets.⁸⁹ According to two nuns of the Visitandine convent in San Vito al Tagliamento, many people suspected that he had spread false doctrines "touching Beccarellism."⁹⁰

Did Scolari in fact hold, teach, and put into practice the libertine conclusions that could be drawn from Quietism? So his penitent Elisabetta Minio, a Venetian noblewoman, and her servants claimed. Scolari, she alleged, had instructed her that a pure person's flesh was "purified and sanctified." Hence he had shown her his nude body and spent many nights in bed with her and her maids.⁹¹ One of her serving women testified that Scolari insisted on their masturbating each other. When she protested that "the saints don't do these things," he replied that for him it was no sin. Another recalled that he had her lick and suck his breast, after which he sent her to communion with his blessing.⁹²

As we saw earlier, many of Scolari's penitents in the Visitandine house of San Vito objected to his frequent presence inside the convent, his propensity to touching and kissing hands and heads through the grate, and his long sessions with an *educanda* whom he was instructing in mental prayer, as well as to his demanding that they sign pacts of absolute obedience to him.⁹³ In a letter he had advised one of them to "attend to the negative" and strive for "annihilation": "In the depths, remain quiet and with closed eyes say [the prayer of quiet?] as often as you can, and pay no attention to the prohibition against thinking about, searching out, and examining sins."⁹⁴ None of the nuns, however, mentioned or hinted at other suspect doctrinal statements, let alone further sexual improprieties, on his part.

Neither, naturally enough, did witnesses called by the defense. The priest who had preceded Scolari as confessor to the nuns of San Vito

stated that in their discussions of “disputed matters of moral theology” he had never heard the defendant say anything unorthodox.⁹⁵ Scolari’s close friend the curate of Perarolo mentioned a conversation about the propriety of a confessor’s curing the illness of a woman who had taken a simple vow of virginity by touching her private parts; they had agreed that it was out of the question.⁹⁶ According to the archpriest of Tremosine, a lawyer who had received his early instruction in letters and morals from the defendant, and a priest from Bogliaco, Scolari had always “abhorred laxist and libertine opinions” and inveighed against “the vice of sensuality.”⁹⁷

In contrast to the record of Ladicosa’s trial, Scolari’s contains few references to books. Although he gave the hermits of Monte Froppa a reading list including works by Jean Gerson, Lodovico da Ponte, Fabio Ambrogio Spinola, and one Rodrigues,⁹⁸ witnesses for the defense asserted that he often expressed strong opposition to heretical texts.⁹⁹ An incident from the early part of his career seems to support this claim. Testifying before the inquisitor of Brescia, Benedetta Agosti recalled that one day at a Christian Doctrine session in the duomo, a friend named Maddalena had lent her a book. She passed it on to Paola Arnosi, with whom Scolari was lodging. Summoning her to Arnosi’s house, he flew into a rage: “He was angry that in that book there were many quotations from the saints—and particularly, it seems to me, Saint Teresa—and his anger was so great that he told me he would tear them out.” She then returned the book to its owner. Only in September 1748 did she learn from the curate of her parish church that the book was entitled *Guida spirituale* and its author was “Molinos, that is, a heresiarch.” For safety’s sake (by that time Scolari was on trial in Venice), a canon of Brescia advised her to prepare an affidavit attesting to the circumstances in which the book had briefly been in her hands.¹⁰⁰

When Scolari decided to leave Elisabetta Minio’s house in 1745, according to the testimony of a priest from Bogliaco, she told him that he would live to regret his departure.¹⁰¹ Her prediction came true. Ignoring all evidence to the contrary, Inquisitor Paolo Tommaso Manuelli framed the sentence against him in terms of Minio’s and her Dominican confessor Zenone Castagna’s original denunciations. Scolari, the sentence proclaimed, had “passed himself off as a saint, and with that simulated holiness had taught false doctrines about sensuality.” Comporting himself “in many shameful and unchaste ways,” he had encouraged women to suck his flesh, saying: “Suck, suck, daughter, the innocence, the love

of God,' and while they were sucking your breast, you said, 'Here is God, and where I am the devil cannot be.'"¹⁰² Of all the sentences passed against Venetian subjects charged with pretense of holiness, Scolari's is the only one that appears not merely unfair from a modern point of view but a blatant miscarriage of justice in early modern terms.¹⁰³

Pretense?

THE SIXTEEN WOMEN and men on whom this study focuses were charged with claiming extraordinary holiness or colluding with others who did so. To what, according to the Holy Office, did their offenses amount? Except in the cases of Narcisa and Pellizzari, the Inquisition ruled that they had deliberately deceived others about their holiness. Their sentences and matching abjurations, crafted by the inquisitors, employed the noun-adjective clusters examined in the Preface: the subjects were judged and confessed to being guilty of *affettata*, *falsa*, *finta*, *pretesa*, or *simulata santità*.

Much as we might wish to retry these defendants and arrive at sentences different from those the inquisitors passed, we cannot do so. As J. H. Hexter observed, historians are not “hanging judges” authorized to condemn historical figures. They can and should, however, try to “do justice” to “losers” in the past.¹ While conceding that, except in the case of Scolari, the judges made determinations fully in accord with the theological and juridical principles by which they operated, we need to inquire whether in fact the defendants fabricated evidence of their holiness. We must recognize that we are working in a liminal zone. In the words of William Christian, “Much religious excitement occurs precisely during the ambiguous period . . . , in the margins of the known and the approved, around persons whose works, visions, or organizations are not yet validated, at places that are in doubt.”² At this critical juncture, we are fully entitled to pursue “possibilities” about the defendants’ intentions, even though we cannot adduce “proofs.”³

Evidence of promotional efforts connected with the fashioning of one’s own or someone else’s holy persona, as we have seen, is thick on the ground. Narcisa, Zavana, Vespa, Rossi, Riccardi, Ferrazzi, Pellizzari, Ladicosa, and possibly Scolari spoke openly and often about their visions and divine favors. Several made their alleged powers of clairvoyance avail-

able to people anxious about the postmortem location of their loved ones. Vespa used and Riccardi distributed holy objects. To publicize their penitents' holiness, Morali and Vincenzi talked freely about their prodigious accomplishments. Vincenzi encouraged and Lucrezia Gambarà's pastor, Giuseppe Simoni, temporarily permitted the collection of potential relics: cloths soaked with Pesenti's sweat and Gambarà's blood.

Whether these words and actions were pronounced and performed in good faith or disingenuously we cannot definitively determine. Again, visions are and remain the private property of those who report having experienced them. No outsider—an inquisitor, a contemporary to whom they are recounted, a historian—can tell if visionaries actually see holy figures and hear them speak or are only pretending to do so. However hard they try, persons not privy to the visions cannot securely determine the source: divine or diabolical influence, humoral imbalance or some other form of disease, delusion, wishful imagination, some combination thereof.⁴ Operating in the realm of possibilities, however, we can do better. That in the early modern period visions were common and much desired experiences and that the elements of them were well known and readily available neither people of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries nor we can doubt. That Pesenti sweated, Gambarà bled, and the fluids they excreted were mopped up seem certain. That many of the subjects' contemporaries found these phenomena credible the trial records make clear. Although the hypothesis of fraud cannot be excluded, the possibility of genuineness appears more credible.

For two reasons inquisitors arrived at the opposite conclusion. First, their assumption that God was a respecter of persons who seldom vouchsafed to laymen and even more rarely to "little women" the privilege of visions led them to exclude the possibility that these visions were of divine origin. Their skepticism about the devil's power to take full possession of a subject's will, furthermore, made them doubt that the ecstasies lacked control over visions coming from the nether regions. If the subjects were sane (only Pellizzari was considered *non compos mentis*), they were also quite capable of and must be held responsible for fabricating visions. Thus fraud became the only viable hypothesis. Second, in no case were visions the only matter at issue. In inquisitors' minds, a variety of attitudes and behaviors uncharacteristic of a "genuine" visionary—pride manifested in boasting; inappropriate dress; making, commissioning, or purchasing and then using and/or distributing suspicious objects—en-

hanced the probability that these defendants were seeking to mislead others about their holiness.

WHEN WE CROSS the poorly marked boundary between reported visions on the one side and behaviors and tangible accessories to holiness on the other, the question of intention becomes more problematic. Balbi's and Zavana's distribution of *Agnus Dei* containing her hair, the mysterious portrait of Zavana, and the "Compendio di miracoli" compiled by suore Benetta Girardi and Gabriella Malipiero which Zavana planned to have published all point toward a level of promotional activity far beyond a mere oral recounting of the bedspread maker's visions. That Balbi and Zavana realized that these items and the ways in which they were using them were of dubious legitimacy seems certain, for they had repeatedly been told so; the two consciously, deliberately disobeyed the sentence passed against them by the Holy Office of Treviso. Yet their motive for persisting in forbidden activities cannot confidently be labeled "pretense" in the sense of faking. It seems quite possible that they were so convinced of their extraordinary holiness that messages and warnings to the contrary did not cause them to desist.

Vespa's is another hard case. Disappointed and disoriented by his experience in Cyprus, he may well have been seeking consolation and assurance. With his usual defenses down, whatever skepticism this intelligent and highly educated bishop might ordinarily have had about the vase's purported origin may have evaporated. The ecstatic features of his illness in Messina could be explained by high fever and delirium. His encouraging Rosa Comminale to write letters from the Virgin and the earlier incident of the moving star in Brendola, on the other hand, suggest attempts to fabricate evidence of the miraculous. Pretense seems to have played a part in his behavior but not to have determined all of it.

Because the limited sources on Rossi do not include a trial transcript, everything we know about her comes from inquisitors. Without interrogations of the defendant and witnesses, it is impossible to evaluate her reports of visions and her claim to have lived for long periods on communion alone. Her failure to pass the tests administered by exorcists with objects and words, which fully satisfied the inquisitor of Brescia that she was simulating diabolic possession, carries a certain weight with us, too. Yet given the apparent absence of any medical evaluation and the use of torture in her case, we cannot be certain whether she was mentally unbalanced or lucidly feigning holiness.

Tempting as it may be to write off Riccardi as a histrionic Sicilian, he deserves more serious consideration. Concerning the holiness of Francesca Tusa, the value of her portrait and rosary beads, and the exceptional place of Venice in the divine scheme of things he was certainly a religious enthusiast. Was he also the self-promoter of a spiritual excellence greater than he actually possessed? So it would appear. The prediction of suor Bianca that he would be promoted to the cardinalate and then elected pope may have quickened the pace at which he marketed the portrait of Tusa, preached extravagant sermons, and went into “ecstasy.” His extensive efforts to cite authoritative texts verifying the orthodoxy of his sermons enhance the impression—but given his right to do so, it can only be an inference—that he was fully aware of what he was doing and realized that he had gone beyond the pale of acceptable religious behavior.

In the case of Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, the central issue to be considered, as it was for Inquisitors Fracassini and Ugoni, is “the knot of noneating.” The food-laden forks that members of the Bellini family spied through the crack in the door of their neighbors’ apartment and the slices of salami discovered under Maria’s bed seem to prove that she had not after all fasted totally and lived on communion alone for more than five years. She and Morali, however, continued until the very end of the trial to maintain that her “divine privilege” was genuine and had never been breached. Only in their abjurations, made when more than a year in prison and repeated interrogations had worn them down, did they acquiesce to the inquisitor’s formulations.

That in Zorzone and on their first stop en route to Rome Janis had pretended not to eat and that Morali had spread word of her prodigious accomplishment seem abundantly clear. Notable by its absence in their story, however, is an escalating effort to publicize her holiness. Their expectation that her privilege would be recognized in Rome was not fulfilled. Thereafter—unlike Balbi and Zavana, Rossi, and Riccardi—they did not insist more and more urgently and openly on Janis’s holiness. Instead, they withdrew into the privacy of their apartment and tried to keep the necessarily improvised heavenly supper secret. By the time they reached Venice, Janis and Morali were no longer seeking to attract attention, build a following, and pass her off in public as a living saint.

Ferrazzi, in contrast, both talked the talk and walked the walk of pretense of holiness. In her house of refuge for “girls in danger” at Sant’Antonio di Castello she created a shrine to her holiness. Not only did she demand ceremonial deference: kneeling in her presence, processions on

the *fondamenta*, singing of the hymn to Saint Cecilia. She furnished the shrine with recycled portraits, with her unmistakable face on the holy bodies of the Madonna of the Seven Sorrows and Saint Teresa. How genuinely she believed in her holiness we cannot determine, but conscious image enhancement was part and parcel of her *modus operandi*, particularly in the last few years before she went on trial. Less equivocally than in any other case, the adjectives connoting deliberate intention to deceive employed by inquisitors fit her.

As promoter of Pesenti's holiness, Vincenzi played a role much more prominent than Balbi, a secondary character in the career of Zavana, and more consistent than Morali, whose publicizing of Janis seems to have lessened in intensity after the pair left Zorzone. His words and actions convey the impression of a man in crisis whose judgment was impaired once Pesenti came into his life. Besides leaning on her every word, writing enthusiastic memoranda about her, urging his parishioners to collect handkerchiefs drenched with her sweat, and demonstrating to his colleagues her insensibility during ecstasy, he followed her visionary inspiration in arranging their spiritual marriage. On the other hand, Pesenti, whose personality emerges more faintly from the trial record, appears to have been anything but a canny conceiver and executor of a plan to pass herself off as a living saint. Although she dominated Vincenzi's mind, he choreographed her actions. The brief duration of their spiritual adventure contributes to the impression that they had neither the time nor the intention to mount a well-conceived campaign of pretense of holiness.

Of the nine "little women" in our group, Pellizzari was certainly the smallest, both in social standing and in mental capacity. From the early reprimands in Bassano to the termination of her trial in Venice without a sentence, inquisitors and other ecclesiastics rightly recognized that she was in no condition to be held judicially responsible for her actions. We can readily concur with their evaluation. In her case, evidence of the conscious intention to project a completely false or partially misleading holy persona is completely absent.

While Ferrazzi took steps to enhance her image through ceremonies and recycled portraits, Ladicosa's penitent Marietta Bon Erizzo fabricated relics, as she eventually admitted. She presented them to him not as direct testimony of her own holy status but as evidence that she was in touch with divine powers. Although not all her reasons for doing so emerged clearly during Ladicosa's trial, it seems likely that one of her motives was to consolidate her position as a recipient of charity from

him and his *Minim confreres*. For this collaborator, feigning seems to have been a means to an economic end. Ladicosa's belief in his holiness stemmed from his reading of Quietist texts. He promulgated it, but only among the select company of his female penitents. Whether he claimed impeccability solely or mainly in order to have sexual relations, or at least sexually fraught encounters, with the Bon sisters and a few others cannot be determined. He looks to us, however, like a true believer in Quietist tenets, not a cynical perpetrator of false holiness.

Even more than the others, Gambarara was caught up in a cycle of self-suggestion which began in early childhood, stimulated by the pious environment in her household. Her biography, to the extent that it can be reconstructed from the records of the investigation, bears a close resemblance to the vitae of prospective female saints. Except to her confessor and then to her interrogator, she never talked about her holiness, let alone proclaiming it. In the last few months before her situation came to public attention, her body did the job for her. Suggestions of feigning emerge only in Randini's evaluation of her comportment during their interviews. They are a product of his presuppositions about graces that a "little woman" could not possibly have received, not probable evidence of any sort that she had practiced to deceive.

Scolari, to put it bluntly, was framed by his onetime penitent Elisabetta Minio and the priests who endorsed her version of what had happened between them. From beginning to end, as noted in Chapter 11, the inquisitors involved in this case cast his words and actions in terms of the original accusation, failing to take into account abundant testimony to the contrary. Scolari was not a proponent of Quietism. He never proclaimed, promoted, or fabricated evidence of his own holiness. Instead, he appears to have been a conscientious priest who may have failed to maintain an appropriate physical and emotional distance from the nuns in the convent at San Vito, but he did nothing that justified his prosecution and conviction for pretense of holiness.

SELF-FASHIONING with an intent to deceive, then, played a part in the behavior of a few Venetian subjects investigated and tried by the Holy Office for pretense of holiness. It is virtually absent in other cases. We, however, are in a position very different from the inquisitors'. In this democratic society at the beginning of the twenty-first century, except on the lunatic political fringes and in the imaginations of a few paranoid individuals, fear of widespread conspiracies and suspicion of people who

are pretending to be something they are not do not dominate our minds. Although we recognize the existence of simulation and dissimulation, our era, fortunately, is not thickly populated with Tartuffes.

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy it was otherwise. Strongly ingrained assumptions about the differences between elites and members of the subordinate classes and between male and female nature, a long tradition of theological writing on discernment of spirits, and well-developed procedures for validating “genuine saints” and unmasking volunteers and draftees in the infernal legions rendered the identification and punishment of simulators *religionis causa* a high priority. The Inquisition, a judicial organ designed originally to ferret out backsliding *convertos* and crypto-Protestants, facilitated the carrying out of this assignment. Irrespective of their “real” beliefs and intentions, particular combinations of words and actions on the part of certain kinds of people almost inevitably brought them into courtrooms of the Holy Office charged with pretense of holiness.

The ensuing confrontations involved not only suspects and defendants, their judges, and the judges’ supervisors on the Congregation of the Inquisition in Rome. Testimony of witnesses for the prosecution and the defense, a few of the former coming forward “spontaneously” but most summoned to give evidence, demonstrates how widely conceptions of “genuine” and “false” holiness had penetrated general discourse. Though designated professionals at the center (theologians, inquisitors, and cardinals) made the final determinations, people on the periphery participated in separating the sheep from the goats. It is clear, therefore, that to a considerable degree, campaigns of social discipline and confessionalization in Italian society of the Counter-Reformation era had accomplished their missions. By the seventeenth century, the defense of orthodox piety and the marginalization of those who sought holiness in alternative ways had become everyone’s business.

Abbreviations

- AlAP Alfianello, Archivio Parrocchiale
- b. busta
- BaGAP Bassano del Grappa, pieve of Santa Maria del Colle, Archivio Parrocchiale
- BgAV Bergamo, Archivio Vescovile
- BgBC Bergamo, Biblioteca Comunale Angelo Mai
- BoASD Bologna, Archivio della Provincia Lombarda dell'Ordine Domenicano
- BoBCA Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio
- BoBU Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria
- BS Bibliotheca Sanctorum*
- BsAS Brescia, Archivio di Stato
- BsAV Brescia, Archivio Vescovile
- BsBCQ Brescia, Civica Biblioteca Queriniana
- C.B. Congregationis Clericorum Regularium S. Pauli seu Barnabitorum (Barnabite)
- C.O. Congregationis Oratorii (Oratorian)
- C.R.Lat. Canonicorum Regularium Lateranensi (Lateran Canon)
- C.R.Th. Clericorum Regularium Theatini (Theatine)
- DBI Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*
- DIP Dizionario degli istituti di perfezioni*
- DS Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*
- DSO Decreta Sancti Officii
- DubTC Dublin, Trinity College Library
- EC Enciclopedia Cattolica*

- EI* *Enciclopedia Italiana*
- fasc. fascicolo
- FiAS Florence, Archivio di Stato
- FiBR Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana
- HC* *Hierarchia Catholica*
- n. note
- no. number
- n.p. no folio or page numbers
- NT Notarile, Testamenti
- NUC* *The National Union Catalog: Pre-1956 Imprints*
- O.C. Ordinis Fratrum Carmelitarum (Carmelite of the Ancient Observance)
- O.C.D. Ordinis Fratrum Carmelitarum Disalceatorum (Discalced Carmelite)
- O.E.S.A. Ordinis Eremitarum S. Augustini (Augustinian Hermit)
- O.M.Conv. Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Conventualium (Conventual Franciscan)
- O.M.Obs. Ordinis Fratrum Minorum de observantia (Observant Franciscan)
- O.M.Ref. Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Reformatorum de observantia (Reformed Franciscan)
- O.P. Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum (Dominican)
- O.S.B. Ordinis S. Benedicti (Benedictine)
- O.S.M. Ordinis Servorum Mariae (Servite)
- O.SS.B.A. Ordinis SS. Barnabi et Ambrosii (secular priest, Milan)
- O.Visit. Ordinis Visitationis (Visitandine)
- OxB Oxford, Bodleian Library
- PdBU Padua, Biblioteca Universitaria
- PS Provveditori alla Sanità
- q. *quondam* (the late/deceased)
- QE Jacques Quétif and Jacques Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum recensiti, notisque et criticis*
- r recto

- RaBC Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense
 reg. registro; registri
- RoAC Rome, Archivio Generale dell'Ordine Carmelitano dell'Antica Osservanza
- RoACS Rome, Archivio Generale dell'Ordine Carmelitano Scalzo
- RoSJ Rome, Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu
- Sbaralea Giovanni Giacinto Sbaralea, *Supplementum et catigatio ad Scriptores trium ordinum S. Francisci a Waddingo aliisve descriptos*
- S.J. Societatis Iesu (Jesuit)
- Sommervogel Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus*
- StSt Stanza Storica
- SU Sant'Ufficio
- UdAA Udine, Archivio Arcivescovile
- T.O.R. Tertium Ordinis S. Francisci (Third Order Franciscan)
- t.p. title page
- v verso
- VaACDF Vatican City, Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede
- VaAS Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano
- VaBA Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
- VD 16 *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts*
- VeAP Venice, Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia
- VeAS Venice, Archivio di Stato
- VeBC Venice, Biblioteca Correr d'Arte e Storia Veneziana
- VeGL Venice, Chiesa di SS. Geremia e Lucia, Archivio Parrocchiale
- VeMGF Venice, Chiesa di S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Archivio Parrocchiale
- VeNM Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
- VePC Venice, Chiesa di S. Pietro di Castello, Archivio Parrocchiale
- VeZ Venice, Chiesa di S. Zaccaria, Archivio Parrocchiale

Notes

PREFACE

1. Paul Wilkes, "Profiles: The Education of an Archbishop," *New Yorker*, 15 July 1991: 38–59; 22 July 1991: 46–65. Quotation from issue of 15 July 1991, 38.

2. *Ibid.*, 15 July 1991, 55; 22 July 1991, 65.

3. The concept was formulated by the sociologist Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959). In a slightly different form, it has become naturalized in the humanities through the work of the new historicist literary critic Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

4. For necessary qualifications to this statement, see Chapter 1.

5. Fulvio Tomizza, *La finzione di Maria* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1981); in English: *Heavenly Supper: The Story of Maria Janis*, trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

6. Giuseppe Paladino, "Suor Cristina Rovoleda creduta santa e il suo processo," *Archivio storico siciliano*, n.s. 36 (1911): 113–25; Giovanni Romeo, "Una 'simulatrice di santità' a Napoli nel '500: Alfonsina Rispoli," *Campania sacra* 8–9 (1977–78): 159–218; Luisa Ciammitti, "Una santa di meno: Storia di Angela Mellini, cucitrice bolognese (1667–17..)," *Quaderni storici* 41 (May–August 1979): 603–39.

7. Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1976); in English: *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980; reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982). Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

8. Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiografia di una santa mancata*, ed. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1990); in English: *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

9. The commonly cited turning point after the hiatus is Lawrence Stone's article "The Return of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History," *Past and Present* 82 (February 1979): 3–24; but see the more current and much more nuanced discussion of Philippe Carrard, *Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), chap. 2, 29–82. As another scholar has recently observed, "The supposed 'return of the narrative' that some scholars have seen as characteristic of history of history in recent years [is] a question poorly stated. How, indeed, could there have been any 'return' or rediscovery where there had been no departure and no abandonment?" Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff*:

History, Language, and Practices, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 17.

10. On the use of “tales,” see, e.g., Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Gary Kates, *Monsieur D’Eon Is a Woman: A Tale of Political Intrigue and Sexual Masquerade* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

11. The most compelling statement of this traditional position by a practicing historian, from which the words in quotation marks are taken, remains J. H. Hexter, “The Rhetoric of History,” chap. in *Doing History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 15–76.

12. Freudian analysis, as employed, for example, in Lyndal Roper’s *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), is to my mind the least transplantable of psychoanalytic approaches.

13. Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053–75.

CHAPTER ONE: TWELVE TRUE STORIES?

1. On Aquileia and Concordia: Because of the protracted closure of UdAA, I was not able to examine the records of prosecutions conducted in the northeastern corner of the Venetian Terraferma against four individuals, two certainly (Marta Fiascaris and Gesualda Forni) and two possibly (Elena Prisach and Domenica Corradini) charged with pretense of holiness. Only Fiascaris has been studied previously. See Sandra Dolso, “Marta Fiascaris da S. Daniele, santa o strega?: Un processo inquisitoriale in Friuli nel secolo XVII (1649–1654)” (tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Bologna, Facoltà di Magistero, a.a. 1986–87, relatore Gabriella Zarri); Marina Romanello: “Il caso di Marta Fiascaris tra affettata santità e rete di solidarietà femminile,” in Ferrante, Palazzi, and Pomata, *Ragnatele*, 240–52; and idem, “Inquietudini religiose e controllo sociale nel Friuli del Seicento,” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 343–65.

2. VeAS, SU, b. 72, dossier Narcisa. There is no indication in VaACDF, DSO, 1618, that the Venetian Inquisition consulted the Congregation of the Holy Office about Narcisa.

3. Ibid., b. 87, fasc. Alvise Balbi and Marietta Zavana; VaACDF, DSO, 1629, 173v; 1630, 16r–v; 1631, 37v. This case is discussed briefly by Claudio Madricardo, “Sesso e religione nel Seicento a Venezia: La sollecitazione in confessionale,” *Studi veneziani*, n.s., 16 (1988): 153–54.

4. Alvise Balbi was born on 10 June 1577 in a villa of the Balbi family near Castel-franco Veneto to Laura Almerio and Zuanne Balbi. On 30 April 1602 he married Marietta q. Bernardo Balbi, with whom he had seven sons. (Genealogies of Venetian patricians do not include daughters until the late eighteenth century.) He died in December 1669. VeAS, Miscellanea Codici, I, reg. 16: Marco Barbaro, “Albori dei patrizi veneziani,” 115; Indice 86 ter 1–2: Giuseppe Giomo, “Indice per nome di donne dei matrimoni dei patrizi veneziani,” 1:47. Since the Venetian dossier does not include interrogations of Zavana, her birthdate and earlier life remain unknown. Her nickname derived from her occupation, the production of bed covers. Giuseppe Boerio, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, 2nd ed. (Venice: Giovanni Cecchini, 1856), s.v. “coltra.”

5. This information comes from the copy of the sentence sent from Treviso to Venice. No records of the Inquisition of Treviso are known to exist. It is possible that

they survive in the Archivio Archivescovile in the series *processi criminali*, which is not open to inspection. The Congregation of the Holy Office instructed the inquisitor of Treviso to inform the papal nuncio in Venice and the Venetian Inquisition about Zavana but did not mention Balbi. VaACDF, 1629, DSO, 173v.

6. VeAS, SU, b. 90, fasc. Pietro Vespa. Giuseppe Giomo and Luigi Pasini, the nineteenth-century compilers of the index to Venetian Inquisition trials, chose to characterize the charges against Vespa as “imposture.” VeAS, Index 303, Sant’Uffizio, V-100. Several aspects of the case make “pretense of holiness” a more accurate rubric. Some procedural details in this case are recorded in VaACDF, DSO, 1632, 189r (leaf missing); 1633, 5r, 16v; 1634, 212v.

On Pietro Vespa’s father, see VeAS, *Miscellanea Codici*, I, reg. 16: Giuseppe Tassini, “Cittadini (S–Z),” 2208. On *cittadini*, see Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: I cittadini originari (sec. XVI–XVII)* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1993).

7. For information about his ecclesiastical career, see *HC*, 4:273. The other two dioceses were Famagusta (to which bishops of Venetian origin were also routinely appointed) and Salamis (whose ordinary was the metropolitan of Cyprus). *Ibid.*, 184, 301.

8. *HC*, 3:258, 269; 4:260, 273.

9. Tassini specifies that he died in the parish of San Gregorio on 14 October 1653. VeAS, *Miscellanea Codici*, I, filza 16, 2208. The date given in *HC*, 4:273 is 1654.

10. VeAS, SU, b. 98, fasc. Caterina Rossi (classified in Index 303, R-139, as a case of “bigotry”); BoBCA, MS B.1888, *Processi contro gli eretici per affettata santità*, 116r–30v (sentence against Rossi dated 25 August 1643, copied by the notary of the Brescian Holy Office on 7 March 1663); VaACDF, DSO, 1643, 16r–v, 41v, 68v, 85r, 129v. This case is discussed briefly by Daniela Berti, “False sante: Per una tipologia dell’affettata santità nel XVII secolo” (tesi di laurea, Università degli Studi di Bologna, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, a.a. 1987–88, relatore Ottavia Niccoli), 44–55, and by Ottavia Niccoli, “Il confessore e l’inquisitore: A proposito di un manoscritto bolognese del Seicento,” in Zarrì, *Finzione e santità*, 421–22. I thank Gabriella Zarrì for allowing me to consult her copy of Berti’s thesis.

On Poschiavo, see Tiziana Mazzali, “Presenza e ruolo della stregoneria a Poschiavo,” in *Riforma e società nei Grigioni: Valtellina e Valchiavenna tra ’500 e ’600*, ed. Alessandro Pastore (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1991), 167–68.

11. VeAS, SU, b. 105, fasc. Giuseppe Riccardi; VaACDF, DSO, 1650, 154v; 1651, 6v, 55r, 166r. This case is treated briefly by Giovanna Paolin, “Confessione e confessori al femminile: Monache e direttori spirituali in ambito veneto tra ’600 e ’700,” in Zarrì, *Finzione e santità*, 377–79. The other member of the regular clergy was Giacomo Ladiceosa, on whom see below. Pietro Vespa resigned from the Carmelite Order when he was nominated bishop of Paphos.

12. VeAS, SU, b. 110, fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis; VaACDF, DSO, 1662, 49v–50r, 113v–114r, 201v; 1664, 60v; 1665, 4r. (I was unable to inspect the 1663 volume, which is being restored.) This case has been thoroughly treated by Fulvio Tomizza, *La finzione di Maria* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1981); in English: *Heavenly Supper: The Story of Maria Janis*, trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Citations below are to the latter. See also my articles “Come costruirsi un corpo di santa,” *Studi storici* 33 (1992): 127–39 (in English: “*Per speculum in enigmatè*: Failed

Saints, Artists, and Self-Construction of the Female Body in Early Modern Italy,” in *Creative Women in Medieval and Early Modern Italy: A Religious and Artistic Renaissance*, ed. E. Ann Matter and John Coakley [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994], 188–200, and “Donne, Inquisizione e pietà,” in *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Seicento*, ed. Bruno Bertoli (Venice: Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 1992), 235–51.

13. VeAS, SU, b. 112, fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi; copy of the trial record and additional material in VaACDF, StSt, C-2-a. Procedural details are in VaACDF, DSO, 1664, 128r, 186v–187r; 1665, 126v, 157v–158r, 170v, 178r; 1666, 78r, 91r, 103v–104r, 120r, 135r, 220v; 1667, 74r, 155v, 169v, 185v, 215r; 1669, 18v. Copies of her sentence may be found in BoBCA, MS B.324, no. 36; BoBU, MS Gozzadini 146, 163r–172v; VeBC, MS Cicogna 2859, 99r–127r; VeBC, MS Donà delle Rose 131, 185v–192r; VeBC, MS Gradenigo 159, 312r–325v; and VeNM, MS Ital. Cl. VII, 1795 (7679), 219–61. I have treated aspects of the Ferrazzi case in several previous publications: “‘Questo non è il ritratto che ho fatto io’: Painters, the Inquisition, and the Shape of Sanctity in Seventeenth-Century Venice,” in *Florence and Italy: Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, ed. Peter Denley and Caroline Elam (London: Westfield College, 1988), 419–31; “Un caso di santità affettata: L’autobiografia di Cecilia Ferrazzi,” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 329–42 (in English: “Inquisition and Female Autobiography: The Case of Cecilia Ferrazzi,” in *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Craig Monson [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992], 105–18); “Come costruirsi un corpo di santa”; “Donne, Inquisizione e pietà”; and *DBI*, s.v. “Ferrazzi, Cecilia.” See also Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiografia di una santa mancata*, ed. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1990) (in English: *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996]).

14. On the maneuvers leading to her release, see VaACDF, StSt C-2-a, fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, and Anne Jacobson Schutte, “Gregorio Barbarigo e le donne: ‘Buone cristiane’ e false sante,” in *Gregorio Barbarigo: Patrizio veneto, vescovo e cardinale nella tarda Controriforma (1625–1697)*, Atti del convegno di studio, Padova 7–10 novembre 1996, ed. Liliana Billanovich and Pierantonio Gios (Padua: Istituto per la Storia Ecclesiastica Padovana, 1999), 864–65.

15. VeAS, PS, b. 892 (Necrologia 1683/84).

16. *Ibid.*, SU, b. 115, fasc. Antonia Pesenti and Francesco Vincenzi; VaACDF, DSO, 1668, 445r; 1669, 61v, 82r, 163v–164r. I discuss this case in “Come costruirsi un corpo da santa” and “Donne, Inquisizione e pietà.”

A pievano was the *titolare* (priest in charge) of a parish church staffed by several clerics. In the census taken a quarter century earlier, ten priests (two nobles, five *cittadini*, and three commoners) lived in the parish. VeAS, PS, b. 570, Anagrafe 1642: Castello and Cannaregio, n.p. Not all of them would have been on the staff of the church, but several assistants of Vincenzi testified in the trial against him and Pesenti. “Ternita” is Venetian for Trinità. On the church, razed in 1832, see Flaminio Corner, *Eclesiae Venetae antiquis monumentis illustratae*, 18 vols. in 9 (Venice: Giovanni Battista Pasquali, 1749), vol. 2, bk. 4, pp. 356–60; Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane*, 6 vols. in 7 (Venice: various publishers, 1824–53), 5:153–224; Giuseppe Tassinì, *Curiosità veneziane ovvero origini delle denominazioni stradali di Venezia*, 9th ed., rev. Lino Moretti (Venice: Filippi, 1988), 726–29; and Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia scomparsa*, 2 vols. (Milan: Electa, 1972), 74, 76, 120, 147, 174, 398.

The artisan Andrea Pesenti was a *corridoro*, a maker of embossed leather wall coverings. Boerio, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, 156. In the census of 1633 he was living in the parish of San Polo with his wife and a son and daughter under eighteen years of age; the last may have been Antonia. VeAS, PS, b. 569, Anagrafe 1633: Sestieri di Santa Croce, San Polo e San Marco. The parish registers of San Polo do not record Antonia's birth—unless her original name was Isabetta, born to Andrea and Barbara Pesenti and baptized on 18 March 1634. VeMGF, San Polo, Battesimi, 6 (1624–41), 121. In the trial record her parents and a brother are mentioned as being alive; none of them was called to testify.

17. The patrician Alvisè Sagredo headed the successful campaign for his release. VaACDF, DSO, 1669, 163v–164r. His death is recorded in VeAS, PS, b. 887 (*Necrologia* 1676/77).

18. *Ibid.*, SU, b. 124, fasc. Maria Pellizzari; nothing in VaACDF, DSO, 1686. For a brief discussion, see Schutte, “Donne, Inquisizione e pietà.” The relevant parish records of Santa Maria del Colle, the *pieve* of Bassano del Grappa, record neither her birth nor her death. BaGAP, Battesimi 8 (1627–45); Defunti 11 (1686–88).

19. Her alternative surname, Favura, derived from *fabbro* (smith).

20. VeAS, SU, b. 127, fasc. Giacomo Ladicosà; inexplicably, nothing in VaACDF, DSO, 1692–94. This case is discussed briefly by Madricardo, “Sesso e religione,” 156–70; and Paolin, “Confessione e confessori,” 379–82.

21. A package containing several of these items is included in the trial record.

22. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, Processo della causa di Lucrezia Gambara d'Alfianello, [Agostino Randini, O.S.B.], “Visioni e stimmate di Lucrezia Gambara da Alfianello diocesi di Brescia.” Several other copies of Randini's report survive: BgBC, MS Sigma 4.30 (MM 186): [Agostino Randini, O.S.B.], “Relazione intorno lo stato dello spirito di Lucrezia Gambara”; BsAV, uncatalogued; RaBC, MSS 579, 580 (two copies bearing the pseudonym “don Placido Daniria d'Uclao”); and one in a private collection in Capo di Ponte (Valcamonica, province of Brescia), which I have not seen. On the Congregation of the Holy Office's involvement in this case, see VaACDF, StSt, C-3-g, fasc. Lucrezia Gambara; VaACDF, DSO, 1729, 5v.

23. *Prevosto* is an honorific title for the priest of a large parish.

24. The nun, whose name is not given in the records concerning Gambara, was almost certainly Giulia Guidotti, sentenced in Reggio Emilia on 17 June 1716. A brief account of her career may be found in BoBU, MS Ital. 6, no. 18.

25. As far as I was able to determine, Lucrezia Gambara's name appears in none of the following registers held in ALAP: Matrimoni 3, 1721–69; Morti 2, 1719–60 (lower halves of pages practically illegible because of water damage and mold); Morti 3, 1761–1819 (examined through 1780). It seems likely, therefore, that she moved outside the parish.

26. VeAS, SU, b. 144, fasc. Andrea Scolari; inexplicably, nothing in VaACDF, DSO, 1747–50. Original transcripts of testimony taken by the inquisitor of Aquileia and Concordia, copies of which he forwarded to Venice, are in UdAA, b. 56, fasc. 31. This case is mentioned briefly by Morena Peruzza, “L'Inquisizione nel periodo delle riforme settecentesche: Il caso veneziano,” *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa* 46 (1994): 153–54.

27. VaAS, Riti, Maria Maddalena Martinengo, 348–49 (*Processus ordinarius Brixien-sis super fama*, 1757–59), 350 (*Processus ordinarius Brixien-sis super non cultu*, 1759), 351 (*Processus apostolicus super sanctitatis, virtutum et miracolorum in genere*, 1764).

28. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, “Introduction: The Crime of History,” in *History from Crime*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), viii–x.

29. Carlo Ginzburg, “The Inquisitor as Anthropologist,” chap. in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 156–64.

30. For a preliminary analysis of linguistic forms in trial transcripts, see the essay by Massimo Prado in *Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti*, ed. Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, 14 vols. (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1980–99), 14:15–86.

31. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles* (1966), trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). The *benandanti* of Friuli were people born with the *camicia* (caul: amniotic sack) who believed that they flew out at night in spirit to protect their crops from evil forces. Ginzburg argues that inquisitors considered them witches, a characterization they eventually came to accept. Idem, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (1976), trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

32. The records of Menocchio’s trials have been published and persuasively reinterpreted by Andrea Del Col, *Domenico Scandella detto Menocchio: I processi dell’Inquisizione (1583–1599)* (Pordenone: Biblioteca dell’Immagine, 1990); in English: *Domenico Scandella Known as Menocchio: His Trials before the Inquisition (1583–1599)*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996). For a persuasive frontal attack on the methods and conclusions of Ginzburg’s *I benandanti*, see Franco Nardon, *Benandanti e inquisitori nel Friuli del Seicento* (Trieste: Edizioni dell’Università di Trieste, and Montereale Valcellina: Centro Studi Storici Menocchio, 1999).

33. On the importance of conducting proceedings in the Venetian vernacular, see Peter Burke, “Languages and Anti-Languages in Early Modern Italy,” in his *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 86.

34. By a somewhat less arduous route, Luciano Osbat reaches a similar conclusion: “L’Inquisizione e la storia dei comportamenti religiosi,” in De Rosa and Gregory, *Storia dell’Italia religiosa*, 375–91.

35. Del Col’s most recent and strongest refutation of Ginzburg’s “inquisitor as anthropologist” analogy may be found in his *L’Inquisizione nel patriarcato e diocesi di Aquileia, 1557–1559* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, and Montereale Valcellina: Centro Studi Storici Menocchio, 1998), clxxvii–viii, clxxxiii, cxcix, ccxviii–xxii.

36. Andrea Del Col, “I processi dell’Inquisizione come fonte: Considerazioni diplomatiche e storiche,” *Annuario dell’Istituto storico italiano per l’età moderna e contemporanea* 35–36 (1983–84): 33–34, 38, 42–49; idem, “Alcune osservazioni sui processi inquisitoriali come fonti storiche,” *Metodi e ricerche. Rivista di storia regionale*, n.s., 13 (1994): 95–96; idem, *L’Inquisizione nel patriarcato*, esp. cxcv–viii. Nardon, *Benandanti e inquisitori*, takes the same position.

37. Del Col, *L’Inquisizione nel patriarcato*, clxxxv–xc. We shall see that in seven-

teenth- and eighteenth-century trials, some suspects and defendants spoke more fully and frankly than Del Col maintains.

38. Anne Jacobson Schutte, “Prefazione” to Del Col, *Inquisizione*, viii.
39. Del Col, *L’Inquisizione nel patriarcato*, clxxviii–ix.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ROMAN INQUISITION IN VENICE

1. Sardinia and Sicily were subject to the Spanish Inquisition. On Naples, see Giovanni Romeo, “Una città, due inquisizioni: L’anomalia del Sant’Ufficio a Napoli nel tardo ’500.” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 24 (1988): 42–67. On the tiny Republic of Lucca successfully resisting the introduction of the Roman Inquisition, see Simonetta Adorni-Braccesi, “La Repubblica di Lucca e l’abborrita’ Inquisizione: Istituzioni e società,” in Del Col and Paolin, *L’inquisizione romana*, 333–62; and idem, “Una città infetta”: *La repubblica di Lucca nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1994).

2. In at least one diocese, however, bishops continued for some time to conduct heresy prosecutions on their own or in more or less harmonious collaboration with inquisitors. Andrea Del Col, *L’Inquisizione nel patriarcato e diocesi di Aquileia, 1557–1559* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, and Montereale Valcellina: Centro Studi Storici Menocchio, 1998).

3. John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 125 and 156–57 n. For a broad-ranging treatment, see Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice, un corpo e due anime: La monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982).

4. Andrea Del Col, “L’Inquisizione romana e il potere politico nella repubblica di Venezia (1540–1560),” *Critica storica* 28 (1991): 189–90.

5. Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 143.

6. *Ibid.*, 128.

7. Ludwig von Pastor, *Storia dei papi dalla fine del Medio Evo*, trans. Pio Cenci, 16 vols. (Rome: Desclée, 1912–34), 6:321 (Marcellus II), 5:674 (Paul IV), 8:33–34 (Pius V), 10:515–16 (Urban VIII). Carafa, the first commissioner general of the Roman Inquisition, was succeeded in that position by his protégé Ghislieri. Vincenzo Maria Fontana, O.P., *Sacrum theatrum dominicanum* (Rome: Nicolò Angelo Tinassi, 1666), 521. Two other popes elected in this period knew the Holy Office well: Felice Peretti (Sixtus V, 1585–90) through his work as inquisitor in Venice and consultant to the Congregation, and Giovanni Antonio Facchinetti (Innocent IX, 1591) because he had participated in sessions of the Venetian Inquisition during his tenure as nuncio there. Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, 10:27–28, 582. Adriano Prosperi observes that work for the Inquisition was a vehicle of social mobility; without it, men of humble origins such as Ghislieri and Peretti would never have ascended the papal throne. Prosperi, “L’Inquisizione in Italia,” in *Clero e società nell’Italia moderna*, ed. Mario Rosa (Rome: Laterza, 1992), 281, 300.

8. Paul V (1605–21) had served as a member of the Congregation, Alexander VII (1655–67) and Innocent XII (1691–1700) as inquisitors in Malta, and Clement X (1670–76) as consultant to the Congregation. Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, 12:34; 14.1:320, 635; 14.2:421.

9. For a review of modern scholarship on Venice, see James S. Grubb, “When

Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography,” *Journal of Modern History* 58 (1986): 43–94.

10. On extradition, see Carlo De Frede, “L’estradiçione degli eretici dal Dominio veneziano nel Cinquecento,” *Atti dell’Accademia pontiana*, n.s., 20 (1970–71): 255–86, and Del Col, *L’Inquisizione nel patriarcato*, clxiii–iv.

11. John Tedeschi with William Monter, “Toward a Statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisitions, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” in Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 91.

12. Andrea Del Col, “Organizzazione, composizione e giurisdizione dei tribunali dell’Inquisizione romana nella repubblica di Venezia (1500–1550),” *Critica storica* 25 (1988): 244–94; idem, “L’Inquisizione romana e il potere politico.” On the lay deputies, see also Paul F. Grendler, “The ‘Tre Savi sopra Eresia,’ 1547–1605: A Prosopographical Study,” *Studi veneziani*, n.s., 3 (1979): 283–340.

13. See Silvana Seidel Menchi, “Protestantesimo a Venezia,” in *La chiesa di Venezia tra Riforma protestante e Riforma cattolica*, ed. Giuseppe Gullino (Venice: Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 1990), 75–85; idem, “Varieties of Italian Anticlericalism,” in *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 271–81; idem, “Italy,” in *The Reformation in National Context*, ed. Robert Scribner, Roy Porter, and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 181–201.

14. On these two categories of offenses, see respectively Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550–1650* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Claudio Madricardo, “Sesso e religione nel Seicento a Venezia. La sollecitazione in confessionale,” *Studi veneziani*, n.s., 16 (1988): 121–70; and Stephen Haliczzer, *Sexuality in the Confessional: A Sacrament Profaned* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

15. On general trends, see Tedeschi with Monter, “Toward a Statistical Profile.” On the types of cases tried in seventeenth-century Venice, see Giovanni Scarabello, “Paure, superstizioni, infamie,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, vol. 4, pts. 1–2, *Il Seicento* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1983–84), 369–76, and Anne Jacobson Schutte, “I processi dell’Inquisizione veneziana nel Seicento: La femminilizzazione dell’eresia,” in Del Col and Paolin, *L’Inquisizione romana*, 329–42.

16. Jacopo Altoviti, “Istruzione rituale lasciata da Monsig. Jacopo Altoviti, Arcivescovo di Atene, a suoi successori nella Nunziatura di Venezia fatta nell’anno 1663,” chap. 21: “Congregazione del Sant’Uffizio,” in VaAS, Archivio della Nunziatura di Venezia, 2, 58v–60r; another copy of this chapter is in VaAS, Nunziature Diverse, 178, 470v–473r. On Altoviti, see *DBI*, s.v. “Altoviti, Iacopo,” by Franco Gaeta. The arrangements outlined in this paragraph differ in some respects from those of the sixteenth century described by Del Col, “Organizzazione,” 270–71, and Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 128, 160.

17. Such procedural activities as hearing motions from attorneys, but almost never interrogations, were occasionally conducted on other days of the week.

18. In the mid-1650s a Venetian civil servant noted that San Teodoro, “the little church of the canonica,” was secular, not ecclesiastical, territory and therefore “could be called part of Palazzo Ducale.” VeAS, Senato, Deliberazioni Roma, reg. 53 (Ippolito Buzzoni, *avvocato fiscale* in Brescia, to the *podestà* of Brescia, 11 November 1654). On San Teodoro, an elegant construction of the 1490s designed by the architect Giorgio Spavento, who was also responsible for the sacristy, see Anne Jacobson Schutte, “Uno

spazio, tre poteri: San Teodoro, sede del Sant'Ufficio nella prima età moderna," in *San Marco: Aspetti storici ed agiografici*, ed. Antonio Niero (Venice: Marsilio, 1996), 97–109.

19. In some tribunals, consultants to the Inquisition attended sessions regularly or on invitation. Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 142–33. I have found no evidence that this was the case in Venice, where they submitted their opinions in writing.

20. See VaAS, Archivio della Nunziatura di Venezia, 2 (Altoviti, "Istruzione rituale," chap. 14, "Concerning the Hand"), 445–485: "[The nuncio] shakes the hand of no one except cardinals, the doge, royal ambassadors, other nuncios, and the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. . . . This rigor concerning the hand, [which is] more important for the nuncio in Venice than for other nuncios, derives, I believe, from the greater necessity of not allowing the nobles here, who consider themselves equal to any prince, to put on airs."

21. Following a controversy with the inquisitor of Verona, this seating chart was confirmed by the Venetian Senate. Bortolomio Melchiori, "Dall'Inquisizione contro gl'eretici, o sia del Tribunal del S. Offizio" (c. 1730), in VeNM, MS Ital. Cl. VII, 2197 (8600), "Inquisizione contra gli eretici," 9r–10v.

22. Bishop of Bergamo from 1615 to 1626, of Vicenza from 1626 to 1629, and of Padua from 1629 to 1631, Federico Corner was named cardinal on 19 January 1626; he served as patriarch of Venice from 1631 to 1644, when he retired on account of age and illness. *DBI*, s.v. "Corner, Federico," by Giuseppe Gullino. During the period covered by this study, the only other ordinary of Venice awarded the red hat was Giovanni Badoer, appointed patriarch in 1688 and elevated to the cardinalate on 17 May 1706, just three weeks before he was transferred to the bishopric of Brescia. *DBI*, s.v. "Badoer, Giovanni Alberto," by Gian Franco Torcellan.

23. In the 1570s the responsibility for appointing inquisitors, previously exercised by the generals of their orders, was assumed by the Congregation. Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti e streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni, 1990), 182. Although trial records do not state who asked the questions, the responses of those being questioned ("Yes, Father"; "No, Father") and the consistent line of interrogation pursued, along with occasional notes in an inquisitor's hand corresponding to the pattern of interrogation, suggest that in the seventeenth century the inquisitor alone spoke in the presence of defendants and witnesses. In one sixteenth-century case, against Giulio Gerlandi (1561–62), however, the notes taken by the defendant on some lines of questioning not recorded in the trial transcript reveal that one of the Savi interrogated him about the rumored community of women in the Anabaptist communities of Moravia. Andrea Del Col, "Alcune osservazioni sui processi inquisitoriali come fonti storiche," *Metodi e ricerche: Rivista di storia regionale*, n.s., 13 (1994): 93, 100–101.

24. VeAS, SU, b. 153, "Elenco degli inquisitori domenicani, 1570–1775"; another list with comments, "Copia tratta dal Registro de' PP. Inquisitori di Venezia" (c. 1737), is in b. 156. An unbroken line of Brescians held the office from 1632 to 1693.

25. Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 128–30. The other seats of the Holy Office in the Venetian republic were Belluno, Bergamo, Brescia, Capodistria (covering the Istrian peninsula), Ceneda, Crema, Padua, Rovigo (diocese of Adria), Treviso, Udine (patriarchate of Aquileia and diocese of Concordia), Verona, Vicenza, and Zara (covering Dalmatia). Bergamo, Brescia, Crema, Verona, Vicenza, and Zara were staffed by Observant Dominican inquisitors, the other tribunals by Conventual Franciscans.

26. BsBCQ, MS Fè 32, no. 1: Luigi Fè d'Ostiani, "Notizie storiche e genealogiche sulle famiglie Ugoni e Casaloldo," 95–97; BsAS, Ospedale Maggiore, S. Domenico, Libro C, 30r–197r; BoASD, MS II.2500, Consilia Provinciae Lombardiae ab anno 1558 ad 1704, 62r–115r; Andrea Rovetta, *Bibliotheca chronologica illustrorum virorum provinciae lombardae Sacri Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Bologna: Giuseppe Longo, 1691), 186; QE, 2:642b. Ugoni's "Promptuarium seu elencus observandorum pro expeditione caesarum S. Officii" was apparently never published; I have not been able to locate the manuscript.

27. For the limitations placed on Venetian inquisitors in this last category, see below.

28. In the late sixteenth century the Holy Office in some Italian regions began to employ *vicari foranei* and commissioners to cover rural areas. See, for example, Albano Biondi, "Lunga durata e microarticolazione nel territorio di un Ufficio dell'Inquisizione: Il 'Sacro Tribunale' a Modena (1292–1785)," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 8 (1982): 73–90, and Adriano Prosperi, "Vicari dell'Inquisizione fiorentina alla metà del Seicento: Note d'archivio," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 8 (1982): 275–304. This system in Venetian territory, however, has been examined closely only for the late eighteenth century. Morena Peruzza, "L'Inquisizione nel periodo delle riforme settecentesche: Il caso veneziano," *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa* 46 (1994): 139–86, esp. 158–86.

29. In 1645 the income of the Venetian Inquisition was 505 scudi, its expenses 368 scudi. VaBA, Vat. lat. 10945: Giacomo Angarano, O.P., "Anima del Sant'Offitio spirata dal Supremo Tribunale della Sacra Congregazione," 162r; on the following pages (162v–165r), Angarano lists budgets for the other seats of the Holy Office in Venetian territory.

30. Eliseo Masini, *Sacro arsenale, ovvero prattica dell'ufficio della Santa Inquisizione* (Bologna: Baglioni, 1665; reprint, Milan: Xenia, 1990), 15–16. Masini's manual, one of very few works of its kind in Italian, was published at least ten times between 1621 and 1730. Emil van der Vekene, *Bibliotheca bibliographica historiae Sanctae Inquisitionis*, 2 vols. (Vaduz: Topos, 1982–83), no. 143, 146, 161, 174, 180, 191, 201, 208, 211, 212.

31. Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 129–30.

32. *Ibid.*, passim; see esp. 142–43, 146, 154.

33. On these legal advisers to the doge concerning jurisdictional matters (almost all Servites), see Antonella Barzazi, "I consultori 'in iure,'" in *Storia della cultura veneta*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, vol. 5, pts. 1–2, *Il Settecento* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1985), 177–99.

34. Paolo Sarpi, *Sopra l'ufficio dell'Inquisizione*, in Sarpi, *Scritti giurisdizionalistici*, ed. Giovanni Gambarin (Bari: Laterza, 1958), 119–212. This work was published for the first time under the title *Historia della Sacra Inquisizione* (Serravalle: Fabio Albicocco, 1638) and many times thereafter as *Discorso dell'origine, forma, leggi, ed uso dell'ufficio dell'Inquisizione nella città e dominio di Venezia*. Sarpi, *Scritti giurisdizionalistici*, 312–14.

35. *Ibid.*, 122.

36. See, for example, the comments of Jacopo Altoviti, VaAS, Nunziature Diverse, 178, 217r–19v.

37. VeAS, Consultori in Jure, filza 113, 93 (Francesco Emo to Doge Domenico Contarini, 14 February 1663).

38. *Ibid.*, filza 112, 513–16 (Francesco Emo to Doge Domenico Contarini, 1 December 1663). Emo was paraphrasing Sarpi's *Sopra l'ufficio dell'Inquisizione* (Sarpi, *Scritti giurisdizionalistici*, 155). For an early example of a native inquisitor of Venice who saw himself as the republic's servant first, see my essay "Un inquisitore al lavoro: Fra Marino da Venezia e l'Inquisizione veneziana," in *I francescani in Europa tra Riforma e Controriforma* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1987), 165–96.

39. VeAS, Senato, Deliberazioni Roma, reg. 56 (1653), 105r, 108r (originals of the same documents in Deliberazioni Roma, filza 92). Ugoni was not the only inquisitor ordered out of the republic. A list of expulsions compiled in the eighteenth century includes two illustrious predecessors, Michele Ghislieri (Bergamo, 1550) and Felice Peretti (Venice, 1560), and his contemporary Serafino Bonamello (Crema, 1654). VeAS, SU, b. 152, fasc. 1, "Somarii di leggi e decreti relativi all'Inquisizione"; Consultori in Jure, filza 83, "Inquisitori corretti alcune volte dal Principe," 258r.

40. This proviso was closely related to chap. 24, which circumscribed Venetian inquisitors' authority over Jews and "other sorts of infidels," who could not be brought to trial for practicing their own religion. If they blasphemed against the Christian faith or tried to proselytize among Christians, they were to be prosecuted by the secular authorities. Sarpi, *Scritti giurisdizionalistici*, 126–27. Converted Jews and Muslims who returned to their old faith and Christians who apostatized to Judaism or Islam, however, fell within the Inquisition's purview. On movements between the three "religions of the book," see *Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti*, ed. Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, 14 vols. (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1980–99); Lucia Rostagno, *Mi faccio turco: Esperienze ed immagini dell'Islam nell'Italia moderna* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 1983); Fulvio Tomizza, *Fughe incrociate* (Milan: Bompiani, 1990); and Lucetta Scaraffia, *Rinnegati: Per una storia dell'identità occidentale* (Rome: Laterza, 1993).

41. VeAS, Senato, Deliberazioni Roma, reg. 58 (1655), 158v–159v, 163v–164r, 165r–166r, 178r, 180v–181r (originals in Deliberazioni Roma, filza 94).

42. On the Senate's satisfaction with Ugoni's appointment, see VeAS, Senato, Deliberazioni Roma, reg. 66 (1662), 190v (the Senate to the ambassador in Rome, 20 January 1663).

43. On this social category, see Chapter 1, section entitled "Pietro Vespa."

44. Carlo Bullo, "Antonio e Andrea de' Vescovi," *Ateneo veneto* 25, no. 1 (1902): 216–27. Antonio Vescovi's "Formularium," consisting of specimen documents for the use of chancellors, is in VeBC, MS Cicogna 100.

45. VeAS, NT, b. 1145 (notary Gasparo Acerbi), no. 11, 1 February 1654. His previous wills of 1647, 1650, and 1653 (two), still sealed because they were superseded by the 1654 testament, are in Notarile, Atti (notary Gasparo Acerbi), nos. 12, 21, 22, 23.

46. Bullo, "Antonio e Andrea de' Vescovi," 411; Antonio Vescovi, testament of 1654; Antonio Vescovi, *Formularium*, 509v–512r.

47. RoACS, MS Plut. 202a, Provincia Venetiarum, "Historia Provinciae Historica narratio de rebus Provinciae Venetiarum," 15r. Andrea Vescovi's hand and name first appear in inquisitorial records on 15 January 1654. VeAS, SU, b. 104, fasc. Laura Malipiero.

48. Antonio Vescovi, testament of 1654.

49. The last occurrence of Andrea Vescovi's hand is in VeAS, SU, b. 134, fasc. Caterina Schiavonetti et al. On 8 August 1709 a new notary, Lorenzo Bosetti, took over the recording of this trial; he was appointed chancellor sometime before 14 January

1710. VeAS, SU, b. 131, fasc. Antonia Paon Manazzi and Antonio Facchinetti. Like his uncle, Andrea Vescovi composed several works, none of which was published. Bullo, “Antonio e Andrea de’Vescovi,” 411–17. On his catalogue of holy Venetians, see Chapter 5.

50. See, for example, Cesare Carena, *Tractatus de officio Sanctissimae Inquisitionis et modo procedendi in causis fidei* (Cremona: Marc’Antonio Belpieri, 1641), 49–50. This influential manual, discussed in Chapter 4, was first published in 1636.

51. Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 131–32, 163–64 n. 33.

52. See Masini, *Sacro arsenale*, 38–42.

53. Except where otherwise noted, the following sketch is based on Masini, *Sacro arsenale*; Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 132–53; and my reading of seventeenth-century trial records. For a useful schematic presentation of trials before the Spanish Inquisition that, *mutatis mutandis*, clarifies Roman Inquisition procedure as well, see Jean-Pierre Dedieu, “L’Inquisition et le droit: Analyse formelle de la procédure inquisitoriale en cause de foi,” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velásquez* 33 (1987): 227–51; now in his *L’administration de la foi: L’Inquisition de Toledo* (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 1992).

54. Adriano Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 230–32; Del Col, *L’Inquisizione nel patriarcato*, 348–49.

55. On the controverted issue of confessors’ collaboration with inquisitors, see Romeo, *Inquisitori*; Giovanna Paolin, “Inquisizione e confessori nel Friuli del Seicento: Analisi di un rapporto,” in Del Col and Paolin, *L’Inquisizione romana*, 175–87; Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza*; Giovanni Romeo, *Ricerche su confessione dei peccati e Inquisizione nell’Italia del Cinquecento* (Naples: La Città del Sole, 1997); and Elena Brambilla, “Confessione, casi riservati e giustizia ‘spirituale’ dal XV secolo al concilio di Trento: I reati di fede e di morale,” in *Fonti ecclesiastiche per la storia sociale e religiosa d’Europa: XV–XVIII secolo*, ed. Cecilia Nubola and Angelo Turchini (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), 491–540 (esp. 516 ff.).

56. Silvana Seidel Menchi, “Inquisizione come repressione o Inquisizione come mediazione?: Una proposta di periodizzazione,” *Annuario dell’Istituto storico italiano per l’età moderna e contemporanea* 35–36 (1983–84): 53–77.

57. Since only one of the “false saints,” Caterina Rossi, was tortured, there is no need to provide a detailed explanation of methods and safeguards employed in the administration of torture. For further information on this subject, see Masini, *Sacro arsenale*, 115–43, and Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 141–47.

58. On the beams of a room in the prison of the Venetian Inquisition, according to an anecdote of uncertain provenance and reliability, two couplets were carved: “Chi qui dentro si difenderà, dieci anni di più vi starà” (Anyone in here who mounts a defense will stay here ten years longer) and “Chi qui dentro non si difenderà, più presto da qui uscirà” (Anyone in here who doesn’t mount a defense will get out of here more quickly). VeBC, MS Gradenigo 159, 10r. See John Tedeschi, “The Rights of the Defendant before the Roman Inquisition,” in *Ketzerverfolgung im 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Silvana Seidel Menchi (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 1992), 125–46.

59. See Masini, *Sacro arsenale*, 85–104.

60. In the relatively uncommon short-form *processo sommario*, the only example of which in the Venetian trials for pretense of holiness is Marietta Bon Erizzo’s (see

Chapter 1), there was no *sentenza*. On the differences between a formal and summary trial, see Del Col, *L'Inquisizione nel patriarcato*, cxcvii–viii.

61. See Andrea Del Col, “I processi dell’Inquisizione come fonte: Considerazioni diplomatiche e storiche,” *Annuario dell’Istituto storico italiano per l’età moderna e contemporanea* 35–36 (1983–84): 34.

62. Two others, *de violenti* for heinous crimes and *de formali* for guilt beyond the shadow of a doubt and without any mitigating circumstances, almost never occur in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Venetian trials.

63. Francesco Bordoni, *Manuale consultorum in causis S. Officii contra haereticam pravitatem refertum* (Parma: Ippolito Rosati & fratelli, 1693), 135–36.

64. According to Bordoni (*ibid.*, 137), “a suspect of heresy *de levi* is not to be punished with heretics’ penalties, for he has not been formally judged a heretic.”

65. For example, Faustina Mainardi and two accomplices (Pandolfo Ricasoli, canon of Santa Maria del Fiore, and the priest Jacopo Fantoni), who were sentenced for pretense of holiness by the Florentine Inquisition, made a semipublic abjuration on 20 November 1641. Inquisitor Angiolo Muzzarelli invited Cardinal Carlo de’ Medici, members of his family, and a host of religious and secular “qualified persons” to the ceremony, held in the refectory of Santa Croce. Ruguccio Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della casa Medici*, 5 vols. (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1781), 4:191–93; Modesto Rastrelli, *Fatti attinenti all’Inquisizione e sua istoria generale e particolare di Toscana* (Florence: Anton Giuseppe Pagani, 1782), 150–55. According to Rastrelli, Muzzarelli’s turning the occasion into a public spectacle displeased Grand Duke Francesco II and the Congregation of the Holy Office so much that he was removed from office. The trial record of this case apparently does not exist; copies of the three codefendants’ abjurations may be found in BoBU, MS Ital. 6, 7r–19v, and FiBR, MS Ricc. 2120, 461r–477v. Among Venetian subjects convicted of pretense of holiness, only Giacomo Ladicosa’s abjuration and sentencing occurred in such semipublic circumstances; see Chapter 9.

66. Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 151–52.

67. Del Col has recently shown that convicted criminals condemned to death by the Venetian Holy Office were not invariably “relaxed to the secular arm”; in a few instances, sentences were carried out by Inquisition personnel. In contrast to practice in the dominant city, furthermore, executions in other parts of the Venetian domain took place in public by hanging, burning, quartering, or some combination thereof. Del Col, “Alcune osservazioni,” 91; Andrea Del Col and Marisa Milani, “Senza effusione di sangue e senza pericolo di morte’: Intorno ad alcune condanne capitali delle Inquisizione di Venezia e di Verona nel Settecento e a quelle veneziane del Cinquecento,” in *Eretici, esuli e indemoniati nell’età moderna*, ed. Mario Rosa (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1998), 141–94.

68. On two capital sentences carried out in 1705, see Del Col and Milani, “Senza effusione di sangue,” 141–73, 187–96.

69. On appeals to the Congregation, see Pietro Paolo Guazzini, *Tractatus moralis ad defensam animarum advocatorum, iudicum reorum* (Venice: Tommasini, 1650), 427.

70. Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, xi, 8–9.

71. The main exceptions are priests, friars, and monks convicted of having solicited

sexual favors in the confessional. For a somewhat sympathetic view of these perpetrators, see Haliczler, *Sexuality*, chap. 5: “The Soliciting Confessor,” 86–104.

CHAPTER THREE: “LITTLE WOMEN” AND DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

1. On Spanish beatas, see Claire Guilhem, “L’Inquisition et la dévaluation des discours féminines,” in *L’Inquisition espagnole XVIe–XIXe siècle*, ed. Bartolomé Bennassar (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 197–240; Jodi Bilinkoff, “Charisma and Controversy: The Case of María de Santo Domingo,” *Archivo dominicano* 10 (1989): 55–66; Mary Elizabeth Perry, “Beatas and the Inquisition in Early Modern Spain,” in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Stephen Haliczler (London: Croom Helm, and New York: Barnes & Noble, 1987), 147–68; idem, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 97–117; and Mary E. Giles, ed., *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), esp. pt. 2.

2. For a concise review of the “converso problem” in Spain, see Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 38–62.

3. A thorough, persuasive treatment of Valdés’s influence in Italy is provided by Massimo Firpo, *Tra alumbados e “spirituali”: Studi su Juan de Valdés e il valdesianesimo nella crisi religiosa del ’500 italiano* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990).

4. Because uncloistered religious women in early modern Italy have received little scholarly attention, generalizing about them is hazardous. See *DIP*, s.v. “Pinzochere,” by Romana Guarnieri; Gabriella Zarri, “Monasteri femminili e città (secoli XV–XVII),” in *Storia d’Italia, Annali*, vol. 9, *La Chiesa e il potere politico dal Medioevo all’età moderna*, ed. Giorgio Chittolini and Giovanni Miccoli (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), 359–429; Elisja Schulte van Kessel, “Vergini e madri tra cielo e terra: Le cristiane nella prima età moderna,” in *Storia delle donne in Occidenti dal Rinascimento all’età moderna*, ed. Arlette Farge and Natalie Zemon Davis (Rome: Laterza, 1991), 161–63. The Tridentine decree *De regularibus et monialibus*, chap. 5 of which concerned enclosure, was passed in Session XXV on 3–4 December 1563. *Conciliorum oecumenorum decreta*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al. (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1991), 776–78.

5. *DIP*, s.v. “Discernimento degli spiriti,” by M. Colombás García; *DS*, s.v. “Discernement des esprits,” by Jacques Guillet, Gustave Bardy, François Vandenbroucke, Joseph Pegon, and Henri Martin.

6. Translations of these passages are taken from the New Revised Standard Version. Those citing 2 Corinthians usually quoted only the middle verse.

7. On developments previous to Gerson, see André Vauchez, *La sainteté in Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age d’après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981).

8. Jean Gerson, *De probatione spirituum*, in Gerson, *Opera omnia*, ed. Louis Ellies Du Pin, S.J., 5 vols. (Antwerp: sumptibus Societatis, 1706), 1:37–43.

9. “Little woman” (*muliercula*): the derogatory diminutive connotes an uneducated laywoman of low social status old enough to be sexually active.

10. Jean Gerson, *Exemplum quoddam de seductione mulieris quod accidit anno Domini 1424*, in Gerson, *Opera omnia*, 1:19–20.

11. On women’s talkativeness, see Peter Burke, “Languages and Anti-Languages

in Early Modern Italy,” chap. in Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 84.

12. Girolamo Savonarola, *Trattato della rivelazione della Chiesa divinitus* [= *Compendio di rivelazioni*] (Venice: Bernardino Stagnino, 1536), 16r–v.

13. QE, 1:837; Auke Jelsma, “The Appreciation of Brigid of Sweden (1303–1373) in the Fifteenth Century,” in Schulte van Kessel, *Women and Men in Spiritual Culture*, 172.

14. Juan de Torquemada, *In defensorium eiusdem super revelationes caelestes Sanctae Brigittae de Vuatzsteno*, in *Revelations Sanctae Brigittae*, ed. Consalvus Durantus (Rome: Ludovico Grignano, 1627), 1:★★2r–★★6r. This work was first published in Rome in 1557. QE, 1:841.

15. Teresa of Jesus [of Avila], Saint, *The Book of Her Life*, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 1, trans. Kevin Kavanaugh, and Otilio Rodriguez, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1987), 34–35. When citing the *Life*, I give chapter and section numbers, followed by page numbers in parentheses from this edition. On the circumstances of composition, see Rosa Rossi, *Teresa d’Avila: Biografia di una scrittrice*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1984), 33–54. For an impressive feminist reading of Teresa’s *Life* and her other works, see Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

16. Teresa, *Life*, 2.8 (60); 3.6 (65); 5.3 (71); 7.21 (93); 12.7 (122–23); 15.10, 13 (144, 146); 23.2, 4–5, 13 (201–2, 206); 15.20–22 (222–23); 29.5–6 (248–49); 30.8–11 (256–58); 31.1–6, 9–11 (264–66, 267–68); 33.3–4 (285–86); 36.7–10, 19 (312–14, 318).

17. For an astute analysis of this theme in Teresa’s *Life* and her other works, see Alison Weber, “Saint Teresa, Demonologist,” in *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*, ed. Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 171–95.

18. Teresa, *Life*, 20.6 (174); 25.3, 7–9 (213–14, 216–17).

19. *Ibid.*, 25.11–13 (217–19), 28.10 (242).

20. *Ibid.*, 25.2 (213).

21. *Ibid.*, 20.23 (182); 23.2 (201); 25.3, 10–11 (213–14, 217–18); 28.13 (243–44).

22. *Ibid.*, 23.5, 15 (202, 207).

23. *Ibid.*, 26.3 (225), 28.4 (238–39).

24. *Ibid.*, 13.13, 19 (124, 131–32); 28.14–16 (244–45).

25. *Ibid.*, 23.9 (203–4), 15.14–19 (219–22), 26.3–5 (225–26), 28.4 (238–39), 30.3–6 (254–55), 34.10–13 (297–99).

26. *Ibid.*, 5.3–6 (71–74), 31.7–8 (266–67).

27. *Ibid.*, 8.12 (100), 37.5 (325–26).

28. Teresa’s *Life* first appeared in print in *Los libros de la Madre Teresa de Jesus*, ed. Luis de León (Salamanca: Guillermo Foquel, 1588). An Italian translation by the Oratorian priest Giovanni Francesco Bordini, first published in Rome in 1599, was issued many times thereafter. Valentino Macca, “L’influsso del magistero teresiano in Italia,” in *Teresa de Jesús: Estudios historico-literarios, Studi storico-letterari* (Rome: Teresianum, 1982), 121–50.

29. *DS*, s.v. “Direction spirituelle in Occident: Période moderne,” by André Rayez, Michel Olphe-Galliard, and Charles Berthelot du Chesnay; *EC*, s.v. “Direzione

spirituale,” by Umile Bonzi; *DIP*, s.v. “Direzione spirituale,” by Ermanno Ancilli. Recent case studies of spiritual direction include Adriano Prosperi, “Dalle ‘divine madri’ ai ‘padri spirituali,’” in Schulte van Kessel, *Women and Men*, 71–90; Romana Guarnieri, “‘Nec domina nec ancilla, sed socia’: Tre casi di direzione spirituale tra Cinque e Seicento,” in the same volume, 111–32; Gabriella Zarri, *Il carteggio tra don Leone Barolini e un gruppo di gentildonne bolognesi negli anni del Concilio di Trento (1545–1563)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1986); and Anna Scattigno, “‘Carissimo figliolo in Cristo’: Direzione spirituale e mediazione sociale nell’epistolario di Caterina de’ Ricci (1524–1590),” in Ferrante, Palazzi, and Pomata, *Ragnatele di rapporti*, 219–39.

30. On confessional manuals, see Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Anne Jacobson Schutte, “Consiglio spirituale e controllo sociale: Manuali per la confessione stampati in volgare prima della Controriforma,” in *Città italiane del ’500 tra Riforma e Controriforma* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1988), 45–59; and Miriam Turrini, *La coscienza e le leggi: Morale e diritto nei testi per la confessione della prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991).

31. One partial exception has been identified by Gabriella Zarri, “‘Vera’ santità, ‘simulata’ santità. Ipotesi e riscontri,” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 12. *Confessione composta al proposito de monache sore piçocare et altre persone religiose* (Venice: [Lucantonio Giunta?], 1517) mentions in passing a fault subsumed under the sin of pride: pretending to be holier than one actually is. Gradually, however, the writers of confessional manuals began to take account of the needs of devout, scrupulous penitents who wished to cleanse their souls frequently. Turrini, *La coscienza e le leggi*, 212–41.

32. *DIP*, s.v. “Direzione spirituale,” by Ermanno Ancilli.

33. On Juan de Avila (1499–1569), canonized in 1970, see *DS*, s.v. “Juan de Avila,” by Juan Esquerda Bifet, and David Coleman, “Moral Formation and Social Control in the Catholic Reformation: The Case of San Juan de Avila,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 17–30. In the early 1530s, while imprisoned by the Inquisition, Juan de Avila drafted *Audi, filia*, a spiritual handbook for a female penitent. When published without his knowledge in 1556, the book raised new suspicions about his orthodoxy; it was placed on the Index in 1559. An authorized revised version was issued several times in Spain between 1574 and 1581, as well as in an Italian translation by Camillo Camilli: Juan de Avila, *Trattato spirituale sopra il verso Audi filia del salmo Eructavit cor meum* (Venice: Francesco Ziletti, 1581).

34. Diego Pérez de Valdivia, *Aviso de gente recogida*, ed. Alvaro Huerigo and Juan Esquerda Bifet (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1977), 17–21, 55–104; Alison Weber, “Between Ecstasy and Exorcism: Religious Negotiation in Sixteenth-Century Spain,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (1993): 221–34. The Italian version, prepared by unnamed Dominicans in Florence, was published several times (Florence: Filippo Giunti, 1590, 1592; Brescia: Francesco Tebaldini, 1602; Venice: Pietro Bertano, 1610, 1650). Citations below are to *Avvertimenti spirituali per quelli che specialmente si sono dedicati al servizio di Dio* (Florence: Filippo Giunti, 1592).

35. Pérez, *Avvertimenti*, dedication to Juan de Ribera, patriarch of Antioch and archbishop of Valencia, *6v–*7r.

36. *Ibid.*, “To the Pious Reader,” 1, 3–5; “To the [male and female] Servants of God,” 11–12.

37. *Ibid.*, 533–630.

38. *Ibid.*, 181–87, 288–324.

39. *Ibid.*, 325–33, 567–68. In addition to predictable suggestions (“some holy book or some spiritual history, such as the *Flos sanctorum*”), Pérez recommends “the reports [*avvisi*] that the fathers of the Company [Society of Jesus] send from the Indies or some book that treats natural phenomena or the history of the world, provided that it is conducive to the spirit” (332).

40. *Ibid.*, 187–248.

41. *Ibid.*, 282–83.

42. *Ibid.*, 283–86.

43. Vincent Ferrer’s *De vita spirituale*, first published in Venice in 1500, appeared much later in Italian translation (Pavia: Giacomo Ardizzoni and Giovanni Battista Rossi, 1613). QE, 1:763–67. On the author, canonized in 1458, see BS, s.v. “Vincenzo Ferrer, s.,” by Sadoc M. Bertucci. Although Pérez certainly knew Juan de Avila’s *Audi, filia*, awareness of his late mentor’s ambiguous reputation and fear of giving the Holy Office another opportunity to prosecute him probably dissuaded him from referring to it.

44. Pérez, *Avvertimenti*, 494–515.

45. *Ibid.*, 525–31.

46. *Ibid.*, 3–5.

47. Marc’Aurelio Grattarola, *Pratica della vita spirituale per ogni stato de persone desiderose di far progresso nella christiana perfettione* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Combi, 1621), previously issued several times (Venice: Giovanni Battista Combi, 1609, c. 1614; Como: Giovanni Angelo Turato, 1617). I thank Adriano Prosperi for calling my attention to this work and Gabriella Zarri for allowing me to consult her copy of it. The *Pratica* is discussed briefly by Prosperi, “L’elemento storico nelle polemiche sulla santità,” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 112–13.

48. Grattarola, *Pratica*, a2v–a3v.

49. *Ibid.*, 118–19.

50. *Ibid.*, 120–27.

51. *Ibid.*, 127–34.

52. *Ibid.*, 121, 132.

53. *Ibid.*, 150–54.

54. *Ibid.*, 135–38.

55. On Pagani (1536–89), see Benedetto Mazzara, *Leggendario francescano*, 3rd ed., ed. Pietr’Antonio da Venezia, 12 vols. (Venice: Domenico Lovisa, 1721–22), 1:40–50, and Sbaralea, 1:91. On the Dimesse, see *DIP*, s.v. “Dimesse della Madonna, Figlie di Maria Immacolata,” by Davide-Maria Montagna. Houses of the Compagnia delle Dimesse operated in Vicenza, Murano, Thiene, Schio, Feltre, Verona, Bergamo, Padua, and Udine. For a fuller discussion and additional bibliography, see Gabriella Zarri, “Disciplina regolare e pratica di coscienza: Le virtù e i comportamenti sociali in comunità femminili (secc. XVI–XVIII),” in Prodi, *Disciplina*, 257–78. The term *dimessa* was also applied in a generic fashion to spiritually inclined women unaffiliated with the Company who lived in retirement in their own homes.

56. Antonio Pagani, *Gli Ordini della divota Compagnia delle Dimesse che vivono sotto*

il nome e la protezione della purissima Madre di Dio Maria Vergine (Venice: Domenico Nicolini, 1587), 45–46.

57. Antonio Pagani, *La breve somma delli essercitii de' penitenti per la profittevole riforma dell'huomo interiore* (Venice: Giovanni Varisco & Paganino Paganini, 1587), 203–7. A companion handbook focuses on the brighter side of the devout life: Antonio Pagani, *La breve somma de i trionfi de' combattenti per la perfetta riforma dell'huomo interiore* (Venice: Giovanni Varisco & Paganino Paganini, 1587).

58. On Jesuits' hazardous relationships with female penitents, see Gianvittorio Signorotto, "Gesuiti, carismatici e beate nella Milano del primo Seicento," in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 177–201.

59. José de Acosta, *De temporibus novissimis libri quatuor* (Rome: Giuseppe Tornerio, 1590), 54–56. On Acosta (c. 1539–1600), see Adriano Prosperi, "America e Apocalisse. Note sulla 'conquista spirituale' del Nuovo Mondo" (1976), now in his *America e Apocalisse e altri saggi* (Pisa: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1999), 15–63 (on Francisco de la Cruz, 17–18).

60. On Del Rio, see Sommervogel, 2 :1894–1903.

61. Martin Antoine Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex* (Venice: Vincenzo Florini, 1616), 503–4.

62. Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex*, 504–6. On Magdalena de la Cruz, see Weber, "Saint Teresa, Demonologist," 173–74, and Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 21–22. The other woman mentioned by Del Rio is undoubtedly Jeanne Fery, a nun in Mons, on whom see Pierre Debongnie, "Les confessions d'une possédée, Jean Fery (1584–1585)," in *Satan [Études carmelitaines 27]* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1948), 386–419.

63. See *DBI*, s.v. "Berinzaga, Isabella Cristina," by Gaetano Cozzi, and "Gagliardi, Achille," by Giampiero Brunelli.

64. On Borromeo's attitude toward mystical phenomena, see Agostino Saba, *Federico Borromeo e i mistici del suo tempo, con la vita e la corrispondenza inedita di Caterina Vannini da Siena* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1933), and *DBI*, s.v. "Borromeo, Federico," by Paolo Prodi.

65. For this reason Borromeo's treatises are very rare; to my knowledge, only the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan possesses all four.

66. Federico Borromeo, *De vera et occulta sanctitate libri tres* (Milan: Ludovico Monza, 1650), 8. A note in the back of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana copy indicating that this work was written shortly before the author's death in 1631 states that a first edition appeared in the following year.

67. Federico Borromeo, *De insanis quibusdam tentationibus liber unus* (Milan: [Collegio Ambrosiano], 1629), 75–78; *idem*, *De vera et occulta sanctitate*, 100–107.

68. Borromeo, *De vera et occulta sanctitate*, 8, 49–50.

69. Federico Borromeo, *De ecstatis mulieribus et illis libri quatuor* (Milan: [Collegio Ambrosiano], 1616), 69–70, 76–77.

70. Borromeo, *De insanis*, 81–83; *idem*, *De vera et occulta sanctitate*, 70–79.

71. Borromeo, *De ecstatis*, 187–208. On inedia and the Speyer case, see Chapter 8. The second of Borromeo's treatises to be published, not cited above, was *De naturali estasi, de vario revelationum et illusionum genere* (Milan: Collegio Ambrosiano, 1617).

72. Emanuel do Valle de Moura, *De incantationibus seu ensalmis* (Evora, Portugal: Laurentius Crasbeeck, 1620), 138–41.

73. *Ibid.*, 147–50.

74. *Ibid.*, 153–57.

75. For identical views expressed in a genre not considered here, commentaries on the summae of Thomas Aquinas, see Albano Biondi, “L’inordinata devozione” nella *Prattica* del Cardinale Scaglia (ca. 1635),” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 306–7.

76. Subsequently published works on discernment of spirits and guides to the devout life, which adhere faithfully to this paradigm, rely heavily on Teresa of Avila’s writings and example. In the first category, see Giovanni Bona, *De discretione spirituum liber unus* (Paris: Louis Billaine, 1673), 75–76, 99–100, 227–28, 232–33, 241, 249, 253, 398–404. On two guidebooks by the Venetian priest Giorgio Polacco intended primarily for spiritual directors issued in the 1640s, see Chapter 7, text starting at n. 51. Later examples in this genre include François de Sales’s letters, written in the early seventeenth century and made available in Italian as *Lettere spirituali*, trans. Giacomo Rossi (Padua: Stamperia del Seminario appresso Giovanni Manfrè, 1738), 1:153–63, 175–83, 245–51, 268–71; Antonio Arbiol, *Desengaños místicos a las almas detenidas o engañados en el camino de la perfección* (1705), 8th ed. (Barcelona: Carlos Sapèra & Jayme Ossèt, 1758), 75–81, 421–26; and Giovanni Battista Scaramelli, *Il direttore mistico, indirizzato a’ direttori di quelle anime che Iddio conduce per la via della contemplazione* (Venice: Simone Occhi, 1754), 444–77.

CHAPTER FOUR: FROM STUDY TO COURTROOM

1. Alessio Porri, *Antidotario contro li demonii nel quale si tratta come entrano ne’ corpi humani, over in quelli stiano, come da quelli si scacciano, et altre cose degne di sapersi* (Venice: Roberto Miettì, 1601), 16–19.

2. Among the many studies tracing the origins of the witchcraft paradigm, the most intriguing is Carlo Ginzburg, *Storia notturna: Una decifrazione del sabba* (Turin: Einaudi, 1989); in English (a version that leaves much to be desired): *Estacies: Deciphering the Witches’ Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon, 1991).

3. Armando Verdighione, introduction to Heinrich Krämer (Institor), and Jacob Sprenger, *Il martello delle streghe*, trans. Fabrizio Buia, Elena Caetani, Renato Castelli, Valeria La Via, Franco Mori, and Ettore Perella (Venice: Marsilio, 1977), 9–10. Contrary to widely held opinion, Sprenger did not coauthor the book.

4. Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esocisti e streghe nell’Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni, 1990), 69–85. See also Ginzburg, *Storia notturna*, 66, and Bernardo da Como, *Lucerna inquisitionum haereticarum pravitatis*, ed. Francisco Peña (Venice: Marc’Antonio Zaltieri, 1596).

5. Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches’ Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition (1609–1614)* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980).

6. Romeo, *Inquisitori*.

7. *Ibid.*, 30, 44–45, 48–53.

8. *Ibid.*, 15.

9. *Ibid.*, chap. 2: “Un’inquisizione perplessa” (25–66). A notable exception was Carlo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, who remained a true believer in diabolic witchcraft and assiduously prosecuted witches. *Ibid.*, 36–37, 47–52, 59–60.

10. *Ibid.*, 85–94.

11. See below.

12. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, chaps. 1–3, 8 (3–108, 247–74). Not all functionaries in the field endorsed and followed this policy. In the patriarchate of Aquileia during the seventeenth century several inquisitors, notably Giulio Missini da Orvieto, actively prosecuted alleged witches, much to the annoyance of the Congregation of the Holy Office. Franco Nardon, *Benandanti e inquisitori nel Friuli del Seicento* (Trieste: Edizioni dell'Università di Trieste, and Montereale Valcellina: Centro Studi Storici Menocchio, 1999), 61–62, 99, 104, 111–13, 122–25, 133–35, 151–52, 171–74.

13. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 33.

14. Simancas (d. 1583) was successively bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, and Zamora. *HC*, 3:184, 283, 360. On his Italian career, see Romeo, *Inquisitori*, chap. 3 (esp. 73, 77–79). Simancas's shorter manual, *Praxis haereseos sive enchiridion iudicum violatae religionis* (Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1568), was issued again in Venice by Giordano Ziletti in 1569 and 1573 and in Antwerp by Plantin in 1573. For the publication history of inquisitorial manuals, see Emil van der Vekene, *Bibliotheca bibliographica historiae Sanctae Inquisitionis*, 2 vols. (Vaduz: Topos, 1982–83).

15. Diego de Simancas, *De catholicis institutionibus ad praecaudendas et extirpandas haereses admodum necessarius*, 3rd ed. (Rome: in aedibus Populi Romani, 1575), 148–49. “That girl from Cordoba” is almost certainly Magdalena de la Cruz, whose case, as mentioned above, was later discussed by Del Rio.

16. Since *De catholicis institutionibus* was not reissued between 1575 and 1692, repeated references to it may well be secondhand citations. In his *Praxis haereseos sive enchiridion* Simancas does not mention pretense of holiness. Having examined almost all the inquisitorial manuals issued in Italy in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, I have found only one other passing reference bearing tangentially on pretense of holiness. According to Nicolau Eymeric, one technique of evasion and prevarication employed by heretics is “the feigned holiness of their behavior,” which should be investigated closely because in most cases they are guilty of “pride, lust, gluttony, vainglory, envy, and other [sins].” Nicolau Eymeric, *Directorium inquisitorum*, ed. Francisco Peña (Rome: Casa del Popolo Romano, Giorgio Ferrario, 1587), 433.

17. *DBI*, s.v. “Benincasa, Orsola,” by Silvana Menchi; Jean-Michel Sallmann, “La sainteté mystique féminine à Naples au tournant des XVIe et XVIIe siècles,” in Boesch Gajano and Sebastiani, *Culto dei santi*, 684–87; Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 34 n. Although the president of the nine-member commission was Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro, head of the Congregation of the Holy Office, Sallmann (“Sainteté mystique,” 85) is mistaken in calling it “certainly a tribunal of the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition.”

18. Giovanni Romeo, “Una ‘simulatrice di santità’ a Napoli nel ’500: Alfonsina Rispoli,” *Campania sacra* 8–9 (1977–78): 159–218; Sallmann, “Sainteté mystique,” 692–97; *idem*, *Naples et ses saints à l’âge baroque (1540–1750)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), 178–86.

19. Jean-Michel Sallmann, “Esiste una falsa santità maschile?” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 120–21; *idem*, *Naples et ses saints*, 186–93.

20. Sallmann, “Sainteté mystique,” 690–92; *idem*, *Naples et ses saints*, 193–202.

21. Luigi Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione in Napoli* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1892; reprint, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1987), 2:22–30; *DBI*, s.v. “Di Marco,

Giulia,” by Jean-Michel Sallmann; idem, *Naples et ses saints*, 202–10. An account of this notorious case circulated widely in manuscript.

22. Giovanni Romeo, “Una città, due inquisizioni: L’anomalia del Sant’Ufficio a Napoli nel tardo ’500,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 24 (1988): 42–67.

23. Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

24. These documents, not utilized by Brown, were brought to scholars’ attention by Rudolph Bell: Rudolph Bell and Judith C. Brown, “Renaissance Sexuality and the Florentine Archives: An Exchange,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (1987): 490. The Carlini dossier is in FiAS, *Miscellanea Medicea*, 376, inserto 28; the documents are no longer in the order given by Bell.

25. Bell gives the names of the two Capuchins. Without explaining why, he assigns both works to Ricordati. Bell and Brown, “Renaissance Sexuality,” 490, 495.

26. According to its author(s), “Segni” is a precis of “the treatise he wrote on contemplation, chapters 18, 19, and 20.” On Villanueva (1568–1608), see Sommervogel, 8:711. The only relevant work listed there was not, as far as I have been able to determine, reissued in Latin or Italian: Melchor de Villanueva, *Libro de la oración mental* (Toledo: Pietro Rodríguez, 1608).

27. On the Augustinian Hermit Henricus de Frimaria (c. 1245–1340), see *DS*, s.v. “Henricus de Frimaria le vieux,” by Adolar Zumkeller. The work referred to is Heinrich von Frimaria, *Librum de quatuor instinctibus divino, angelico, diabolico et mundano*, in Bartolomeo Ribmertini, *Insignis atque praeclarus de deliciis sensibilibus paradisi liber* (Venice: Jacopo Pencio for Lazzaro Soardi, 1498), 55v–65r.

Gilles Charlier (c. 1390–1472), a native of Cambrai, taught theology at the University of Paris. The work alluded to is probably his *Sporta fragmentorum* (Brussels: Fratres vitae communis, 1478–79), 69r–71v.

On Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533), see Albano Biondi’s introduction to his *Strega o delle illusioni del demonio*, trans. Leandro Alberti, ed. Albano Biondi (Venice: Marsilio, 1989). The work referred to in the Pescia document is *De renun praenotatione libri IX* (Strasbourg: Johann Knobloch, 1506–7), bk. 9, “De praenotationibus discernendis”; also in Pico’s *Opera omnia* (Basel: Henricpetri, 1573; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1969), 2:682–709.

The Jesuit Pedro de Rivadeniera (1527–1611), biographer of Ignatius Loyola and chronicler of the early years of the Society of Jesus, wrote *Tratado de la tribulación* (Madrid: Pedro Madrigal, 1589), issued in Latin as *De tribulatione huius saeculi libri duo* (Cologne: Conrad Butgen, 1603). Sommervogel, 5:1733. There is a modern edition of this work in Pedro de Rivadeniera, *Obras escogidas*, ed. Vicente de la Fuente (Madrid: M. Rivadenegra, 1868), 358–448.

28. The Carlini affair left no trace in Inquisition records preserved in FiAA, DubTC, or the correspondence between the Congregation and the Florentine Holy Office held in the Royal Library of Brussels. (I thank John Tedeschi for checking his photocopy of the Brussels documents.) Although VaACDF does not hold the record of her trial, a brief mention of a memorandum about her read in the Congregation of the Holy Office makes clear that it was involved in the case: DSO, 1733, 16r (30 January 1633).

29. On Carlini’s punishment, see Bell and Brown, “Renaissance Sexuality,” 499–502.

30. A 1631 edition listed by Vekene (*Bibliotheca*, no. 156) as being held in the library of the Catholic University of America is a “ghost.” The earlier of two editions in that library is dated 1636; its preface indicates clearly that it is the *editio princeps*.

31. For an overview of the career of Carena (c. 1597–c. 1659), see Gabriele Cornaggia Medici, “Cesare Carena, giurista cremonese del secolo XVII,” *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 6, 57 (1930): 297–330. On Campori, who was considered *papabile* in the conclaves of 1621 and 1623, see *HC*, 4:13, and *DBI*, s.v. “Campori (Campora), Pietro,” by Rotraut Becker. Carena dedicated the *Tractatus* to his patron and to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Urban VIII’s nephew.

32. Vekene (*Bibliotheca*, 1:51) reproduces the title page of the 1642 edition.

33. Cesare Carena, *Tractatus de officio Sanctissimae Inquisitionis et modo procedendi in causis fidei* (Cremona: Marc’Antonio Belpieri, 1636), 371–72. Light on what Carena may have meant by nonsuspicious revelations is shed in a work by a Jesuit theologian published a few years before Carena’s manual. Citing a ruling by the Council of Trent (session 6, canon 12), Antonio Santarelli argues that a private revelation that does not convey assurance of salvation is not ipso facto illegitimate: *Tractatus de haeresi, scismate, apostasia, sollicitatione in sacramento poenitentiae et de potestate Romani Pontificis in his delictis puniendis* (Rome: heirs of Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1625), 8–9. On Santarelli, see Somervogel, 7:579–83.

34. Cesare Carena, *Tractatus de officio Sanctissimae Inquisitionis et modo procedendi in causis fidei* (Cremona: Marc’Antonio Belpieri, 1641), 312. Carena drew these citations from a work by a Theatine consultant to the Sicilian Inquisition, Antonino Diana: *Resolutionum moralium compendium*, ed. Matteo Defendi (Venice: Francesco Baba, 1640).

35. *HC*, 4:14–15; *QE*, 2:501.

36. John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 205–27, 229–58. Romeo’s findings support Tedeschi’s contention that in his “Instructio” and “Prattica” Scaglia summarized and publicized previous decisions made by the Congregation. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 65; idem, “I processi di stregoneria,” in De Rosa and Gregory, *Storia dell’Italia religiosa*, 201–2.

37. Albano Biondi, “L’inordinata devozione’ nella *Prattica* del Cardinale Scaglia (ca. 1635),” in Zari, *Finzione e santità*, 306–25; the relevant sections of the “Prattica” are published in the appendix to this article. See also Adriano Prosperi, “L’elemento storico nelle polemiche sulla santità,” in the same volume, 112–15.

38. Biondi utilizes two copies in Modena, Biblioteca Estense. In a Roman exemplar from which “Della santità affettata” is missing, the final section, “Delle monache,” concludes with a summary of Giulia Di Marco’s trial not included in the Modenese manuscripts. VaBA, Borg. Lat. 660, 96r–99v. “Della santità affettata” constitutes the first chapter of the second part in another exemplar: OxB, MS Mendham 36, no. 1, 59r–65r. I am grateful to John Tedeschi for furnishing a photocopy.

39. Biondi, “L’inordinata devozione,” 316–17.

40. *Ibid.*, 317–18.

41. *Ibid.*, 318–19.

42. *Ibid.*, 319–20.

43. *Ibid.*, 320.

44. In mandating lighter sentences for women than for men, Scaglia is in line with

previous writers on inquisitorial procedure, e.g., Simancas, *De catholicis institutionibus*, 120; idem, *Praxis haereseos*, 60r.

45. Biondi, “L’inordinata devozione,” 321.

46. The *De partibus potentialis iustitiae in secundam secundae D. Thomae Aquinatis* of de la Torre (d. 1612), a professor of theology at the University of Salamanca, was first published in that city in 1611. QE, 2:383.

47. Biondi, “L’inordinata devozione,” 321–23.

48. Carena’s modern biographer, who does not account for the young jurist’s activities between 1619 (when he took his law degree at Pavia) and 1625 (when he became Campori’s auditor in Cremona), suggests that at a later point in his life he may have worked in Rome. Cornaggia Medici, “Cesare Carena,” 303, 305. In the light of his connection with Campori and Urban VIII’s authorization of his inquisitorial appointments, it seems plausible to suggest that he entered Campori’s service in Rome before the prelate settled in his diocese in mid-1621.

49. According to Cornaggia Medici (“Cesare Carena,” 308), this commentary, as well as an unfinished *Praxis inquisitoria* by Francisco Peña annotated by Carena, appeared in the 1642 edition of his *Tractatus*, which I have not seen.

50. Among other seventeenth-century manuals I have examined, the two that provide the most thorough treatment of pretense of holiness come from the orbit of the Spanish Inquisition. The *Manuale qualificatorum Sanctae Inquisitionis* by Giovanni Alberghini, a Third Order Franciscan from Palermo who served as consultor to the Sicilian Inquisition, was published at least four times (Palermo: Decio Cirillo, 1642 and possibly 1647; Zaragossa: Augustín Verges, 1671; Cologne: sumptibus fratrum de Tournes, 1740; Venice: Domenico Deregni, 1754); see the 1754 edition, 212–17. The Valencian Jesuit Sebastian Salleles, consultor to the Holy Office of Malta, presented examples drawn from his own experience and that of colleagues in Spain and the Low Countries in his *De materiis Tribunalium Sanctae Inquisitionis*, 2 vols. (Rome: Giovanni Pietro and Tommaso Coligni, 1651–56), 1:294, 305–8; 2:95–102, 211–13. Neither writer cites Carena or Scaglia on the subject.

51. Prosperi, “L’elemento storico,” 114.

52. Cremona: Marc’Antonio Belpieri, 1641, 1642, 1655; Lyon: Laurent Anisson, 1649, 1669; Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1668. In a preface to another of Carena’s works, *Resolutionum practicarum seu rerum praesertim in foro Cremonensi iudicatorum* (Cremona: Marc’Antonio Belpieri, 1647), the printer asserts that the *Tractatus* has been well received not only in Italy but also in Spain, France, and Germany. Cornaggia Medici, “Cesare Carena,” 307. For additional evidence on the authoritative status of this manual in Italy, see Tedeschi, *Prosecution*, 73 n. 42.

53. The same was the case with prosecutors of witches. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 237, 255.

CHAPTER FIVE: REFASHIONING “TRUE” HOLINESS

1. Gabriella Zarrì, “‘Vera’ santità, ‘simulata’ santità: Ipotesi e riscontri,” in Zarrì, *Finzione e santità*, esp. 14–19. For a remarkably lucid, concrete, and prescient anticipation of this historiographical paradigm, see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978). The current state of research and theoretical reflections on it are well represented by three articles in Prodi, *Disciplina*:

Pierangelo Schiera, “Disciplina, Stato moderno, disciplinamento: Considerazioni a cavallo tra la sociologia del potere e la storia costituzionale,” 21–46; Wolfgang Reinhard, “Disciplinamento sociale, confessionalizzazione, modernizzazione: Un discorso storico,” 101–23; and Heinz Schilling, “Chiese confessionali e disciplinamento sociale: Un bilancio provvisorio della ricerca storica,” 125–60. On Italy in particular, see Adriano Prosperi, “Riforma cattolica, Controriforma, disciplinamento sociale,” in De Rosa and Gregory, *Storia dell’Italia religiosa*, 3–48, and idem, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1996).

2. Pierre Deloof, “Per uno studio sociologico della santità,” in *Agiografia altomedioevale*, ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976), 233–39.

3. Peter Burke, “How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint,” chap. in Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 59.

4. Quotation from Stephen Wilson, introduction to *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History*, ed. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

5. Burke, “How to Be,” 48–50.

6. Deloof, “Per uno studio,” 239–42.

7. Among the many important studies in this area, see especially Pierre Deloof, *Sociologie et canonisations* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969); Boesch Gajano, *Agiografia altomedioevale*; André Vauchez, *La sainteté in Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge d’après les procès de canonization et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981); Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000–1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Boesch Gajano and Sebastiani, *Culto dei santi*; and Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

8. Except where otherwise indicated, this and the following three paragraphs synthesize studies by Gabriella Zarri, “Pietà a profezia alle corte padane: Le pie consigliere dei principi,” in *Il Rinascimento nelle corte padane: Società e cultura*, ed. Paolo Rossi (Bari: De Donato, 1977), 201–37; idem, “Le sante vive: Per una tipologia della santità femminile nel primo Cinquecento,” *Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 6 (1980): 371–445 (also in idem, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra ’400 e ’500* [Turin: Rosenberg & Seller, 1990], 87–163; and in English in *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996], 219–303); and idem, “Les prophètes de cour dans l’Italie de la Renaissance,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome-Moyen Âge* 102 (1990): 649–75.

9. On prophets in northern and central Italy, see also Ottavia Niccoli, *Profeti e popolo nell’Italia del Rinascimento* (Rome: Laterza, 1987); in English: *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane ((Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

10. The term *semireligious*, which Zarri does not use, was coined by Romana Guarnieri. *DIP*, s.v. “Pinzochere,” by Romana Guarnieri. Though not entirely felicitous in English, it serves to distinguish from nuns those women who made private vows of poverty and chastity but did not solemnly promise obedience to a superior.

11. In accordance with general scholarly practice, I use the Latin term *vitae* for saints' lives, which are not "biographies" in the modern sense of the word. See Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, 14–15, and below.

12. On Negri, see Andrea Erba, "Il 'caso' di Paola Antonia Negri nel Cinquecento italiano," in Schulte van Kessel, *Women and Men in Spiritual Culture*, 193–212, and Massimo Firpo, "Paola Antonia Negri, monaca Angelica (1508–1555)," in *Rinascimento al femminile*, ed. Ottavia Niccoli (Rome: Laterza, 1991), 35–82.

13. On Savonarola's posthumous following, see Massimo Firpo and Paolo Simoncelli, "I processi inquisitoriali contro Savonarola (1558) e Carnesecchi (1566–1567): Una proposta di interpretazione," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 18 (1982): 202–33, and Lorenzo Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Moment in Florence, 1494–1596* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

14. In 1538 Paul III approved the local cult of Guglielmo Cuffitella already in existence but did not declare him a saint. *EC*, s.v. "Canonizzazione," by Giuseppe Löw.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. Sixtus V issued the bull *Immensa aeterni Dei*, which established the Congregation of Rites, on 22 January 1588. *EC*, s.v. "Congregazioni Romane: Congregazione dei Riti," by Ferdinando Antonelli.

19. Romeo De Maio, "L'ideale eroico nei processi di canonizzazione della Controriforma," chap. in his *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento* (Naples: Guida, 1973), 257–58.

20. *Ibid.*, 263–72; Delooz, "Per uno studio," 245–51. Delooz interprets the role of martyrdom in a rather different way.

21. Unless otherwise indicated, this and the following two paragraphs are based on *EC*, s.v. "Beatificazione," by Giuseppe Löw; *ibid.*, s.v. "Canonizzazione," by *idem*; Giuseppe Dalla Torre, "Processo di beatificazione e canonizzazione," in *Enciclopedia del diritto* (Milan: A Giuffrè, 1987), 37:932–43; and *idem*, "Santità ed economia processuale. L'esperienza giuridica da Urbano VIII a Benedetto XIV," in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 231–63.

22. De Maio, "L'ideale eroico," 257–58.

23. These are collected in Urban VIII, *Urbani VIII Pont. O. M. Decreta servanda in canonizatione et beatificatione sanctorum* (Rome: Reverenda Camera Apostolica, 1642).

24. On the issue of miracles, see also Delooz, "Per uno studio," 251–57.

25. The fifty-year rule was not always followed. Alexander VII, for example, anticipated the deadline by seven years in canonizing his old friend François de Sales (d. 1622) in 1655. Burke, "How to Be," 58. In the twentieth century the waiting period was abbreviated further, first to thirty years and then (in 1983) to five. On current canonization procedures, see Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990; reprint, 1996).

26. Cases concluded or dropped are available for inspection in the Vatican Archives, but those pending before the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (the modern name of the Congregation of Rites) are not accessible. Another important set of documents on canonization, removed to Paris by order of Napoleon and never returned, may be

found in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Charles De Clercq, “Les causes des serviteurs de Dieu,” *Revue de droit canonique* 4 (1954): 76–90.

27. A published example of postmortem Inquisition proceedings in the sixteenth century is *Nuovi documenti su Vittoria Colonna e Reginald Pole*, ed. Sergio Pagano and Concetta Ranieri (Vatican City: Archivio Vaticano, 1989). In 1965, when Paul VI established the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as successor to the Congregation of the Holy Office, the procedural norms followed in the handling of dissidents became “internal,” that is, secret; the current version of the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, published in 1983, sheds no light on the subject. Andrea Del Col, personal communication.

28. See Chapter 3.

29. This line of inquiry is employed in Lucetta Scaraffia, *La santa degli impossibili: Vicende e significati della devozione a Santa Rita* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990).

30. Giovanni Musolino, Antonio Niero, and Silvio Tramontin, *Santi e beati veneziani: Quaranta profili* (Venice: Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 1963), 13–26.

31. Andrea Vescovi, “Catalogo de santi, beati, venerabili, e servi d’Iddio venetiani, come pure d’altri santi e beati forastieri morti in Venetia o stati per qualche tempo in detta città, quali dalla Santa Chiesa ovvero da degni autori sono con tal titolo registrati,” VeNM, MS Ital. Cl. VII, 331 (8661), 2r–v. This is the autograph manuscript, authenticated by Vescovi’s collaborator Giovanni Battista Ferretti, notary and vice chancellor of the patriarch. *Ibid.*, n.p. (second leaf). Musolino, Niero, and Tramontin (*Santi e beati veneziani*, 26–27) list other copies. Vescovi’s “Erga Sanctissimam Sedem Venetorum Obsequia” (VeBC, MS Cicogna 2114) was also designed to demonstrate the unwavering orthodoxy of the Republic.

32. Vescovi, *Catalogo*, 2v.

33. *Ibid.*, 2r. In some instances Vescovi justified his deviation from this prudent restraint by noting that the source he followed had already assigned an honorific title. *Ibid.*, 7r, 24v, 33v, 48v. For the obligatory disclaimer affidavits, see Urban VIII, *Urbani VIII*, 17–20.

34. Musolino, Niero, and Tramontin, *Santi e beati veneziani*, 60–61.

35. Burke, “How to Be,” 54.

36. At the end of the “Catalogo” (69r–84r) Vescovi indexes Venetian and “foreign” holy people according to status in secular life, subsequent affiliation with religious orders and rank in the secular clergy, and sex. I have adjusted his numbers to eliminate double counting (e.g., members of the regular clergy who became bishops, daughters of doges who became nuns). For statistics on canonized saints, see Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, 121–37.

37. De Maio, “L’ideale eroico,” 262–63; Burke, “How to Be,” 57.

38. On this model, which emerged in the fourteenth century and was modified only slightly in the seventeenth to accommodate the new emphasis on heroic virtue, see Vauchez, *Sainteté in Occident*, 583–622.

39. I have discussed the following examples in “Piccole donne, grandi eroine: Santità femminile ‘simulata’ e ‘vera,’ nell’Italia della prima età moderna,” in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Laterza, 1994), 277–301 (in English: “Little Women, Great Heroines: Simulated and Genuine Female Holiness in Early Modern Italy,” in *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri [Cambridge: Har-

vard University Press, 1999], 144–58), and “‘Sante’ e ‘streghe’ in Italia nella prima età moderna: Sorellastre o estranee?” in Seidel Menchi, Schutte, and Kuehn, *Tempi e spazi*, 335–52.

40. Vescovi, “Catalogo,” 6v. The guidebooks to which he refers are Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare*, ed. Giustiniano Martinioni (Venice: Stefano Curti, 1663), 210, and Domenico Martinelli, *Il ritratto di Venetia* (Venice: Giovanni Giacomo Hertz, 1684), 295–96.

41. On Bagatta, who wrote biographies of at least six other saintly Theatines, see Antonio Francesco Vezzosi, *Gli scrittori de’ Chierici Regolari detti Teatini* (Rome: Stamperia della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide, 1780), 1:95–99.

42. Giovanni Bonifacio Bagatta, *Vita della serva di Dio Madre Angela Maria Pasqualiga nobile venetiana, institutrice delle Vergini Regolari di Gesù e Maria di Venetia* (Venice: Giovanni Francesco Valvasense, 1680), a3r–v, a5r. In line with his caution about premature, counterproductive veneration, Bagatta refers to Pasqualigo in his title and throughout the book as a “servant of God.”

43. In the records of litigation about Angela Maria’s and her sister Lucia’s inheritance, which dragged on from 1588 until the 1640s, they are described as Antonio Pasqualigo’s “natural [not, as usual in legal records, “natural and legitimate”] daughters.” The absence of the second adjective may indicate that their mother was not his wife. VeAS, Gesù e Maria, b. 10.

44. Bagatta, *Vita*, 1–6.

45. The Dominican nun Rose of Lima (1586–1617), the first saint from the New World, was beatified in 1668 and canonized in 1672. BS, s.v. “Rosa, da Lima, vergine, santa,” by Niccolò Del Re and Adriana Cartotti Oddasso. *Processi informativi* for Maria Villani (1584–1670), daughter of Neapolitan nobles and also a Dominican nun, were conducted in the 1670s and 1680s, but she was never beatified or canonized. Ibid., s.v. “Villani, Maria, venerabile,” by Domenico Ambrasi.

46. The topos of literacy miraculously acquired merits further investigation.

47. Bagatta, *Vita*, 7–9.

48. Girolamo Pasqualigo’s name, which Bagatta does not give, appears in the records of litigation over his nieces’ inheritance, cited above in n. 43.

49. Bagatta, *Vita*, 10–16.

50. Ibid., 17–23.

51. Ibid., 23–37.

52. Ibid., 37–50.

53. Lucia Pasqualigo is also listed in Vescovi’s “Catalogo,” 35r.

54. Bagatta, *Vita*, 50–73, 95–99, 102–17; Vescovi, “Catalogo,” 15r.

55. On Polacco, see Chapter 7, text starting at n. 51.

56. Bagatta, *Vita*, 73–76.

57. Ibid., 76–80.

58. Benedetto Mazzara, *Leggendario francescano*, 3rd ed., ed. Pietr’Antonio da Venezia, 12 vols. (Venice: Domenico Lovisa, 1721–22). On Mazzara (d. 1692), see Ignazio Di Pietro, *Memorie storiche degli uomini illustri della città di Solmona* (L’Aquila: Grossiana, 1806), 192–93, and Sbaralea, 3:197. I have not located the two earlier editions of the *Leggendario* (Venice: Bartolomeo Tramontin, 1667–80; Venice: Andrea Poletti, 1689).

59. Vescovi, *Catalogo*, 17v, 34r.

60. Mazzara, *Leggendario francescano*, 2:4–8.

61. The name Eremita Francescane was chosen to avoid confusion with the previously established convent of Capuchin nuns in Padua, which Cecchini had originally joined. *Ibid.*, 2:16.

62. *Ibid.*, 2:9–26.

63. Although Pietr'Antonio da Venezia did not list Spinelli's life as one of those he added to Mazzara's collection, he must have been responsible for the reference to a vita issued in the year of Mazzara's death by the Oratorian Tommaso Baldassini da Jesi: *Vita della serva di Dio suora Maria Felice Spinelli* (Bologna: heirs of Antonio Pissari, 1692). For reasons of economy, I follow Pietr'Antonio da Venezia's summary.

64. Mazzara, *Leggendario francescano*, 1:339–42.

65. *Ibid.*, 1:339–46, 360–61.

66. The conclusion (1:366) mentions other clerics who called her a saint in her lifetime: the canon Giovanni Andreis, the Theatine Pietro Piccini, and the Somaschan Giovanni Francesco Priuli. Andreis's and Priuli's names turn up in other lives of "genuine" and "false saints."

67. *Ibid.*, 1:346–56.

68. *Ibid.*, 1:356–65.

69. *Ibid.*, 1:362.

70. Burke, "How to Be," 55–66.

71. Burke counts twenty-six nobles, three "middle-class" (the quotation marks are his), eight agricultural workers (the majority of whom lived before the sixteenth century), and eighteen whose social origins are unclear. *Ibid.*, 54. Of the women (my calculation), ten of twelve (83%) were of royal, noble, or prosperous middling origin; only Margaret of Cortona and Rose of Lima came from humble backgrounds.

72. Vescovi, "Catalogo," 25r (Tiepolo), 26v (Morosini), 8v (Grandi). I have not located Vescovi's vitae of Tiepolo and Morosini or his manuscript sources on Grandi (an oration by one Accursio, a manuscript vita possibly by the same writer, and a funeral oration by an unnamed author). Vescovi's last bibliographical reference for Grandi is the inscription on his tomb in San Giovanni Elemosinario, a deconsecrated church inaccessible to the public. On Grandi's role in Ferrazzi's life, see Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 32, 35, 51–54, 57, 66–67, 68, 72.

73. Vescovi, "Catalogo," 27v. Vescovi left space to fill in sources and added Barbarigo's date of death, 1697, at the very last minute.

74. Pierantonio Gios, "Gregorio Barbarigo e gli 'spirituali,'" *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, n.s., no. 45 (1994): 23–29; see also my "Gregorio Barbarigo e le donne: 'Buone cristiane' e 'false sante,'" in *Gregorio Barbarigo: Patrio veneto, vescovo e cardinale nella tarda Controriforma*, ed. Liliana Billanovich and Pierantonio Gios (Padua: Istituto per la Storia Ecclesiastica Padovana, 1999), 845–66, in which I discuss Barbarigo's decisive intervention in Ferrazzi's case. Since this article appeared, I have discovered that in late June 1665, several months before she was sentenced, her defense attorney petitioned the Congregation of the Holy Office, unsuccessfully, to transfer jurisdiction over her case from Inquisitor Agapito Ugoni to Cardinal Barbarigo, the patriarch of Venice, or the patriarch of Aquileia. VeAS, Secreta, Archivi propri, Roma, filza 40,

63r–v (Giacomo Querini, Venetian ambassador to the pope, to the doge, Rome, 27 June 1665).

75. Tommaso Agostino Ricchini, *De vita ac rebus gestis beati Gregorii Barbadici S.R.E. Cardinalis Episcopi Patavini libri tres* (Rome: Tipographia Pontificia Vaticana presso i Fratelli Salvioni, 1761), 1–12.

76. *Ibid.*, 13–49. For the full story, see BgAV, MS 47: *Visitatio Barbadica tomus primus*, 89r–91v.

77. See Schutte, “Gregorio Barbarigo.”

78. Ricchini, *De vita*, 50ff. The most recent summary account of Barbarigo’s life is BS, s.v. “Gregorio Giovanni Gaspare Barbarigo, santo,” by Ireneo Daniele. For a perceptive analysis of important themes in his career, see Liliana Billanovich, “Gregorio Barbarigo vescovo e patrizio veneziano: Proposte di lettura,” *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, n.s., no. 33 (1988): 79–105. The best source on his work with women is Giuseppe Musoco, “Delle attioni e virtù di Gregorio Barbarigo cardinale di Santa Roma Chiesa e vescovo di Padova,” PdBu, MS 2269, 477–79, 673–81.

79. On this point, see Fulvio Tomizza, *Heavenly Supper: The Story of Maria Janis*, trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 104, and Anne Jacobson Schutte, “Come costruirsi un corpo di santa,” *Studi storici* 33 (1992): 127–39 (in English: “*Per speculum in enigmate*: Failed Saints, Artists, and Self-Construction of the Female Body in Early Modern Italy,” in *Creative Women in Medieval and Early Modern Italy: A Religious and Artistic Renaissance*, ed. E. Ann Matter and John Coakley [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994], 188–200).

CHAPTER SIX: SORCERESSES, WITCHES, AND INQUISITORS

1. For an illuminating, if somewhat overblown, comparison between witches and saints, see Marcello Craveri’s introduction to the anthology *Sante e streghe: Biografie e documenti dal XIV al XVII secolo* (Milan: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 1980), 7–24, 48–52. Richard Kieckhefer offers additional insights but pays little attention to female practitioners of sorcery: “The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft, and Magic in Late Medieval Europe,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24 (1994): 355–85. See also my “‘Sante’ e ‘streghe’ in Italia della prima età moderna. Sorellastre o estranee?” in Seidel Menchi, Schutte, and Kuehn, *Tempi e spazi*, 335–52.

2. Only about 11 percent of sixteenth-century Venetian Inquisition prosecutions concerned sorcery and magic. Marisa Milani, “L’ossessione secolare di suor Mansueta: Un esorcismo a Venezia nel 1574,” *Quaderni veneti* 7 (1987): 29.

3. John Martin, “Per un’analisi quantitativa dell’Inquisizione veneziana,” in Del Col and Paolin, *L’Inquisizione romana*, 148.

4. Milani, “L’ossessione,” 129. Women constituted the majority of defendants in witchcraft prosecutions throughout Europe in this period: Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1995).

5. VeAS, Maggior Consiglio, reg. 21 (“Leona”), 204v–205r.

6. Paolo Sarpi, *Sopra l’ufficio dell’Inquisizione*, in Sarpi, *Scritti giurisdizionalistici*, ed. Giovanni Gambarin (Bari: Laterza, 1958), 125.

7. Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti e streghe nell’Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni, 1990), 85–86.

8. Nonetheless, the *consultori in iure* continued to reiterate Sarpi’s position. See,

e.g., VeAS, Consultori in Jure, filza 112, 202 (Francesco Emo to Doge Domenico Contarini, 3 November 1662); *ibid.*, filza 83, n.p. (unsigned opinion, February 1692). On rare occasions a secular magistracy handled a case of this kind. In June 1653, for example, the Esecutori contra la Bestemmia convicted Apollonia Colanina of magical practices identical to those for which the Inquisition later prosecuted Apollonia Bruni (see below). A few months later, Colanina's sentence—six months in a “dark prison,” followed by banishment—was amended to four months sewing sails in the Arsenal at half pay. VeAS, Consiglio de' Dieci, Parti comuni, filza 562, n.p.

9. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 187–90, 205–15.

10. *Ibid.*, 190–205, 215–46. Telling examples of attacks from the “center” on local efforts to found shrines are provided by Adriano Prosperi, “Madonne di città e Madonne di campagna: Per un'inchiesta sulle dinamiche del sacro nell'Italia post-tridentina,” in Boesch Gajano and Sebastiani, *Culto dei santi*, 615–47.

11. Punishments for occult practices in sixteenth-century Venice include one sentence of life imprisonment, three of perpetual exile from Venetian territory, twenty-three of exile from six months to ten years, twelve of some hours in the stocks, six of public whipping, and five of salutary penances; the harsher ones were assigned to male practitioners of magic. Milani, “L'ossessione,” 129. See also Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550–1650* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 219–24; Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 260–61. Sentences in one tribunal dependent on Venice were harsher: see Stefania Malavasi, “L'archivio del Sant'Ufficio di Rovigo,” in Del Col and Paolin, *L'Inquisizione*, 139–40. On exceptional death sentences levied on two male sorcerers in the early eighteenth century, see Andrea Del Col and Marisa Milani, ““Senza effusione di sangue e senza pericolo di morte”: Intorno ad alcune condanne capitali delle Inquisizioni di Venezia e di Verona nel Settecento e a quelle veneziane del Cinquecento,” in *Eretici esuli e indemoniati nell'età moderna*, ed. Mario Rosa (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1998), 141–96.

12. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 247–49, 254, 260–61.

13. *Ibid.*, 265–68.

14. The following discussion of Venetian sorceresses is drawn from my essay “Donne, Inquisizione e pietà,” in *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Seicento*, ed. Bruno Bertoli (Venice: Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 1992), 235–51.

15. VeAS, SU, b. 114, fasc. Lucia schiavona.

16. Martin, *Witchcraft*, 231–34.

17. VeAS, SU, b. 114, fasc. Eufemia.

18. *Ibid.*, b. 115, fasc. Isabella Veseschin. On the age and marital status of sorceresses, see Martin, *Witchcraft*, 227–30.

19. Martin, *Witchcraft*, 206–12.

20. VeAS, SU, b. 113, fasc. Africa Speranzini.

21. *Ibid.*, b. 114, fasc. Eufemia

22. Of 182 proceedings for occult practices in the Venetian tribunal of the Holy Office from 1542 to 1599, only 50 ended in condemnations. Milani, “L'ossessione,” 129. Ratios in the seventeenth century are similar.

23. Because the records of prosecutions for witchcraft by the Venetian Inquisition rarely contain written submissions by defendants or their attorneys, this sort of self-fashioning on the stand—a performing art—differs from the literary kind treated in

Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

24. VeAS, SU, b. 114, fasc. Zanetta Molin and Marietta Grimani.

25. *Ibid.*, first interrogation of Grimani, 13 September 1666.

26. *Ibid.*, third interrogation of Grimani, 16 November 1666. For a similar recipe described by a healer of the late sixteenth century, Elena “la Draga” Crusichi, and the identification of ingredients in her pharmacopeia, see *Antiche pratiche di medicina popolare nei processi del S. Ufficio (Venezia, 1572–1591)*, ed. Marisa Milani (Padua: Centro Stampa Palazzo Maldura, 1986), 37, and Martin, *Witchcraft*, 142. “La Draga” also features in Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 149–52, 156–64.

27. Fasc. Zanetta Molin and Marietta Grimani, third interrogation of Grimani, 16 November 1666.

28. *Ibid.*, fourth interrogation of Grimani, 18 November 1666. The lineup was rarely used in Inquisition trials. Witnesses’ testimony, describing Grimani as very short and bent over, suggests that she suffered from osteoporosis.

29. See Martin, *Witchcraft*, 139–47; Marisa Milani, “Il caso di Emilia Catena, ‘meretrice, striga et herbera,’” *Museum Patavinum* 3 (1985): 75–97; *La verità ovvero il processo contro Isabella Bellocchio (Venezia, 12 gennaio–14 ottobre 1589)*, ed. idem (Padua: Centro Stampa Palazzo Maldura, 1985); idem, *Piccole storie di stregoneria nella Venezia del ‘500* (Verona: Essedue, 1989); Mary R. O’Neil, “Sacerdote ovvero strione: Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Steven L. Kaplan (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 53–84; and idem, “Magical Healing and Love Magic in the Roman Inquisition,” in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Stephen Haliczzer (London: Croom Helm, and New York: Barnes & Noble, 1987), 88–114.

30. Fasc. Zanetta Molin and Marietta Grimani, sentence, 13 January 1667.

31. Six months after she was sentenced, however, the Holy Office granted her petition to be released from house arrest so that she could care for her orphaned grandsons. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1667.

32. VeAS, SU, b. 115, fasc. Caterina Erba.

33. On sorcery and male–female relationships, see Martin, *Witchcraft*, “love magic,” in the index; Milani, “Il caso di Emilia Catena”; idem, “L’incanto’ di Veronica Franco,” *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 162 (1985): 250–63; *La verità*, ed. idem; idem, *Piccole storie; Streghe e diavoli nei processi del S. Ufficio*, ed. idem (Bassano del Grappa: Ghedina & Tassotti, 1994; and O’Neil, “Magical Healing and Love Magic.”

34. Fasc. Caterina Erba, first interrogation of Erba, 22 August 1669.

35. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 191–98; Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), esp. 230–32.

36. Fasc. Caterina Erba, denunciation, 12 August 1669. For contrasting evaluations of the importance to the Holy Office of sorceresses’ “reputations,” see Martin, *Witchcraft*, 234–38, and Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 266.

37. Fasc. Caterina Erba, 13 and 21 August 1669.

38. *Ibid.*, first interrogation of Erba, 22 August 1669.

39. On “throwing the cord,” see Martin, *Witchcraft*, 123.

40. Fasc. Caterina Erba, first interrogation of Erba, 22 August 1669.

41. Martin, *Witchcraft*, 106, 111, 166, 206.
42. Fasc. Caterina Erba, first interrogation of Erba, 22 August 1669.
43. *Ibid.*, sentence, 7 September 1669.
44. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1669.
45. VeAS, SU, b. 114, fasc. Apollonia Bruni.
46. On afterbirths, see Martin, *Witchcraft*, 128–29.
47. Fasc. Apollonia Bruni, denunciation, 18 January 1667; interrogation of Lunardo Collatoni, 1 February 1667.
48. *Ibid.*, testimony of Bruni, 27 January 1667.
49. *Ibid.*, first interrogation of Bruni, 3 March 1667.
50. *Ibid.*, 3 March 1667, interrogation of Pasqualin Spada.
51. *Ibid.*, 8 March 1667.
52. Milani, “L’ossessione,” 131–33; Giovanna Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio: Monacazioni forzate, clausura e proposte di vita religiosa femminile nell’età moderna* (Pordenone: Biblioteca dell’Immagine, 1996), 58–59, 169–70. Paolin provides a complete transcription of the record.
53. Milani, “L’ossessione,” 133–35; Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio*, 55–62, 171–72.
54. Milani, “L’ossessione,” 134–42; Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio*, 56–58, 171–76.
55. Milani, “L’ossessione,” 142–53; Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio*, 62–67, 176–83.
56. On forced monachization, see Giovanna Paolin, “Monache e donne nel Friuli del Cinquecento,” in *Società e cultura del Cinquecento nel Friuli occidentale: Studi*, ed. Andrea Del Col (Pordenone: Edizioni della Provincia di Pordenone, 1984), 201–28; Enrico Cattaneo, “Le monacazioni forzate fra Cinque e Seicento,” in *Vita e processo di Suor Virginia Maria de Leyva monaca di Monza*, ed. Umberto Colombo (Milan: Garzanti, 1985), 145–95; Francesca Mediolì, *L’Inferno monacale* di Arcangela Tarabotti (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990), esp. 111–35; and Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio*. For a cogent early critique of the practice which has not yet received the scholarly attention it deserves, see Giovanni Andrea Ugoni, *Ragionamento nel quale si ragiona di tutti gli stati dell’humana vita* (Venice: Pietro da Fino, 1562), 46–59. I am grateful to Silvana Seidel Menchi for calling my attention to this text and providing a photocopy of it. On monachization as a strategy to enhance honor, see Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
57. BoBU, MS Ital. 6, no. 19, “Caso seguito in Maradi [*sic*], diocesi di Forlì, di una monacha che sino da fanciulla sposò un demonio,” 155r–157v. (Other copies of this account may be found in BoBCA, MS B.324, no. 31 bis; BoBU, MS Ital. 22, no. 35; BoBU, MS Ital. 304, no. 57.) As suggested below, its probable author is the missionary who conducted the investigation; his intended audience is not specified. Marradi, politically subject to the grand duke of Tuscany, was in the diocese of Faenza (not Forlì) in the States of the Church. No trace of the trial dossier remains in FaAV (where, however, I was not allowed to see the *processi criminali*), the Archivio di Stato of Faenza, DubTC, or VaACDF; but entries in VaACDF, DSO, 1721–26, record the Congregation of the Holy Office’s surveillance of the case. An earlier version of what follows has appeared previously: Anne Jacobson Schutte, “My Satanic Spouse: Nuns and Sexual Possession in Early Modern Italy,” *Civis* 21 (1997): 163–75. I examine this case more thoroughly in “Asmodea, A Nun-Witch in Eighteenth-Century Tuscany,” in *Were-*

wolves, Witches, and Wandering Spirits, ed. Kathryn A. Edwards (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, forthcoming).

58. VaACDF, DSO, 1721–26.

59. Asmodea is the feminine form of Asmodeus (first mentioned in the apocryphal Book of Tobit, 3:8, 17), whom writers on exorcism identified as the demon of lust. See, for example, Girolamo Menghi, *Fustus daemonum*, in *Thesaurus exorcistanum* (Cologne: Lazarus Zetzner, 1608), 538; Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, 2nd ed. (Milan: Collegio Ambrosiano, 1626), 175. Since the account of the case is not a trial transcript, it is impossible to tell whether, as seems likely, the name was suggested to the nun by her interrogator.

60. Here again, suggestive questioning may have elicited this place-name in Campania, probably less familiar to a Tuscan nun than to a cleric who had read treatises on witchcraft and magic. See, e.g., Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica et possibilità delle mirabili e stupendi operationi delli demoni e de' malefici* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1576; reprint, ed. Antonio Aliani with a postface by Ottavio Franceschini, Genoa: Nuova Stile Regina, 1987), 173; Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, 86.

61. Compare the cases of Eustochia da Padova and Magdalena de la Cruz, discussed briefly by Kieckhefer, “Holy and Unholy,” 361–67.

62. On hypochondria, a term that in the early modern era referred to a physical syndrome, see Chapter 8.

63. It is conceivable that Asmodea had been traumatized even earlier by sexual abuse. See Anita M. Walker and Edmund H. Dickerman, “Magdeleine des Aymards: Demonism or Child Abuse in Early Modern Europe?” *Psychohistory Review* 24 (1996): 239–64.

64. One writer on witchcraft describes the pact with the devil as a counterconfirmation involving the renunciation of all previous promises to God and the assignment of a new name. Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, 36. Another likens the pact to monastic profession. Menghi, *Compendio*, 83.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HEALERS OF THE SOUL

1. For a general statement about the parallel functions of exorcists and physicians, see François-Xavier Maquart, “L’esorciste devant les manifestations diaboliques,” in *Satan [Études carmelitaines 27]* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1948), 328–48.

2. Notable examples of this argument, all of them more nuanced than this brief summary suggests, include Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle: Une analyse de psychologie historique* (Paris: Plon, 1968); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971); and H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witchhunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562–1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).

3. Among the writers of manuals and treatises on exorcism mentioned in this chapter, Franciscans predominated: Girolamo Menghi was an Observant, Valerio Polidoro a Conventual, Ignazio Lupi and Candido Brugnoli Reformed. Alessio Porri was an Observant Carmelite of the Mantuan Congregation. The title page of Floriano Canale’s manual gives him the title “R.P.D.” but does not specify his order. Floriano Canale, *Del modo di conoscer e sanare i maleficiati trattati due* (1st ed., 1622; Brescia: Santo

Zanetti, 1638; reprint, Sala Bolognese: Arnaldo Forni, 1987; this book, a compilation drawn from earlier treatises, was reissued at least twice, in 1648 and 1680). Zaccaria Visconti belonged to the Order of SS. Barnaba e Ambrogio, a company of secular priests founded by Carlo Borromeo; Giorgio Polacco, whom we met briefly in Chapter 5 and will encounter later in this chapter, was a secular priest in Venice. Occasional conflicts between inquisitors and exorcists, discussed below, may have something to do with the fact that many of the former (including the inquisitor general of Venice) were Dominicans; members of this order contributed little or nothing to the literature on exorcism.

4. The useful and important distinction between “good” and “bad” possessions is made by Daniel Pickering Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

5. See Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell’arte essorcistica et possibilità delle mirabili e stupendi operationi delli demoni e de’ malefici* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1576; reprint, ed. Antonio Aliani, Genoa: Nuova Stile Regina, 1987). Ottavio Franceschini’s postface to the reprint, “Un ‘mediatore’ ecclesiastico: Girolamo Menghi (1529–1609),” provides a summary of Menghi’s career, on which see also Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti e streghe nell’Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni, 1990), 114–22. A useful broad historical overview of exorcism is provided by Ottavio Franceschini: “L’esorcista,” in *Medicina, erbe e magia* (Milan: Silvano for Federazione delle Casse di Risparmio e delle Banche del Monte dell’Emilia e Romagna, 1981), 99–115.

6. See, e.g., Valerio Polidoro, *Practica exorcistarum*, in *Thesaurus exorcistarum* (Cologne: Lazarus Zetzner, 1608), 8–10; Zaccaria Visconti, *Complementum artis exorcisticae* (1600), in *ibid.*, 777–81.

7. Maquart, “L’esorciste,” 328.

8. Herbert Haag, *La credenza nel diavolo: Idea e realtà nel mondo demonico*, trans. Aldo Geccelin (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1976), 193–95.

9. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 148–52; David Gentilcore, “Contesting Illness in Early Modern Naples: *Miracolati*, Physicians, and the Congregation of Rites,” *Past and Present* 148 (August 1995): 117–48.

10. For instance, Polidoro, *Practica exorcistarum*; Pietro Antonio Stampa, *Fuga Satanae exorcismus*; and Visconti, *Complementum*, available under one cover in *Thesaurus exorcistarum* (Cologne: Lazarus Zetzner, 1608), 1–284, 1193–1272, and 757–1192, respectively. This volume also includes two works by Girolamo Menghi: *Flagellum daemonum, exorcismos terribilis, potentissimos et efficaces* (1577) and *Fustis daemonum* (1584), 285–527, 527–756. An exorcist uncomfortable in Latin could consult Menghi’s *Compendio* or Alessio Porri, *Antidotario contro li demoni* (Venice: Roberto Mietti, 1601).

11. Haag, *Credenza nel diavolo*, 192–93.

12. *Ibid.*, 189–92; Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 135–36.

13. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 150–51. In Modena and Gubbio such exorcism centers came into being. At the turn of the century the Discalced Carmelite Alessio Porri, a native of Mantua who described himself as consultor to the Holy Office and “public exorcist in the city of Venice,” claimed that the Venetian ordinary, Cardinal Patriarch Lorenzo Priuli, had encouraged him to dedicate himself to exorcism. Porri, *Antidotario contro li demoni*, t.p., a2r–v.

14. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 146–48, 154–55, 161–62.
15. *Rituale Romanum Pauli Quinti pontificis maximi jussu editum* (Venice: Balleoni-ana, 1726) 358–59.
16. *Ibid.*, 359–60.
17. *Ibid.*, 360–61. Some manuals published before the appearance of the *Rituale Romanum* gave exorcists long lists of what medicines to administer and how: e.g., Visconti, *Complementum*, in *Thesaurus exorcistarum*, 807–18.
18. *Rituale Romanum*, 360–62.
19. *Ibid.*, 362–89.
20. Single-sheet providing prayers, unconventional litanies, and lists of words and formulas to be used for warding off danger and keeping the devil and his minions at bay may be found in many Inquisition trials of men for magic and a few of women for witchcraft. See, for example, VeAS, SU, b. 104, fasc. Laura Malipiero.
21. Ignazio Lupi, *Nova lux in Edictum S. Inquisitionis ad Praxim Sacramenti Poenitentiae pro cuiuscunque statu ac conditione* (Bergamo: Marcantonio Rossi, 1648), 299.
22. *Ibid.*, 283. Lupi also inquires whether the doge's tossing a ring into the sea on Ascension Day is a superstitious practice. No, he replies, for it is done "with the greatest prudence." A loyal Venetian subject, he maintains that this is a legitimate "civil ceremony for designating the dominion of the Venetian Republic in the Adriatic Sea." *Ibid.*, 267.
23. *Ibid.*, 310–11.
24. On Brugnoli (Brognolo, Brognolus), see Massimo Petrocchi, *Esorcismi e magia nell'Italia del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Naples: Edizioni Libreria Scientifica, 1957), 29–48, and *DBI*, s.v. "Brugnoli, Candido," by Antonio Rotondò.
25. Candido Brugnoli, *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum* (Bergamo: Marcantonio Rossi, 1651; subsequent editions published in Lyon, 1658; Venice, 1683; and Venice, 1702). See also his *Alexicacon, hoc est opus de maleficiis ac morbis maleficis* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Catani, 1668; reissued in Venice, 1714).
26. The task, he said, was assigned to him by the provincial of his order; to fulfill it, he had conducted research in Rome, Venice, Treviso, and other Italian cities. Brugnoli, *Manuale* (1651), ++2r–v.
27. *Ibid.*, ++3v.
28. Petrocchi, *Esorcismi e magia*, 32–47.
29. Polidoro, for instance, advocates detailed questioning. *Practica exorcistarum*, in *Thesaurus exorcistarum*, 13–16, 53–56.
30. Brugnoli, *Manuale* (1651), 148–50. Menghi had also advocated caution in interrogating demons: *Flagellum daemonum*, in *Thesaurus exorcistarum*, 300–301, 305–11.
31. Franz Heinrich Reusch, *Der Index der vorbotenen Bücher: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Literaturgeschichte*, 2 vols. in 3 (Bonn, 1885; reprint, Darmstadt, Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1967), 2.1:119–23; Petrocchi, *Esorcismi e magia*, 13–23.
32. Earlier in the year Ugoni had approved his including in the *Alexicacon* an account of the miraculous image of Christ in a chapel attached to his convent. Brugnoli, *L'immagine del Re supremo monarcha di tutto il creato* (Venice: Giovanni Pietro Brigonci, 1669), b2r–v.
33. VeAS, SU, b. 115, fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 32v–33r (statement by Candido Brugnoli, 19 July 1668). Brugnoli was not summoned but appeared

spontaneously; he was not interrogated on his statement. At a later point in the trial (see below), Vincenzi identified the woman as Osanna di Lorenzo Longo and described exorcising her. *Ibid.*, 65r–66r (interrogation of Vincenzi, 11 December 1668).

34. *Ibid.*, b. 111, fasc. Marina, wife of Ambrogio, carpenter in the Arsenal (denunciation dated 2 June 1665).

35. *Ibid.*, b. 113, fasc. Africa Speranzini, n.p. (denunciation by Ventura Palmesani, 8 April 1666; interrogation of Palmesani, 15 July 1666).

36. Her first appearance on the stand had been cut off shortly after she began responding to the first question because the hour was late. *Ibid.*, b. 115, fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 32r–v (interrogation of Pesenti, 13 August 1668).

37. From the beginning of the investigation until 13 August, when the Inquisition ordered that Pesenti and Vincenzi be imprisoned, she had been living under house arrest in her father's home and he in his rectory. *Ibid.*, 30r.

38. *Ibid.*, 33r–v (interrogation of Antonia Pesenti, 23 August 1668). Brugnoli had extensive experience with women and sexual possession. Albano Biondi, “Tra corpo ed anima. Medicina ed esorcistica nel Seicento (l’*Alexicacon*’ di Candido Brugnoli),” in Prodi, *Disciplina*, 404–5.

39. See n. 33 above. Ugoni had examined the book and approved it for publication. Brugnoli, *Alexicacon*, t.p.: statement of permission from the Riformatori della Studio to issue the book (28 July 1667). On this work, “an anthology of topical examples,” see Biondi, “Tra corpo ed anima,” 397–416. Brugnoli may have borrowed his title from Barthélemy Faye’s *Energumenicus, eiusdem Alexicacus* (Paris: Sebastian Nivelle, 1571), an account of the “miracle of Laon,” on which see Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, 19–28.

40. Fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 34r (Brugnoli to Ugoni, 29 August 1668; entered into the record on 30 August).

41. In the late sixteenth century, ordering a possessed person to lick the ground was one of the few practices of exorcists to which the Holy Office objected. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 131–32. Pesenti’s ground licking preceded her encounter with Brugnoli; perhaps Vincenzi had taught her this practice, about which she later testified. Fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 44v–46r (interrogation of Pesenti, 13 September 1668). See also Chapter 10.

42. Fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 34v–36r (testimony of Pasqualin and Angela Spada, 30 August 1668).

43. *Ibid.*, 36r–37v (interrogation of Brugnoli, 4 September 1668); 38r–v (Brugnoli’s written report). On Asmodeus, see Chapter 6, n. 59.

44. Fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, n.p. near end of fasc. (21 December 1668).

45. VeAS, SU, b. 98, fasc. Caterina Rossi (copy in Antonio Vescovi’s hand); longer version in BoBCA, MS B. 1888, Processi contro li eretici per affettata santità, 116r–130v.

46. Physicians were not called in to examine this physical sign, and the writer of the summary did not decode the abbreviation I.V.M.L. Perhaps the letters stood for the ungrammatical declaration “Io voto me a Lucifero [I dedicate myself to Lucifer].”

47. The inquisitor was Clemente Ricetti da Iseo, inquisitor general of Venice from 1632 to 1639. VeAS, SU, b. 153, “Elenco degli inquisitori domenicani, 1560–1755.” He then served as inquisitor of Brescia until 1647. Vincenzo Maria Fontana, *Sacrum theatrum dominicanum* (Rome: Nicolò Angelo Tinassi, 1666), 560–61.

48. VeAS, SU, b. 98, fasc. Caterina Rossi, n.p.; BoBCA, MS B.1888, 116r–130v.

49. Ibid.

50. See nn. 3, 6, and 17 above.

51. The following treatment of Polacco is drawn from my essay “Tra Scilla e Cariddi. Giorgio Polacco, donne e disciplina nella Venezia del Seicento,” in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo: Studi e testi a stampa*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1996), 215–36.

52. Giorgio Polacco, *Pratiche per discernere lo spirito buono dal malvagio e per conoscer gl'indemoniate e maleficate* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti per Carlo Zenero, 1638), a5r–a6r.

53. On the low educational level of most parish priests, see, e.g., Gabriele De Rosa, “I codici di lettura del ‘vissuto religioso,’” in De Rosa and Gregory, *Storia dell'Italia religiosa*, 303.

54. “I have omitted citing many passages from Scripture, the Fathers, and the Scholastics, which could well be adduced to supply additional support for these *Instructions*, in order not to confound and confuse the minds of the simple people for whom they are principally composed.” *Pratiche*, a5v.

55. For a list of Polacco's sources, see the appendix to my “Tra Scilla e Cariddi,” 235–36. Polacco's phrase “the new Tostato of our time” (quoted in *ibid.*, 234 and n. 102) was very likely an allusion to one of the writers he cites, Cornelius à Lapide [Cornelis Cornelissen van der Steen], S.J. (1567–1637), whose massive commentary on the Bible bore comparison to the proverbially voluminous one composed by the Spanish Franciscan Alonso de Madrigal, known as Tostado (d. 1455): *Opera omnia quotquot in Scripturae sacrae expositionem et alia adhuc iuuenta sunt*, 29 vols. (Venice: Giovanni Battista Sessa il giovane e Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1596).

56. Like most other dioceses in Italy, the patriarchate of Venice was slow to implement the Tridentine requirement of establishing a seminary for the training of priests. Polacco probably learned the rudiments of his profession from the cleric who sponsored his ordination, the pievano of Santa Maria del Giglio (VeAP, Curia Patriarcale, Archivio “Segreto,” I: Clero, Ordinazioni, b. 9, 24 September 1594), and his first supervisor, the pievano of Santi Apostoli (Giorgio Polacco, *Oratio habita in funere Zachariae Pensabeni ecclesiae SS. Apostolorum antistitis et divi Marci canonici* [Venice: ad insignum Leonis, 1600], 5v–6r). He later boasted, “I have not studied the sciences in any university other than my own library.” Giorgio Polacco, *Breve raccontamento di quanto gli è occorso nel corso di trenta sei anni continui mentre è stato confessor delle venerande monache di S. Lucia di Venetia* (Venice: Francesco Miloco, 1643), 3.

57. The ordinand had served as tutor to Doge Pasquale Cicogna's son Giovanni. Giorgio Polacco, *Ad illustrissimum ac reverendissimum virum Matthaenum Zane patriarcham venetiarum oratio* (Venice: Marc'Antonio Zaltieri, 1602), A1v. The doge's facilitating his ordination (*Breve raccontamento*, 9) may have been required because Polacco was not yet twenty-five, the minimum age for becoming a priest.

58. Polacco, *Breve raccontamento*, 7. On the complex relationship between spiritual women and their confessors, see Giovanna Paolin, “Confessione e confessori al femminile. Monache e direttori spirituali in ambito veneto tra '600 e '700,” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 366–88; Anne Jacobson Schutte, “Come costruirsi un corpo di santa,” *Studi storici* 33 (1992): 127–39; Jodi Bilinkoff, “Confessors, Penitents, and the Construction of Identities in Early Modern Avila,” in *Culture and Identity in Early Modern*

Europe (1500–1800): Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis, ed. Barbara B. Diefendorf and Carla Hesse (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 83–100; and Adriano Prosperi, “Diari spirituali e discernimento degli spiriti: Le mistiche della prima età moderna in Italia,” in Prosperi, *America e Apocalisse e altri saggi* (Pisa: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1999), 343–65.

59. Polacco, *Breve raccontamento*, 3.

60. *Ibid.*, 3–4. One of his works is dedicated to the nuns of Sant’Anna: Giorgio Polacco, *Del perfetto stato religioso libri tre* (Venice: Giacomo Vincenti, 1610), a2r–v.

61. Polacco, *Breve raccontamento*, 3–4.

62. *Ibid.*, 3, 5, 8–9, 12–13, 19–20.

63. According to Polacco, Patriarch Giovanni Tiepolo (in office from 1619 to 1631) called him “another himself”—meaning that Santa Lucia was so well run that, unlike many other convents, it did not require much attention from the ordinary. *Ibid.*, 18.

64. *Ibid.*, 19–20, 29. In records of Morosini’s visitations to the parish churches of San Martin and Sant’Aponal on 17 January and 10 February 1647, respectively, Polacco is identified as vicar of the nuns. VeAP, Curia Patriarcale, Archivio “Segreto,” IV: Visite, Visite pastorali, b. 11 (Morosini, 1645–76, II), nos. 13 e 33. On 12 September 1651, in the same capacity, he signed in a rather shaky hand a notarial act executed in the convent of Santa Maria Maggiore. VeAP, Curia Patriarcale, Archivio “Segreto,” IV: Nunziatura veneta, b. 1 (1561–1813), no. 14.

65. For a complete enumeration of his writings, not all of which appear to have been published, see the list appended by the publisher to Giorgio Polacco, *Aforismi sopra le cerimonie sacre usate dalla Santa Chiesa Romana nel sacrificio della Messa et nelle altre funzioni ecclesiastiche* (Venice: Zaccaria Concetti, 1674), n.p., at end. They include a treatise against the heliocentric conception of the universe: *Anticopernicus catholicus, seu de terrae statione, et de solis motu, contra systema Copernicum, catholicae assertiones* (Venice: Guerigli, 1644).

66. Giorgio Polacco, *Examinator Synodalis sive de ipsius ratione, statu, et causa subiectiva* (Venice: Miloco, 1652).

67. VeBC, MS Cicogna 3236 (notes made in the nineteenth century by Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna on convent records, many no longer extant), fasc. S. Lucia, n.p. Lacunae during the 1650s in the series of municipal necrologies, the disappearance of the parish records of Santa Lucia, and the demolition in 1858–60 of the convent and its church (containing Polacco’s tomb) to clear the way for building the railway station Venezia–Santa Lucia make it impossible to determine precisely when he died. Cicogna’s notes, which identify the place of his burial, erroneously give his date of birth as 1568 and state that he died at the age of eighty-four; hence his death can be tentatively placed sometime between 1652 and 1655.

68. Polacco, *Breve raccontamento*, 29–30.

69. On Freud and demonic possession, see Francesco Lazzari, *Esperienze religiose e psicanalisi* (Naples: Guida, 1972), 67–89. Haag observes that demonic possession is a “‘historical’ illness” not to be confused with hysteria, which has also passed from the scene. Haag, *Credenza nel diavolo*, 223–29.

70. The best-known case of a possessed nun is that of Jeanne [de Belcier] des Anges (1605–66) of the Visitandine convent in Loudon, France. Two Italian transla-

tions of her autobiography include valuable reflections on diabolic possession and the subject's efforts to deal with it: *Autobiografia: Il punto di vista dell'indemoniata*, ed. Mino Bergamo (Venice: Marsilio, 1986), and *Storia della mia possessione*, ed. Angelo Morino (Palermo: Sellerio, 1986).

71. Polacco, *Breve raccontamento*, 30–31. On Scaglia's "Prattica," see Chapter 4.

72. Polacco, *Pratiche*, 32–33; idem, *Antidoto contro le velenose illusioni del nemico infernale in materia di estasi, ratti e rivelazioni*, 2nd ed. (Venice: Francesco Miloco, 1646), 10.

73. Polacco, *Antidoto*, 27–28; slightly different wording in *Pratiche*, 89–91, where he claims that she manufactured her stigmata. In the *Antidoto*, he goes on to mention having heard years earlier about another woman who pricked holes in her forehead to resemble the wounds inflicted by Christ's crown of thorns. This may be Benedetta Carlini, on whom see Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); see also Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Piccole donne, grandi eroine: Santità femminile 'simulata' e 'vera,' nell'Italia della prima età moderna," in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Laterza, 1994), 277–78.

74. On the inquisitor, Clemente Ricetti, see n. 47 above.

75. VeAS, SU, b. 112, fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 28v–29r. This is the second of two reports by Polacco included in the trial record. Through a slip of the pen, the date is given as 1638 rather than 1637.

76. *Ibid.*, 27r–v (first report).

77. *Ibid.*, 27v–28v.

78. This was a bluff. As noted in Chapter 2, the government of the Venetian state almost never permitted the extradition of a subject.

79. See below at n. 92.

80. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 28v–29v (second report).

81. *Ibid.*, copy of an original in Polacco's hand. Although Corner and the inquisitor probably sought and obtained guidance from the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome, there is no sign of the incident in VaACDF, DSO, 1637–38.

82. "Cecilia with the Stigmata": *ibid.*, 27v (first report); see Chapter 5.

83. Giovanni Bonifacio Bagatta, *Vita della serva di Dio Madre Angela Maria Pasqualiga nobile venetiana, institutrice delle Vergini Regolari di Gesù e Maria di Venetia* (Venice: Giovanni Francesco Valvasense, 1680), 76–80.

84. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 159r (tenth interrogation of Ferrazzi, 4 September 1664). On Ugoni, see Chapter 2.

85. Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 23 (first interrogation of Ferrazzi, 19 June 1664). Twice she reiterated this assertion: *ibid.*, 37 (fourth interrogation of Ferrazzi, 8 July 1664); 45 (autobiographical deposition, 9 July 1664). Pinzoni later testified that he had confessed her for six years. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 125v (interrogation of Pinzoni, 12 August 1664).

86. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 61–62 (autobiographical deposition).

87. *Ibid.* Earthly voices confirmed her negative judgment of Polacco's behavior. While interrogating her shortly thereafter, the inquisitor told her to "bear patiently with this lord whom God has given you," meaning Polacco. *Ibid.*, 34. The abbess and nuns of Santa Maria Maggiore, she says, "frequently caressed me and desired to spend

time with me, although Polacco forbade them to seek me out”; and the Somaschan Giovanni Francesco Priuli promised to take her under his wing. *Ibid.*, 62–63 (autobiographical deposition).

88. *Ibid.*, 27 (second interrogation of Ferrazzi, 23 June 1664).

89. Polacco, *Pratiche*, 38–39, 88–91; *Antidoto*, 27–28.

90. Polacco, *Pratiche*, 54–56.

91. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 23 (first interrogation of Ferrazzi), 61 (autobiographical deposition); fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 138r (seventh interrogation of Ferrazzi, 21 August 1664).

92. See Polacco, *Pratiche*, 19–20, 133–39; idem, *Trascorso della grazia gratis data di risanar l’infermità così naturali come soprannaturali* (Venice: Pietro Miloco, 1643), esp. 82–83.

93. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 23 (first interrogation of Ferrazzi, 19 June 1664). The team very likely included the Reformed Franciscan Raimondo da Venezia and Giovanni Zogalli, a priest at San Felice who confessed the nuns of Santa Giustina. The former had been prosecuted by the Venetian Holy Office in 1635 for promoting the cult of the Spanish beata Luisa de Carrión, whom the Inquisition of Valladolid tried for pretense of holiness beginning in 1634. VeAS, SU, b. 72, fasc. Raimondo da Venezia.

94. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 71 (autobiographical deposition).

95. Giorgio Polacco, *Industriae pro confessariis monialium ad eas in sua vocatione invandas* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Vaglierino, 1636), 96–97; idem, *Pratiche*, 59–65; idem, *Antidoto*, 33–44.

96. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 55 (autobiographical deposition).

97. *Ibid.*, 27 (second interrogation of Ferrazzi).

98. Polacco, *Breve raccontamento*, 26; VeBC, MS Cicogna 3236, fasc. Santa Lucia, n.p.

99. As the title page and the closing section of *Antidoto* make clear, it is a second edition. I have not been able to find a copy of the first edition, published sometime before 1643, when Polacco referred to it by its full title in *Breve raccontamento*, 16.

100. Polacco, *Trascorso*; idem, *Breve raccontamento*.

101. Polacco, *Antidoto*, 3–5. Although the dedication is dated “All Saints’ Day [1 November] 1644,” the book did not appear until 1646—another sign that Polacco was in difficulty in 1643–44.

102. *Ibid.*, 12.

103. *Ibid.*, 21.

104. *Ibid.*, 66–67.

105. *Ibid.*, 49–50.

106. See above, Chapter 5. For a particularly clear and reassuring statement of this view by an eighteenth-century Jesuit theologian, see Giovanni Battista Scaramelli, *Il direttore mistico, indirizzato a’ direttori di quelle anime che Iddio conduce per la via della contemplazione* (Venice: Simone Occhi, 1754), 456–58, 461.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HEALERS OF THE BODY

1. Don Hanlon Johnson, cited by Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 17.

2. Among the exceptions are Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Margaret R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Mean-*

ing in the Christian West (Boston: Beacon, 1989; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1991); and Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

3. Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 66. Although I use Bordo's book here to illustrate the tendency to project backward the hegemony over the body captured by physicians only in the nineteenth century, I consider her study one of the best of its kind.

4. For a devastating critique of the poststructuralist notion that women patients can in any way exert power, see *ibid.*

5. As Ottavia Niccoli rightly observes, the question "what really happened?" cannot be asked about visions, accessible only to those who experience them: "Esorcismi ed esorcisti tra Cinque e Seicento," *Società e storia* 32 (1986): 141.

6. Thomas Pater, *Miraculous Abstinence: A Study of One of the Extraordinary Mystical Phenomena* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1946), 85, 6. Operating on the basis of studies in the field then called "abnormal psychology," a Jesuit contemporary of Pater's came reluctantly to the opposite conclusion: "So in the considerable list of those holy people who are reported to have lived for long periods with no other nourishment than the Blessed Sacrament, one looks, but looks in vain, for the name of one who was free from strange inhibitions in the matter of diet and whom the neuropath specialist would have pronounced to be perfectly sound and normal." Herbert Thurston, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (London: Burnes Oates, 1952), 341–77.

7. Walter Vandereycken and Ron van Deth, *From Fasting Saints to Anorexic Girls: The History of Self-Starvation* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 143–61.

8. Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

9. Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*.

10. *Ibid.*, xiv–xv.

11. See, for example, Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 42–44. For a critique of Brumberg's approach, see Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 61–68.

12. Bell, *Holy Anorexia*, 1–21, 180–90 (epilogue by William N. Davis, M.D.).

13. Brumberg notes that the words "anorexia" and "anorexy" occur for the first time in the sixteenth century. A century later, in his *Opera quae extant omnia* (Frankfurt, 1646), Guglielmus Fabricius Hildanus wrote of "inedia prodigiosa"; in his treatise *Nosologie methodique* (Lyon, 1772), François Boissier de Sauvages de la Croix employed the term "anorexia mirabilis." Brumberg, *Fasting Girls*, 290 n. 2. Since Brumberg investigated the etymological history of the term, it strikes me as odd that she attacks as anachronistic and reductive Bell's use of "holy anorexia." Brumberg, *Fasting Girls*, 42–44. For a more extensive discussion of this problem, see Vandereycken and van Deth, *From Fasting Saints*.

14. On the former criticism, Ann G. Carmichael, "Past Fasts: Medieval Saints with the Will to Starve" (review of *Holy Anorexia* and *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*), *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 19 (1989): 639. On the latter, Eugene F. Rice Jr., review of *Holy Anorexia*, *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986): 733–35.

15. Carmichael, "Past Fasts," 643.

16. Jack Goody, review of *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, *English Historical Review* 105

(1990): 429–31; Linda L. Carroll, “The Spirit in the Body: Physical and Psychological Influence on Holy Anorexia in the Case of Maria Janis,” *American Society of Church History Papers* (Portland, Ore.: Theological Research Exchange Network, 1995), 1–31 (shorter version, “Holy Anorexia: The Reputation of Fasting in the Case of Maria Janis,” *Psychohistory Review* 26 [1998]: 115–36).

17. “It is my hope, as it is Professor Bell’s, that readers of our books will find our work complementary.” Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, xiv.

18. Fulvio Tomizza, *La finzione di Maria* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1981) 129; in English, *Heavenly Supper: The Story of Maria Janis*, trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 104.

19. See, for instance, the materials used by Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994).

20. See Chapter 1.

21. VeAS, SU, b. 90, fasc. Pietro Vespa, 26r–27v, 63r–65v (interrogations of Vespa on 15 and 17 November 1633 and 2 March 1634). This and the statements that follow are synthetic versions of the defendants’ statements, not direct quotations.

22. *Ibid.*, b. 110, fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (interrogations of Janis on 14 March, 27 June, and 26 July 1662; 1 March 1663).

23. Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 23, 40 (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 19 June 1664; autobiographical statement dictated on 9 July 1664); VeAS, SU, b. 112, fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 138r (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 21 August 1664).

24. Fasc. Pietro Vespa, 11r–14r.

25. Fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Domenico Colombo, 8 May 1662; interrogation of Giovanni Palazzi and his wife, Caterina, 22 May 1662).

26. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Giuseppe Merloni and Giuseppe Valle, 12 May 1662).

27. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Antonia Bellini, 7 March 1662).

28. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 1r (denunciation by Chiara Bacchis, shortly before 7 May 1664), 43r–v (interrogation of Isabella Checchi, Padua, 22 June 1664), 44v–45r. According to another witness in Padua, she was born with greens in her mouth (*nata con l’erba in bocca*) because her mother ate nothing but greens during her pregnancy. As a consequence, Cecilia was so small that her mother, unable to swaddle her, kept her in a little box; her appetite never developed normally. *Ibid.*, 44v–45r (interrogation of Caterina Papafava, Padua, 30 June 1664).

29. *Ibid.*, 3v (interrogation of Chiara Garzoni, 8 May 1664), 107v (interrogation of Maria Giaffoni, 1 August 1664), 131v (interrogation of Elisabetta Bonardi, 4 August 1664), n.p. (interrogation of Angela Terzi, 4 July 1665).

30. VeAS, SU, b. 115, fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 1v, 2v, 4r (denunciation by Giovanni Daviano, 19 June 1668; confirmed in interrogation, 26 June 1668); 5r (interrogation of Bartolomea, wife of the hatmaker Giocondo de Salvador, 3 July 1668). Bartolomea was the source of rumors that she ate normally. Another witness reported the pudding incident differently: according to women in the neighborhood, the Virgin had said, “Antonia, Antonia, tell signor pievano to make you a junket, which you’ll eat.” *Ibid.*, 18r (interrogation of Francesco Gravano, priest at Santa Ternita, 3 July

1668). According to Pesenti herself, she had fasted severely at home but ate regular meals while living at Santa Ternita. *Ibid.*, 40r–v (interrogation of Pesenti, 6 September 1668).

31. Lucien Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI siècle: La religion de Rabelais* (Paris: A. Michel, 1947).

32. See Jean Céard, *La nature et les prodiges: L'insolite au XVIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1977).

33. Pierre Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses* (Paris: Vincent Sertenas, 1560), on which see Céard, 252–72. Data on editions, indicative though not necessarily complete, come from *NUC*, 62:274–76.

34. Simone Porzio, *De puella germanica quae fere biennium vixerat sine cibo* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1551); in Italian: *Disputa dello eccellentissimo filosofo M. Simone Portio napoletano sopra quella fanciulla della Magna laquale visse due anni o più senza mangiare e senza bere* (Florence: [Lorenzo Torrentino], 1551). Citations below are to the Italian edition. Margaretha's surname, not mentioned by Porzio, is given in *NUC*, 82:357. On early modern physicians and inedia, see an essay that appeared after this book had gone into production: Antonella Pagano, "'Admirabilis abstinentia': Digiuno femminile e medicina umorale," in *Donne filosofia e cultura nel Seicento*, ed. Pina Totaro (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1999), 117–40.

35. Porzio, *Disputa*, 8–14.

36. Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 104.

37. Gerhard Bucholtz, *De puella quae sine cibo et potu vitam transigit, brevis narratio*, three Latin and three German editions of which were published in 1542. *VD 16*, B 9067–73. I was unable to locate the published account of Margaretha by Johannes Lange, included in Paolo Lentolo, *Historia admiranda de prodigiosa Apollonia Schreierae, virginis in agro bernensi, inedia* (Bern: Jean Le Preux, 1604), 26–34.

38. Porzio, *Disputa*, 15–18.

39. *Ibid.*, 18–45.

40. *Ibid.*, 45–52. The “cooked phlegm” explanation continued to hold sway among physicians and natural philosophers. See, for example, Giovanni Vincenzo Imperiale, *Le notte beriche, ovvero de' quesiti e discorsi fisici, medici, storici e sacri libri cinque* (Venice: Paolo Baglioni, 1663), 62–74.

41. In his dedication to Alamanno Salviati, the translator, Giovanni Battista Gelli, explained that this was a trial run for a more ambitious project Porzio had encouraged him to undertake: the translation of the Neapolitan's treatise on eye color. Porzio, *Disputa*, 3–7. Guillaume Le Sueur's Latin treatment of the Martin Guerre case, *Admiranda historia* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1561), crossed over into French in the same year (Paris: Vincent Sertenas, 1561); Coras's *Arrest memorable* (Lyon: Antoine Vincent, 1561) appeared in Latin fifteen years later (Frankfurt: Andreas Wechel, 1576). Davis, *Return of Martin Guerre*, 127–28.

42. Daniel Pickering Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1981), 14–15. Walker, however, includes only the devil in the supernatural explanation.

43. Johann Weyer, *De lamiiis liber; item De commentitiis ieiuniis* (Basel: Oporinus, 1577).

44. Son of the Neapolitan religious exile Scipione Lentolo, pastor in Chiavenna, Paolo Lentolo (c. 1560–1613) earned his medical degree at the University of Basel in 1591. After serving briefly as personal physician to Elizabeth I, he was appointed city doctor in Bern, where he was granted the status of bourgeois. *Dictionnaire historique et biographique de la Suisse*, 7 vols. (Neuchâtel: Administration du Dictionnaire historique et biographique de la Suisse, 1921–33), s.v. “Lentulus, Paul.” Among the full accounts he published are reports on Margaret of Speyer by Bucholtz and Johann Lange; writers from whose works he excerpted passages about inedia include Francesco Petrarca, Girolamo Cardano, Laurent Joubert, and Martin Del Rio.

45. On French and English instances, see Walker, *Unclean Spirits*.

46. Lentolo, *Historia*, 51–74. Lentolo’s friend Wilhelm Fabricius Hildanus, a surgeon, gave him previously published accounts of Catharina Binder’s case (on which see *VD* 16, G 3568–70) and a similar one from Cologne.

47. Liceti (1577/8–1657), a prolific writer on medical and philosophical subjects, took his degree at the University of Bologna in 1600 and subsequently taught philosophy at the Universities of Pisa, Padua, and Bologna. *Enciclopedia Italiana*, 36 vols. (Rome: Istituto Treccani, 1929–39), s.v. “Liceti, Fortunio,” by Agostino Palmieri.

48. Fortunio Liceti, *De his qui diu vivunt sine alimento libri quatuor* (Venice: Francesco Grossi, and Padua: Gasparo Crivelli for Pietro Bertelli, 1612), 146–49. He was referring to a passage in [Cattaneo Marabotto], *Vita mirabile e dottrina santa della beata Caterina Fiesca Adorna* (first published in Genoa, 1551; many subsequent editions), 7th ed. (Genoa: Benedetto Celle for Giuseppe Bottari, 1667), 12–14. On Catherine of Genoa (1447–1510), see *BS*, s.v. “Caterina da Genova, santa,” by Gian Domenico Gardini.

49. Liceti, *De his qui diu vivunt*, 58, 162.

50. The term “the knot of noneating” (*il nodo del non mangiare*) was coined by the inquisitor of Bergamo, Vincenzo Maria Rivale, who at the request of the inquisitor of Venice, Ambrogio Fracassini, interrogated witnesses from Zorzone about Pietro Morali and Maria Janis. Fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (Rivale to Fracassini, Bergamo, 24 May 1662).

51. Paolo Zacchia, *Quaestionum medico-legalium* (Rome: Giacomo Mascardo, 1621); expanded editions appeared frequently during the author’s lifetime and after his death. I cite the revised edition, 2 vols. (Lyon: Jean-Antoine Huguetau & Marc-Antoine Ravaud, 1661), é2v.

52. On Zacchia, see Guido Panseri, “La nascita della polizia medica: L’organizzazione sanitaria nei vari Stati italiani,” in *Storia d’Italia, Annali*, vol. 3, *Scienza e tecnica nella cultura e nella società del Rinascimento ad oggi*, ed. Gianni Micheli (Turin: Einaudi, 1980), 183–86; Carlo Colombero, “Un contributo alla formazione della nozione di malattia mentale: Le *Questioni medico-legali* di Paolo Zacchia,” in *Follia, psichiatria e società: Istituzioni manicomiali, scienza psichiatrica e classi sociali nell’Italia moderna e contemporanea*, ed. Alberto De Bernardi (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1982), 317–29; Graziella Magherini and Vittorio Biotti, *L’Isola delle Stinche e i percorsi della follia a Firenze nei secoli XIV–XVIII* (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1992), 132–42; and Valerio Marchetti, “La simulazione di santità nella riflessione medico-legale del sec. XVII,” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 202–27.

53. For his *consilia* on allegedly miraculous cures prepared for the Congregation of Rites, see Zacchia, *Quaestionum*, 2:127–47, 201–2, 230–32. His *consilium* on a contested inheritance bearing on the identity of a man who had returned to Bologna after an absence of thirty years is reminiscent of the case of Martin Guerre, to which he does not refer (*ibid.*, 2:271–76).

54. *Ibid.*, 1:268–74. The nun was probably Colomba da Rieti.

55. *Ibid.*, 1:220–21.

56. *Ibid.*, 1:227–29.

57. *Ibid.*, 1:229–30; Marchetti, “Simulazione,” 212–14.

58. Zacchia, *Quaestionum*, 1:266–68; Marchetti, “Simulazione,” 214–18.

59. VeAS, SU, b. 105, fasc. Giuseppe Riccardi, 25v (interrogation of Giovanni Francesco Leoni, 6 December 1650).

60. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Riccardi, 12 January 1651).

61. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Riccardi, 16 January 1651).

62. Paolo Zacchia, *De’ mali hipochondriaci libri tre* (1639), rev. ed. (Venice: Paolo Baglioni, 1665), 1–5.

63. *Ibid.*, 14–15, 229–312, 349. On madness involving melancholy, see Magherini and Biotti, *L’Isola delle Stinche*, 45–46, 57, 77–79, 126, 129–30. Scientific publications on madness proliferated in the early modern period: 31 titles between 1459 and 1500, 230 between 1500 and 1550, 680 between 1550 and 1600, 1,535 between 1600 and 1650, 1,538 between 1650 and 1680. *L’Isola delle Stinche*, 133 n.

64. Zacchia, *De’ mali hipochondriaci*, 44–47.

65. *Ibid.*, 59–68, 230–34, 240–56, 284–85.

66. *Ibid.*, 83–87.

67. *Ibid.*, 256.

68. *Ibid.*, 286.

69. *Ibid.*, 50–52.

70. *Ibid.*, 23.

71. Pietro Caffi was interrogated by the prosecution on 12 August 1664 and testified again on 22 January 1665 in the defense phase of the trial. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 124v–125r, n.p. Pietro Caimo and Nicolò Alberici testified during the defense phase on 22 and 27 January 1665 respectively. *Ibid.*, n.p.

72. E.g., fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (affidavit of Pietro Mussitelli attesting to the jailed Morali’s illness, 8 September 1662; fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, n.p. (physicians’ affidavits supporting a request by her attorney, Marcantonio Ferro, that she be released temporarily from prison on account of illness, 4 January 1666).

73. Fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (interrogation of Janis, 20 July 1662). In this interrogation Ugoni introduced the threat of torture, a tactic often employed to frighten defendants into telling the “truth” inquisitors wanted to obtain.

74. Roveto, a native of Brescia, was inquisitor general of Venice from 17 July 1677 to 27 May 1693. VeAS, SU, b. 153, “Elenco degli inquisitori domenicani, 1560–1755.”

75. On witnesses’ testimony, see VeAS, SU, b. 124, fasc. Maria Pellizzari, n.p. (interrogations in Bassano of Antonio Fornazari, Giovanni Michelati, Francesco Quantaro, and Lorenzo Rosa, all of whom called her “crazy,” 14 July 1686). According to a witness in Padua, her son held the same opinion. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Girolamo Perocco, 9 July 1686).

On the decision, see *ibid.*, n.p. (sentence, 17 September 1686). There is no mention in the trial record of Pellizzari's having been exorcised or examined by a physician.

76. Only in the case of Benedetta Carlini, which was not a formal inquisitorial proceeding, do investigators' marginalia indicate what works they had consulted. See Chapter 4.

77. According to an ecclesiastical survey conducted in the mid-seventeenth century, Alfianello contained eighteen hundred souls. Bernardino Faino, *Sanctae Brixianae Ecclesiae civis preclara lumina catalogis quatuor compendiaris pandit* (Brescia: Antonio Ricciardi, 1658), 259.

78. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, Processo della causa di Lucrezia Gambara d'Alfianello, 62–63 (second report of don Agostino Randini to Leandro Chizzola, vicar general of the bishop of Brescia, 14 February 1729).

79. *Ibid.*, 64–66. Later, exorcism was included in the program of handling Gambara which Chizzola ordered Simoni to follow. *Ibid.*, 29 (Chizzola to Simoni, 16 January 1729).

80. *Ibid.*, 75–77 (Randini's third report to Chizzola, 16 February 1729).

81. *Ibid.*, 76–78.

82. *Ibid.*, 1–4 (Simoni to Chizzola, Alfianello, 8 December 1728; Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 14 December 1728).

83. VaACDF, StSt C-3-g, n.p., fasc. Lucrezia Gambara (Filippo Garbelli to Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, Brescia, 14 December 1728). Without mentioning the name of his Benedictine confrere Randini, Garbelli later criticized his report on Gambara (discussed below) for the author's failure to cite all relevant works on the subject of discernment of spirits. BsBCQ, MS 1.VII.18.m.1a, n.p.: Filippo Garbelli, "Lettera e dissertazione di Filippo Garbelli abate di Pontevico su'l fenomeno di Lucrezia Gambara d'Alfianello diretta al P. Ercole Belagi."

84. Fasc. Lucrezia Gambara, n.p. (Pietro Ottoboni to Giovanni Antonio Davia, Rome, n.d.).

85. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Congregation to Cardinal Bishop Querini, n.d. but before 23 December 1728); also in BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 43–47.

86. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 39, 49, 84 (undated instructions from the Congregation of the Holy Office; Chizzola to Querini, 27 January 1729; Randini to Chizzola, 22 February 1729).

87. *Ibid.*, 9–13, 41 (record of Chizzola's interview with Simoni, signed by the latter, 4 January 1729; Chizzola to Querini, 16 January 1729).

88. *Ibid.*, 40 (Chizzola to Querini, 16 January 1729).

89. *Ibid.*, 49 (Chizzola to Querini, 27 January 1729). On Randini, a native of Brescia, see Mariano Armellini, *Additiones et correctiones Bibliothecae Benedictino-Cassinensis, alias S. Justinae Patavinae, primae partis* (Foligno: Pompeo Campana, 1735), 16–17. On Giulia Guidotti, the "false saint" of Reggio Emilia, see Chapter 1.

90. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 36–40, 48–49, 51 (Chizzola to Simoni, 29 January 1729; Chizzola to Querini, 16 and 27 January 1729).

91. RaBC, MS 580, Visioni, estasi e stimmate di Lucrezia Gambara da Alfianello diocesi di Brescia descritte e per ordine di Monsig.e Vicario Generale di detta città esaminate e riconosciute prestigi, inganni ed illusioni diaboliche, n.p.

92. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 54–55, 65–66 (Randini's first and second reports to Chizzola, 12 and 14 February 1729).

93. *Ibid.*, 67, 87, 101 (Randini's third, fourth, and fifth reports to Chizzola, 16 and 23 February 1729).

94. *Ibid.*, 74 (Randini's third report to Chizzola, 16 February 1729); for another mention of his practicing physiognomy and asking Gambara's Brescian hostess to do the same, see *ibid.*, 87 (Randini's fourth report to Chizzola, 23 February 1729). As mentioned in Chapter 1, at age twelve Gambara had supplemented her vow of perpetual virginity, made four or five years earlier, with the resolve never to look a man in the face. *Ibid.*, 58 (Randini's second report to Chizzola, 14 February 1729).

95. *Ibid.*, 73 (Randini's third report to Chizzola, 16 February 1729).

96. *Ibid.*, 116–20, 148 (Randini to Chizzola, 4, 16, 18, and 23 March 1729). Before the investigation Gambara had not sought medical attention for her wounds because, she explained, there was no *medico condotto* (municipal physician) in Alfianello, she could not afford to pay as a private patient, and doctors themselves said that they could not help her. *Ibid.*, 95 (Randini's fourth report to Chizzola, 23 February 1729).

97. *Ibid.*, 112–13, 115 (Randini to Chizzola, 25 and 26 February 1729).

98. *Ibid.*, 89 (Randini's fourth report to Chizzola, 23 February 1729); see also *ibid.*, 106 (same report). In their final colloquy, Randini tried to explain these principles to Gambara: *ibid.*, 109 (Randini's fifth report to Chizzola).

99. *Ibid.*, 55–56: she had a reasonably decent theological vocabulary (Randini's second report to Chizzola, 14 February 1729); 61: she furnished “an *Iliad* on her austerities” (*ibid.*); 67: she could read a little (Randini's third report to Chizzola, 16 February 1729); 72–73: her memory was good (*ibid.*); 104–5: her intellect and capacity for learning were far superior to her social condition (Randini's fifth report to Chizzola, 25 February 1729); 110: she regularly attended Christian Doctrine sessions (*ibid.*).

100. *Ibid.*, 70, 76, 92–94, 104, 110, and esp. 111–12 (Randini's third, fourth, and fifth reports to Chizzola).

101. *Ibid.*, 24, 36 (Chizzola to Simoni, 16 and 26 January 1729).

102. *Ibid.*, 85–86, 114 (Randini to Chizzola, 23 and 25 February 1729).

103. *Ibid.*, 153 (Chizzola to Simoni, 23 March 1729); RaBC, MS 580, n.p. (Randini's final report, 22 May 1729).

104. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 85–86, 100–101, 114 (Randini to Chizzola, 23 February 1729; Randini's fourth and fifth reports to Chizzola, 23 and 25 February 1729).

105. RaBC, MS 580, n.p.

106. As indicated in Chapter 1, n. 25, Gambara's life after the investigation concluded cannot be traced in the parish records of Alfianello.

107. For a French case of possession in the late seventeenth century of which physicians took full charge, see François Bayle and Henri Grangeron, *Relation de l'état de quelques personnes prétendues possédées* (Toulouse: Veuve Fouchac & Bely, 1682). VaACDF contains many pretense of holiness dossiers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which deserve study.

CHAPTER NINE: RINGS AND OTHER THINGS

1. Zapetti, a native of Quinzano (which of the five towns of that name in northern Italy the records do not reveal), served as inquisitor in Venice from 18 July 1625

until 14 August 1632. VeAS, SU, b. 153, “Elenco degli inquisitori domenicani, 1560–1755.”

2. Ibid., b. 87, fasc. Alvise Balbi and Marietta Zavana, n.p. (Basilio Zavalini, notary of the Treviso Inquisition, to Zapetti, n.d.). He did not ask Zapetti to look for the portrait.

3. Ibid., n.p. (interrogation of Benetta Girardi, 11 March 1630).

4. Ibid., n.p., “Compendio di miracoli che si raccontano da diversi di Marietta Zavana detta la Coltrera.” Page references in the trial record indicate that this was an abstract from a manuscript at least 220 pages long.

5. See *EC*, s.v. “Sacramentali,” by Antonio Gaboardi, and R. W. Scribner, “Cosmic Order and Daily Life: Sacred and Secular in Preindustrial German Society,” in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz (London: German Historical Institute, 1984), 17–31.

6. VeAS, SU, b. 90, fasc. Pietro Vespa, first part, 23r–v. (The record is divided into two separately paginated sections, referred to here as first and second parts.) Unfortunately none of the fragments remains in the dossier. Marc’Antonio Padavino, the former Venetian diplomatic representative in Naples, testified on 17 January 1634 to having the box made. Ibid., second part, 33r.

7. Ibid., first part, 2r–3r (Vespa’s written submission, 1 September 1633).

8. A letter included among the defense documents reports Vespa’s intention to present the vase to the doge. Ibid., second part, n.p. (Marc’Antonio Padavino to Doge Francesco Erizzo, Naples, 8 December 1631).

9. Ibid., first part, 3r–4r; affidavits, 4r–10v.

10. The copies of the two letters forwarded from Rome to the Venetian tribunal (ibid., first part, 11r–14v) bear no names. The probable author of the first was one of the many men in Messina whom Vespa named as enemies: Defendente Brusati, the archbishop’s vicar. The second appears to have been written by someone who had served Luca Stella while he was archbishop of Candia and was now living in Venice: perhaps Luigi Robabelli, a canon of Candia; Lorenzo Manfanello, archdeacon of the cathedral of Candia; or Simone Mercati, a former member of Stella’s staff. Ibid., second part, 7v–8v (interrogation of Pietro Maria Ferrari, Stella’s secretary, Vicenza, 10 December 1633).

11. Ibid., first part, 11r–12v (copies of the letters of denunciation, one dated 27 November 1632 and the other undated); 15r–16v (copies of the “Virgin’s letters”). As Vespa may have known, the tradition of a missive from the Virgin addressed to the Messinese had been affirmed by the Jesuit Melchior Inchofer in a treatise published in Messina in 1619. Genoveffa Palumbo, “Lettere immaginarie, apocriefe e inventate,” in *Per lettera: La scrittura epistolare femminile tra archivio e tipografia, secoli XV–XVII*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Viella, 1999), 167–77.

12. Fasc. Pietro Vespa, first part, 14r–v. The trial record contains nothing confirming the claim that the Inquisition of Messina (a branch of the Spanish Holy Office) had intervened.

13. Ibid., first part, 26r–33r (interrogations of Vespa, 15 and 17 November 1633).

14. On its acquisition: As we shall see shortly, he exchanged for it the only liquid asset he possessed, the episcopal ring he had received when he was consecrated bishop

of Paphos. Neither witnesses nor the inquisitor expressed concern about his trading away the object symbolizing his ecclesiastical office to acquire the vase.

15. *Ibid.*, first part, 35r–56r (interrogations of Vespa, 24 November and 6 December 1633; 24 January, 9 and 14 February 1634).

16. *Ibid.*, second part, 8r, 14v, 23r, 37v (interrogations of Pietro Maria Ferrari, 10 December 1633; Luca Stella, 13 December 1633; Alvise Robabelli, who supplied Billio's current address, 22 December 1633; Leonardo Manfanelli, 19 January 1634).

17. *Ibid.*, second part, 43r–v (interrogation of Billio, Turin, 9 January 1634; entered into the Venetian trial record on 24 January 1634).

18. As noted in Chapter 1, the Congregation eventually suspended the proceedings pending the gathering of further information in Messina. *Ibid.*, second part, n.p. (Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Clemente Ricetti, 23 December 1634).

19. *Ibid.*, second part, 1r (denunciation by Pietro Martire Cattaneo da Casola, O.P., 6 September 1633).

20. *Ibid.*, second part, 4r, 5r (interrogation of Domenico Neretti, O.P., Vicenza, 1 December 1633).

21. *Ibid.*, second part, 10v–11r, 14v–15r, 19r–20r, 30r–31v (interrogations in Vicenza of Bishop Stella's secretary, Pietro Maria Ferrari, 10 December 1633; Bishop Luca Stella and Giovanni Patrizio Gattoni, O.C., 13 December 1633; Nicolò Randonio, 10 January 1634); 28r–29v (interrogations of the Carmelite friars Angelo da Monteforte and Giovanni da Monteforte, Verona, 2 January 1634). This incident is discussed further in Chapter 10.

22. VeAS, SU, b. 105, fasc. Giuseppe Riccardi, n.p. (denunciations by Giovanni Francesco Leoni and fra Marino Cavaletti, 27 August 1650). (The trial record is paginated part of the way through the interrogatory phase; numbering resumes temporarily in the defense phase.) Leoni's brother-in-law, a Camaldolensian monk, testified that he also had some connection with the Venetian Zecca (mint). *Ibid.*, 8r–10v (interrogation of don Egidio Pezzi, 3 September 1650). Leoni knew Riccardi well because after the friar had been suspended *a divinis*, he had slept for a year in the Leoni house. *Ibid.*, 28v–29r (interrogation of Caterina, wife of Zuan Francesco Leoni, 15 December 1650).

23. *Ibid.*, 1r–2v (copy of indulgences).

24. *Ibid.*, 12r (seizure of Riccardi's manuscripts, books, and the bag, 18 September 1650). One of the manuscript books contained the prophecies of Joachim of Fiore.

25. *Ibid.*, 26r (testimony of Leoni, 6 December 1650). When I first examined the trial record, it contained several more rosary beads wrapped in paper.

26. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Riccardi, 16 January 1651).

27. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Riccardi, 19 January 1651).

28. Riccardi had little to say about his life before he arrived in Rome some ten years before his trial in Venice. It is possible that at some point he was stationed in the monastery of San Francesco in Caccamo, southeast of Palermo. Touring Club Italiano, *Guida d'Italia: Sicilia*, 6th ed. (Milan: Touring Club Italiano, 1989), 481.

29. Fasc. Giuseppe Riccardi, n.p., 25r (denunciation by Zuan Francesco Leoni and Marino Cavaletti, 27 August 1650; interrogation of Leoni, 6 December 1650). On "accessories" and presentation of self in early modern portraits, see Peter Burke, *The*

Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 151–67.

30. Fasc. Giuseppe Riccardi, 19r–v (interrogation of fra Michele Stella, 24 November 1650).

31. *Ibid.*, 28r–v (the portrait and other items received into evidence).

32. *Ibid.*, 8r–10v (interrogation of don Egidio Pezzi, 3 September 1650).

33. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Battista Rossi, Verona, 10 January 1651).

34. *Ibid.*, 4v (interrogation of fra Marino Cavaletti, 1 September 1650).

35. *Ibid.*, n.p. (defense proposition no. 2, submitted 2 March 1651).

36. Urban VIII, *Urbani VIII Pont. O.M. Decreta servanda in canonizatione et beatificatione sanctorum* (Rome: Reverenda Camera Apostolica, 1642), 2–6 (Decreta Sanctissimae Inquisitionis sub diebus 13 Martii et 2 Octobris 1625).

37. Fasc. Giuseppe Riccardi, n.p. (interrogation of Rossi, Verona, 10 January 1650).

38. *Ibid.*, 4v, 7v, 26v–27r (interrogations of fra Marino Cavaletti, 1 September 1650; Matteo Cabernoto, pievano of San Tomà, 6 September 1650; Francesco Pezzi, 7 December 1650).

39. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Riccardi, 24 January 1651).

40. On the defense attorney's protest, *ibid.*, n.p. ("Diffese in iure per il Padre Maestro Alcalá [sic] inquisito nel S. Officio," n.d. but probably March 1651).

41. VeAS, SU, b. 110, fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (report on seizure, 28 January 1662; inventory marked "A" at end of dossier).

42. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Janis, 30 January 1662).

43. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Janis, 14 March 1662). She later stated that her devotion to Saints Augustine and Monica played a part in her desire eventually to wear the dress. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Janis, 27 June 1662). These saints may have become important to her on account of the prominence in Zorzone of the confraternity of Mary Virgin of Consolation of the Holy Belt of St. Augustine and his Mother St. Monica, established in 1627. Among the founders were members of the Palazzi family. Morali assiduously and successfully promoted the confraternity, marketing its leather belt to inhabitants of Zorzone and neighboring villages. See Fulvio Tomizza, *Heavenly Supper: The Story of Maria Janis*, trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 75.

44. Fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (interrogation of Morali, 7 February 1662).

45. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Morali, 7 February 1662; interrogation of their traveling companion, Pietro Palazzi, 28 February 1662).

46. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Janis, 14 March 1662).

47. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Rivale to Fracassini, Bergamo, 1 February 1662). The Dominican Rivale, a native of Bologna, served as inquisitor in Bergamo from 16 December 1651 until 8 July 1662, when he was transferred to Brescia. VeAS, Senato, Deliberazioni Roma Ordinaria (Secreta), reg. 56, 158v; reg. 66, 86v–87r; Vincenzo Maria Fontana, *Sacrum theatrum dominicanum* (Rome: Nicolò Angelo Tinassi, 1666), 558, 560–61. On the Pelagini, see Gianvittorio Signorotto, *Inquisitori e mistici nel Seicento italiano: L'eresia di Santa Pelagia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989).

48. On Ugoni's appointment as inquisitor: VeAS, Senato, Deliberazioni Roma Ordinaria (Secreta), reg. 66, 190v.

49. Some hostile witnesses insinuated that Janis and Morali often withdrew to an upper room in his house on the pretext of practicing mental prayer. Janis stoutly denied it, and the Holy Office did not probe further. Fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (interrogation of Janis, 11 July 1662).

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*, n.p. (sentence of Janis, 15 March 1663).

52. *Ibid.*, n.p. (report on seizure, 28 January 1662; inventory marked “A” at end of dossier).

53. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Janis, 30 January 1662).

54. *Ibid.*, n.p. (report on disposal of the wafers, witnessed by fra Francesco Obici da Fermo and fra Valentino da Crema, 1 February 1662).

55. Janis also took communion at several Venetian churches, including San Giovanni di Rialto (Iseppo Rizzo, the priest who administered the sacrament to her there without hearing her confession, denounced her and Morali to the Holy Office) and Santa Teresa, the Carmelite convent founded by Maria Ferrazzi, Cecilia’s sister. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Morali, 31 January 1662).

56. *Ibid.*, n.p. (esp. the interrogations of Janis, 20 July 1662, and of Morali, 26 July 1662).

57. *Ibid.*, n.p. (sentences of Morali and Janis, 15 March 1663).

58. Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 70–71.

59. *Ibid.*, 39.

60. See BS, s.v. “Caterina di Alessandria, santa,” by Dante Balboni, Giovanni B. Bronzini, and Maria Vittoria Brandi.

61. On rings as tokens of espousal in the lives of ecstatic nuns, see, e.g., Herbert Thurston, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (London: Burnes Oates, 1952), 130–40, and Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 69–70.

62. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 70–71.

63. *Ibid.*, 71. Alvise q. Francesco Zonati (c. 1600–1654) was chaplain and curate of San Severo and confessor to the nuns of Sant’Antonio di Torcello. In his will he left 110 ducats to Ferrazzi “so that she will pray to God for me.” VeAS, NT, b. 152 (notary Francesco Beaciani), no. 16 (30 August 1654). See also Emmanuale Antonio Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane*, 6 vols. in 7 (Venice: various publishers, 1824–53) 2:408, 6:685.

64. One of her former charges asserted that she had made this claim. VeAS, SU, b. 112, fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 30r (interrogation of Elisabetta Bonardi in the convent of Santa Teresa, Conegliano, 4 August 1664).

65. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 69–70. Girolamo Chiaramonte (1600–1676) served as *praepositus* of the Venetian province of the Society of Jesus from 1656 to 1659. RoSJ, Schedario biografico.

66. Only the ring is briefly mentioned in the sentence. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, sentence, 8v.

67. *Ibid.*, 20v, 30r, 33r, 35r (interrogations of Fiorina Forni and Lucrezia Volta, 23 June 1664; Faustina Antonelli and Antonia Bernardi, 1 July 1664); defense phase, n.p. (interrogations of Anna Carrara, Lucrezia Spinelli, Meneghina Benetti, and Fiorina

Forni, 10 and 17 March, 21 April, and 8 July 1665). For a fuller treatment of the portraits, see Anne Jacobson Schutte, “‘Questo non è il ritratto che ho fatto io’: Painters, the Inquisition, and the Shape of Sanctity in Seventeenth-Century Venice,” in *Florence and Italy: Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, ed. Peter Denley and Caroline Elam (London: Westfield College, 1988), 419–31.

68. As Fiorina Forni later put it, “We called [the painting of the Madonna of the Seven Sorrows] Saint Cecilia, for looking at her and the painting was the same thing.” Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, defense phase, n.p. (interrogation of Forni, 8 July 1665).

69. *Ibid.*, 32v, n.p. between 35 and 36 (seizure of the paintings, 1 July 1664).

70. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 35 (third interrogation of Ferrazzi, 3 July 1664). Giovanni Andreis confirmed that he had commissioned the portrait by Stroiffi. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 106v (interrogation of Andreis, 24 July 1664).

71. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Ermanno Stroiffi and Nicolò Renieri, 27 January and 26 March 1665). Renieri did not mention the role of his daughters Angelica and Clorinda in the painting of the portrait.

72. *Ibid.*, 122r–123v (interrogation of Giacinto Cornacchioli, 5 August 1664).

73. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Cornacchioli, 22 January 1665).

74. *Ibid.*, n.p., sentence, 4r–v, 12r.

75. Between the publication of Urban VIII’s regulations and Ferrazzi’s trial, one writer of an inquisitorial manual commented further on illegitimate images of non-recognized holy people: Sebastian Salleles, *De materiis Tribunalium Sanctae Inquisitionis*, 2 vols. (Rome: Giovanni Pietro and Tommaso Coligni, 1651–56), 1:298. Shortly after the trial, the subject was discussed at some length by Tommaso Del Bene, *De officio S. Inquisitionis circa haeresim*, 2 vols. (Lyon: Jean-Antoine Huguetan, 1666), 2:353–64.

76. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 28–30 (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 23 June 1664), 62 (autobiographical deposition, 9 July 1664); fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 150r–153r, 159r, 161r (interrogations of Ferrazzi, 2, 4, and 8 September 1664).

77. See the exhibition catalogue *La Maddalena tra sacro e profano: Da Giotto a De Chirico (Palazzo Pitti, 24 maggio–7 settembre 1986)*, ed. Marilena Mosco (Milan: Mondadori, and Florence: La Casa Usher, 1986).

78. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 22r (interrogation of Fiorina Forni, 22 June 1664). On the allegation that Mariettina was her daughter, see Chapter 11.

79. *Ibid.*, 161r (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 8 September 1664).

80. Testifying for the defense, a priest acknowledged that at Ferrazzi’s request, he had consecrated some vessels and deconsecrated others for use in her houses. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Pietro Fontana, 2 June 1665).

81. *Ibid.*, sentence, 5r.

82. VeAS, SU, b. 115, fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 4r (interrogation of Giovanni Daviano, 28 June 1668).

83. *Ibid.*, 6r, 17r (interrogations of Bartolomea, wife of Giacomo q. Salvador *capeller* [hatmaker] di Serravalle and Francesco Gravano, priest at Santa Ternita, 3 July 1668). Another priest who testified on the same day complained that the women who flocked to the church were getting in the way of his saying mass. *Ibid.*, 19r (interrogation of Giovanni Maria Duringhini).

84. *Ibid.*, 7r–9r (“Raguaglio descritto da me Francesco de’ Vincenzi pievano di S. Ternita dell’immagine della B. Vergine che si ritrova nella mia chiesa,” 13 June 1668).

85. *Ibid.*, 19v (report of seizure, 3 July 1668).

86. For example, *ibid.*, 19v, 21r, 22r (interrogation of Antonia, daughter of Giocundo di Salvador; report of the commissioner of the Holy Office on a conversation with the priest Andrea Berlendis; interrogations of Angela, wife of the hatmaker Michele Cettini, and Zaneta, wife of the standard-bearer Francesco Ghetussi; all 5 July 1668).

87. *Ibid.*, 58r (Vincenzi's memorandum, July 1668). Santina Vincenzi was not summoned to testify.

88. *Ibid.*, 62v–63r (Andrea Vescovi's report on seizure at Vincenzi's house, 4 December 1668). According to witnesses, Ferrazzi also wore a ring bearing this saint's portrait, which she claimed he himself had given her. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 131v (interrogation of Elisabetta Bonardi in the convent of Santa Teresa, Conegliano, 4 August 1664); 141v (interrogation of Angela Terzi, 22 August 1664); sentence, 8v.

89. Fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, n.p. (7 March 1669).

90. See Chapter 11.

91. Fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 59r–62v (interrogations of Vincenzi, 27 and 29 November 1668).

92. *Ibid.*, 62v–63r (Vescovi's report on seizing the evidence, 4 December 1668). Vincenzi and Pesenti, however, recalled that the ring bore the image of Saint Anthony of Padua. *Ibid.*, 61r, 63v (interrogation of Vincenzi, 27 November 1668; interrogation of Pesenti, 4 December 1668).

93. *Ibid.*, 63r–64r (interrogation of Pesenti, 4 December 1668).

94. *Ibid.*, 64v (following interrogation of Pesenti, 4 December 1668).

95. *Ibid.*, n.p. (14 March 1669).

96. *Ibid.*, 62v–63r (action taken following Vescovi's report on the confiscation).

97. VeAS, SU, b. 127, fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, cover (attestation by Gaetano Cozzi in the presence of Raimondo Marozzo della Rocca, Luigi Lanfranchi, and Ugo Tucci, 5 March 1693).

98. *Ibid.*, 9v, 13r–v, 15r (search of cell, 18 February 1693; inventory made by fra Giovanni Antonio Guerra, provincial of the Minim Order, 3 February [or March?] 1693; search of cell, 10 March 1693). The inquisitor Giovanni Tommaso Roveto, who began the prosecution, was succeeded on 27 May 1693 by Antonio Leoni da Padova. VeAS, SU, b. 153, "Elenco degli inquisitori domenicani, 1560–1755."

99. Fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 14r–18r, 20r (interrogations of Ladicosa, 5 February [March?], 10 March, and 31 March 1693). Marietta eventually admitted that she had misled Ladicosa about the provenance and genuineness of the relics. *Ibid.*, 22v–23r (interrogation of Bon Erizzo, 7 April 1693).

100. *Ibid.*, 18r, 20r, 21v (interrogations of Ladicosa, 11 and 31 March and 3 April 1693).

101. *Ibid.*, 26v (testimony of Claudio Somariva, 21 April 1693).

102. *Ibid.*, 46r–47r (interrogation of Ladicosa, 3 September 1693). Before he took on Marietta as a penitent, he had stated earlier, her previous confessor, Antonio Fabris of the church of Santa Marina, had persuaded him that she was having supernatural experiences. *Ibid.*, 14r (interrogation of Ladicosa, 5 February [actually March] 1693).

103. As we saw in Chapter 2, the Venetian Holy Office never conducted Spanish-style autos-da-fé, and it very rarely invited outsiders to attend sentencings.

104. Fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, n.p. (sentence, 25 May 1694); 63v (Ladicosa's release from prison on 29 May 1704).

105. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, Processo della causa di Lucrezia Gambara d'Alfianello, 1–2, 10–11 (Giuseppe Simoni to Leandro Chizzola, Alfianello, 8 December 1728; Chizzola to Simoni, 4 January 1729).

106. *Ibid.*, 14 (Simoni to Chizzola, Alfianello, 8 January 1729).

107. *Ibid.*, 41 (Chizzola to Angelo Maria Querini, Brescia, 16 January 1729).

108. Another was saying mass without having been consecrated a priest, for which several men in the seventeenth century were sentenced to death by the Inquisition and subsequently executed. Andrea Del Col and Marisa Milani, “‘Senza effusione di sangue e senza pericolo di morte’: Intorno ad alcune condanne capitali delle Inquisizioni di Venezia e di Verona nel Settecento e a quelle veneziane del Cinquecento,” in *Eretici esuli e indemoniati nell'età moderna*, ed. Mario Rosa (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1998), 155–57, 167.

CHAPTER TEN: TIME AND SPACE

1. Benedetto Croce, “History and Chronicle,” in *Theories of History*, ed. Patrick Gardiner (New York: Free Press, 1959), 226–33; R. G. Collingwood, “History as Re-enactment of Past Experience,” in the same volume, 251–62.

2. See Chapter 9, 000.

3. See Ottavia Niccoli, *Il seme della violenza: Putti, fanciulli e mammoli nell'Italia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: Laterza, 1995).

4. Stanley Chojnacki, “Political Adulthood in Fifteenth-Century Venice,” *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 791–810; idem, “Measuring Adulthood: Adolescence and Gender in Renaissance Venice,” *Journal of Family History* 17 (1992): 371–95.

5. Creighton Gilbert, “When Did a Man in the Renaissance Grow Old?” *Studies in the Renaissance* 14 (1967): 7–32.

6. On nonelite women in early modern Italy, see Luisa Ciammitti, “Fanciulle monache madri. Povertà femminile e previdenza a Bologna nei secoli XVI–XVIII,” in *Arte e pietà: I patrimoni culturali delle opere pie* (Bologna: Istituto per i beni culturali della Regione Emilia-Romagna, 1980), 461–520; idem, “Quanto costa essere normali: Le dote nel Conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baraccano (1630–1680),” *Quaderni storici* 53 (August 1983): 469–97; Elizabeth Storr Cohen, “La verginità perduta: Autorappresentazione di giovani donne nella Roma barocca,” *Quaderni storici* 67 (April 1988): 169–91 (in English, “No Longer Virgins: Self-Representation by Young Women in Late Renaissance Rome,” in Migiel and Schiesari, *Refiguring Woman*, 169–91); Lucia Ferrante, “Patronesse e patroni in un’istituzione assistenziale femminile (Bologna sec. XVII),” in Ferrante, Palazzi, and Pomata, *Ragnatele di rapporti*, 59–79; Daniela Lombardi, *Povertà maschile, povertà femminile: L’Ospedale dei Mendicanti nella Firenze dei Medici* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988); and Monica Elena Chojnacka, *Working Women of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

7. Silvana Seidel Menchi, “La fanciulla e la clessidra: Nota sulla periodizzazione della vita femminile nelle società preindustriali,” in Seidel Menchi, Schutte, and Kuehn, *Tempi e spazi*, 105–55.

8. The term *putta*, usually applied to a young girl, could also mean a virgin of any age. For instance, when a fifty-three-year-old witness in one trial, unmarried and living with her parents, was asked to identify herself, she stated, “I’m a putta.” VeAS, SU, b. 144, fasc. Andrea Scolari, n.p. (interrogation of Benedetta di Giovanni Battista Agosti, Brescia, 9 March 1750).

9. Edward Muir and Ronald F. E. Weissman, “Social and Symbolic Places in Renaissance Venice and Florence,” in *The Power of Place: Bringing Together Geographical and Social Imaginations*, ed. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 93–94. On ritual and festive movement through space, see also Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), and Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists: Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

10. Dennis Romano, “Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice,” *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989): 339–53.

11. Stanley Chojnacki, “‘The Most Serious Duty’: Motherhood, Gender, and Patrician Culture in Renaissance Venice,” in Migiel and Schiesari, *Refiguring Woman*, 133–54.

12. Romano, “Gender and the Urban Geography”; Muir and Weissman, “Social and Symbolic Places,” 91.

13. John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

14. Muir and Weissman, “Social and Symbolic Places,” 94–100.

15. Mario Rosa, “L’onda che ritorna: Interno ed esterno sacro nella Napoli del ’600,” in Boesch Gajano and Scaraffia, *Luoghi sacri*, 401–02. See also Gianvittorio Signorotto, “Lo spazio delle devozioni nell’età della Controriforma,” in the same volume, 315–25, and Muir and Weissman, “Social and Symbolic Places,” 100.

16. But see the essays in Seidel Menchi, Schutte, and Kuehn, *Tempi e spazi*.

17. Exceptions to this statement include Niccoli, *Il seme della violenza*, and Raul Merzario, *Anastasia, ovvero la malizia degli uomini* (Rome: Laterza, 1992).

18. VeAS, SU, b. 72, fasc. Narcisa, n.p. (Paola’s letter to the Holy Office, 13 September 1618; interrogation of Marina, daughter of Giovanni da Palma, 8 October 1618).

19. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Paola’s letter, 13 September 1618; interrogation of Lucieta, daughter of Giovanni da Palma, 8 October 1618).

20. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Paola’s letter, 13 September 1618). In the chancellor’s heading on her holograph letter, Paola is described as “amitam presbiteri Laurentii,” that is, aunt or great-aunt on his father’s side.

21. *Ibid.* (Paola’s letter, 13 September 1618). Paola stated that Narcisa was living with a male cousin, therefore not necessarily with Marina and Lucieta.

22. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Marina, 8 October 1618).

23. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Lucieta, 8 October 1618).

24. Perhaps Narcisa was more literate than her cousins, for Paola characterized her earlier lifestyle as including the reading of “profane books.” The group may have included Paola’s niece Lugrezia; the Holy Office did not follow Paola’s suggestion that she be interrogated. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Paola’s letter, 13 September 1618).

25. VeAS, SU, b. 127, fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 1r–3v (denunciation by Marina Bon Schiavo, 14 July 1692).

26. *Ibid.*, 9v–12r (interrogation of Marietta Bon Erizzo, 19 February 1693; her written submission, n.d. but between 19 and 26 February 1693; interrogation to confirm written statement, 26 February 1693). Ladicosa said that he instructed her because she wanted to become a nun. *Ibid.*, 13v (interrogation of Ladicosa, 5 February [actually March] 1693). She later achieved her ambition; see Chapter 11, n. 2. The friar was so proud of his pedagogical accomplishment that he cut her signature off a letter so that he could show it to others. *Ibid.*, 19r (interrogation of Ladicosa, 31 March 1693); the letter, marked exhibit B, is at the end of the dossier.

27. *Ibid.*, 9v (report on search of Ladicosa's cell, 18 February 1693).

28. *Ibid.*, 24r (interrogation of Ladicosa, 9 April 1693). Ladicosa had given some "relics" to Biondini, who had been his penitent. *Ibid.*, 19v (interrogation of Ladicosa, 31 March 1693). On Biondini, see *DBI*, s.v. "Biondini, Maria Arcangela," by Gaspare De Caro, and Cecilia Nubola, "Maria Arcangela Biondini (1641–1712), fondatrice del monastero delle Serve di Maria di Arco," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 24 (1998): 767–802.

29. For quotation: fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 1r (denunciation by Bon Schiavo, 14 July 1692).

30. *Ibid.*, 11r (Bon Erizzo's written statement, n.d. but between 19 and 26 February).

31. *Ibid.*, 2r–v (denunciation by Bon Schiavo, 14 July 1692). Between residing in the parish of San Felice and moving to San Francesco di Paola, Bon Erizzo had lived "above the Fondamenta della Tana." *Ibid.*, 62r–v (interrogation of Ladicosa, 14 January 1694).

32. *Ibid.*, 60v (interrogation of Ladicosa, 14 January 1694).

33. *Ibid.*, 26r, 27v (interrogation of Ladicosa, 21 April 1693; written statement by and interrogation of Dolfina di Simon Taulignan, 22 April 1693).

34. *Ibid.*, loose sheets following 63v (two attestations dated 30 April 1694). The friars stated that he had served several times as superior of the house.

35. VeAS, SU, b. 112, fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 39v (interrogation of Antonia Pesenti, 6 September 1668).

36. *Ibid.*, 40r.

37. *Ibid.*, 39v–40r, 41v (interrogations of Pesenti, 6 and 11 September 1668).

38. The census lists 161 nobles (two of them priests), 122 *cittadini* (including five priests), 65 nuns in the Cistercian convent of Santa Maria della Celestia, 17 inhabitants of the Ospedale delle Boccole, and 1,615 *artefici* (three of them priests). VeAS, PS, b. 570, Anagrafe 1642: Castello.

39. Fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 5r–6v (interrogation of Bartolomea, wife of Giocondo q. Salvador, hatmaker, 3 July 1668); quotation from 5r.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*, 4v, 18r, 23v, 26r, 28v (interrogations of Giovanni Daviano, 28 June 1668; Francesco Gravano, priest at Santa Ternita, 3 July 1668; Andrea Fava, priest at Santa Ternita, 5 July 1668; Marcantonio Scolari, deacon of Santa Ternita, 10 July 1668; Giovanni Maria Durighini, priest at Santa Maria Nova, 13 July 1668).

42. *Ibid.*, 1v (denunciation by Daviano, 19 June 1668). Another witness reported

a bystander's joking that all that was missing was musicians to play for this dance. *Ibid.*, 23v (interrogation of Fava). The pievano was later questioned about this ceremony, which the inquisitor termed "superstitious." *Ibid.*, 62r–v (interrogation of Vincenzi, 28 November 1668).

43. *Ibid.*, 22v–23r (interrogation of Fava); 27v (interrogation of Giovanni Pretegianni, priest at San Giovanni in Bragora, 13 July 1668).

44. *Ibid.*, 25r, 28r (interrogations of Fava, 10 July 1668; Durighini, 13 July 1668).

45. *Ibid.*, 1v–2r (denunciation by Daviano, 19 June 1668). See also 29v (interrogation of Durighini, 13 July 1668).

46. *Ibid.*, 20v (interrogation of Antonia, daughter of Giocondo di Salvador, 5 July 1668).

47. E.g., *ibid.*, 22r (interrogation of Angela, wife of Michele Cettini, hatmaker, 5 July 1668).

48. *Ibid.*, 24v (interrogation of Andrea Fava, 10 July 1668).

49. *Ibid.*, 65r (interrogation of Vincenzi, 11 December 1668). In the same interrogation he mentioned sending letters from Osanna Longo to his acquaintance suor Maria Arcangela Biondini, then living at Santa Maria delle Grazie. When Inquisitor Ugoni attempted to obtain this correspondence, the nun informed him that she had burned it. *Ibid.*, n.p., loose sheet marked B (Biondini to Ugoni, 29 December 1668). Vincenzi also claimed that Biondini visited Pesenti in spirit. *Ibid.*, 54v (Vincenzi's memorandum, written in July and presented to the Inquisition on 20 November 1668).

50. *Ibid.*, 40v (interrogation of Pesenti, 6 September 1668).

51. *Ibid.*, n.p., 15v–16v (denunciation by fra Marino Cavaletti, 29 August 1650; interrogation of fra Agostino Maffei, 10 November 1650).

52. *Ibid.*, 28v–29r (interrogation of Caterina Leoni, 15 December 1650).

53. *Ibid.*, 5v, 15v–16r, 22v (interrogations of Cavaletti, 1 September 1650; Maffei, 10 November 1650; Antonio Pezzi, 27 November 1650).

54. *Ibid.*, n.p., 5v, 13r–15r, 20r–v (denunciation by Cavaletti; interrogations of Cavaletti, 1 September 1650; fra Francesco Soranzo, 27 September 1650; fra Ottavio Rogaredo, 24 November 1650).

55. *Ibid.*, n.p., 18r–v, 19r–20v (interrogations of fra Marco Santano, 15 November 1650; fra Michele Stella, 24 November 1650).

56. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Alvisè Ventura, 12 January 1651). This volume was not entered into evidence.

57. VeAS, SU, b. 87, fasc. Alvisè Balbi and Marietta Zavana, n.p. (interrogation of suor Benetta Girardi, 11 March 1630).

58. *Ibid.*, n.p. Abstracts of her letters to these nuns are contained in the dossier.

59. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Balbi's servant Franco Pellegrini and his neighbor Francesca q. Bartolomeo Oddi, 5 September 1630; Balbi's servant Menega q. Giovanni Domenico Furlanis, 10 September 1630). Zavana owned a house in the parish of San Stin, which she rented out for use as a rooming house. *Ibid.*, n.p. (list of questions sent by the Holy Office of Treviso to be put to witnesses in Venice).

60. *Ibid.*, n.p. (instructions from the inquisitor of Treviso to be used during the investigation in Venice, 22 August 1630). The rupture with Pasqualigo is discussed further in Chapter 11.

61. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Girardi, 11 March 1630). Suor Benetta said that she had known Zavana for eight years but had seen her rarely during the last two. Later she made clear that the prohibition of Balbi's and Zavana's visiting nuns in convents did not apply to her house, San Marcuola, because "this is a hermitage." *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Girardi, 12 September 1630). As mentioned earlier, an abridgment of the "Compendio di miracoli che si raccontano da diversi di Marietta Zavana detta la Coltrera" may be found in the dossier.

62. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Pellegrini, 5 September 1630; Furlanis, 10 September 1630). A report on Zavana's activities in San Floriano dated 12 September 1629 was sent by the inquisitor of Treviso to his colleague in Venice.

63. *Ibid.*, n.p., "Compendio di miracoli." According to suor Benetta, Zavana was responsible for recruiting seventy young women (an impossibly high number) to enter this convent.

64. With God's help, Zavana allegedly saw the faults in Bonomo's soul and reformed her in the presence of Abbess Gabriella. *Ibid.*, n.p., "Compendio di miracoli." On Bonomo (1606–70; beatified 1783), whose career resembles those of the holy women discussed in Chapter 5, see *DBI*, s.v. "Bonomo, Giovanna Maria," by Giuseppe Pignatelli, and *BS*, s.v. "Bonomo, Giovanna Maria, beata," by Scipione De Paoli.

65. Fasc. Alvisè Balbi and Marietta Zavana, n.p., "Compendio di miracoli."

66. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Girardi, 11 March 1630).

67. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Furlanis, 10 September 1630).

68. One other woman—Andriana Buranella, also called suor Andriana delle Buranelle, perhaps a *conversa* in San Mauro or San Vito on the island of Burano—is mentioned in the record, but no details about her are provided. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Pomello, pievano of San Fantin, 24 March 1630; list of questions from the Holy Office of Treviso to be put to witnesses in Venice).

69. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Oddi, 5 September 1630).

70. *DBI*, s.v. "Bonomo, Giovanna Maria," by Giuseppe Pignatelli.

71. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, Processo della causa di Lucrezia Gambara d'Alfianello, 41 (Leandro Chizzola to Angelo Maria Querini, Brescia, 16 January 1729).

72. *Ibid.*, 50 (Chizzola to Querini, Brescia, 10 February 1729).

73. *Ibid.*, 158 (Chizzola to Giuseppe Simoni, Brescia, 16 May 1729).

74. On the development of the confessional booth, see Wietse de Boer, "'Ad audiendi non videndi commoditatem': Note sull'introduzione del confessionale soprattutto in Italia," *Quaderni storici* 77 (August 1991): 543–72. Confessional booths were not standard equipment even in the churches of Venice in the late seventeenth century.

75. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 2–13 (Simoni to Chizzola, Alfianello, 8 December 1728; Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 14 December 1728; Simoni to Chizzola, Alfianello, 23 December 1728; Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 4 January 1729).

76. *Ibid.*, 4–6 (Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 22 December 1728).

77. *Ibid.*, 78, 146–47 (don Agostino Randini's second report to Chizzola, Brescia, 16 February 1729; Randini to Chizzola, Brescia, 23 March 1729).

78. For comparison, see the much better documented case on the periphery analyzed by Liliana Billanovich, "Esperienze religiose negate nel tardo Seicento: Il parroco e le devote di Alano fra Vescovo e comunità rurale," in *Studi in onore di Angelo*

Gambasin dagli allievi in memoria, ed. Liliana Billanovich (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1992), 43–131.

79. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 14–37 (Simoni to Chizzola, Alfianello, 14 January 1729; Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 10 January 1729; Simoni to Chizzola, Alfianello, 12, 13, 14, and 15 January 1729; Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 16 January 1729; Simoni to Chizzola, Alfianello, 17 and 15 January 1729; Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 26 January 1729).

80. *Ibid.*, 38–40, 48–49, 50–51 (Chizzola to Querini, Brescia, 16 January 1729; Chizzola to Querini, Brescia, 27 January and 10 February 1729).

81. *Ibid.*, 101 (Randini's fourth report to Chizzola, Brescia, 23 February 1729).

82. *Ibid.*, 159 (Chizzola to Simoni, Brescia, 16 May 1729).

83. VeAS, SU, b. 124, fasc. Maria Pellizzari, n.p. (interrogation of Pellizzari, 17 September 1686).

84. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Pellizzari, 10 September 1686).

85. *Ibid.*, n.p. (letter of denunciation by Girolamo Filomena, 27 June 1686).

86. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Filomena, 27 June 1686).

87. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Pietro di Antonio Visentin, 4 July 1686).

88. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Caterina Loisi, 27 June 1686; Caterina, widow of Alvise the hunchback, 27 August 1686; Giacomina Veniali, widow of Angelo Lanfranchi, 3 September 1686).

89. Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 22, 24, 27–29, 43–45, 55, 61, 63–66, 67–69, 73.

90. *Ibid.*, 22–23, 30, 55–56, 61–63, 71–72.

91. *Ibid.*, 33, 60. On Santa Teresa, see *DBI*, s.v. “Ferrazzi, Maria,” by Anne Jacobson Schutte.

92. An exception is suor Giovanni Maria Bonomo's testimony about Ferrazzi's visits to her convent of San Girolamo in Bassano. VeAS, SU, b. 112, fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 10r–12v (interrogation of Bonomo, Bassano, 14 May 1664). According to Chiara Bacchis, Bonomo said of Ferrazzi, “Oh, the poor thing! I think she has been tricked by the devil, and the Jesuit fathers tricked me by leading me to believe that she is a saint.” *Ibid.*, 1v (interrogation of Chiara Bacchis, 7 May 1664).

93. *Ibid.*, defense phase, n.p. (interrogations of Bernardo Bertani and Michele Benaglia, 19 February 1665; Bartolomeo Gastaldi, 10 March 1665; Francesco Bonci, 24 March 1665).

94. *Ibid.*, 4v (interrogation of Chiara Garzoni, 8 May 1664).

95. *Ibid.*, 89v, 163v–164r (interrogations of Alba Albini and Ferrazzi, 16 July and 8 September 1664).

96. *Ibid.*, 15v, 22v, n.p. (interrogations of Caterina Radi and Fiorina Forni, 18, 23, and 30 June 1664). As the Holy Office requested, Forni turned in a copy of the lyrics. *Ibid.*, n.p. (lyrics dated and signed by Forni, 4 July 1664).

97. VaAS, Nunziatura di Venezia, b. 101, 320v, 327r, 354v (*avvisi* dated 21 June and 5 July 1664).

98. Jean Gailhard, *The Present State of the Republic of Venice, as to the Government, Laws, Forces, Riches, Manners, Customs, Revenue, and Territory of that Commonwealth, with a Relation of the Present War in Candia* (London: for John Starkey, 1669), 169–71 (italics in the original). On Gailhard, see Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 17 n.

99. On the confraternity, see Chapter 9.

100. VeAS, SU, b. 110, fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (interrogations of Giovanni Domenico Colombo and Giacomo Palazzi, 8 May 1662; Apollonia Bonfantelli and Caterina Ferosi, 13 May 1662; Giovanni Palazzi, Caterina Zambonelli, and Margherita Castellani, 22 May 1662; Andrea Algherati, 24 May 1662; Giovanni Bonfantelli and Maria Rotigni, 29 May 1662; Lucrezia Caponi, Caterina Janis, and Giovanni Battista Janis, 30 May 1662; and Serafino Serafini, 1 June 1662).

101. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Agostino Vitali to Giulio Renieri, inquisitor of Mantua, Botta, 2 May 1662; Renieri to Vincenzo Maria Rivale, inquisitor of Bergamo, Mantua, 4, 8, and 9 May 1662; interrogations of Agostino and Taddeo Vitali, 11 May 1662; Agostino Vitali's servants Antonia Gervasoni and Andrea Algherati, 18 and 24 May 1662).

102. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Iseppo Rizzo, 24 January and 2 March 1662). *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Caterina and Antonia Bellini, 26 January 1662; interrogations of Antonia, Meneghina, and Caterina Bellini, 7 March 1662). *Ibid.*, n.p. (statement by Andrea Vescovi, 27 January 1662). *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Antonio Peverada, 20 April and 6 June 1662; Giovanni Domenico Calvi, 2 May and 6 June 1662; Jacopo Panighetti, 4 May 1662; and Jacopo Giovanni Palazzi, 11 May 1662).

103. VeAS, SU, b. 144, fasc. Andrea Scolari, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Maria Leonesio, archpriest of Tremosine, Brescia, 12 March 1750). Only two sections of the trial record, the materials forwarded from Udine and a collection of defense documents labeled B, are paginated.

104. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations in Vicenza of the Oratorian priests Marco Antonio Billi, 21 March 1750; Pietro Pittarini, 23 March 1750); defense file marked B, 60 (attestation of Pittarini, 3 November 1747).

105. *Ibid.*, n.p. (e.g., denunciation by Pietro Paolo di Santa Teresa, 12 and 14 December 1747; interrogations of Elisabetta Minio, 15 December 1747, and Zanetta Volpato, 19 December 1747).

106. *Ibid.*, e.g., materials forwarded from Udine, 16v, exhibits M–N (interrogation by Baratti of suor Maria Margarita Ronconi, superior of Santa Maria della Visitazione, 23 April 1748; suor Maria Gertruda, superior of the Capuchin convent in Castions, to Ronconi, Castions, 16 October 1747 and 16 January 1748); n.p. (interrogations of suor Maria Felice [al secolo Bernardina] Minio, San Vito, 1 April 1750; Giovanni Maria Pinozza, hermit in Monte Froppa, Udine, 18 June 1750; Giacomo Giorgi, Brescia, 14 March 1750).

107. *Ibid.*, e.g., materials forwarded from Udine, 1r–2v (denunciation by Leonardo Maria Cantarutti, O.P., 18 April 1748; interrogation of Ronconi, 20 April 1748); n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Talamini, curate of Perarolo di Cadore, Udine, 16 July 1748); defense documents labeled B, 51–59, 131–35 (affidavit of Valentin Zulian, Venice, around 30 December 1749; Giacomo Maria Erizzo to Scolari, Portogruaro, 27 September 1747; Erizzo to Ronconi, Portogruaro, 29 October 1747; Erizzo to Ottavio Manzoni, Portogruaro, 23 October 1747).

108. *Ibid.*, n.p. (report of arrest, 20 February 1748; interrogation of Leonesio, Brescia, 12 March 1650)

109. The convent had been established thirty-nine years earlier. *Ibid.*, defense documents labeled B, 136–39 (Ronconi to an unnamed correspondent, undoubtedly Talamini, San Vito, 20 July 1747). It housed at least eighteen professed nuns, two novices,

and two servants, who testified in the trial, as well as some *educande*. The nuns ranged in age from twenty-two to fifty-eight; most were natives of San Vito and other towns in the Friuli.

110. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Talamini, Udine, 16 July 1748; Talamini to Ronconi, Perarolo, 20 March, 2 April, and 13 August 1747).

111. See especially *ibid.*, 2v (interrogation by Baratti of Ronconi, 20 April 1748). The superior reported that the loud tone of voice required to accommodate his deafness made it easy for her to hear what was said by both parties in confession.

112. See, e. g., Gabriella Zarri, *Il carteggio tra don Leone Bartolini e un gruppo di gentildonne bolognesi negli anni del Concilio di Trento (1545–1563)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1986).

113. Fasc. Andrea Scolari, n.p.

114. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation by Cantarutti of suor Giovanna Francesca Pasquolini, Lent 1748; undated copy of her vow; interrogation by Baratti of Pasquolini, 20 April 1748). The long series of daily religious practices prescribed in the vow included thirty-three kissings of the ground and three licking crosses on it.

115. *Ibid.*, n.p., 7v (interrogation by Cantarutti of suor Maria Vittoria Bottoglia, Lent 1748; interrogation by Baratti of Bottoglia, 20 April 1748).

116. *Ibid.*, n.p., 15r–v (Scolari to Maria Emanuela Antonini, n.d; interrogation by Baratti of Antonini, 22 April 1748).

117. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Scolari to Maria Costanza Ortes, 19 July 1747). One nun, who had burned all his letters, objected to his overly affectionate terms of address. *Ibid.*, 5v (interrogation by Baratti of suor Maria Gioseffa Riola, 20 April 1748). The next day she made it clear that this and other behaviors, motivated by his fervor, seemed perfectly innocent. *Ibid.*, 6v (interrogation by Baratti of Riola, 21 April 1748). Another evaluated his hand kissing in the same way. *Ibid.*, 7r (interrogation by Baratti of suor Maria Rosa Innocenti, 21 April 1748).

118. *Ibid.*, 12v (interrogation by Baratti of Ortes, 22 April 1748).

119. *Ibid.*, 3v, 13v–14r (interrogations by Baratti of Riola, 20 April 1748; Maria Elena Eletta Novelli and Teresa Domini, 22 April 1748).

120. *Ibid.*, n.p., 2v, 12v (interrogation by Cantarutti of Ortes, Lent 1748; interrogations by Baratti of Ronconi, 20 April 1748, and Ortes, 22 April 1748).

121. When questioned by Baratti, several nuns prudently stated that only God and the competent authorities could judge Scolari. *Ibid.*, 2r–3r, 8r, 10r, 11r, 13r, 13v, 15v (interrogations of Ronconi and Grazia Rosalia Sala, 20 April 1748; Anna Ludovica Zanon, Maria Elisabetta Franceschini, Maria Elena Francesca Zuliani, Domini, and Antonini, 22 April 1748).

122. *Ibid.*, defense documents labeled B, 136–39 (Ronconi to an unnamed correspondent, undoubtedly Talamini, San Vito, 20 July 1747).

123. The exception was Giovanna Francesca Pasquolini, who had taken the vow of obedience to Scolari under duress and could hardly wait for him to leave. *Ibid.*, 5r (interrogation of Pasquolini, 20 April 1748).

124. E.g., *ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation by Cantarutti of suor Marianna Colombo, Lent 1748).

125. *Ibid.*, n.p., 6r (interrogation by Cantarutti of suor Maria Eleonora Vezzi, Lent 1748; interrogation by Baratti of Vezzi, 20 April 1748).

126. VeAS, SU, b. 90, fasc. Pietro Vespa, first part, 1r–4r (Vespa to the Holy Office, 1 September 1633).

127. *Ibid.*, first part, 1r.

128. *Ibid.*

129. The charge was made shortly after the trial began. *Ibid.*, second part, 1r (denunciation by Pietro Martire Cattaneo da Casola, O.P., 6 September 1633). Witnesses to the alleged events in Brendola were heard some months later. *Ibid.*, 10v–11r, 14v–15r, 19r–20r, 30r–31v (interrogations in Vicenza of Pietro Maria Ferrari, secretary to Bishop Stella, 10 December 1633; Bishop Luca Stella and Giovanni Patrizio Gattoni, O.C., 13 December 1633; Nicolò Randonio, 10 January 1634); 28r–29v (interrogations in Verona of Angelo da Monteforte, O.C., and Giovanni da Monteforte, O.C., 2 January 1634).

130. *Ibid.*, 20v–11r (interrogation of Ferrari, Vicenza, 10 December 1633).

131. *Ibid.*, 14v–15v (interrogation of Stella, Vicenza, 13 December 1633).

132. *Ibid.*, 19v–20r (interrogation of Gattoni, Vicenza, 13 December 1633).

133. *Ibid.*, 28r–29v (interrogations of Angelo da Monteforte and Giovanni da Monteforte, Verona, 2 January 1634).

134. *Ibid.*, 30r–v (interrogation of Randonio, Vicenza, 10 January 1634).

135. *Ibid.*, first part, 58v–59r (interrogation of Vespa, 20 February 1634). “It must have been a well-paid witness who uttered such a bold falsehood,” Vespa observed.

136. *Ibid.*, 57v–61r.

137. *Ibid.*, 60r, 61r.

138. See Chapter 9.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: GENDER AND SEX

1. Jean-Michel Sallmann, “Esiste una falsa santità maschile?” in Zarri, *Finzione e santità*, 119–28 (covering only the prosecution of males). See also idem, “La sainteté mystique féminine à Naples au tournant des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles,” in Boesch Gajano and Sebastiani, *Culto dei santi*, 681–702. In a subsequent monograph Sallmann treats all eight cases and develops further his hypothesis about “female” and “male” types of holiness. Idem, *Naples et ses saints à l’âge baroque (1540–1750)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), 177–232.

2. Since proceedings in the cases of Narcisa, Balbi and Zavana, and Vespa did not reach a conclusion, none of them was sentenced. The lack of formal proceedings against and a sentence for Bon Erizzo may be due to the fact that not long before she signed a printed abjuration form on 18 June 1694, she had become a *conversa* in the Benedictine convent of Santa Maria dell’Umiltà. VeAS, SU, fasc. Giacomo Ladicoso., n.p. (written attestation by Giovanni Battista Della Vedova, priest at Santa Fosca, that with permission from Patriarch Morosini and Cardinal Barbarigo he had exorcised her several times around 1673 and had later confirmed the vow of chastity required for her becoming a nun, 29 April 1694). The person named in this document, Marina, should almost certainly be Maria. In 1673, when the exorcisms were performed, Marietta was about twenty-one, her sister Marina some sixteen years younger; in 1694 Marina, with a living husband, could not have become a nun.

3. As should be clear by now, I do not subscribe to the essentialist conclusions

drawn by many readers from Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

4. See Chapter 1.

5. VeAS, SU, b. 72, n.p. (interrogation of madonna Paola, 13 September 1618).

6. Among canonized female saints in the medieval and early modern periods, an early decision in favor of maintaining virginity in order to pursue the religious life is almost universal. Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000–1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

7. Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 41, 36–37, 32, 72–73.

8. See below.

9. On Ladicosa's teaching Bon Erizzo to write, see Chapter 10. As mentioned earlier, Zavana wrote letters, but the fragmentary trial record does not contain her signature or mark. Another case of pretense of holiness in which a priest taught a woman to write is discussed by Luisa Ciammitti, "Una santa di meno: Storia di Angela Mellini, cucitrice bolognese (1667–17 . . .)," *Quaderni storici* 41 (May–August 1979): 603–39, and Armando Petrucci, "Nota sulla scrittura di Angela Mellini," *Quaderni storici* 41 (May–August 1979): 640–43.

10. On her mother's reading, see Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 10–12. One witness described her going into ecstasy while he was reading *L'umanità di Christo* by "Partenio Etiro" (an anagram of Pietro Aretino). Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, defense phase, n.p. (interrogation of Francesco Querini, son-in-law of Marietta Cappello, 7 May 1665). The British Library holds three editions (1628, 1633, 1645) of Aretino's *Dell'umanità del figliuolo di Dio libri tre* issued by the Venetian printer Marco Gianammi under that pseudonym because the book was on the Index. *Catalogue of Seventeenth Century Italian Books in the British Library*, ed. Dennis Rhodes, 3 vols. (London: British Library, 1986), s.v. Pietro Aretino. Two other witnesses mentioned girls reading the lives of Saints Gertrude and Teresa, which prompted some of the girls in the first instance and Ferrazzi in the second to go into ecstasy. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 14v, 107v (interrogations of Caterina Radi and Maria Griffoni, 18 June and 1 August 1664).

11. *Ibid.*, 87r, 132v, 139r–v, 156v (interrogations of Alba Albini, Apollonia Marcella, Ferrazzi, and Lucrezia Polaio, 16 July; 19, 21, and 31 August 1664); defense phase, n.p. (interrogations of Silvia Ogniben, Lucrezia Spinelli, and Meneghina Benetti, 29 January, 17 March, and 21 April 1665). The priest Andreis said that he had mandated these readings. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Andreis, 27 January 1665). The book must have been Cesare Franciotti, *Delle pratiche di meditationi avanti e dopo la S. Communionem . . . Che sono come aggiuntioni alle pratiche sopra li Evangelii di tutto l'anno* (Naples, 1600; several subsequent editions). On the Lucchese priest Franciotti (1557–1627), see *DBI*, s.v. "Franciotti, Cesare," by Elena Del Gallo. The reader may have been Giulia (no surname), daughter of Francesco da Zara, who died on 4 May 1658. VeAS, PS, b. 879; VeGL, SS. Geremia e Lucia, Morti 36. Francesca Franzoni, who was alive at the time of the trial, was not called to testify.

12. VeAS, SU, b. 87, fasc. Alvisè Balbi and Marietta Zavana, n.p. ("Compendio di miracoli"). VeAS, SU, b. 110, fasc. Pietro Morali and Maria Janis, n.p. (interrogations of Giovanni Domenico Palazzi and Caterina Zambonelli, wife of Giovanni Palazzi, 8 and 22 May 1662). Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 45, 56–57, 65–66, 67, 73. VeAS, SU, b. 124, fasc.

Maria Pellizzari, n.p. (interrogation of the priest Lodovico Seroggetti, 18 July 1686; Gabriel Squari, former vicar of the inquisitor of Vicenza, to Oliviero Tieghi, inquisitor of Padua, Bassano, 10 April 1686).

13. See below.

14. See above.

15. See Chapter 10.

16. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Sebastian Padavin, secretary of the *Provveditori sopra Monasteri*, to the *Capi del Concilio dei Dieci*, n.d. but September 1661).

17. *Ibid.*, 111r (interrogation of suor Domenica, *al secolo* Chiara Polis, convent of Santa Caterina, 28 July 1664).

18. VeAS, NT, b. 1267 (Agostino Zon), no. 39, testament of Andriana Mocenigo Foscarini (29 September 1662); *ibid.*, b. 65 bis (Andrea Bronzini), no. 229, testament of Lucrezia Trevisan Vendramin (21 August 1659); *ibid.*, b. 1139 (Angelo Alessandri), n. 176, testament of Vendramin (25 October 1662). As mentioned earlier, Ferrazzi was also named as a beneficiary in the will of one of her confessors, Alvisè Zonati.

19. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, n.p. (interrogations of Marietta Morosini Cappello, Veniera Venier Zorzi, Franceschina Surian Zorzi, and Bianca Nani Duodo, 23 March 1665). This was Cappello's second appearance on the stand; she had been summoned by the prosecution on 25 August 1664. *Ibid.*, 143r–146r.

20. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 55.

21. *Ibid.*, 67–68.

22. *Ibid.*, 67.

23. *Ibid.*, 48, 58. The chronology of Ferrazzi's successive establishments is drawn from the parish registers of VeZ, VeMGF, VeGL, and VePC, which record the deaths of her charges.

24. *Ibid.*, 67.

25. Her house in Cannaregio was located not far from the church and convent of San Girolamo, across the Rio del Battello in Corte dei Vitelli. VeGL, Morti 35, 19 and 21 June 1657 (deaths of Maria della Mosta and Erizza Spinelli).

26. On the palazzo at Sant'Antonio, see Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 87–88; bibliography in Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiografia di una santa mancata*, ed. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1990), 24 n. 26.

27. Two witnesses not unfriendly to the defendant suggested that she lacked the intelligence and managerial capacity to run such a large operation. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 104v, 106r (interrogations of Vincenzo Maria Capece and Giovanni Andreis, 24 July 1664). Apparently she sought help. At some point, probably around 1660 or 1661, she went to the Zitelle in Padua seeking information about how it was managed. *Ibid.*, 44r (interrogation of fra Francesco Gusella, former confessor at the Zitelle, Padua, 25 June 1664). According to suor Giovanna Maria Bonomo, Ferrazzi had asked two or three years earlier that she leave her convent of San Girolamo in Bassano and come to Venice to govern the “girls.” *Ibid.*, 12v (interrogation of Bonomo, Bassano, 14 May 1664).

28. VeAS, *Provveditori sopra Monasteri*, b. 272, fourth unnumbered fasc., 3r (unsigned letter, 20 June 1661). It is possible that Isabetta Bertelli, who had died in the house, was Marina's sister and Alban's niece. VePC, Morti, mazzo 3, b. 8 (28 July 1659).

Chiara Bacchis, who denounced Ferrazzi to the Inquisition, had tried and failed to regain custody of her daughters and niece. See Chapter 1.

29. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, n.p. (Sebastian Padavin, secretary of the Provveditori, to the Capi, 12 September 1661); original in VeAS, Consiglio de' Dieci, Parti comuni, filza 620, *sub data*.

30. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, n.p. (deliberation of Consiglio dei Dieci, 19 September 1661); original in VeAS, Consiglio de' Dieci, Parti comuni, reg. 158 (1661), 274r–v, and in Parti comuni, filza 620, *sub data*. On the removals, see fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, n.p. (report covering removals between 16 July and 9 September 1661).

31. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Provveditori sopra Monasteri to the [Capi del?] Consiglio dei Dieci, 13 September 1663).

32. *Ibid.*, n.p. (19 leaves). Alvise Zane, Ferrazzi's attorney, presented this document to the tribunal on 20 August 1665. *Ibid.*, n.p. On conditions in Ferrazzi's houses, see Anne Jacobson Schutte, "La storia al femminile nelle fonti inquisitoriali veneziane: Una fattucchiera, una finta santa e numerose putte pericolanti," in *L'Inquisizione romana: Metodologia delle fonti e storia istituzionale*, ed. Andrea Del Col, Gian Paolo Gri, and Giovanna Paolin (Trieste: Edizioni dell'Università di Trieste, and Montebelluna Valcellina, Centro Studi Storici Menocchio, forthcoming).

33. On the Zitelle, see Monica Elena Chojnacka, "Women, Charity, and Community in Early Modern Venice: The Casa delle Zitelle," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51 (1998): 68–91. Chojnacka (83 ff.) calls the Zitelle a "female community." True, only women lived there; but on the administrative flow chart male "governors" stood above female "governesses." *Ibid.*, 73–74.

34. See, e.g., fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 10r (interrogation of Lucietta Brighenti, 18 June 1664); n.p. (letter of Lucietta Brighenti, 29 May 1664); 21r–v (interrogation of Fiorina Forni, 23 June 1664); 31r (interrogation of Lucrezia Volta, 30 June 1664); 109v (interrogation of Maria Griffoni (1 August 1664), 111r (interrogation of suor Domenica, *al secolo* Chiara Poli, 28 July 1664), 121r (interrogation of Lucietta Mattolina (Padua, 27 July 1664), 135r–136r (interrogation of Lucietta, widow of Domenico da Lameldo (19 August 1664), 143r (interrogation of Angela Terzi, 22 August 1664), 155r–v (interrogation of Beatrice Bonomo (Vicenza, 24 August 1664), 156v–157r (interrogation of Lucrezia Polaio, 31 August 1664); defense phase, n.p. (interrogation of Angela Terzi, 9 July 1665).

35. *Ibid.*, 5v (interrogation of Chiara Garzoni, 8 May 1664); 13r (interrogation of Margarita Bacchis, 5 June 1664); 15v (interrogation of Caterina Radi, 18 June 1664); 33r, 34r (interrogation of Faustina Antonelli, 1 July 1664); 127v (interrogation of fra Basilio Pico, 14 August 1664). When fra Basilio reprimanded her for breaking the Third Commandment, Ferrazzi retorted, "What do you want? That these girls go make love?" On the goods they produced, most of them intended for use in churches, see *ibid.*, 34r–v, 100v (interrogations of Faustina Antonelli and Ferrazzi, 1 and 23 July 1664); 118v (interrogation of Antonia Donadoni, Padua, 8 July 1664); defense phase, n.p. (interrogations of the merchants Andrea Zois and Bartolomeo Ansuino, 5 March and 14 April 1665).

36. *Ibid.*, defense phase, n.p. (interrogation of Angela Terzi, 9 July 1665). Three physicians who regularly visited the girls contested the allegations of poor medical care. *Ibid.* (interrogations of Pietro Caffi and Pietro Caimo, 22 January 1665; interro-

gation of Nicolò Alberici, 27 January 1665). On Ferrazzi's charges, see Schutte, "La storia al femminile nelle fonti inquisitoriali veneziane." By the end of June 1664 the establishment at Sant'Antonio di Castello and the branch house in Padua had been shut down. VeAS, Senato Terra, reg. 168 (March–August 1664), 384v–3385r (report on the actions of the Provveditori sopra Monasteri, 30 June 1664); VeAS, SU, b. 110, fasc. Giovanni Battista da Este and Cherubino da Venezia, n.p. (Giovanni Angeli, inquisitor of Padua, to Ugoni, Padua, 5 June 1664).

37. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 1r (Chiara Bacchis's letter of denunciation, n.d. but shortly before 7 May 1664). In 1606 the Venetian Inquisition had tried two cases in which women were accused of hearing confessions. VeAS, SU, b. 70 (fasc. Felicità greca, Dimesse di Murano). See Giovanna Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio: Monacazioni forzate, clausura e proposte di vita religiosa femminile nell'età moderna* (Pordenone: Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 1996), 95–101.

38. Because the question of confession arises on virtually every page of the trial record, there is no need to provide specific citations. On "chapters of faults" in convents, see *DIP*; s.v. "Capitolo delle colpe," by Gabriel Ghislain.

39. On obedience, see Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 13–14.

40. On role reversal in confessor–penitent relationships, see Chapter 7, n. 58.

41. See below.

42. I know of no inquisitors charged with sexual improprieties. John Tedeschi (personal communication) has suggested that the many manuscript compilations of sentences against "Quietists" served not only to inform inquisitors about prosecutions on these grounds but also to titillate them and other readers, including lay libertines.

43. Diego de Simancas, *De catholicis institutionibus ad praecaudendas et extirpandas haereses admodum necessarius*, 3rd ed. (Rome: in aedibus Populi Romani, 1575), 228; quoted by John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 144 and 186 n. 116.

44. Cases of bigamy, among the heresies prosecutable by the Roman Inquisition, centered not on sexual relations with two or more partners claimed to be spouses but on abuse of the sacrament of marriage. Iberian inquisitors heard more talk about sex than their Italian counterparts, for they were authorized to prosecute people on the very common charge of having alleged that "simple fornication" (voluntary sexual relations between partners neither of whom was married) was not a sin. Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 265–66.

45. The inquisitor of Treviso specified that Zavana was not to be confused with "that [other] Marietta Coltrera of such a bad reputation in Venice." Fasc. Alvisè Balbi and Marietta Zavana, n.p. (list of questions from the Holy Office of Treviso to be put to witnesses in Venice).

46. *Ibid.*, n.p. ("Compendio di miracoli"). According to suor Benetta Girardi, Zavana also stated that "Signor Alvisè is a seraphim and no longer a man; surely he is a saint, and all his children will be saints," and that "Balbi is no longer Balbi but at one with Christ crucified." *Ibid.*, n.p., undated letter of suor Benetta to an unidentified recipient, probably suor Gabriella; "Compendio di miracoli."

47. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Pomello, pievano of San Fantin, 24

March 1630). As noted earlier (Chapter 10), the other woman was probably Andriana Buranella.

48. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Franco Pellegrini, 5 September 1630).

49. According to Pellegrini, Zavana claimed that the inquisitor of Treviso had given her special permission to stay in Balbi's house that night. *Ibid.* She told other witnesses the same thing. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Francesca Oddi, 5 September 1630; Menega Furlanis, 10 September 1630).

50. *Ibid.*, n.p. (list of questions sent from the Holy Office of Treviso to be put to witnesses in Venice).

51. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Pietro Palazzi, 9 February 1662; Giovanni Domenico Calvi, 2 May 1662; Giacomo Panighetti, 4 May 1662; and Antonia Gervasoni, 18 May 1662).

52. *Ibid.*, n.p. (especially the interrogations of Janis, 20 July 1662, and of Morali, 26 July 1662).

53. See Chapter 9.

54. See Chapter 3.

55. Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum et incantationibus libri sex*, 5th ed. (Basel: Oporinus, 1577), 656–57. The source Weyer cited for this story, which he located in a chapter entitled “On the depraved imagination of melancholiacs,” was Paolo Grillandi, *De sortilegiis*, in *Tractatus diversi super maleficiis*, issued at least five times (Venice: Jacopo Giunti, 1536, 1545, 1547; Venice: Girolamo Giglio, 1560; Frankfurt: M. Lechler for the heirs of Christoph Egenolf, 1592). I was unable to locate this book.

56. VeAS, SU, b. 115, fasc. Francesco Vincenzi and Antonia Pesenti, 4v (interrogation of Giovanni Daviano, 28 June 1668).

57. This was probably Tommaso Villafranca, mentioned below.

58. *Ibid.*, 39v–41v (interrogation of Pesenti, 6 September 1668). In his denunciation of 19 June 1668, the canon Giovanni Daviano stated that she had moved into the pievano's house a few days earlier. *Ibid.*, 1r.

59. *Ibid.*, 34r (Brugnoli's report on his visit to Pesenti, 29 August 1668); 36v–37r, 38v (interrogation of Brugnoli, 4 September 1668).

60. *Ibid.*, 43v (interrogation of Pesenti, 11 September 1668).

61. *Ibid.*, 44r (interrogation of Pesenti, 13 September 1668).

62. *Ibid.*, 40r (interrogation of Pesenti, 6 September 1668); 42r, 43v (interrogation of Pesenti, 11 September 1668); 44r–45r (interrogation of Pesenti, 13 September 1668).

63. *Ibid.*, 38v (interrogation of Brugnoli, 4 September 1668).

64. *Ibid.*, 58v (interrogation of Vincenzi, 20 November 1668).

65. *Ibid.*, 58r (Vincenzi's memorandum of July 1668); 61v–62r (interrogation of Vincenzi, 29 November 1668).

66. *Ibid.*, 46r (interrogation of Pesenti, 13 September 1668).

67. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 40 (autobiographical deposition, 9 July 1664). The inquisitor challenged this statement on the grounds that she had continued to associate with her brothers and had let physicians and a priest see parts of her naked body. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 147v–148r (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 26 August 1664).

68. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, Processo della causa di Lucrezia Gambarà d'Alfianello, [Agostino Randini, O.S.B.], “Visioni e stimmate di Lucrezia Gambarà da Alfianello diocesi di Brescia,” 58 (Randini to Ippolito Chizzola, 14 February 1729).

69. Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 41–42.

70. *Ibid.*, 50.

71. BsBCQ, MS *L.II.13, 59–63 (Agostino Randini to Ippolito Chizzola, 14 February 1729).

72. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, n.p., 7v (interrogation of Camilla Bonardi, 13 May 1664); 9v (interrogation of Margherita Bacchis, 5 June 1664); 16v (interrogation of Lucietta Brighenti, 18 June 1664); n.p., 30v, 31v (interrogations of Fiorina Forni, Lucrezia Volta, and Chiara Garzoni, 30 June 1664); 37r–v (interrogation of Nadalina Frieli, 3 July 1664); 50r (interrogation of Sara Palmarin, Padua, 22 June 1664); 88r–v (interrogation of Alba Albini, 15 July 1664); 104r (interrogation of Giovanni Zogalli (30 July 1664); 107v, 109r (interrogation of Maria Griffoni (1 August 1664); 110v–113v (interrogation of suor Domenica of Santa Caterina, *al secolo* Chiara Poli, 28 July 1664); 130v–132r (interrogation of Elisabetta Bonardi, convent of Santa Teresa, Conegliano, 4 August 1664); 136v–137v (interrogation of Lucietta, widow of Domenico da Lomello, 14 August 1664). Someone—probably Chiara Bacchis, the prime mover against Ferrazzi—added to the written denunciation of Chiara Garzoni the word “sodomite,” the meaning of which Garzoni claimed not to know. *Ibid.*, 3v (interrogation of Garzoni, 8 May 1664). This insinuation was never pursued by the inquisitor or mentioned by witnesses.

73. *Ibid.*, 30v–31r (interrogation of Lucrezia Volta, 30 June 1664).

74. On Ferlini’s molesting some of the “girls,” see *ibid.*, 112v–113 (interrogation of Maria Griffoni, 1 August 1664); 130–131v (interrogation of Elisabetta Bonardi, convent of Santa Teresa, Conegliano, 4 August 1664). On rumors about the child, see Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 28 (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 23 June 1664); fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 161r, 163v (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 8 September 1664). The son of her first sponsor had heard in Rome that Ferrazzi and Ferlini were married. *Ibid.*, defense phase, n.p. (interrogation of Pietro Lion, Padua, 6 March 1665).

75. Quoted from Ferrazzi, *Autobiography*, 28.

76. Fasc. Cecilia Ferrazzi, 165r (interrogation of Ferrazzi, 11 September 1664).

77. *Ibid.*, defense phase, n.p. (interrogations of Francesco Vendramin, 7 May 1665; and Paolo Lion, 28 May 1665).

78. For a discussion of these treatises, see Massimo Petrocchi, *Il quietismo italiano del Seicento* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1948), and *DS*, s.v. “Quietisme: Italie et Espagne,” by Eulogio Pacho.

79. Romeo De Maio, “Il problema del quietismo napoletano,” *Rivista storica italiana* 81 (1969): 723–24 n. 7.

80. *Ibid.*, 721. As Gianvittorio Signorotto has observed, the notion of “pre-Quietism” is the product of a retrograde tendency to divide religious ideas into “orthodox” and “non-orthodox” categories: *Inquisitori e mistici nel Seicento italiano: L’eresia di Santa Pelagia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989), 18–20.

81. VeAS, SU, b. 127, fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 25r (interrogation of Ladicosa, 9 April 1693). On a similar case, see Leopoldo D’Erasmì, “Donne e confessori tra autorità civile ed autorità ecclesiastica nelle temperie del quietismo da un processo padovano di fine Seicento” (tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Padova, Facoltà di scienze politiche, a.a. 1995–96, relatore Liliana Billanovich). I thank Liliana Billanovich for allowing me to read this thesis.

82. Fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 12v (interrogation of Marina Bon Schiavo, 27 February 1693).

83. *Ibid.*, 26r, 27r, 54r (interrogations of Bon Erizzo and Ladicosa, 14 and 21 April 1693; interrogation of Bon Erizzo, 17 November 1693).

84. *Ibid.*, 40v, 44v (interrogation of Ladicosa, 25 August 1693). The book referred to is *Vita et opere spirituali del beato Enrico Susone*, trans. Ignazio Del Nente (1st ed., Florence, 1642; at least ten more editions by 1721). Giovanni Della Croce, *Enrico Suso: La sua vita, la sua fortuna in Italia* (Milan: Ancora, 1971), 119 n. Della Croce (121–22) characterizes the translator's intentions as "anti-Quietist."

85. Fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 9v (report on the search of Ladicosa's cell at San Francesco di Paola, 18 February 1693); the book is described as containing a great deal about "the so-called prayer of quiet." On Biondini, see Chapter 10, n. 28.

86. *Ibid.*, 24r (interrogation of Ladicosa, 9 April 1693). The book referred to is Louis-François d'Argentan (1616–80), *Esercittii del christiano interiore ne' quali s'insegnano le pratiche per confermare il nostro interiore a quello di Giesù Christo, per vivere della sua vita* (Venice: Giuseppe Prosdocimo, 1681).

87. Fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 42r (interrogation of Ladicosa, 25 August 1693). These books are undoubtedly Fabio Ambrogio Spinola (1593–1671), *Compendio delle meditazioni sopra la vita de Giesù Signor Nostro per ciascun giorno dell'anno* (Venice: Zaccaria Conzati, 1689), and Tomás de Villacastín (1590–1649), *Manuale d'esercittii spirituali per fare l'oration mentale*, trans. Giacomo Grassetti (Messina: heirs of Brea for Placido Pizamente, 1637; Rome: Angelo Bernabò del Verme, 1657).

88. Fasc. Giacomo Ladicosa, 60v (interrogation of Ladicosa, 14 January 1694).

89. Condemned to life imprisonment, he died in jail in 1716. *DBI*, s.v. "Beccarelli, Giuseppe".

90. VeAS, SU, b. 144, fasc. Andrea Scolari, records of examinations conducted by Carlo Ippolito Bavatti, inquisitor of Udine, in the convent of the Visitation, San Vito al Tagliamento, 3v, 13r (interrogations of suore Maria Gioseffa Riola and Maria Margarita Ronconi, 20 and 22 April 1748).

91. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogation of Elisabetta Minio, Venice, 15 December 1747).

92. *Ibid.*, n.p. (interrogations of Zanetta Volpato and Francesca Beati, 19 December 1747).

93. See Chapter 10.

94. *Ibid.*, n.p. (Scolari to Emanuela Antonini, n.d.). See also the vow of obedience written by suor Giovanna Francesca Pasquilini, in which she promised to confess in the mode he had taught her, "endeavoring to keep myself quiet." *Ibid.*, n.p.

95. *Ibid.*, interrogations conducted in Udine, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni De Luca, 13 February 1750).

96. *Ibid.*, examinations conducted by Francesco Antonio Benoffi, inquisitor of Aquileia and Concordia, n.p. (interrogation of Giovanni Talamini, 28 June 1750). This case of conscience apparently concerned Elisabetta Minio and her confessor, the Observant Dominican Zenone Castagno. *Ibid.*, collection of notarized affidavits submitted by the defense, 58 (statement by Leonardo Maria Cantarutti, O.P.).

97. *Ibid.*, examinations conducted by Giacinto Maria Marini, inquisitor of Brescia, n.p. (interrogations of Giovanni Maria Leonieso and Giacomo Giorgi, 12 March 1750; Domenico Ghiselli, 14 March 1750).

98. *Ibid.*, n.p., examinations conducted by Francesco Antonio Benoffi, inquisitor of Aquileia and Concordia (interrogation of Giovanni Maria Pinozza, 28 June 1750). “Ludovico da Ponte” was Luis de la Puente, S.J. (1554–1624), three of whose books in Italian translation are listed in Sommervogel, 6:1271–95. “Rodrigues” was Alfonso Rodriguez, S.J. (1537–1616), not to be confused with the Jesuit saint of the same name (1571–1617); the book was probably *Essercitio di perfettione e di virtù christiane*, trans. Tiberio Putignano (Rome: Bartolomeo Zanetti, 1617; several later editions). Sommervogel, 6:1958–59.

99. Fasc. Andrea Scolari, n.p., presentation by the defense (in Scolari’s hand), n.d.

100. *Ibid.*, n.p., examinations conducted by Giacinto Maria Marini, inquisitor of Brescia (interrogation of Benedetta Agosti, 9 March 1750).

101. *Ibid.*, n.p., examinations conducted by Giacinto Maria Marini, inquisitor of Brescia (interrogation of Domenico Ghiselli, 14 March 1750).

102. *Ibid.*, n.p., sentence (17 September 1750).

103. As indicated in Chapter 1, however, he was eventually rehabilitated sufficiently to fulfill an important assignment in the episcopal curia of Brescia.

CHAPTER TWELVE: PRETENSE?

1. J. H. Hexter, “Garrett Mattingly, Historian,” chap. in *Doing History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 167–72.

2. William C. Christian Jr., “The Delimitations of Sacred Space and the Visions of Ezquioga, 1931–1987,” in Boesch Gajano and Scaraffia, *Luoghi sacri*, 99.

3. See Carlo Ginzburg, “The Inquisitor as Anthropologist,” in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 156–64. On the legitimacy of pursuing “possibilities,” see *idem*, “Prove e possibilità,” afterword to Natalie Zemon Davis, *Il ritorno di Martin Guerre: Un caso di doppia identità nella Francia del Cinquecento* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1984), 131–54, and Natalie Zemon Davis, “On the Lame,” *American Historical Review* 93 (1988): 572–603.

4. Ottavia Niccoli, “Esorcismi ed esorcisti tra Cinque e Seicento,” *Società e storia* 9 (1986): 409–18.

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