

From Iberian Innovation to Sardinian Appropriation: Breaking down Giovanni Delogu Ibba's *Index libri vitae*

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ABSTRACT

KATHLEEN CRAWFORD BOYLE: From Iberian Innovation to Sardinian Appropriation:
Breaking down Giovanni Delogu Ibba's *Index Libri Vitae*
(Under the direction of Edward D. Montgomery)

To reach the rich core of the culture of Sardinia, one must sift through the layers of sediment left by the people that have lived their history on Sardinia's soil. The early chapters of the dissertation provide important cultural and historical background information for my analysis. But even in the light of the innumerable outside influences on Sardinia over the years, it would be incorrect to view the island's culture as a chameleon that simply takes on any and all aspects of the currently dominating tribe of people because this assumes that the civilization of the island is completely devoid of its own long standing and very unique traditions.

My dissertation examines one of the primary theatrical genres of Sardinia, the *sacre rappresentazioni*, and traces the origins of this genre through two different religious-based literary traditions of the island, the *letteratura agiografica* and the *gosos*, religious poetic compositions, performed through song and written in praise of the Lord, the Virgin Mary or the saints. One of the primary focuses of this study is to examine what influence the roughly 400-year Spanish presence had on these religious works in Sardinia. I explore the ways in which Iberian culture at times blended into the already established traditions of the island, and at other times imposed itself on these traditions, by introducing something entirely new.

As the primary text for my study, I have Giovanni Delogu Ibba and his 18th century work *Index libri vitae*, as it provides a very characteristic presentation of Sardinia at the time in which he was writing.

Delogu Ibba's *ILV* (1736) is divided by the author into seven books, written in three different languages (Latin, Castilian and Logudorese) and contains multiple genres including hagiographic material in its simplest forms, elaborate *gosos* likely performed on feast days or during processions, and a well-developed passion play focusing on the *isclavamentu*.

Through an analysis of Delogu Ibba's work it is possible to see how these genres, not always of Sardinian origin, are adapted by the author for his own didactic purposes and also indicative of 18th-century Sardinia in which he was writing.

DEDICATION

To my parents and Michele who always help me keep things in perspective and to Boppa to whom I can finally respond “Yes, Boppa, I finished the book report.”

D.D.M.D.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A 2007 installment of Bachisio Bandinu's radio program, "Il filo d'orbace, le maschere e i volti dei sardi," dedicated to "La lingua nella liturgia," began by asking a seemingly simple question, "La liturgia: si può celebrare una santa messa in sardo? Non si può celebrare in sardo?"¹ Invited to discuss this question with the host were two Sardinian scholars, Raimondo Turtas,² Jesuit priest and Professor Emeritus of the Università degli Studi di Sassari (1980 – 2003), where he taught the history of the Church in Sardinia, and Fr. Paolo Monni, known on the island not only for being a man of the Church but also for his translations of important literary and religious texts into Sardinian.³ Bandinu chose to raise this question because of the conclusions of the *Concilio Plenario Sardo II*, which spanned a

¹ Bachisio Bandinu is an anthropologist, a writer and a journalist who has dedicated his career to examining questions related to Sardinian identity. This radio program was broadcast on April 5, 2007 on Radio RAI Sardegna. The recording that I used was found on the website *Sardegna Digital Library*, an indispensable website that calls itself "La memoria digitale della Sardegna" because of its collection of videos, audio files, database of images and an entire library of texts. "La lingua nella liturgia." Narr. Bachisio Bandinu. *I fili d'orbace, le maschere e i volti dei sardi*. Dir. Stefania Martis. Radio RAI Sardegna. 5 April 2007. Radio. < <http://www.sardegna.digitallibrary.it/index.php?xsl=626&s=17&v=9&c=4462&id=86242>>

² Raimondo Turtas is the author of over a hundred publications related to the history of the Sardinian Church, from the origins to modern day. His work often relates to historical events and problems that the Church faced throughout history as a result of these historical changes. His most well-known publication is *Storia della chiesa in Sardegna dalle origini al Duemila*, a nearly 1000-page volume detailing the Church's history.

³ Fr. Paolo Monni is most recognized for his translation of Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* into the Logudorese dialect of Sardinian that was published in 2000 by Della Torre. His later and most recent translation work focused on the translation of important liturgical texts into Sardinian. At the time of his death in 2009, he was working on a translation of the Roman Missal into Sardinian. "La scomparsa di padre Paolo Monni." *La Nuova Sardegna*. 30 Dec. 2009, pg. 4 section: Nuoro. Web. 1 Apr. 2013. < http://ricerca.gelocal.it/lanuovasardegna/archivio/lanuovasardegna/2009/12/30/SN3PO_SN304.html>

thirteen-year period (1987-2000).⁴ The CPS II examined topics such as the need for greater collaboration between the dioceses of the island as well as the need to institute a new type of evangelization that fit the realities of the twenty-first century, all the while keeping in mind “il valore della ‘sardità’, la coscienza di appartenere a un popolo con una propria specificità storica e culturale.”⁵

This allusion to a “specificità storica e culturale” makes perfect sense for Sardinians, whose history has seen a number of invited and uninvited foreign rulers, each one leaving a mark on the culture and oftentimes the language, and questions the role that its language should play in the religious and political spheres. However, Bandinu was reacting to the fact that the Church, and more specifically, the CPSII, dedicated no more than half of a page in their final report, the *atti* of the Council, to the place of the Sardinian language in the liturgy.⁶ In article 100 of the report, the Sardinian bishops describe the languages of the island as “un singolare strumento comunicativo della fede per il nostro popolo” (Turtas, Pregare 224) and proceeds to say that through them, “è stato tramandato per generazioni un grande patrimonio di fede e di sapienza cristiana, incarnate nella cultura e nella quotidianità di vita della gente dell’Isola” (Turtas, Pregare 224).

⁴ A very informative and thorough analysis of the Concilio Plenario Sardo II can be found on the website: www.cresia.info, under the direction of Bachisio Bandinu. It is a website that according to its statute promotes the evangelization and the spirituality of the faith based community in Sardinia, aims to share documents and articles relevant to the current needs of the Church on the island and organizes meetings and conferences all with the goal of keeping the faith alive on the island. This website published a series of twenty articles written by *Cresia* collaborator, Gianfranco Murtas, analyzing the *atti* published at the end of the CPSII. For further information, see “Concilio Plenario Sardo.” Web. 15 Mar. 2013

< http://www.cresia.info/it/pages/rubrica.asp?id_rubrica=6>

⁵ One review I read about the *CPSII* was in an article “Concilio plenario della Sardegna: Un’isola in movimento.” *Jesus*. No. 4 (2000). Web. 15 Mar. 2013. < <http://www.stpauls.it/jesus00/0004je/0004je18.htm>>.

⁶ The viewpoints of the CPSII were summarized by Turtas during the radio program as well as in his book *Pregare in sardo. Scritti su Chiesa e Lingua in Sardegna*. Cagliari: CUEC, 2006. Print. This book is actually a collection of 75 different articles that Turtas wrote for the weekly publication of the Sardinian dioceses beginning in 2002, shortly after the publication of the *atti* of CPSII in 2001.

The CPSII was ostensibly a very different council from the *Concilio plenario sardo I*, which was held in Oristano in 1924, and in which “aveva di fatto scoraggiato, anche se non espressamente vietato, l’uso del sardo nella predicazione; alla lingua isolana vennero poi preclusi ambiti prestigiosi di visibilità, quali l’impiego nella lettura domenicale del vangelo, dopo la presentazione del testo latino, e nell’insegnamento del catechismo” (Turtas, Pregare 24). In the eyes of those bishops at Oristano, only two of whom were actually from the island, it was “risky” to use the local vernacular in any important aspect of the celebration of the Sunday mass or even in catechism.

The First Plenary Council of Sardinia was determined to uphold the common hierarchical divide that existed at that time between the Italian language and Sardinian. As Giovanni Lupinu explains in his introduction to Turtas’ *Pregare in sardo*, “In Sardegna si cementava, anche per effetto dei deliberati ecclesiastici, una situazione di diglossia, con una rigida divisione gerarchica degli ambiti d’uso fra l’italiano, varietà alta selezionata nello scritto e, in generale, nei rapporti formali, e il sardo, codice di scarso prestigio, storicamente marginalizzato, relegato all’impiego orale e ai rapporti informali” (24).

It seemed that the positions held by the Sardinian bishops at the Second Plenary Council were a serious shift away from those expressed at Oristano some sixty years earlier. And yet, in reality, this group of Sardinian bishops did little to change the linguistic hierarchy that existed before on the island. Their final report included statements like “Le tradizionali forme di preghiera, individuali e collettive, composte in sardo hanno in sé, oltre le ricchezze di contenuti spesso eccellenti, anche il fascino evocativo di un patrimonio che ha le sue radici nel nostro tradizionale modo di pensare e di sentire” (Turtas, Pregare 41), but concluded by saying “i tempi non sono maturi” (Turtas, Pregare 238) for the introduction of Sardinian into

the masses. When pressed on the issue, the bishops explain that linguistic variations throughout the island would cause a problem, as it would be difficult to choose between Campidanese, the language of southern Sardinia, and Logudorese, that of northern Sardinia.

During Bandinu's radio program, Fr. Monni was asked to respond to the question of the viability of saying mass in Sardinian. Drawing upon his experience as a translator and his intricate knowledge of Logudorese, Fr. Monni responded that in his humble opinion, he found Sardinian more appropriate than even Italian, because of its ability closeness to the original Latin. In *Pregare in sardo*, when addressing the importance of using Sardinian in religious texts, Fr. Monni stated,

Perdende la limba, perdamus puru su sentimentu prus profundu de sa precadoria? Sos càntigos sardos bortados in italianu perdent sa sustantzia issoro. E a nissunu benit in mente, pro fortuna, de los traslare; ma si sighimus in custu modu, con s'escrusione de sa limba sarda dae s'iscola e dae sa liturgia, amus a finire chi sos pitzinnos de cras non ant a cumprudere prus custos cantigos e custos faveddos. E isa limba sarda at a faghera sa fine de sa limba latina. (120)⁷

He also cited the example of the *gosos*, to which a later chapter of this dissertation will be dedicated, as a prime example of the capabilities of the Sardinian language to express the soul of the island.

It is ironic that the Sardinian bishops' decision not to support a liturgy celebrated in Sardinian flies in the face of history, for the Church had been the one realm in which the language of the island was protected. Hundreds of years before, it would have been impossible for priests to reach an illiterate people in the most isolated parts of the island, had they not adopted the vernacular as a means of communication. This was particularly

⁷ Translation is mine: "Losing the language (i.e. Sardinian), do we not also lose the deepest meaning of the prayer? The songs in Sardinian translated into Italian lose their substance. Luckily, no one thinks to translate them; but if we continue on in this fashion, with the exclusion of the Sardinian language from the schools and from the liturgy, we will end up like the children of the future that will no longer understand these songs and these stories. And the Sardinian language will meet the fate of the Latin language."

All translations of quotations in Latin and Logudorese are mine unless otherwise stated.

important when you think about the problem of illiteracy on the island at many points throughout history.

While the task of going into these small towns in Sardinia in order to preach to the people was generally left to the local clergy, Turtas gave a handful of examples of foreign-born men of the Church that came to the island and took it upon themselves to learn the local language in order to better serve the community. One such example is Pietro Frango, an Aragonese priest that was serving in Ales, in the province of Oristano, beginning in January of 1564. According to Turtas, after realizing that he would soon be traveling around to different areas in the community, Frango began learning the local language and “a poco più di un anno dal suo arrivo (marzo 1565) stava già preparando l’edizione in sardo campidanese dei testi del sinodo che aveva appena terminato” (Turtas, Pregare 79). His ability to express himself and preach to the people in their local language is documented. Yet all were not like Frango and, for every example of a priest like him, there was a clergyman that took no steps to integrate into his new community. For example, the Portuguese bishop Pietro Clement was assigned to Ales for a number of years without succeeding to learn the language. Clement, “ignorando la parlata locale, non poteva comunicare direttamente con i suoi preti e i suoi fedeli, ciò che lo costringeva a delegare ad altri lo svolgimento di funzioni specifiche del suo ministero” (Turtas, Pregare 79).

When asked during Bachisio Bandinu’s radio program if the Sardinian people had the right to pray in their own language, Turtas’ response was clear, stating that the bishops have “il dovere di tentare il più possibile di rendere il messaggio cristiano più vicino alla cultura e al pensiero profondo di coloro che devono essere evangelizzati.”⁸ This was not new for the

⁸ This is taken from my own transcription of the radio program cited above.

bishops, as it was an obligation that many Sardinian bishops and clergy had fulfilled during the previous four centuries, when clergymen took it upon themselves to travel around the island and used the local languages in their preaching. He explained,

Per merito di questi ecclesiastici, missionari e talvolta pure semplici fedeli dotati di vena poetica, la lingua sarda ha potuto vivere e svilupparsi, ha prodotto composizioni in versi di alto livello, ha elaborato rappresentazioni religiose di grande drammaticità e tante altre manifestazioni perfettamente integrate nella cultura profonda della società isolana, ha persino assimilato elementi delle precedenti forme di religiosità precristiana. (Turtas, Pregare 121).

It is among this group of religious men referenced in the quote above that I place Giovanni Delogu Ibba, the author of the *Index libri vitae*.

An Introduction to Giovanni Delogu Ibba and the *Index libri vitae*

Information about the author of the *Index libri vitae*, Giovanni Delogu Ibba, is scarce at best. There is much disagreement concerning even the most basic biographical information. The primary example of the debate over the life of Delogu Ibba is the disagreement surrounding his date and place of birth. Giuseppe Marci in the introduction to his edition of *Index libri vitae*. Here Marci writes, “Il Tola lo ritiene nato a Sassari attorno alla metà del secolo XVII, il Martini ‘nella villa d’Itiri il 20 ottobre 1664 da Pietro Delogu e da Catterina Ibba’. Il Siotto-Pintor lo dice: ‘Nato in Itiri Cannedu verso la metà del secolo XVII, morto in Villanova Monteleone nel 1738.’” (xxvii). There are no definite answers, yet his date of death is almost universally accepted as the year 1738 and an even more specific date, August 21st, 1738, is given by Pietro Martini in the second volume of his famous work, *Biografia sarda* (26-7).⁹ Marci emphasizes that the lack of information is an enormous obstacle for having an accurate account of the development of Sardinian literature. Marci

⁹ Martini wrote, “Nella medesima terra di Villanova Monteleone egli si addormentava nel Signore il 21 agosto 1738” (*Biografia sarda* vol. II, 26-7).

explains, “Alla scarsità di informazioni documentarie gli studiosi più recenti aggiungono, alle volte, una certa approssimazione che non li rende del tutto affidabili: basterà dire che Raimondo Bonu addirittura propone un’indicazione errata riguardante il nome di battesimo” (Tragedia x).

The church positions held by Giovanni Delogu Ibba throughout his lifetime included “prima vicario foraneo, qualificatore del santo ufficio ed esaminatore sinodale della diocesi di Bosa; quindi fu rettore della parrocchia di Villanova Monteleone cospicuo villaggio del capo settentrionale della Sardegna” (Tola, Dizionario biografico 23). There is little other definite information concerning his scholastic endeavors, but the offices that he held during his religious career in Sardinia, and according to Pasquale Tola, make it fairly certain that he was a student of theology and a priest. Tola, the author of *Dizionario biografico degli uomini illustri di Sardegna*, describes him as a “pio ecclesiastico e riputato poeta nazionale” (23) and Martini adds that Delogu Ibba is “uno dei più benemerenti e dotti ecclesiastici dell’isola ai tempi suoi” (25). According to the biographical notes included in the 2003 edition of his *Index libri vitae*, he was also very revered by the faithful members of his parish and had gained their love and gratitude because of “l’ardenza dello zelo evangelico, e per l’esemplarità della vita, e per lo spirito fervente di carità” (Martini 26).

Delogu Ibba’s reception by critics has not been always so favorable. In fact he receives rather mixed reviews depending on the scholar and on which of the seven parts of his work is being analyzed. The first five parts of *Index libri vitae*, those written in Latin, are often criticized for being very repetitive and formulaic with little to no artistic expression. Francesco Alziator calls them “un’andatura modesta e narrativa; non ricchezza di immagini né commozione lirica, né mai si esce dai limiti di una corretta parafrasi, in distici, della

Scrittura” (Storia 221). When one considers that Delogu Ibba viewed his text as a didactic tool with a paraliturgical function, the comments made by Alziator are not as disparaging as perhaps he intended them to be. He spares not a single one of the first five parts of the *Index* from his criticism. Of the fourth part, which tells of the lives and the honors of selected saints, Alziator does acknowledge that it displays a more varied expression and conciseness but then proceeds to criticize the “ghiribizzo tutto secentesco delle acrobazie verbali” as well as Delogu Ibba’s “giuochi di parole di pessimo gusto” (Storia 223-4). And his criticism of the fifth part of the index is more intense, causing Alziator to say its tone is very modest and leads to even more modest poetic results in spite of the fact that it is dedicated to the contemplation of some of the greatest mysteries of the religion, focusing heavily on the passion of Christ.

The parts of the *Index* that are criticized the most, as previously mentioned, are the first five parts of the work all written in Latin; however, it is not Delogu Ibba’s knowledge of the Latin language nor necessarily his ability to write in it that offends the critics but instead it is his monotonous tone and approach. When describing his writings in Latin, Marci comments that he “indubbiamente appare buon conoscitore della lingua latina nella quale esercita la sua versificazione dotato di caratteristiche in relazione alle quali sarebbe impropria una definizione che etichetti il suo *stylus* come *omnino rudis et pene barbarus*” (xi). More positive evaluations of Delogu Ibba’s ability as a writer are attributed to the last two parts of the seven-part work, the sixth section containing a number of *gosos* written in both Logudorese and also Castilian, and the seventh and final section of the text, a passion play written entirely in Logudorese with a handful of lines in Latin. The analyses by all scholars of the final two parts of the *Index* comment particularly on Delogu Ibba’s choice of

Logudorese for the two most important sections of his work. These are two sections that spoke most clearly to his Sardinian audience.

The Logudorese that Delogu Ibba, used in the composition of the *gosos* and the final passion play, is described as “una lingua *illustre*” (Marci xi). Marci even clarifies that Delogu Ibba’s Logudorese was “appartenente non tanto alla sfera dell’oralità quanto a quella della scrittura, e, in primo luogo, della scrittura poetica” (Marci xi). It was therefore not a rustic and unsophisticated language but instead one that was perfectly suited for the purposes of Delogu Ibba. Marci speaks of the importance of Delogu Ibba’s writing in Logudorese when he points to the principal dictionary of this vernacular, *Vocabolario sardo logudorese – italiano*, compiled by Pietro Casu during a twenty-year period of his career, and first published in 1950. Pietro Casu, who also had a background as a poet, a writer and a preacher, compiled his dictionary with a clear desire to turn away from the rustic Logudorese of the uneducated, which had been consistently examined by scholars in the past, who had focused almost entirely on “la parlata di contadini e pastori e per gli aspetti più conservativi e più genuinamente popolari della realtà culturale sarda” (Casu 17). Casu was more interested in focusing on a higher level of speech and writing and recognized Delogu Ibba as a primary example, along with other poets well-versed in Logudorese, such as Gerolamo Araolla.¹⁰ Casu “mirava con il suo lavoro a contribuire a fare del sardo una lingua di cultura anche attraverso il recupero e la riutilizzazione di voci antiche di ambito letterario” (Casu 40), and, more than any other author writing in Logudorese, he cites an incredible number of words

¹⁰ Gerolamo Araolla was the author of *Sa vida, su martiriu, et morte de sos gloriosos Martires Gavinu, Brothu et Gianuari*, published in 1582. One poetic composition for which Araolla is famous is a sonnet written in three different languages, “in sardo, in italiano ed in spagnolo” (Alziator, *Storia* 109). It is an important piece not because of the poetry of Araolla but instead because “attesta inoltre il vitale coesistere di tre lingue e di tre mondi culturali diversi nel Cinquecento sardo” (109).

used by Delogu Ibba in the *Index libri vitae*. Delogu Ibba is cited 633 times, when the author with the closest number of citations in Casu's dictionary is Padre Luca with 144 citations.

Pasquale Tola, in the entry that focuses on Delogu Ibba in *Dizionario degli uomini illustri di Sardegna*, is another scholar who praises Delogu Ibba's writing in Logudorese for its importance to the Sardinian literary tradition. Tola asserts the importance of Delogu Ibba among the most well-known Sardinian writers stating, "noi non troviamo fra i poeti nazionali, le di cui poesie siano state pubblicate, veruno che lo superi nell'armonia del verso e nella purità della lingua" (26). His praise of Delogu Ibba does not stop here and he reiterates his favorable opinion near the end of the entry in the dictionary declaring that "A chiunque però conosca le proprietà, i modi, le grazie e la schiettezza nativa della lingua sarda, apparirà di leggieri che il Delogu deve essere collocato fra i poeti più distinti che abbia prodotto la Sardegna" (28).

In addition to the positive remarks made about the Logudorese used in the *Index*, many other scholars also comment on Delogu Ibba's ability to compose convincing poetic works in a variety of languages. As Marci explains,

Padroneggia più lingue: il latino, il sardo, il catalano, il castigliano e l'italiano. Le sente sue e ne dispone con disinvoltura, ovverosia senza soggiacere a pregiudizi di tipo puristico e quindi plasmando tutte le neoformazioni delle quali abbia bisogno per un testo che non è né pastorale né rustico ma, al contrario, abbisogna di un repertorio lessicale e di uno stile adeguati all'altissimo obiettivo cui mira: rappresentare il dramma della passione e della morte di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo, cantare le *lodi* dei Santi, raccontare la storia della loro vita eroica. (Marci xi – xii)

Because of Delogu Ibba's ability to compose in various languages, he used these languages to ensure that he had both the vocabulary and the expressions necessary to tell the story of the lives of Jesus, Mary and the saints, which would ultimately serve as an example for the people of his parish.

Among the scholars who value his work are those who praise his writings in Castilian. Alziator, who was notably harsh in his judgment of the first five books of Delogu Ibba's *Index*, has a very positive critique of the sixth book and in particular of the *gosos* written in Castilian instead of Logudorese. In these poetic compositions, Alziator notes that "Giovanni Delogu Ibba ci dà un saggio della sua capacità di poetare in spagnolo e, a dire il vero, talune strofe di più di una delle laudi mariane, ed in particolare nei *gosos* della Vergine di Valverde, si piegano con una qualche dolcezza di espressione e fluidità di verso" (*Storia* 226). As is clear from the variety of evaluations of the *Index libri vitae* presented here, while the literary value of Delogu Ibba's work in terms of its poetic quality has been at times criticized, this criticism generally falls upon the first five parts of the work, which, in considering the volume of the remaining two parts, make up a relatively small percentage of the *Index*. What is rarely put into question when evaluating the *Index* is the remarkable ability of the author to write inventively in several languages for the purpose of conveying his message.

The unequal quality of the *Index libri vitae* has been ascribed to its nature as a *zibaldone*, which can be translated into English as an author's notebook, perhaps suggesting the old composition notebooks used to store all of one's written compositions. It is a book that Alziator, the scholar who attributed this term, *zibaldone*, to Delogu Ibba's *Index*, goes on to describe as a "raccolta di schede, o come diario, o come scartafaccio di note, o quadernetto di rime" (*Storia* 219). According to him, Sardinian literature is full of *zibaldoni*, and perhaps this accounts for the number of Sardinian texts that remain unknown and unstudied, or at times purposely ignored by scholars. Alziator puts the *Index*, as well as Giovanni Francesco

Carmona's *Alabanças*, in this category, calling Delogu Ibba's work "un ben nutrito zibaldone" (Storia 220).

But, what makes the *Index* a *zibaldone* in the eyes of scholars? One possible explanation is that the seven books of the *Index* contain a number of works in different formats, including epigrams, couplets, formulaic questions and answers sequences, sacred hymns and an entire passion play. Additionally, we should consider the sheer amount of information presented by Delogu Ibba in regards to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the lives and miracles of the saints and also the principal mysteries of the Church. In the end, we too would conclude with Alziatore that Giovanni Delogu Ibba left behind "proprio un ben nutrito zibaldone, più di quattrocento pagine a stampa di corpo 24, in sedicesimo, che inizia con una solenne dedica latina all'eterno Padre" (Storia 220).

The first section of *Index libri vitae* is a series of sixty-three different epigrams written in Latin about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, from the moment of the Immaculate Conception throughout the Passion, his death and resurrection.¹¹ The epigrams trace the life of Christ. It is a veritable "cheat sheet" to the four Gospel accounts, because all the important events of Christ's life receive some attention in the written epigrams, and yet each event is expressed in approximately ten lines or less. The second section of the book is described by Delogu himself as "Vitae circa misteria principalia vitae Beatissimae semper Virginis Mariae

¹¹ An epigram is a literary form that is identifiable by its concise and pointed language. At times the epigram exists on its own as a poem or it may be included as a part of a larger work. The epigram is not confined to a limited subject matter and instead is used to address a number of topics in its characteristic pithiness. (Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics 247-8)

sub correctione Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae” (Index 54).¹² This section is also composed of Latin epigrams, although only twenty-one. These epigrams outline all major events in the entire life of the Virgin Mary. The third section is a series of fifty questions described as “Quinquaginta quaesita circa mysteria principalia Domini Nostri Iesu Christi, et eius Sanctissimae Genitricis Beatae Mariae semper Virginis Dominae Nostrae” (Index 64).¹³ A response follows after every one of the questions that begins “Si tu non credis, falleris, et graviter”¹⁴ and then a single sentence explanation is provided before a second formulaic line, “Fili ne dubites, est ita, crede Deo” (Delogu, Index 64).¹⁵ One of the questions asked, for example, is “Immortalis quis morti se tradidit atrae?”(Delogu, Index 64)¹⁶

The fourth section, also written in Latin, contains sixty-eight epigrams written “ad honorem aliquorum sanctorum, et sanctarum Dei” (Delogu, Index 74) - distributed by the month in which each saint is celebrated.¹⁷ These epigrams state the reason why he or she is being remembered. For example, the epigram dedicated to St. Thomas Aquinas during the month of March reads, “Ad honorem S.(ancti) Thomae Aquinatis Angelicus Doctor recte Thomase vocaris Doctrinis Sanctis, Angelus imo Dei” (Delogu, Index 76)¹⁸ and that of Mary Magdalene reads “Ad honorem S.(anctae) Mariae Magdalenae Ungens, atque lavans, et

¹² “About the primary mysteries of the life of the Blessed and ever Virgin Mary all subject to the Holy Mother Church” (Index 54).

¹³ “Fifty questions concerning the principal mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ and his most Holy Mother, our Lady, the Blessed and every Virgin Mary” (Index 64).

¹⁴ “If you do not believe, you would be wrong and severely” (Index 64).

¹⁵ “Son, do not doubt, for it is so, believe in God” (Index 64).

¹⁶ “Which immortal handed himself over to the black death?” (Index 64).

¹⁷ “In honor of the saints of God” (Index 74).

¹⁸ “In honor of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Thomas, you are rightly called the angelic doctor for the sacred doctrines, and indeed the angel of God” (Index 76).

tergens Magdala Christum crinibus, ac figens oscula casta pedi, lota manes intus divini fluminis imbre, cordeque constricto, gratia te retinet” (Delogu, Index 82).¹⁹ Again, Delogu uses this as an opportunity to teach the members of the religious community about the lives of the saints.

The fifth section contains an additional fifty-two Latin epigrams “sopra i principali misteri della nostra religione ed in lode di varii santi” (Index 102).²⁰ A number of these epigrams are related to the crucifixion of Christ, such as the moment when the soldiers strip the Lord of his clothing, the lowering of Jesus’ head in the moment before he is about to die, and finally, the sudden darkness that appears at the moment when Jesus takes his last breath. The sixth section is the section of *gosos* written in both Castilian and Logudorese, and the seventh and final part of this larger work, also written in Logudorese, is a very elaborate passion play, *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu*.

It is necessary to consider the *Index libri vitae* within the cultural and historical context in which it was written. Delogu Ibba published this work in 1736, not long after the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht concluded the Spanish War of Succession and also brought to an end the almost 400-year period of Spanish control of the island. During this period, Sardinia was described as living “nel mondo della cultura, della letteratura, della mentalità e del costume ispanico” (Alziator, Storia 211). The period in which the *Index* was published is near the beginning of Piedmontese rule, after the brief time during which Sardinia was subjected to

¹⁹ “In honor of Saint Mary Magdalene, besmearing and washing and wiping dry Christ with your hair, and fixing chaste kisses on his foot, you are cleansed Magdalene, in the water of the holy river, with heart restrained, grace keeps you” (Index 82).

²⁰ “About the principle mysteries of our religion and in praise of various saints” (Index 102).

Austrian rule.²¹ The new Piedmontese government was forced to confront was “estrema debolezza delle attività economiche, sconcertante povertà degli abitanti, indolenza della gente, sottopopolamento cronico, clima irriducibilmente malsano” (Piero Sanna, qtd. in Tola, La letteratura 89). The question discussed was how to rule an island that was in such a dismal condition, having been exploited for its resources and not taken care of by the majority of the previous ruling nations. One of the decisions to be made concerned its future mode of communication, since at the time Castilian was not only the official and most commonly used language of the island, except in certain geographic regions, where it was not uncommon to find Catalan as the prominent language.²²

The Piedmontese government did not immediately demand the elimination of the Spanish language and instead was rather tolerant of it for a number of reasons, perhaps most importantly because of the Sardinian general resistance toward any kind of change and its tendency to implement such a change at an incredibly slow speed. Another reason for the toleration of Spanish was purely functional, in order to assure the continuity of daily activity that had for the last three-hundred plus years been conducted in Spanish. No mandate

²¹ Piemontese rule began on the island officially in 1718 with the Treaty of London, through which rule of the island was granted to the Prince of Savoy Victor Amadeus II in exchange for Sicily, which was ceded to the Austrians. Carlino Sole, in his chapter on “La Sardegna spagnola,” in *Breve storia della Sardegna*, clarifies that “La Spagna riconosceva le clausole del trattato di Londra solo nel 1720, anno nel quale ebbe inizio l’effettiva dominazione sabauda” (131).

²² Such a region is Alghero on the western coast of the island. In an article entitled “La variazione linguistica in area sarda,” Ines Loi Corvetto explains, “Nella zona nord-occidentale, dove era diffuso il logudorese, si manifesta un fenomeno di ‘ripopolamento alloglotto’; i sardi vengono allontanati, infatti, dalla città di Alghero che, a partire dal 1354, viene ripopolata con elementi catalani dando così origine alle formazione dell’isola alloglotta della cittadina algherese” (147). Corvetto, Ines Loi. “La variazione linguistica in area sarda.” *Revista de Filologia Románica*. 17 (2000): 143-156.

prohibiting the use of the Castilian language was made until much later, in the year 1760, well after Delogu Ibba wrote the majority of *Index* in Logudorese.²³

Delogu Ibba's choice of language therefore is very significant and indicative of the effort to renew the cultural rebirth that began during the 1600's through attempts to increase local literary production. Tola notes that the difference between the period of Spanish and Piedmontese rule is that in the latter "la coscienza della diversità, dell'essere nazione" (Tola, La letteratura 91) which contributed to increased production in the language of the island, began the process of replacing the Iberian languages of Castilian and Catalan. In Sardinia, the new era was anchored in "la fiducia in se stessi" (Alziator, Storia 212), and this was the period in which Delogu Ibba was writing his didactic work for the people of his diocese.

Regardless of the criticisms related to the literary value of Giovanni Delogu Ibba's *Index libri vitae* as a whole, there is no question that it contains a significant amount of information about the greatest mysteries of the Catholic religion and the linguistic practices of the area. Most of what we know about this work comes from what he himself tells us throughout the seven parts of the *Index*, so it is beneficial to analyze each of the seven parts thoroughly to see, first, how each one is described by the author himself, and second, what we can tell about these statements after a careful reading of each one. Of particular importance and interest are the pages that begin the work, including the title page, the dedication, and finally, a note directed at the intended readers and audience of the *Index*. The title page tells Delogu Ibba's audience that his work is called "*Index libri vitae cui titulus est:*

²³ Ines Loi Corvetto explains the steps taken by the Savoia to eliminate the use of the Spanish language and therefore also the strong contact with the Spanish culture in the same article referenced above. "A partire dal 1760 vengono assunti provvedimenti da parte dei Savoia che mirano ad impedire qualunque tipo di contatto con la lingua e la cultura spagnola. L'atteggiamento di tolleranza verso lo spagnolo cessa con il divieto esplicito di impiegare questa lingua in ogni modalità comunicativa allo scopo di intensificare gli interventi atti a favorire l'integrazione, anche linguistica, della classe dirigente del regno" (152).

Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum” (*Index* 12); however, it is referred to by all scholars strictly as the *Index libri vitae*. The reference to the title used to indicate Jesus on the cross brings immediate focus to Delogu Ibba’s work. Therefore, the starting point coincides with its ending, the Passion play that concludes the *Index*.

Delogu Ibba proceeds to immediately summarize his proposed topic in order to call the audience’s attention to his driving purpose. He then adds, “Ex innumeris aliqua praecipua capita, sive principalia mysteria vitae, passionis, mortis, resurrectionis, et ascensionis eiusdem Domini Nostri Iesu Christi: Beatissimae semperque Virginis Mariae matris eius: nonnulorumque virtutes sanctorum, in quibus ipse Deus mirabilis est” (*Index* 12).²⁴ These are the topics that will be at the center of each of the seven parts of the *Index*, the life, the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the virtues and miracles of the saints. Delogu Ibba uses the rest of the title page to state that he is composing this work, with his modest artistic style, as a humble servant of the Lord (“quam breviter tangens, a minimo servo eius inconcinne digestus” 12). His writing serves as an exercise and as a means to comfort the humble and devoted members of his parish in Villanova Monteleone (“ad aliquorum humilium devotorum excitationem, et aliqualem eorum commoditatem” 12).

It is on the title page, as previously mentioned, that we learn the most information about the life of our author. He identifies himself as the Reverend Giovanni Delogu Ibba, the Pastor of Villanova Monteleone in the Diocese of Bosa and lists the titles of his religious offices held in addition to stating that he has been in holy orders for fifty years. The title page

²⁴ “From the innumerable examples, present some of the particular reasons or principal mysteries of the life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension into Heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ: and the most Holy Virgin Mary his mother: and the virtues of some saints, through which God himself is wonderful” (*Index* 12).

also provides us with other relevant information about the book. It received “et superiorum permissu nuperrime typis mandatus anno Domini 1736. In oppido Villae Novae Montis Leonis, in praelo Reverendorum Patrum Servorum B.(eatae) M.(ariae) V.(irginis) Sacerensium. Per Iosephum Centolani. Superiorum licentia. 1736” (12).²⁵ The fact that what he has written has been approved by the Church is a source of pride for Delogu Ibba and something that will be repeated often at the beginning and end of many of the seven parts. For example, at the conclusion of books two and three, Delogu Ibba includes the expression, “Sub correctione Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae” (54).

The *Index* was printed by Giuseppe Centolani, who, as Tola explains in his *Dizionario biografico degli uomini illustri di Sardegna*, traveled to Villanova Monteleone for the purpose of publishing Delogu Ibba’s work. According to Tola, Centolani was called to the diocese of Bosa by the celebrated Giorgio Soggia, “uno degli uomini più chiari dell’ordini dei servi di Maria” (Martini 146). This makes sense considering that Soggia was also credited with bringing about the reemergence of printing in the Northern part of Sardinia, particularly around Sassari. When describing Soggia’s influence, Martini explains, “... la tipografia da lui rinnovata in Sassari, non solo inservì in gran parte alla stampa delle sue scritture, ma anche per lunghi anni fu usata in vantaggio delle lettere nel capo settentrionale dell’isola” (151). But even from Sassari, Centolani made the roughly twenty-five mile trip to Villanova Monteleone, traveling through rocky and mountainous terrain in order to print Delogu Ibba’s work. This printing is the source of the three existing copies of the *Index*, which are housed

²⁵ “And with the permission of his superiors, it was sent to be printed in 1736 A.D. In the town of Villanova Monteleone among the Holy Fathers of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Sassari. Through the work of Giuseppe Centolani. With the permission of his superiors. 1736” (*Index* 12).

in the Biblioteca comunale of Alghero and in the university libraries of both Sassari and Cagliari.

The dedication of the book is exactly what one would expect given the religious nature and the pious tone that Delogu Ibba assumes immediately, beginning with the title page of the work. He begins his dedication by saying, “Ecce tuum librum Domine Deus Pater omnipotens, cui titulum in cruce dedisti: *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum*. Quem legere, quem audire nos docuisti, imo de lucida nube strictissime praecepisti, dicendo nobis in discipulis suis: ecce filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui, ipsum audite” (14).²⁶ In other words, Delogu Ibba reverently states that the book is dedicated to the Lord, composed for him and in his name. This is also the first of innumerable direct references to or quotations from the Sacred Scriptures, this one in particular taken from Matthew 17:5.

Delogu Ibba continues, “Nec mirum; est enim tota sapientia tua. Est ipsum Verbum tuum” (14).²⁷ By telling his reader that everything there is to learn can be learned through Jesus Christ and through careful adherence to what he has to teach us, and he reiterates the fact that the work that he is composing is directly inspired by Lord and belongs to Him. He writes, “Cui ergo Pater omnipotens, nisi tibi ipsi librum tuum offerre poterò, vel dicare? Tuus est, tibi dico [...] Nec meum aliquod offero, sed quod vere tuum est libentissime reddo” (14).²⁸

²⁶ “Here is your book, O Lord Almighty Father, whose title you gave on the cross: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. You taught us to read it and to listen to it. In fact from a bright white cloud you gave us an order, telling us as disciples, ‘Here is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him’ (Index 14).

²⁷ “It is not a wonder, for he is the sum of your wisdom and he is your word” (Index 14).

²⁸ “Therefore, Almighty Father, if not to you, to whom will I be able to offer and dedicate this book? It is yours, I say to you [...] I am not offering to you something that is mine, instead I offer to you most happily what is truly yours” (Index 14).

The piety and humility of Delogu Ibba continues throughout the dedication as he acknowledges that he is not worthy enough to turn over his completed *Index* to the Lord but will nevertheless do so with the help of the Virgin Mary. This is an opportunity for Delogu Ibba to introduce one of the main subjects of this work as a whole, and in his direct address of Mary, he once again reiterates the primary focus of the entire *Index*. He writes, “Tu quoque pijssima, clemensque Virgo Redemptrix, quae benignissimo, et amabilissimo titulo de Mercede Redemptionis Captivorum tam intime gloriaris (utpote Redemptoris divini dignissima mater” (14).²⁹ He identifies Mary with the virgin mother of the Lord Jesus Christ and at the same time reminds us all that it is through her son that we are freed from our sins. What Delogu Ibba writes immediately following this is similar to a preview of the books to come. He also references, “sicut in utero sancto tuo, in templo quoque, et in cruce ipsum dilectum filium tuum aeterno Patri pro ipsa captivorum Redemptione libentissime obtulisti” (14), thereby foreshadowing the scenes from the lives of Christ and his mother that will be the focus of the first, second, third, fifth and seventh books of the *Index*.³⁰

Much more revealing than even the dedication is the note to the *benigno lectori* that Delogu Ibba places before the start of the first book. There is a significant amount of information about the author’s inspiration, his message and his method that can be learned from the note to the reader. It begins by saying, “En habes Christiane lector apertum in cruce

²⁹ “Also you, most pious and modest Virgin Mary, co-Redeemer, who are glorified with the title of Our Lady of Mercy and Redeemer of the Captives (in that you are the most worthy mother of the divine Redeemer” (Index 14)

³⁰ “As in your holy womb, and in the temple, and on the cross, you offered your beloved son to the Eternal father for the redemption of captives” (Index 14).

librum non a me compositum, sed a Deo Patre genitum ab aeterno” (14).³¹ Once again Delogu Ibba focuses on the divine inspiration behind the work. The unusual reference that follows is what causes the reader to reflect for a moment. Delogu Ibba implies that the book with the seven seals is his source of inspiration by saying, “quem nemo poterat neque in caelo, neque in terra, neque subtus terram aperire, neque respicere illum” (18 / Book of Revelation 5:3). In the final book of the Bible, in the Book of Revelation, John, the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, writes “Ego Joannes frater vester, et particeps in tribulatione, et regno, et patientia in Christo Jesu: fui in insula, quæ appellatur Patmos, propter verbum Dei, et testimonium Jesu” (5.1:9). It is from this book of the Book of Revelations that Delogu Ibba draws the idea for his entire work. There are of course the obvious numerical similarities between the book of the seven seals and Delogu Ibba’s work, which is divided into seven separate books.

More important to note, however, is the quotation previously mentioned that explains that no one was worthy enough to be able to read or even look upon the book of the seven seals. As we read on in Revelation and likewise in the note to the readers of Delogu Ibba, we learn that the only one capable of opening this book to reveal the contents is the Lord Jesus Christ who sits on the right hand of the Father. And how is he able to do this? Through sacrificing his life to save man from their sins, “agnus accepit, et aperuit illum, solvens septem signacula eius, expandens nempe se ipsum in cruce, proferensque septem mysteriosissima verba” (18).³² This is indicative of Delogu Ibba’s message throughout the work. He has always maintained, as he did on his title page and in the dedication and as he

³¹ “You have in your hand, O Christian reader, a book opened on the cross, not composed by me, but by the God our Father from Eternity” (Index 14).

³² “The Lamb received it (the Book of the Seven Seals) and opened it, breaking the seven seals, extending himself on the cross and pronouncing the seven mysterious words” (Index 18).

will continue to do throughout the entire *Index*, that the key to understanding all of the primary mysteries of the church is to focus on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He is the *verbum*, which Delogu Ibba reiterates once again with the quotation previously presented in the dedication, “Hic est filius meus delictus, in quo mihi bene complacui, ipsum audite” (18). Reading through each book of the *Index* is similar to the loosening of one of the seals that prevents the faithful from truly understanding the mysteries of the Church. It is Delogu Ibba’s intention here to unveil these mysteries. The Book of Revelation is not the only book of the Bible referenced by Delogu Ibba as a source of inspiration for his work. Reference is also made to the 1 Corinthians and in particular a statement made by Paul in the second chapter of this book. Paul writes, “Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum” (1 Corinthians 2:2).³³ This quote is taken directly from the Bible and included in Delogu Ibba’s note to his reader. His focus is strictly on Jesus Christ and the crucifixion for they will be able to save us from our sins. In the first third of his note to the readers, Delogu Ibba has confirmed his familiarity and ability to quote the Scriptures as well as enlightened the reader about two separate passages that have provided him with the inspiration and the structure of his work.

Delogu Ibba writes in three different languages, Latin, Spanish and Logudorese, one of the four primary dialects of the Sardinian language. Toward the end of his address of the readers that precedes the first part of his book, Delogu writes, “Utque nemo se excuset, omnibus simul loquitur linguis, ut ab omnibus legi, et intelligi possit” (*Index* 18-20).³⁴ The

³³ “For I resolved to know nothing when I was with you, if not Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

³⁴ “And so that no one may find excuses, it is spoken in all languages at the same time, in order that it may be read and understood by all” (*Index* 18-20).

use of multiple languages was necessary because the author claims that this book contains all the information that the benevolent reader needs to know, and he does not want language to be an obstacle for his audience. Delogu relates his need to use multiple languages to the title that was fixed on the cross above the head of Jesus, identifying him as “Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum.” This title was also written in three different languages, in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, in order that “Ab omnibus legeretur, indicans ipsum librum ab omnibus pariter posse legi” (Delogu, Index 18).³⁵ The quotations that explain the languages used by the author and the languages written on the cross are almost identical. They both stress the importance of the text that is written in the various languages and how the title on the cross, in the past, had to be comprehensible, and how Delogu’s work, *Index libri vitae*, in the present and future must also be clear. There is a strong connection with the title that appeared on the cross of Jesus as evidenced by the title page of Delogu’s work which reads “Index libri vitae. Cui titulus est: Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum” (Index 12). He relates his work, and the importance of it, to the identification of Jesus on his cross, which to the author seems fitting because of the large part of his text dedicated to recounting the Passion, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the reader.

The languages chosen by Delogu Ibba for the *Index libri vitae* are not without significance. The use of Latin by the author in the dedication, the note to the reader, the first five books of the work and also in small inclusions in the passion play is not surprising given that Delogu Ibba was a man of the Church. At the same time, this use of Latin is somewhat curious when one considers the previously cited statement regarding the author’s intent to make the text comprehensible to everyone. Ecclesiastical Latin limited the participants’ comprehension of the mass, for example, because it was clearly a language that tied more

³⁵ “It will be read by all, meaning that this book will be able to be read equally by all” (Index 18).

closely to the learned population of that age and not the average person. Tola claims that in the 1500's and 1600's the use of Latin "poteva dare una garanzia anche maggiore di diffusione, tra gli studiosi e gli uomini colti di tutta Europa: era il latino che, pur avendo perduto, col formarsi delle lingue nazionali, una larga parte del suo ruolo originario, rimaneva alla base della formazione letteraria e tecnica delle persone di cultura; veniva utilizzata dalla Chiesa e diffusa con il monachesimo" (Storia 39). Latin was a language studied and carefully used by the clergy in religious ceremonies, for example during the reading of the scriptures, and it was certainly recognizable to a Christian because of its use in prayers and hymns during the mass. However, at times the use of Latin limited the lay person's ability to fully participate in the religious ceremonies. The use of Latin in the opening books of the *Index* cause us to pause and consider who in fact was Delogu Ibba's intended audience for Books One through Five. Perhaps parts of the opening books were considered more for other ecclesiastics and not necessarily for the people.

The use of Castilian by Delogu Ibba is very understandable considering the historical and social context in which our author was writing. In his introduction to the 2003 edition of the *Index libri vitae*, Giuseppe Marci comments on the circumstances in which it was not uncommon for Sardinian authors to opt to write in languages other than their own national vernacular. Marci explains, "I sardi non solo capivano le lingue ma avevano eccellenti ragioni che li costringevano a usarle nella dimensione pratica e li spingevano a impiegarle in quella fantastica e dell'elaborazione artistica, in un *gioco* che possiamo immaginare *divertito* già nel Quattro, nel Cinque e nel Seicento e che sicuramente ha una componente ludica e un evidente tratto sperimentale ancora nei giorni nostri" (xxii). What Marci is referring to here once again calls to mind the storied history of the island and the number of languages that

were present throughout Sardinian history because of the visiting ruling nations. Delogu Ibba is certainly not the only author who was composing in Castilian during the 1700's and he was preceded by a number of authors in the previous century. Some other authors who were writing in Castilian or Catalan in Sardinia are Juan Francisco Carmona, Antioco del Arca, Antonio Lo Frasso, Girolamo Araolla, Salvatore Vidal and Antonio Maria da Esterzili, some of whose writing will be discussed later in this dissertation.

For what specific reasons did these writers choose to write in Castilian or Catalan? Pasquale Tola provides a few explanations to this question. Even before the start of Iberian domination on the island of Sardinia, the linguistic situation on the island was very complex. There were a number of regional variations of the island's vernacular, in particular, Campidanese, Logudorese, Gallurese, Nuorese and Sassarese, just to name the most well-known linguistic varieties of the island. At the start of the Iberian rule, first Catalan and then Castilian were added to the linguistic mix. What Tola goes on to explain in his chapter, "Tra catalano e castigliano," is that this created a situation of *diglossia*, which can be defined as a situation in which "aggiunte ai dialetti locali della lingua vi sono una o più varietà sovrapposte, molto divergenti e altamente codificate, diffuse con l'istruzione e utilizzate per gli scopi formali e nella scrittura, non estese alla popolazione locale, che tuttavia le comprende" (*Storia*, 38). And the situation was even more complex than simply the presence of the various languages on the island, because each language also carried a different weight in terms of its importance. The Iberian languages represented the languages of those in control and the language used in legal documents by those ruling and because of this, Tola attributes a certain amount of prestige to choosing to write in Castilian or Catalan. As with the use of Latin, using Castilian or Catalan, according to Tola, could also at times guarantee a

greater distribution of the writing because it would be comprehensible to someone not from the island.

The use of the island's vernaculars, however, was not without benefit. While Castilian and Catalan might be languages that were prominent in large cities on the island, the use of these Iberian languages in more remote areas of Sardinia would not be advantageous because it would almost guarantee that a significant part of the local population was excluded from comprehending and not considered part of the intended audience. The Sardinian vernaculars were still the primary language of communication for the masses that were not living in the large city centers of the island. These languages were viewed as being inferior in comparison with the Iberian languages when utilized in written works “dal punto di vista del ruolo, del riconoscimento e della circolazione” (Tola, *Storia* 40) because beyond the island's confines, understanding of these vernaculars would not be possible.

And yet, Giovanni Delogu Ibba chose Logudorese as the language in which to write the majority of the *Index*.³⁶ Those authors choosing to write in one of the island's vernaculars were also concerned about comprehensibility and diffusion of their work. It is just that they had an entirely different audience in mind. It was not the diffusion of their written work beyond Sardinia that interested such an author, but instead the importance of making it comprehensible to the local inhabitants who were living outside of the aforementioned cultural centers. They were not searching to fabricate some sort of educated tone to their work, but instead a popular tone that would appeal to the masses. Tola explains that such authors were primarily religious authors looking to spread their message and he mentions

³⁶ While Latin is the language used to write the first five parts of the *Index libri vitae*, those five parts in comparison to the sixth part dedicated to the *gosos* and the seventh part, which consists of an entire passion play, make up a significantly smaller portion of the work taken as a whole.

two genres that are often at the center of such works, saints' plays, and in particular the saga of certain famous Sardinian saints, and *sacre rappresentazioni* (Tola, Storia 40). Delogu Ibba fits in particularly well with this explanation seeing as how Logudorese is used for Book Six, the collection of *gosos* written in praise of the lives of Jesus, Mary and the saints, and for Book Seven, his famous passion play about the deposition of Christ from the cross. In the work of Delogu Ibba, Castilian takes on a much diminished role and in fact only appears in Book Six's *gosos*, and even then is only used for a fraction of the *gosos*, thirteen in total. More attention will be paid to this later on in the analysis of the *Index*.

Returning to the text of the *Benigno lectori*, further comment is required for the final statements that Delogu Ibba leaves with his readers. Something that our author highlights more than once for his readers is the idea that this book that they have before them contains everything that they need to know about their religion and the mysteries of the Church. He writes, "evidens est, quod ipse divinus liber, quem habes, et ego tibi offero omnia in se ipso continent, nec aliquid ibi deest, quod extra illum quaerere possis" (Index 18).³⁷ Immediately after, Delogu Ibba once again clarifies for his reader what he is offering them with his work and it is here that he again identifies his work as an *index*. The identification as an index is a very curious one and yet very fitting. In my efforts to find other religious works of this era of the 1700's or even before in the preceding century, I did not come upon other examples of such a work. So Delogu Ibba was not imitating a genre that he was already familiar with at the time. Our author continues on with his explanation to the reader and describes the *Index* as "parvulum, et brevissimum indicem, qui te ad principalia saltem utcumque capita manu

³⁷ "It is evident, that this holy book, which you have and which I offer to you, contains everything, and ther is nothing that you would be able to look for outside of this book" (Index 18).

ducat, ut sic saltem aliquid praelibans, immergaris in profundam mirabilium Dei abyssum” (Index 20).³⁸ Just as a traditional index, Delogu Ibba says that his work will help to direct the readers to particular sections that interest them.

The ways in which this is accomplished have to do with the division of the books and also the identifying incipits or titles of all of the epigrams that make up the first six books of the *Index libri vitae*. Each individual book of the work is preceded by its own title page that identifies the book and also the motive behind it, for example, the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Book I) or the honor of some saints of the Lord (Book IV). As we begin each single book, the start of a new epigram or a new couplet is indicated by the continuous numbering system that is present in the first six books. In Marci’s edition of the *Index*, the first lines of the epigrams are distinguished further by italicized print, yet he does not indicate that this was done in the original Latin written by Delogu Ibba and printed by Centolani in 1736. In terms of the printed edition done by Giuseppe Centolani, Marci has included the original index of the Centolani edition of Delogu Ibba’s work in an appendix that follows Book Seven’s passion play. In this index, the publisher leaves the division of the first five books and under a heading for each individual book, Centolani gives a numbered list of one line that summarizes the subject matter of each epigram. Each of the first five books has a clear beginning and end indicated by Centolani and these divisions absolutely facilitate the use of Delogu Ibba’s work as an index and as a means to aid his reader in finding the information that he is looking for. In a comparison of the subject of the epigrams and the phrases or sentences used in the index of Delogu Ibba’s work, we see that they do not correspond word for word; however, the numbering in the index does match up almost without exception to

³⁸ “I offer to you a tiny, and very brief index, that can at least lead you to the principal sections and enjoying at least certain parts, you may immerse yourself in the deep abyss of the wonders of the Lord” (Index 20).

the corresponding epigram in the actual section of the work. There is a slight discrepancy because in the first five books of the *Index*, there are a total of 255 epigrams, and yet in the index there are only 250 listed. A note in Marci's edition of the *Index*, clarifies that the index is accurate until the very end of the list of subjects in the fifth book. Identification of the epigrams numbered from 250 to 254 in Book Five are not present in the index. The final note in the index, n. 250 "Benigno Lectori veniae petitio" (Index 795), actually corresponds to number 255, the final epigram of Book Five. There are no page numbers given for the readers, as in a modern day index, but the numbering system is sufficient enough for the reader to locate easily a particular epigram or a *gosos* praising an individual saint.

When discussing the origins of the *sacre rappresentazioni* on the island of Sardinia, Alziator states,

Ritrovare le origini prime della drammatica religiosa di Sardegna non è cosa facile, ma pensiamo di non essere molto lontani dal vero se ci orienteremo verso talune forme della produzione agiografica e, soprattutto, se terremo presenti le divozioni delle confraternite religiose del tipo di quella dei Disciplinati bianchi di Sassari, di cui si è parlato altrove. Né vanno dimenticati i popolareschi 'goggius', dei quali alcuno si presenta anche in forma drammatica. (Alziator, Storia 183)

My study will examine one of the primary theatrical genres of Sardinia, the *sacre rappresentazioni*, and will trace the origins of this genre through two different religious-based literary traditions of the island, the *letteratura agiografica* and the *gosos*, both of which will be introduced later in this dissertation. One of its primary objectives will be to examine what influence the roughly 400-year Spanish presence had on these religious works in Sardinia, how it interacted with the traditions and the culture of the Sardinian people that existed before of the arrival of the Spanish, such as its strong sense of *religiosità popolare*. It will be necessary to look at the ways in which Iberian culture at times blended into these already established traditions, and at times imposed itself, by introducing something entirely

new. As a primary text for my study, I have chosen Giovanni Delogu Ibba and his 18th-century work *Index libri vitae* because I see in Delogu Ibba's *Index libri vitae* all of the elements of Alziator's quotation above.

The second chapter of the dissertation will give a brief outline of the earliest periods in Sardinian history leading up to the arrival of the Romans on the island in 238 B.C. shortly after the end of the First Punic War. After the Romans' seizure of the island, a period of "Romanization" begins, though this process was often opposed by the inhabitants of the island. The Christianity of the inhabitants of the island dates from this clash of cultures, which results in their dedication to a group of Sardinian martyrs and saints. Before focusing on the ways in which the hagiographical tradition manifested itself in Sardinian literature and theater, the second chapter gives a brief introduction to hagiography and how these stories and legends were passed on.

Because of the efforts to promote the island's own saints, there are a number of resulting hagiographical works that provide the earliest examples of Sardinian religious theater. In order to demonstrate that the evolution of these hagiographic dramas is a result of Spanish influence, in the third chapter I have chosen to highlight two works that demonstrate the progress made in this genre from the late 1400s to the 1600s. The first is *Sa vitta et sa morte et passione de Sanctu Gavinu Prothu et Januariu*, written by Antonio Cano and first published in the year 1557. This is a very early example of Sardinian hagiography; however, it allows us to see the dramatic possibilities that lie in these lives of saints, such as the inclusion of dialogue between the different characters instead of the story's being written in a strictly narrative format. The second is an example of the infiltration of Spanish culture in Sardinian theater as seen in Antioco del Arca's play from the year 1658 entitled *El sacco*

imaginado, which is written in honor of the illustrious martyrs and patrons of Sardinia, San Gavino, San Proto and San Gianuario of Torres (Alziator, Testi 81). From the earliest example of Cano to that of Antioco del Arca, there is clear development that takes place, not only in terms of the storylines but also in terms of the dramatic possibilities.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation will turn the attention to the *gosos* referenced in the Alziator quote above as one of the other primary sources for the *sacre rappresentazioni* in Sardinia. I will provide all the necessary background on its religious literary tradition and trace its steps through Provençal, Catalan, Castilian and Sardinian. The focus of this chapter will be on the inherent dramatic possibilities in these *gosos* and their role as the most natural expression of *religiosità popolare* on the island. The chapter will also study the most important rites and rituals of Holy Week in Sardinia as they are inextricably linked to the *gosos* as well as to *le passioni*, with which Delogu Ibba which closes the *Index*. One of the two sections of Delogu Ibba's seven-part work that receives the most attention is the sixth part full of *gosos* written in both Logudorese and Castilian. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed analysis of the *gosos* written by Delogu Ibba. Some of the aspects that will be analyzed are the saints chosen to be included, what elements of their story are told, the dramatic possibilities of these *gosos* and the percentage of the *Index* that these *gosos* represent.

Finally, chapter 5 of my dissertation that will review the seven parts of Giovanni Delogu Ibba's work as the backdrop for tracing Sardinian religious literature and drama from its beginnings to the well-developed *sacra rappresentazione* that closes the work. The *Index libri vitae* contains all of the elements that we have talked about: the Sardinian fascination with the stories and legends of saints and their martyrdom, proselytizing through the lives of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary and these saints as models for the faithful to follow; as well

as its propensity to express its religiosity through the lyrical compositions known as *gosos*. The Spanish influence on the culture of the island is most clearly represented by the use of Castilian in many *gosos*; and yet, Castilian Spanish is not the only language to be employed. Paradoxically, in Delogu Ibba's use of Castilian, Latin and Logudorese, we see reflected in the Spanish control on the island as the Sardinian nation asserts the importance of its own language consistent with the general sentiment "di fiducia in se stessi" (Alziator, Storia 212). And finally in the *Passion* play, *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu*, we see the advancements made by the *sacre rappresentazioni*, both technically and artistically. Just as his title suggests, Giovanni Delogu Ibba in his seven-part work provides us with an *index* or a catalogue of not only the dogmas of the church, but also the various phases of the development of the *sacre rappresentazione*.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND HAGIOGRAPHY IN SARDINIA

A Brief Introduction to Early Sardinian History

To reach the rich core of the culture of Sardinia, one must sift through the layers of sediment left by the people that have lived their history on Sardinia's soil. From the earliest Nuragic civilization of Sardinia to the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians to the Romans, the Vandals to the Byzantines, the Genoese and the Pisans to the Aragonese and the Castilians and finally the Dukes of Savoy from Italy's Piedmont region, all these people have shaped and carved the religion, the literature and the language of this island. But even in light of the innumerable outside influences on Sardinia over the years, it would be incorrect to view the island's culture as a chameleon that simply takes on any and all aspects of the currently dominating nation of people, because this assumes that the civilization of the island is completely devoid of its own long standing and very unique traditions. Sergio Bullegas, a prominent scholar of the history of theater in Sardinia, warned against this misconception when he wrote, "Ogni discorso sulla cultura nella Sardegna del tempo sarebbe parziale, o addirittura infondato, se non si considerasse l'esistenza di un ricco, robusto, vitale,

persistente e mai cancellato mondo di identità, fatto di singolari e peculiari usi e costumi comuni agli abitanti dell'Isola” (Bullegas, *Il tragico* 41).³⁹

In order to fully understand Sardinian culture, it is important to look back at the various phases of Sardinian history. The earliest periods of the history of Sardinia are beyond the parameters of this study, which focuses primarily on the island after the arrival of Christianity; however, a brief look at the well-known Nuragic period is in order. In the second chapter of his book entitled *La Sardegna*, Giovanni Lilliu describes the Nuragic period, which spans roughly 1500 – 500 B.C., as a time in which “[...] crearono una condizione statale di autonomia e di autodeterminazione nell'isola. La Sardegna conobbe allora l'unico e importante momento storico di autentica indipendenza” (34). The Nuragic people were divided up into what could be defined as tribes and lived among these tribes in concentrated areas. Lilliu uses the Latin term *civitates* to describe them. These groups, especially those living isolated in the more mountainous regions, known today as Barbagia, create “quel tessuto di autentica sardità” (19).⁴⁰ The distribution of different tribes living in concentrated areas is very similar to the early 9th century when Sardinia is divided up into four *giudicati*.⁴¹ This was another period in Sardinian history of relative autonomy and

³⁹ Sergio Bullegas is a prominent scholar and professor in the Department of Storia del Teatro e dello Spettacolo at the Università degli Studi di Cagliari. According to Bullegas, through his research he has worked to bring to light the earliest examples of theater in Sardinia beginning in the early 15th century. He also examines outside influences on Sardinian theater, such as that of the Spanish Golden Age. As his quote indicates above, his research examines the theater of Sardinia in its cultural context, while also highlighting the originality of these Sardinian authors and dramatists rooted in the culture of the island. Throughout the course of this study, Bullegas has proved to be an invaluable source for my research.

⁴⁰ Lilliu, Giovanni. “Al tempo dei nuraghi.” *La società in Sardegna nei secoli*. Torino: ERI – Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1967. 19-30. Print.

⁴¹ The four *giudicati sardi* in this period were Cagliari (S), Arborea (Central Sardinia), Logudoro (NW) and Gallura (NE).

independence, even if it lasted just a brief period of time.⁴² One of the most telling signs that fighting among these tribes was quite common are the architectural remains known as *i nuraghi*.⁴³ These architectural structures are most identified with Sardinia and still today numbering close to 7,000 on the island. They served as fortified living quarters and, in some cases, even as fortresses, during this relatively volatile period often characterized by intertribal feuding. This period in Sardinian history is significant because of the cultural implications that will resurface over and over again in the years that follow. Lilliu raises two very interesting points regarding the structure of Sardinian society during the Nuragic period and how it laid the groundwork for the Sardinian response to outside invasion in the future. He explains,

Nel modello sociale a gruppo chiuso e compatto, fortemente antagonista e intransigente nella difesa dei valori della tribù concepita come ‘popolo’ autonomo e libero, noi possiamo trovare la spiegazione della lunga e tenace resistenza opposta ai Cartaginesi prima e poi ai Romani dalle popolazioni preistoriche della Sardegna [...] È in esso la sorgente anche di una certa Sardegna sempre ‘resistente e ribelle’ (Lilliu, “Ai tempi dei nuraghi” 28).

It is because of this structure of society in the Nuragic period that the Sardinian people were so resistant to the presence of foreign powers. This is the reaction that we will see to the Carthaginians in the 6th century A.D., the Romans in the 3rd century A.D., and the Aragonese

⁴² The age of the *giudicati* came to a close when the Sardinians were forced to seek the aid of the Pisans and the Genovese to defend themselves against threats of Arab invasion. “Nel 1014 una parte della Sardegna fu invasa da un esercito musulmano guidato da Mogehid, signore delle Baleari; in aiuto dei Sardi vennero allora le repubbliche marinare di Pisa e di Genova, che, allontanata la minaccia araba, intrattennero con l’isola proficui rapporti commerciali.” (13) Casula, Francesco. “La Sardegna nella sua storia.” *Breve storia della Sardegna*. Torino: ERI- Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1969. 7-25. Print.

⁴³ In a chapter of the book *Breve storia della Sardegna*, Ercole Contu, responsible for the chapter “La Sardegna del tempo dei nuraghi” describes the structure of the *nuraghi* as follows “La forma più semplice e più comune di nuraghe è quella costituita da una torre troncoconica, una specie di secchio rovesciato. La muratura è fatta da grossi blocchi senza altro legame che il peso stesso dei materiali. All’interno della torre è un vano circolare, cioè una camera ...” (45-6).

in the early 14th century, just to name a few examples. The other observation made by Lilliu is how this social structure planted the seed for “la negazione necessaria storicamente di quella attitudine ‘nazionale’ che la Sardegna non riuscì mai a condurre a compimento” (Lilliu, “Ai tempi dei nuraghi” 29). The division on the island and this attitude of every tribe or geographical region for itself resurfaces during the period of the *giudicati* and in the 17th century when Sassari and Cagliari were fighting for primacy in the eyes of the Church.

The first foreign rulers on the island were the Phoenicians (850 – 550 B.C.) and then later, the Carthaginians (509 – 238 B.C.).⁴⁴ Because of Sardinia’s geographical location, it was a premier site for expansion. The arrival of the Phoenicians on the island can be dated to roughly 850 B.C. and the motive for their settling in Sardinia was business related and not a result of their desire to take over and conquer. Sardinia was considered a new source of materials and resources for the Phoenicians. Having formed colonies in Nora, Sulcis, Tharros, Karalis, Bitia, in addition to other smaller settlements throughout the island, the Phoenicians were able to sell their goods peacefully among the indigenous people.⁴⁵ At first, there was a relatively friendly relationship established between the indigenous Sardinians and the Phoenician merchants; however, during the 6th century B.C. they were joined by the Carthaginians who took control of the island by force. In Giuseppa Tanda’s contribution “Dalla preistoria alla storia” to Brigaglia’s volume, *Storia della Sardegna*, she describes this

⁴⁴ The dates for the Phoenician and Carthaginian rules on the island are taken from: *Storia della Sardegna*. Ed. Manlio Brigaglia. Cagliari: Edizioni Della Torre, 1995. Print. For a very detailed and also approachable introduction to Sardinian history, this book is very helpful. A chapter is dedicated to each period in Sardinian history and each chapter begins with a timeline of the most important historical and cultural events.

⁴⁵ It is through the settling of these colonies that Sardinia sees for the first time “la vera e avanzata formazione urbana sulle coste, mentre nel resto del territorio continuerà l’aggregazione in comunità di villaggio coerente alla struttura sociale tribale” (Lilliu, *La storia della Sardegna* 35).

period after the Carthaginians' arrival as follows, "Con il dominio militare e lo sfruttamento economico instaurati (la Sardegna era diventata fornitrice importante di grano per Cartagine, lo sarà anche per Roma), si sfaldò nell'aspetto materiale la civiltà dei nuraghi e cominciò la deculturazione forzata" (72).⁴⁶ The Carthaginians exploited all the natural resources on the island and monopolized the commercial activity. This is not the last time in Sardinian history that the island's location will render it a target for occupation nor is it the last time they will experience this type of exploitation of resources on their shores, as we will see with the arrival of the Pisans and the Genovese and later the Aragonese and the Castilians. And while there was some interaction between the Carthaginians and the indigenous people of the island resulting in the *civiltà sardo-punica*, many of these Sardinian tribes moved inward to the central mountainous regions to avoid such interaction (Tanda 72). The rule of the Carthaginians did not last long in Sardinia and just after nearly 300 years, they found themselves in a vulnerable situation with the Romans.

Shortly after the end of the First Punic War, in the midst of a Carthaginian mercenary revolt and after an invitation to act by these same rebelling mercenaries, the Romans took control of the island in 238 B.C. The Carthaginians, already weakened from the revolt, were not able to resist and therefore the Romans were able to take control of the coastal cities, such as Carales, Nora, Bithia, Sulci, and also some smaller centers such as Tharros, Cornus and Olbia (Meloni 71).⁴⁷ What the Romans found on the island upon their arrival were two entirely different realities and two groups of people. In the coastal cities "viveva una

⁴⁶ Tanda, Giuseppa. "Dalla preistoria alla storia." *Storia della Sardegna*. Ed. Manlio Brigaglia. Cagliari: Edizioni Della Torre, 1995. 25-74. Print.

⁴⁷Meloni, Piero. "Dalla conquista romana alla fine della repubblica." *La società in Sardegna nei secoli*. Torino: ERI – Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1967. 71-82. Print.

popolazione mista di Sardi e di Punici, di vinti e di vincitori ormai profondamente unificati sotto le istituzioni , la lingua, la religione di Cartagine, le quali avrebbero continuato a sussistere ancora per molti secoli dopo la conquista romana” (Meloni 77). In the mountainous regions were the indigenous people of Sardinia that viewed the Romans as invaders of their land and began nearly 130 years of revolts and rebellion against them in the hopes of gaining their independence once again. The Romans were able to overpower and gain control of the people in the coastal towns by 215 B.C., when the army of Ampsicora was defeated by the militia of T. Manilius Torquatus at Cornus. It was not until 111 B.C. that the inland resistance by the indigenous Sardinians was defeated thanks to a military campaign led by Marcus Cecilius Metellus on behalf of the Romans. After 127 years of continuous fighting and rebellion, the island finally experienced an era of peace and prosperity.⁴⁸ It is during this period that the arrival and spread of Christianity on the island.

The Arrival of Christianity in Sardinia

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when Christianity reached the island because of a scarcity of documentation. The documentation that does exist is in the form of “una notevole quantità di sicuri indizi monumentali e tre documenti letterari che ci attestano la presenza del cristianesimo nei primi secoli” (Filia 38). The structures referenced by Damiano Filia are a Christian cemetery in Cagliari in southern Sardinia, a Christian hypogeum near Bonorva around Sassari in the northwest, the remains of catacombs in Sulcis, Forum Traiani and

⁴⁸ For more information on the arrival of the Romans on the island of Sardinia and the resulting roughly 130 years of revolts, see also: Mastino, Atilio. “La Sardegna romana.” *Storia della Sardegna*. Ed. Manlio Brigaglia. Cagliari: Edizioni Della Torre, 1995. 75 - 130. Print.

Tharros, and some inscriptions that include religious symbols and biblical scenes (Filia 38). The problem with this type of evidence is the lack of a clear date. What is certain is the most unlikely source that brought Christianity to the island. As Lorenzo Manconi states in his book *La Chiesa in Sardegna dalle origini a oggi*, “La buona novella arrivò in Sardegna per mezzo di ebrei convertiti, di marinai, mercanti, militari, schiavi, esiliati” (8). The earliest Christian communities were found in the more easily reached coastal cities. For centuries, these coastal towns were subject to the *ultimi arrivati* on the island, whether that be new foreign powers or in this case, deported Christian missionaries. It was more difficult to penetrate the interior regions of the island that remained pagan until Pope Gregory I, commonly known as Gregory the Great, made it his mission to evangelize the people living there.

The spread of Christianity on the island was without a doubt aided by the presence of the Romans. After 127 years of rebellion and revolt, under the Romans, Sardinia enjoyed a period of great peace and prosperity in addition to the benefits of the Roman colonization of the island. In the opening chapter of the book *Breve storia della Sardegna*, Francesco Casula describes this period stating, “Furono costruiti strade, ponti ed acquedotti; nelle città, aumentate di numero ed elevate al rango di municipi, sorsero i grandi edifici pubblici” (Casula, “La Sardegna nella sua storia” 10). Filia explains the purpose of this construction stating that, “Le grandi vie consolari avevano questo scopo politico-militare per il rapido movimento delle legioni, pronte a reprimere qualsiasi tentativo di rivolta o invasione nelle provincie, ma erano altresì necessarie per la penetrazione della civiltà romana, favorivano in alto grado l’agricoltura e il commercio e introducevano nei paesi conquistati usi e costumi della vita romana” (Filia vol.1, 45). This was the beginning of a very slow process of

Romanization that in the end aided the spread of the new religion because of how well the island was now connected.

Even with the advancements made on the island thanks to the Romans, it did not change how the island was perceived by the surrounding territories, still viewed as the destination for those exiled, condemned and deported. In his *Storia della Sardegna*, Evandro Putzulu even called Sardinia “la terra classica dell’esilio e della deportazione” (49) likely because of the isolation of the island, the dry climate and even the bouts of malaria that had raged through the territory. Ettore Pais, author of *Storia della Sardegna e della Corsica durante il dominio romano*, wrote, “Per la sua insularità, per il lavoro delle miniere, per la malsania, la Sardegna era una delle provincie che più delle altre era adatta per allontanare i proseliti delle nuove fedi” (178). One of the first large deportations that we know about happened in 19 B.C. when 4000 Jews were deported to Tharros, located on the bay of Oristano on the western coast. It was through a decree of Tiberius, which Filia explains, “aveva proibito le religioni di origine estera e i loro riti, primi fra questi i riti egiziani e giudaici” (Filia, vol. 1 p.46). This deportation to Sardinia led to the formation of a number of faith-based communities on the island, such as Cagliari, the first settled location of the deported Jews. This was not the last widespread deportation of the Jews. Just thirty years later, this time through a decree of Claudius, there is another that “li scacciava da Roma quali eccitatori di torbidi continui in nome del Messia” (Filia, vol. 1 p.46). So while some were forced to the island, others went voluntarily to avoid the foreseeable persecution, and others still went to the island for missionary purposes, with the hope of converting those recently deported. Manconi views the process by which Christianity spread very logical, explaining

that “prima si ebbero le comunità giudeo-cristiane, poi quelle composte di soli cristiani. Ai primi cristiani indigeni si aggiunsero col tempo quelli mandati in esilio nell’Isola” (Manconi 8). Filia agrees that the first bearers of the new religion directed their attention toward these Jewish communities spread throughout the western world.

There were incredible numbers of Christians deported to Sardinia around 150 years later in 174 A.D., a date that is often mentioned because of the degree of Marcus Aurelius. This deportation of Christians is important because of the presence of Callistus, later elected pope (221-27 A.D.).⁴⁹ Around 235 A.D. Ippolito, a well-known Roman priest, and another future pope, Ponziano, were also forced to go to the island.⁵⁰ They found themselves exiled to the island because of the Emperor Massimino II Trace who directed an edict against the heads of the local churches. Because of their presence on the island, the connection between these early Sardinian Christian communities and the Roman Church is more apparent. Francesco Alziator states, “Circa il 250 sarebbero sorte le prime chiese vescovili nelle città della costa e prima del 305 parecchie comunità cristiane avrebbero avuto il loro vescovo” (Alziator, *Storia* 21). In the closing paragraph of his opening chapter, “Origini del Cristianesimo e dell’Episcopato,” Filia outlines the accepted timeline for the arrival of Christianity on the island,

⁴⁹ The story of Callistus is an interesting one because, as Filia explains, “Questi era stato schiavo d’un tale Carporo ed avendone, second l’accusa del libello, dilapidati i beni e turbati i giudei nell’esercizio delle loro funzioni, da Fusciano prefetto di Roma fu condannato ai lavori delle miniere in Sardegna” (42). Through an interesting turn of events he was liberated by Marcia, “concubina dell’Imperatore Commodo, segretamente affiliata alla fede” (Putzulu 50), who had asked for a list of all those Christians that had been deported to the island and condemned to work in the mines. Having obtained amnesty for all those on the list from Commodus, Marcia was able to free them. Yet somehow Callisto’s name had been left off the list and it wasn’t until he finished begging on his hands and knees in tears that he too was able to receive his freedom.

⁵⁰ In Antonio Francesco Spada’s first volume of *Storia della Sardegna Cristiana e dei suoi Santi*, he summarizes the story of Ippolito, that after the election of Pope Callisto “non volle sottostare a tale nomina, si ribellò e si fece a sua volta eleggere dai propri partigiani vescovo di Roma, divenendo il primo antipapa della storia” (10).

La Sardegna ricevette da Roma il primo seme della fede probabilmente al tramonto del primo secolo o agli inizi del secondo, e contava nuclei cristiani certi alla fine del medesimo. È molto probabile che circa il 250 esistesse qualche chiesa vescovile nelle città di costa che costituivano un punto d'irradiazione per la terraferma circostante. È pure verosimile che prima del 305 parecchie comunità cristiane avessero il loro vescovo. (Filia, vol. 1 p.58)

However, even after the spread of Christianity, Alziator is careful to note that “assai lenta fu la cristianizzazione dell'Isola” (Alziator, Storia 21). It did, however, lead to a large number of conversions, and it is during this time that the new Sardinian martyrs quickly gain importance on the island. As many scholars of this period of Sardinian history and of the Church have pointed out, it is important to keep in mind the large number of people that were sent to the island, died because of their faith, and whose names will never be known or recognized among the martyrs.

One reoccurring problem in studying the early history of Sardinia, whether that be political, literary, or religious, is the serious lack of documentation that remains, or that ever existed. Much light is shed on the situation in Sardinia late 6th and very early 7th century thanks to Pope Gregory I (590-604) because of the number of letters that he wrote about the island.⁵¹ For an island that had been very isolated, you would never know this from Pope Gregory I's ability to communicate with those in charge of the island. Sardinia was no longer under Roman rule but instead, after a period of being ruled by the Vandals (455-533 A.D.), it now found itself under the control of the Byzantines. At this time, Gregory I was at the head of the church and the majority of the towns along the Sardinian coast had already converted

⁵¹ For more information about the Pope Gregory the Great's efforts to remain in contact with the island of Sardinian and also his efforts to evangelize even the most internal zones on the island, see: Manconi, Lorenzo. *La chiesa in Sardegna dalle origini a oggi*. Cagliari: Vert Sardegna Editrice, 1981. 24-7. Print. See also: Spada, Antonio Francesco. *Storia della Sardegna Cristiana e dei suoi Santi*. 3 vols. Oristano: Editrice S'Alvure, 1994. 47-53. Print.

to Christianity. One of Gregory's primary concerns was the need to convert those living in the internal regions of Sardinia, the *Barbaricini*. Spada adds to this one area also "le popolazioni montanare della Barbagia, del Gerrei e di parte della Gallura" (vol.1 p.29). Concerned and upset about the number of pagans left in that area of Sardinia, Pope Gregory urged the religious leaders of the island to intervene. In 594 he sent one bishop, Felix, and one monk, Ciriacus, from Rome in an effort to bring Christianity to this group of people that remained rooted in the traditions of the past. In one of his letters to Zarbada, a Byzantine general who had succeeded in defeating the *barbaricini*, Pope Gregory I wrote, "Voi vi proponete di concludere la pace con i Barbaricini col patto di portarli al servizio di Cristo. Mi sono veramente compiaciuto di questa iniziativa e farò conoscere le vostre intenzioni ai serenissimi imperatori, appena a Dio piacerà" (Spada vol. 1 p. 29). In the end, it was the conversion of their leader, Ospitone, that brought about significant change. There is one known correspondence to Ospitone in which Gregory I asks for the leader's assistance. The pope wrote,

Poiché nessuno del tuo popolo è cristiano, so che tu sei migliore di tutto il tuo popolo, appunto perché tu sei cristiano. In effetti, mentre tutti i Barbaricini vivono come delle bestie prive di ragione ignorando il vero Dio e adorando gli alberi e le pietre, tu adorando il vero Dio dimostri che sei di molto superiore a tutti quanti. Ma la fede che tu hai ricevuto deve essere anche accompagnata da buone azioni, e tu devi servire Cristo in cui credi usando ciò che hai di vantaggio sugli altri: devi cioè portare a Cristo tutti quelli che potrai, facendoli battezzare ed esortandoli ad amare la vita eterna (Spada vol. 1 p. 29).

From the correspondences between Gregory and other bishops on the island, we know that he was not pleased or impressed by their efforts. He criticizes them for their lack of pastoral work, their unwillingness to go to those interior regions, in an effort to convert anyone still participating in pagan worship. The most famous recipient of the pope's criticisms was

Januarius, the bishop of Cagliari at the time, who was chastised for being “arrogante, litigioso, avaro” and because of reports of him taking money from the people of his church under false pretenses. Januarius and stories like his are important because they document a clergy in charge on the island and yet unqualified to care for the spiritual well-being of the newly converted. Manconi describes the clergy saying, “Nell’Isola il clero lasciava molto a desiderare. Gli interessi materiali prevalevano su quelli spirituali” (26). And this is a problem that did not diminish but instead resurfaced some 900 years later in 16th-century documents.

The documentation and information that is available thanks to the letters of Gregory the Great eventually ceased and Sardinia entered a period that was almost entirely void of this type of firsthand information. It is hard to say what was happening with the spread of Christianity at that time, but it is certain is that Sardinia was under almost constant threat from the Arabs as were many other places in the Mediterranean. It is because of this constant threat that Sardinia, already organized in the four *giudicati* previously mentioned, sought the help of the Pisans and the Genovese in order to thwart these attacks. It was not long before they realized just how valuable the island was in terms of their commercial dreams.

Francesco Casula explains, “Così, dopo un’aspra battaglia, anche l’ultima e più seria minaccia araba fu scongiurata ed i continentali poterono inoltre accorgersi quanto importante fosse dal punto di vista strategico e commerciale la grande isola. Essi perciò cominciarono a stringere legami d’affari prima col giudicato di Torres, poi con quello di Cagliari, Gallura e Arborea” (85).⁵² This commercial relationship was initially advantageous to the Sardinians and increased the connection between the island and the mainland. This connection created

⁵² Casula, Francesco. “La Sardegna giudicale.” *Breve storia della Sardegna*. Torino: Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1965. 85-93. Print.

additional opportunities for the evangelization of the island. Casula continues his description, “Contemporaneamente a questo risveglio commerciale iniziava in Sardegna la penetrazione del monachesimo attraverso i benedettini di Montecassino e di San Vittore di Marsiglia,⁵³ i vallombrosani⁵⁴ e i camaldolesi,⁵⁵ che portarono alla vita religiosa sarda la forza vivificatrice della loro regola e fra il popolo il beneficio della cultura” (“La Sardegna giudicale” 86). As a result of this renewed religious presence on the island, Sardinia once again steps out of a period of silence. New documents from this time are extremely helpful in putting together the history.⁵⁶

It was through the actions of the Church that Sardinia passed into the hands of the Aragonese. In a power play to gain control of Sicily, Pope Boniface VIII named Jaume II of Aragon the new King of Sardinia and Corsica on April 4, 1297. In exchange for the title of the King of Sardinia and Corsica, Jaume II renounced his position of power in Sicily. This proved to be a nominal title alone because as Evandro Putzulu recaps, “In pratica le cose andarono diversamente, perché la Sicilia si ribellò al re d’Aragona e si proclamò indipendente, la Corsica rimase sotto Genova e la Sardegna sotto la signoria di Pisa, del

⁵³ According to Manconi, they arrived in Sardinia around 1089 from France. He describes them as being “al centro di una vasta rete di interessi economici e commerciali. Erano trafficanti e ricchi; perciò era natural che le loro ricchezze facessero gola” (38).

⁵⁴ Manconi explains that there is very little information on these monks, and that information that we do have is very vague. He does say that they seemed to expand in spread into the *giudicati* of Torres and Arborea between 1128-76 (40).

⁵⁵ According to Manconi, they arrived in Sardinia between 1105 and 1112, initially in Torres and then they continued to move into the other *giudicati*.

⁵⁶ These documents have been very important for the study of the early vernaculars of the island and they tended to account for the activities of the churches. One very well-know example of such documents are called *condaghes* and they were written in order to “registrare le vicende patrimoniali di un determinato monastero e [...] promulgare in modo più o meno solenne un preciso atto del giudice o di privati a favore degli stessi monasteri” (Turtas, Pregare in sardo 59).

giudice d'Arborea e di alcune famiglie liguri, come i Doria, i Malaspina e gli Spinola, nessuno dei quali aveva riconosciuto la cessione fatta da Bonifacio VIII al re d'Aragona” (104).⁵⁷ If Jaume II was going to gain control of the island it was clear that he would have to do so by force. The power play of Pope Boniface VIII would not be the last. In the following 25 years, Hugo II, *giudice* of Arborea, saw his opportunity to rid himself of Pisan control. He envisioned using the Aragonese to rid the island of the Pisans and hoped subsequently to seize the opportunity to expand his own territory. Hugo II quickly repented for this decision because the realities of the Aragonese presence on the island were far different than what he had expected. Putzulu describes them as “povera per la politica imperialistica” (106) and explains how they used the land of Sardinia to compensate generously “uffici e [...] i baroni catalano-aragonesi, i mercanti e tutti coloro che avevano partecipato alla campagna di conquista” (106). Hugo II is famously quoted as saying, “I Sardi si attendevano un re e si erano ritrovati con un tiranno in ogni villaggio” (Putzulu 106). This began another period of around 150 years of fighting and revolts that did not end until May 29th 1478 at the Battle of Macomer, which saw the defeat of the Sardinians and marked the end of their resistance to the Iberian rulers. In the second volume of *Storia della Sardegna Cristiana e dei suoi Santi*, Spada describes the aftermath of those years of resistance, explaining that “I suoi abitanti si erano ridotti a meno della metà, centinaia di villaggi erano scomparsi, molte iniziative economiche, culturali e religiose erano state abbandonate e il territorio si era inselvaticato” (Spada 141). In his book, *Sardegna catalano-aragonese: profilo storico*, Francesco Cesare Casula echoes the opinions of Spada and Putzulu and adds,

⁵⁷ Putzulu, Evandro. “La Sardegna nel primo periodo della dominazione aragonese.” *Breve storia della Sardegna*. Torino: ERI – Edizione RAI Radiotelevisione Italia. 103 – 111. Print.

Abbiamo raccontato come alla Sardegna giudiciale e comunale (e signorile) si sostituì, dal 1323-1420, la Sardegna iberica reale e feudale la quale, da qualunque punto si guardi, era fundamentalmente basata su una conquista violenta, ed i suoi abitanti erano considerati sempre dei vinti, almeno per tutto il periodo della egemonia catalano-aragonese. Di conseguenza, il governo impiantato dai vincitori non teneva minimamente conto dei popoli e delle loro relative libertà giudicali o comunali. (127)

This description of the conditions during the better part of the 14th century, makes it clear why the Sardinians were so hostile to the Aragonese on the island.

It is important to note how this description differs from that of certain Spanish scholars, such as Joaquin Arce in his book *España en Cerdeña*, whose research is dedicated to this period of exchange in Iberian and Sardinian history. Arce believes that the period of Spanish rule in Sardinia is judged unfairly and that a number of positive things were the result of Spanish influence. Some of the contributions that Arce cites are “la contribución de character cultural” (Arce 213), such as contributions to the literature, printing on the island, in the founding of churches, confraternities, schools, and the undeniable influence of the Iberian languages (Arce 213). He admits that the contributions of the Spanish should be discussed and debated but they cannot be ignored in their entirety. Arce’s comments are in response to a few Sardinian scholars such as Siotto-Pintor who was quoted as saying, “Carattere essenziale del ministro di Spagna fu la negligenza” (Arce 206) and who described the Spanish government at the time as “l’impotenza spagnola” (Arce 206). Casula was not nearly as forgiving of the Spanish as Arce, and he gave a very thought-provoking assessment of the Aragonese rule on the island, “Vogliamo dunque concludere [...]che l’avvento degli Aragonesi nell’isola non è da ritenersi né trionfo né sconfitta, ma la dolorosa nascita della Sardegna di oggi” (Casula, 128). As this study continues, the Spanish contributions to Sardinian culture mentioned by Arce will be revisited.

The next phase in Sardinian history began with the union of the two Iberian crowns of Castile and Aragon through the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. This was the era of the “Reyes católicos” during which a number of very important religious events occurred, such as the introduction of the Spanish Inquisition on the island in 1492, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and the arrival of the Jesuits on the island. Because this was also a peaceful period on the island politically, my focus will be on the religious changes of the time as they had a significant effect on Sardinian culture and the people.⁵⁸

One of the primary problems among the Church of the time was the ill-prepared bishops that were, in theory, responsible for the Sardinian diocese. Given the way in which these bishops were chosen for their posts, it is not difficult to understand why Sardinia saw a decline in how well the Church functioned. Spada explains, “Durante la dominazione dell’Aragona, i re tennero sempre conto del vantaggio politico derivante dell’aver vescovi a loro fedeli e fecero di tutto perché alle sedi isolate venissero destinati ecclesiastici degni della loro fiducia e possibilmente di origine iberica” (Spada vol. 2 p. 154). This election process did not change once Ferdinand was in power. The situation that resulted was not at all beneficial for the Church in Sardinia because the work of the bishops was practically non-existent given that many of them did not even reside there. Turtas explains this situation as follows, “Per molti decenni continuò ancora il loro assenteismo, con le inevitabili conseguenze di decadimento nella cultura e nello stile di vita del clero, come pure nella

⁵⁸ It should be noted that there were two attempts by foreign powers to invade the island during this time but both of them resulted in nothing. The threats were by the French in both instances. Both threats were fought off not by the Spanish army, but instead by an army of men of the island that band together to defend themselves.

qualità dell'istruzione e della pratica religiosa nel popolo" (107).⁵⁹ As we saw in the 6th century when Pope Gregory the Great wrote to chastise the bishops in Sardinia for not engaging in their pastoral duties, a similar situation arose in the Church in the 14th-16th centuries.

There are two very famous criticisms of the level of the clergy's preparedness during the 16th century that come from Segismundo Arquer and the Archbishop of Cagliari, Parragués de Castillejo. Arquer, when describing the clergy, was quoted as saying, "Sacerdotes indoctissimi sunt, ut rarus inter eos est, sicut et apud monachos, inveniatur, qui latinam intelligat linguam. Habent suas concubinas maioremque dant operam procreandis filiis quam legendis libris" (Arce 99). Similarly Parragués de Castillejo commented that "La ignorancia en general es tan grande que no hai clérigo en esta mi Diócesis que entienda nada de lo que lee ni sepa qué cosa es ser clérigo" (Arce 99-100). Both men were known to have no problems expressing exactly what they thought. When further describing the situation of the Sardinian clergy, Parragués de Castillejo added,

I chierici sardi avevano vissuto per molto tempo nel disordine; che se tutti quelli che lo meritavano per delitti, ignoranza o incapacità fossero stati sospesi o tolti di mezzo, a malapena sarebbe rimasto nell'Isola un chierico; che i frati erano i più scandalosi; che c'era da meravigliarsi che nell'Isola vi fossero ancora cristiani perché non v'era chierico o prelato che conoscesse la legge di Dio. (Manconi 66)

Given the severity of their criticisms, it is not surprising that Arquer found himself in the middle of controversy during the time of the Spanish Inquisition. He is easily the most

⁵⁹ Turtas, Raimondo. "La Chiesa sarda dal periodo spagnolo all'Ottocento." *Storia della Sardegna. 4: dal 1700 al 1900*. Roma; Bari: Editori Laterza. 106-119. Print.

recognizable Sardinian condemned by the Inquisition, having been falsely accused of heresy by his political enemies, and eventually burned at the stake on June 4, 1571.⁶⁰

Steps to ensure the instruction and preparedness of the clergy were one of the many results of the Council of Trent in which a number of Sardinian bishops participated, though not in its entirety because of their unexplainable absence at the start of it. These steps included “l’istituzione dei seminari, la frequenza annuale dei sinodi diocesani e le visite pastorali alle parrocchie” (Spada, vol. 2 p. 163). The third recommendation referenced in the quote became one aspect of the bishop’s job that was more easily carried out thanks to the Council’s regulation that no longer allowed the trend of absenteeism and instead required not only residency on the island, but more specifically in the geographical area assigned. Another important development approximately half way through the Council of Trent was the arrival of the Jesuits on the island. The archbishops of both Cagliari and Sassari, Baldassarre de Heredia and Salvatore Alpeus, respectively, wrote to Ignatius of Loyola inquiring about the possibility of the Jesuits’ help with the education of both the young people and the clergy. Shortly thereafter, the Jesuits arrived in Sardinia and began to found colleges throughout the island, “a Sassari nel 1559, a Cagliari nel 1564, ad Iglesias nel 1580, ad Alghero nel 1588 e in varie altre località nei secoli seguenti” (Turtas, Pregare 91).

In addition to the role they played in education, Jesuit priest Raimondo Turtas raises a very interesting point about the lost opportunity to promote the Sardinian language that shortly after the arrival of the Jesuits. In Sardinia, one of the island’s vernaculars, Catalan or

⁶⁰ For an explanation of the false accusations against Arquer, Spada writes, “Nonostante le sue dichiarazioni di fede cattolica, fu condannato al rogo perché il tribunale prestò fede ai suoi accusatori. Questi, secondo alcuni, agivano spinti da motivi politici, da interesse o per odio e liti tra famiglie. Ancora oggi non sappiamo niente di certo e la vicenda dell’Arquer resta oscura” (Spada, vol 2 p.191).

Castilian were spoken depending on the context and the speaker, therefore language always represented a small issue to be resolved, which the Jesuits recognized upon their arrival. Turtas uses the example of Sassari in the 1500s because it represented a linguistic situation in which five languages were being used regularly. Those languages were *il sassarese, l'italiano, il sardo logudorese, il catalano e il castigliano*. Anyone of these could have become the language used by the Jesuits in their colleges, because as Turtas explains, “una regola delle costituzioni dell’ordine prescriveva che, ovunque fosse stato destinato per svolgere la sue attività, il gesuita doveva apprendere quanto prima la lingua del posto e servirsene nei suoi ministri (predicazione, confessioni, esercizi spirituali, insegnamento, ecc)” (Turtas, Pregare 91). This was an opportunity for those on the island to assert one of the island vernaculars as the language used in the schools. Instead the important families on the island preferred that their children learned Castilian, given that it was the language of the ruling class and therefore carried a prestige with it that outweighed the Sardinian vernaculars. In pointing out what a missed opportunity this was for the Sardinian language, Turtas explains, “Se il sardo fosse stato utilizzato nell’insegnamento, sarebbe stato ‘costretto’ a trasformarsi in lingua di cultura scritta invece che restarsene confinato nell’oralità tra le plebi analfabete” (Turtas, Pregare 92).

The first part of the chapter presented an overview of Sardinian history, both political and religious, because it is indispensable to understanding the changing culture on the island. As a result of periods of foreign political control, the spread of Christianity, and Sardinia’s exit from isolation and entrance into the Italian and then Iberian spheres, we see the island develop in a number of ways. The level of documentation varies depending on the period in

history and this obviously hinders the amount of information that scholars are able to draw upon. In the earliest times, there were brief periods of abundant written documentations regarding what was happening on the island, such as the letters of Pope Gregory I, who maintained relatively constant contact with the heads of the Sardinian church. That information just as quickly disappeared when the island found itself again under the threat of attack, for example in the 8th and 9th centuries, when there was often the threat of Arab invasion along the coastal towns.

In the 15th century, literary production first in Sardinian and then also in the Iberian languages begins to flourish. The introduction of Castilian is aided by the fact that it is no longer only in the political sphere, but also in the schools run by the Jesuits at the request of the noble Sardinians who wished that their children to be well-versed in the language of the ruling class. The next chapter examines a selection of the hagiographic works from the 15th and 17th centuries as it was a popular genre at that time. In these texts we see the dramatic possibilities of the earliest work and the plays dedicated to the very same saints that developed out of the early examples. Through an analysis of two works, I will point out a number of ways in which Sardinian theater developed and flourished because of its contact with Spain. Before looking specifically at the literary and dramatic hagiographic examples chosen, I would first like to discuss the importance of this genre and the roles that the saints played in the spread of Christianity on the island.

The Importance of the Martyrs and the Saints to the Island's Concept of Christianity

For written documentation of the presence of Christianity on the island, Filia cites the *Martyrologium* from the 5th century because it contains a number of references to Sardinian martyrs who gave their lives for the faith before the year 305. In his chapter “*L’agiografia*,” Alziator recalls that a number of early Sardinian manuscripts containing works of hagiography that were destroyed in a fire at Cagliari’s *Archivio dell’Arcivescovado*. Therefore what remains are simply medieval references to or reworkings of these original works. One example of a work lost to us that contained very important information on Sardinian hagiography is *Dei martiri e santi sardi* written by Giov. Battista Fara, most well known for his historical writings in his work *De rebus sardis* (published in 1580). According to Filia, the oldest known Sardinian hagiographer is Giovanni Arca, author of *De sanctis Sardiniae libri tres*, a collection of *passioni* about the lives of the Sardinian saints that dates to 1598.

The two works written by Fara and Arca reveal the focus of the islanders on their own national martyrs.⁶¹ “La Chiesa sarda, fiera dei suoi santi e dei suoi martiri, anch’essa si studiò di tramandare ai fedeli dell’avvenire le gesta di coloro che erano vissuti nel nome di Cristo” (Alziator, *Storia* 55). Similarly, in his *Storia della Sardegna*, Giuseppe Manno explained, “Ciò che maggiormente vale a dimostrare essere stata nei primi tempi del cristianesimo bandita nella Sardegna la novella legge ed essersene altamente radicato lo zelo nel cuore degli isolani, è il ricordo dei molti martiri i quali nelle prime del pari e nelle estreme persecuzioni sparsero ivi il loro sangue” (Manno, vol. 1 p. 250). Sardinian hagiography chose

⁶¹ This call to promote and honor the saints coming out of the island is one that was present still in the 20th-century when the *Concilio Plenario Sardo I* at Oristano in 1924 declared, “Si raccomanda una particolare devozione verso i santi della nostra isola, nonché verso i propri santi protettori e i patroni delle parrocchie e delle diocesi” (Turtas, *Pregare* p. 128).

not to look to very well-known continental martyrs and saints for stories to pass on to its faithful. The most notable martyrs and saints of the island's hagiographic literature are: "Saturno, Gavino, Proto, Gianuario, Efisio, Giovenale, Lussorio, Cesselo, Camerino, Antioco e Giorgio" (Alziator, Storia 55). For a number of these saints, one also finds cults and churches dedicated to them and often claiming to have their relics.

One of the two hagiographic works presented in the next chapter was written in the first half of the 1600s, thus the political and cultural situation in Sardinia during the 17th century is very pertinent when considering the increase in liturgical drama during this century. According to Alziator, "Il Seicento ha per la Sardegna una fisionomia tipicamente spagnola: cessato ogni influsso del Rinascimento italiano, esaurite o isterilite le energie indigene, cessata ogni iniziativa originale, l'intero secolo si colora di luci ispaniche" (Alziator, Storia 135). The beginning of the Seicento is characterized by a cultural rebirth, with new attention being paid to the importance of education. This led many young people to Italy to study in Italian universities until these same opportunities were provided for them in Sardinia. Marino Carrillo, a man sent by Felipe III of Spain to Sardinia to observe the customs, culture and life of the people on the island, reported, "Oy viven, y he tratado en este Reyno con hombres muy doctos, assi en Drecho, como en Theologia y letras humanas de exemplar vida y costumbres, assi seculares como Ecclesiasticos," (Alziator, Storia 137). It is truly a century in which the norm was the imitation of the Spanish, including the use of the Castilian language in Sardinian literature and drama.

In addition to examining the cultural atmosphere of the Seicento in Sardinia, it is important to also examine at what stage Christianity was during this period. In the introduction to *Testi di drammatica religiosa della Sardegna*, Alziator explains that,

Il clima della Controriforma, che aveva pervaso la Sardegna attraverso la penetrazione capillare degli ordini religiosi, il diffondersi della mentalità spagnola eminentemente dogmatica e acritica e la naturale religiosità dei Sardi, sempre speranzosi di ottenere dall'aiuto divino ciò che non ebbero mai dall'aiuto del prossimo, sono le componenti che creano il terreno ideale per il diffondersi del teatro religioso. (14)

The importance of religion during this period is apparent from the behavior of the religious community and the so-called “gara di reliquie” [war of relics] (Alziator, Testi 13) between the archbishop of Cagliari, Monsignor d’Esquivel, and the archbishop of Sassari, Manca Cedrelles. This dispute began originally over “il titolo di Primate di Sardegna e di Corsica” and resulted in each bishop’s efforts to find ancient relics that would serve as an “indice di cristiana gloria” (Alziator, Testi 13). The war of the relics is a clear indication of the religious fervor that was typical not just in Sardinia during the 1600’s but around Western Europe. Spada describes this period by saying, “Ci fu un periodo abbastanza lungo in cui gli arcivescovi sardi, quasi tutti spagnoli di origini, lottarono l’un contro l’altro per affermare il primato della propria sede su tutta l’Isola. È questa una pagina triste e umiliante della nostra storia ecclesiastica, spiegabile solo nel clima di meschina vanità caratteristico dello spagnolismo che aleggiava su tutta la società sarda” (Spada, vol.2 p. 193). Spada further explains this critique, “La meschina e vuota ambizione spagnolesca dei titoli, creando un forte disagio nella gerarchia, impedì che essa si dedicasse con maggior impegno e unitariamente ai problemi pastorali e sociali del popolo e del clero” (197).

Because of the war of the relics and the intense rivalry that had developed between Cagliari and Sassari, both of which sought to gain religious supremacy for political reasons, there was a mad rush to find any and every inscription or stone indicating the burial place of a martyr. These were used to increase their status and the importance of their churches. In this period of the Church's history, Spada identifies a renewed interest in the cult of the saints that was called for by the Council of Trent and it was something that was happening not only in Sardinia but in many Catholic countries. The desperate need to find relics to validate their churches led to a number of cases of mistaken identity. Filia identifies about some of the most common confusions, particularly with the inscriptions found. One of the primary errors has to do with the letters *B.M.*, found often times in the catacombs close to Christian burials. In the mind of a 17th-century Sardinian bishop waging the war of relics, this *B.M.*, common to secular tomb inscriptions throughout Roman times, could only mean one thing, *Beatus Martyr*. However the actual meaning of these two letters, according to other epigraphic samples, was "*Bonae Memoriae*" or "*Beatae Memoriae*" or "*Bene Merenti*" (Filia vol.1 61), none of which indicate that the person was a martyr. Another confusion presented by Spada was mistaking palm branches carved in the catacombs as a sign of the remains of a martyr when "non erano altro che semplici segni di defunti morti con la fede in Cristo" (Spada, vol. 2 p. 199).

Even with the suspicious identification of the holy relics that the bishops, this phenomenon is indicative of the religious fervor and the pride linked to the saints and the martyrs. In regard to this enthusiasm in Sardinia, J. Arce writes, "Lo curioso de esta estraña manifestación de fe desorbitada es que tiene en España su exacto paralelo. Es el mismo

espíritu que originó los *Falsos Cronicones*, esos fingidos relatos del siglo XVII [...] que se proponían exalter glorias locales, creando nuevos santos o pretendiendo demostrar la antigüedad venerable de ciertas tradiciones piadosas” (Arce 82-3). It is not at all strange that the same phenomenon of erroneous information existed simultaneously in Spain and Sardinia because it is just another example of the intertwined culture of the two nations. Another result of this period in time is the increased production of hagiographic works.

An Overview of Hagiography

Before presenting a few of the most important hagiographic works of Sardinia, it is useful to note some norms that characterize hagiography. The qualities and characteristics that designate someone as “holy” and worthy of being identified as a saint are not precise, but instead vary depending on the region and the time period. These characteristics provide someone of today’s age with an insight into the mindset and the social structure of various eras of the past. As Thomas Head explains in one of his many articles on medieval hagiography, “Sanctity is in many important respects a changing social construct, rather than an immutable theological ideal. Hagiography was formed by and in turn helped to form the history of the changing ideals of sanctity” (Head “Hagiography”).⁶² Even though this concept is dependent upon the era and the geographic location, there are certain generally accepted ideas of sanctity that seem to stand the test of time. Head explains, “A holy person

⁶² Thomas Head is a professor in the Department of History at Hunter College and The Graduate Center of City University of New York. He is a contributing editor to the section of ORB dedicated to Hagiography. His personal website reads, “As editor of the hagiography section of ORB (the *On-Line Reference Book of Medieval Studies*), Tom has made available a set of general articles and detailed bibliographies relating to the study of hagiography and the cult of the saints in medieval Christianity.” This extensive and very well put together on-line reference section on hagiography was incredibly helpful in my study. Please see the bibliography for information about the *On-Line Reference Book of Medieval Studies*. The following link takes you directly to the ORB page dedicated to hagiography: < <http://www.the-orb.net/encyclp/religion/hagiography/hagindex.html>>.

is one who serves as an exemplar of virtue and an embodiment of sacred power. The holy person lives according to the highest ideals of a religious tradition” (“Holy”). An even simpler definition would be a person thought to have received immediate entrance into the kingdom of heaven after their earthly death, on account of the way in which they lived their life. These ordinary people who did extraordinary things with their life in terms of their religion were singled out and used as a model of behavior for the public.

Hagiography provided the means by which the Church and its clergy were able to publicize the deeds of these common individuals chosen to serve as models of spiritual behavior. Hagiography, as understood by the etymological breakdown of this word, means “*hagios*” = holy and “*graphie*” = writing. This broad term can refer to any type of Christian literature relating to the saints. In general the type of literature that comes to mind immediately when thinking of hagiography concerns the stories of the lives of the saints; however, it is important to remember that hagiography is not limited to these *vitae*. Instead, a wide variety of genres, such as miracle stories, accounts of the relics, papal bulls about canonization, visions, etc. also fall under the umbrella of the term hagiography. Here I would like to focus on the lives of the saints, *vitae sanctorum*, and their importance.

A hagiographic work was never written with the intention of providing a strict biographical account of the facts in the life of a particular saint. Instead, the intention of each *vita* was to provide an example and a model of a Christian life. In his introduction to the book *Medieval Saints’ Lives*, Duncan Robertson explains, “The announced program of a hagiographical text is to ‘edify,’ that is to say: to teach doctrine, inspire veneration of the saint, and prompt the reader to imitation. Saints’ lives call imperatively for response in

feeling and action, something more than reading as that activity is understood today” (17). In a similar explanation, Gregory of Tours (6th century AD) known as the writer of the work *Vita Patrum*, wrote, “I have recently discovered information about those who have been raised to heaven by the merit of their blessed conduct here below, and I thought that their way of life, which is known to us through reliable sources, could strengthen the Church[...]because the life of the saints[...]encourages the minds of listeners to follow their example” (Head “Hagiography”). A 9th-century hagiographer, Bertholdus of Micy, the writer of the *Life of St. Maximinus of Micy*, adds, “For what has been said and done by the saints ought not be concealed in silence. God’s love provided their deeds to serve as a norm of living for the men of their own times as well as of those years which have since passed; they are now to be imitated piously by those who are faithful to Christ” (Head “Hagiography”). Each one of these texts was didactic because it hoped to portray each saint as a model of Christian virtue. They were written to inspire the listeners to imitate the example of saint’s life, just as the saints had tried to imitate the example of the life of Christ and the lives of the saints that came before them.

This idea of imitation between the saints, as well as the authors of their *vitae*, can be seen in the similarities between many hagiographic accounts. Robertson cites a quotation by James Earl who said, “When you’ve read one saint’s life you’ve read them all” (25). This opinion is indicative of the observation that there is a large amount of repetition present in the genre of hagiography. Robertson clarifies, “Visibly, hagiographers borrowed plots, characterizations and whole pages of wording from one another, leading scholars to deplore their insincerity, their ‘plagiarisms’ and ‘lack of critical eye’” (25). It is important to

remember that the issue of plagiarism was not as important in the Middle Ages as it without a doubt is today. It was very common for one writer to follow the example of another, even when that meant creating the exact same plot and including very similar characters. Head explains that often the hagiographers “drew upon a large body of traditional and somewhat standardized stories about the saints which are known to modern scholars as *topoi* or types. Such stories were borrowed, sometimes with little change, from earlier saints’ lives and were intended to convey a moral message rather than historically accurate information” (“Hagiography”).

This quotation by Thomas Head raises two interesting points that are often discussed in hagiography: *topoi* and how accurate these tales are from a historical point of view. There are a variety of *topoi*, in terms of the people written about, the miracles they perform, the sufferings they endured, their martyrdom, etc., typical to hagiographic writing. For example, the saints whose stories are chosen to be told are often a martyr, a young beautiful virgin, an abbot, a repenting former prostitute or a hermit. Another *topos* is struggle between the pagan beliefs and the Christian religion, whether that struggle be between a father and his daughter, who refuses to worship the pagan idols as she is asked, as in the case of St. Catherine, or between any non-Christian emperor and a pretty young virgin, who is forced to continually rebuke the advances of this emperor who desires to marry her, as in the case of St. Margaret. The results of the saints’ unwillingness to denounce their faith led to similar fates, their martyrdom. They are often martyred by the same means, whether that be beheading, burning at the stakes or some sort of medieval torture machine. In his essay on “The typology of medieval hagiography,” Régis Boyer takes this idea of *topoi* in hagiographical literature a

step farther when he suggests the typical nine step scheme to each saint's life. He does not suggest that every single step is present in each *vita* but proposes that in general, each text follows the following pattern: (1) the origin of the saint, (2) the saint's birth, (3) the childhood, (4) education, (5) piety, (6) martyrdom, (7) *inventio* or the discovery of his relics or his body, (8) *translatio* or the transport of his relics, and finally (9) miracles performed by the saint (Boyer 32). With all of the hagiographical *topoi* and previous examples of saints' lives composed as early as the second century AD, the authors had a large amount of information to draw upon. As Head points out, the end result of the commonality between the stories of the lives of various saints was the elimination of "the particularity of a given saint's life into a generalized type of sanctity" ("Hagiography") and it was this sanctity that was to serve as a model for the followers of Christ.

The second point raised by Thomas Head, the historical accuracy of these *vitae*, is directly linked to the previous point. As Boyer points out in his essay, time and space are not important elements for the author of a hagiographic account. In terms of the place in which the events take place, a name of a city, town or country might be mentioned to clarify where the saint was born; however, primarily the events in the life of the saint receive more attention than the place in which they took place. Boyer does note that the location of the burial of the saint and the location of his or her relics are two cases in the saint's life when location is important because they are holy locations where often a church has been constructed or where people go to pay homage to the saint. Time is even less important to the medieval author than space. Seldom is there a constant reference to the year in which the different events are taking place. As Boyer explains, "There is in the whole saga only one

date proper: it is something the author does not care about. Chronological, human time does not matter, it is only God's time which interests him, God's time where acts and only acts have significance. We could even go so far as to say that the scenery and the dates are almost useless" (29).

When the elements of time and space have that little importance in the account of the life of the saint, it is hard to believe that these tales are chained to historical accuracy. Robertson proposes that "Historicity, then, is not to be confined to a factual skeleton: 'Let us not hesitate to state indeed that the historic interest of the *Vita* is not attached to the skeleton but rather to the extremely concrete and alive detailing in which it is clothed' (*Antoine 22*)" (21-2). Thomas Head refers to some *vitae* written centuries after the actual time in which the saint lived and the fact that often these *vitae* were a mere quilt of the accepted *topoi* woven together and presented to convey the desired message, that of an exemplar for Christian virtue. The example he cites is an anonymous work, *Life of St. Montana*, which Head claims was composed by authors who had no real information on the life of this saint and so they composed this life story by producing a combination of details from saints' lives with which they were familiar. Though this process seems irresponsible and misleading to the modern day reader, in the Middle Ages, it was not necessarily the veracity of the message that was important, but instead, whether or not this message inspired people to act in accordance with the example of the saints. The primary goal was didactic, and so as long as the story of the saint's life inspired others to follow his or her example and helped the listeners understand the model of ideal Christian behavior, it had served its purpose.

It is also reasonable to cite some of the more fantastic elements seen in several saints' lives as justification for questioning the historical accuracy of some *vitae*. St. Margaret of Antioch provides an obvious example of the more fantastic stories because one of the many challenges that she faces is a confrontation with the devil in the form of a dragon. The Latin version of this encounter reads:

Et ecce subito draco exivit de angulo carceris, totus horribilis, variis coloribus, deauratis capillis, et barba aurea, et ferrei dentes; et oculi eius splendebant sicut margarite, et de naribus eius ignis et fumus exiebat, et lingua eius ignem anhelabat, et fetorem faciebat in carcere; et erexit se in medio carceris, et fortiter sibilavit, et lumen factum est in carcere ab igne qui exiebat de ore draconis. (Images of Sainthood 277)⁶³

Margaret encounters the dragon while she is locked in prison after she had refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods and declared to the prefect Olybrius, that she was a Christian woman who had consecrated her virginity to God. According to the legend surrounding the life of St. Margaret, she was subsequently swallowed by that same dragon and was only released from the inside of his stomach when a cross that she carried in her hand was used to irritate the dragon's throat enough to force him to let her out. In addition to Margaret's encounter with the fantastical beast, Margaret also survives two different attempts to kill her, once by fire and the second time by drowning. Her miraculous escapes from the first two attempts at her execution are cited as clear examples of the miracles surrounding the life of Margaret; however, they can also be called into question by the skeptics who question the veracity of these accounts.

⁶³ English translation of the Latin text provided by Elizabeth Robertson in her chapter "The Corporality of Female Sanctity in *The Life of Saint Margaret*" included in the book Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe: "And behold at once a dragon came out of a corner of the prison, completely horrible, of various colors, with gold hair and a gold beard, and with teeth of iron, and his eyes were shining like pearls, and from his nostrils came fumes and fire and his tongue exhaled fire, and he made a stench, and light shone in the prison, and he raised himself in the middle of the prison and hissed loudly, and the prison was lit up with the light which came out of the mouth of the dragon" (277).

One of the main goals of the *vitae sancti* was to expand the Christian message to a wider audience. It was necessary to make difficult concepts, whether they are Church doctrine or the history of the early members of the Church, more accessible and understandable. This goal pervaded many aspects of the work of the Church during the Middle Ages and brought about important changes and additions to Church teachings. One prominent example of this goal is the increase in production of liturgical dramas which provided a visual representation of important elements of the Christian faith. Some common subjects for liturgical dramas were the most important events in the life of Jesus Christ, such as the Nativity scene found in Shepherds' plays, and the events of the final 48 hours of Jesus' life, as seen in the Passion and Resurrection plays. Liturgical drama was born out of the need to display to the faithful members of the religious community what they were being asked to believe by faith alone. It was not a condemnation of their inability to trust in the sacred rites and scriptures of the Church, but instead a means of strengthening their faith and rendering aspects of the religion, that were not easily understood, in a more approachable form. The same can be said about the large number of hagiographic dramatic works depicting the saints, the martyrdom of these saints and their earthly deeds that were very popular throughout Western Europe. These plays, when depicting the martyrdom of a saint or the life of the saint in general, could serve as a visual testimony of the refusal to deny the fact that they were Christians.

In the same way, the stories of the lives of the saints were used as a means to connect with the lay community and to provide them with an example of Christian virtue. Priests would often use excerpts from the lives of the saints during their homilies or sermons in

order to capture the attention of their audience, and at the same time communicate a strong message to this audience. In the introduction to his book, Robertson writes, “The lives of saints for many centuries exerted a spell over Christian readers which today even the most devout may find difficult to recapture” (11). These early examples of the lives of the saints were often written in or translated into Latin because of its prestige as one of the languages of the Ecclesiastic community.⁶⁴ However, at a certain point, clearly by the eleventh century, the use of Latin in these texts, which at times were read out loud by the priest during the homily, was no longer constructive because the lay community was too far removed from the days in which Latin was a spoken language used by the average man. Therefore, the translation of these early *vitae sanctorum* into various vernacular languages became important because of the sense of “urgency, a fervor and immediacy to the reader, which had not been felt since the time of Thebaid,” (Robertson 12).

Because hagiography was, in general, a process of writing and rewriting texts, it was not at all unusual to translate the early works into the vernacular. While these texts were being translated and rewritten from the original Latin texts, certain changes were made in order to adapt to the audience of that age. Brigitte Cazelles explains the use of the vernacular and certain changes that were made in these saints’ lives by writing, “Primarily performed rather than read in private, these texts used the Latin book as an actual or remembered model but attempted to engage their non-literate, lay audiences by the use of dialogue, drama, first- and second-person pronouns, and present and perfect tenses in place of the past” (Images 7). In the chapter, “From the Oral to the Written In Saints’ Lives”, Evelyn Birge Vitz gives the

⁶⁴ Robertson refers to Latin as “the international language of authoritative record” (11) to explain why the hagiographical works were translated into Latin.

following explanation for the difference between the Latin texts and their vernacular counterparts, “But laymen are not a captive audience like monks and nuns, and if they do not appreciate the way a story is told, or what is told, they may well just walk away[...]Thus, while Latin sources are sometimes a bit dry or not very dramatic, vernacular compositions reliably liven up the story: they give the character names, provide dramatic details and vivid dialogue, and so on” (Images 99). Vitz’s explanation perhaps provides an insight into some of the fantastical inclusions of the *vitae* mentioned above and also explains why the vernacular forms of these texts became very popular.

It is now important to distinguish the different types of individuals throughout the ages who were recognized as saints, a changing concept that depended not only on the time in which the individual was alive, but also on the location. In the early days of Christianity, when the Roman Empire was still thriving, the persecution of the Christians, as an entire group, provided the “easiest” road to becoming a saint. Head explains that the term *martyr* is “derived from a Greek term (*martus*) for witness, because in the manner of their deaths they bore the ultimate witness to the name of Jesus Christ” (“Cult of the Saints”). He continues on to explain that the stories of the lives and deaths of these early Christian martyrs were written down and collected in books known as *martyrologies*, and that these collections provide the true origin of Christian hagiography. The earliest known example was the *Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*, written in approximately 155/6 A.D., which tells the story of this bishop of Smyrna who was condemned to death by the Roman government on account of his refusal to deny his faith. Polycarp was subsequently stabbed and then burned at the stake. However, as the ultimate example of a martyr, he did not fall victim to the flames before casting a final threat

upon those who executed him, “The fire you threaten me with burns merely for a time and is soon extinguished. It is clear you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment and of the judgment that is to come” (Head “Cult”). In this judgment against his punishers, Polycarp highlights the fact that his death and suffering are solely terrestrial and will not endure, while the pains that they will suffer after the divine judgment will be eternal.

The Edict of Milan in the year 313 A.D., granting the freedom of religious expression, changed the situation significantly. After this edict, the large scale persecution of the Christians ended, but it was not completely obsolete because the Christian faith would once again be tested in the future in front of foreign invaders. Even with the decrease in martyrdom, those early martyrs were neither neglected nor forgotten. The fourth century was the time in which many of the “cults of the martyrs” grew. There were feast days dedicated to them and shrines built for them, often over the location of their tomb. Many times these shrines were built inside of a church in the form of an altar built over the tomb of the martyr, such as St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. These saints were venerated because the faithful believed there to be a reciprocal relationship between them and the martyred saints. Head explains that “this revival of the cult of saints, the concept of saintly patronage was based on the evolving social practice of vassalage, feud, and gift exchange. Devout Christians gained the protection and intercession of the holy dead by bringing them gifts or providing them with services” (“Cult”). God was thought to be working through the saints and the intercessions presented to the saints.

Recognized martyrs were not the only individuals likely to be recognized as saints, also monks, bishops, teachers and visionaries, just to name a few. Behind the martyrs, the

second most common group of individuals that were likely to become saints was certainly the monks. In his article, “The Holy Person in Comparative Perspective,” Head explains, “With the end of persecution, monks who endured the symbolic martyrdom of rigorous self-denial came to be officially honored as saints.” The practices of self-denial were known as the ascetic lifestyle. From this same article, we learn that “Asceticism (from *askesis*; Greek, ‘exercise’ or ‘training’) is the use of the renunciation of physical pleasures or other forms of bodily self-denial as a means of spiritual development.” The monks thought of this practice as a way to exert control over their own appetites, whether that be related to food, drink, sex, money or even personal property. By denying themselves these things, the monks thought that they were capable of purifying their souls, demonstrating greater Christian virtue and obtaining a perfection of the soul not known to them before. These monks withdrew from everyday human interaction to further aid in this process. They led the so called monastic life which was “marked by a spare diet, frequent fasts, a vow of life-long chastity, lack of personal property and silence which was broken for prayer but not personal conversation” (Head “Holy Person”).

Because of their extreme dedication to the purification of the soul and the arrival at spiritual perfection, it is easy to understand why monks form the second group of individuals that frequently achieved sainthood. It is the third group of individuals that provide a challenge for us to understand. The bishops of this period were not necessarily a model of good Christian behavior and they were certainly not retreating from the society in order to lead an ascetic lifestyle. Besides their obvious role in the Church, what were their qualifications? Perhaps it is important to keep in mind that for a period of time in the Middle

Ages, the bishops were the ones charged with the role of identifying and recommending sainthood.

And the rich men and nobility, how did they figure into the concept of sanctity? It was not because of this lifestyle, but instead because of their eventual denial of this lifestyle that brought the nobility into the realm of saintly men and women. In fact, a noble man or woman turning away from his possessions was one of the *topoi* common to hagiographical literature. The 11th-century Old French classic, *La vie de Saint Alexis*, comes to mind because it is a wonderful example of this very *topos*. The opening of this *vita* starts off describing the family of Alexis, “Si fut un sire de Rome la citét / Rices hom fud, de grant nobilitét: Pur hoc vus di, d’un son filz voil parler” (13-5)⁶⁵. From the very beginning we know that Alexis comes from a rich family of great nobility. After Alexis’ father arranges his marriage with the daughter of a wealthy count from Rome, the reader witnesses the drastic change in Alexis’ future. Instead of consummating the marriage that has just taken place, Alexis flees the city and goes to live in a foreign land as a beggar, after first giving away all of his earthly possessions. The text reads, “Tut sun aver qu’od sei en ad portét, Tut le depart, nient ne l’en remest: Larges almosnes par Alsis la citét, dunet as povres u qu’il les pout trover: Pur nul aver ne volt estra ancumbrét” (91-5).⁶⁶ Because of the subsequent lifestyle that Alexis leads, this anonymous man, no longer linked to the wealthy and noble family that he belongs to, is called “l’ume Deu” (“the man of God”). He lives out the rest of his life in the service of the

⁶⁵ The following quotes of *La vie de Saint Alexis* are taken from the Old French edition published by Librairie Droz in Genève in 200. I translate this Old French citation as “There was a man from the city of Rome, and he was a rich man of great nobility. I tell you this, of his one son I want to speak.”

⁶⁶ My translation: “All of his belongings, which he carried away with him, he distributed everything, he had nothing left: throughout the city of Alsis he gives large almsgivings to the poor or those who he was able to find: For he did not want to be burdened down with any possession.”

Lord, without any sort of wealth besides maybe the richness of his spirit, and the author of the *vita* closes the text urging us all to remember the life of Alexis and pray to him because he will answer our prayers and look out for us. The text reads, “Aiuns, seignors, cel saint home en memorie, si li preiuns que de toz mals nos tolget, en icest siecle nus acat pais e goied en cel altra la plus glorie” (621-4).⁶⁷ We can see how Alexis is a model example of a saint’s life.

This brief overview of the important aspects of hagiography will come into play throughout the following chapter as we begin to look specifically at the Sardinian saints most well-known on the island. We will see how these saints became the subjects of the dramatic hagiographic works written in Sardinia that will be examined as evidence of the way in which theater on the island advanced. An analysis of the works of two writers, 15th-century Antonio Cano and 17th-century Antioco del Arca, show the earliest example of a Sardinian literary text in all of its simplicity and also how later authors began to introduce elements of Spanish theater from the Golden Age. Del Arca’s work presents Sardinia in *una cultura ispanizzata* and will serve as the middle phase between Cano and Giovanni Delogu Ibba’s *Index libri vitae*, which maintains many of the innovations adopted thanks to the Spanish presence on the island but finds a way to incorporate them into an entirely Sardinian context.

⁶⁷ My translation: “Let us keep this holy man in our memory, friends, if we pray to him that he takes from us all of our sins, in this lifetime we gain peace and joy and in that other one the everlasting glory”.

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF HAGIOGRAPHY IN SARDINIA

Antonio Cano: *Sa vitta et sa morte et passione de Sanctu Gavinu Prothu et Januariu*

The earliest example of a poem written in Sardinian is that of Antonio Cano written in the late 1400s but not published until 1557 after his death. It is credited as the oldest work written in Sardinian clearly and exclusively written for literary purposes. According to the biographical information about Antonio Cano, he was born in Sassari around 1400 and as a man of the Church, he was a priest in Giave, in charge of the monastery in Saccarglia, a bishop in Bisarcio (1436) and the archbishop of Sassari.⁶⁸ While no exact date is able to be determined, he is likely to have died between 1473 and 1478 (Alziator, Sa vitta 14). What is so interesting about this poem, written by Cano and published in 1557 after his death, is that it was published without Cano's name on it. Tola confirms, "In questa versione compare adespota, ossia senza il nome dell'autore, che nell'unica copia esistente (nella Biblioteca universitaria di Cagliari) è stato aggiunto con un'annotazione a mano: '*Auctore Antonio Cano Archiepiscopo Turritano*'" (Tola, La letteratura 40-1). In the first book of *De Rebus Sardois*, the legendary historian of Sardinian, Giovanni Fara, had already written about this work by

⁶⁸ Alziator reports the starting date of his role as the Archbishop in San Nicola di Sassari as October 23rd 1448. (Alziator, Sa vita 13).

Cano and identified him as the author some years before.⁶⁹ The immediate question raised by Tola is: why would this short poem by Antonio Cano be published some 100 years after his death, given that at the time, printing in Sardinia was still a difficult process because only traveling printing presses existed.⁷⁰ The answer to this question speaks to the point raised earlier when discussing this period of time in the Church's history. In a new edition of the poem by Cano, Dino Manca credits the reforms of the Council of Trent and a renewed effort on the part of the clerics to put the Tridentine reforms into effect. He also credits the archbishop Salvatore Alepus. According to Manca,

L'azione riformatrice e l'opera di evangelizzazione della Chiesa in Sardegna passarono attraverso una riconsiderazione dei canali, ma soprattutto dei codici, per una comunicazione che si voleva immediata ed efficace e per un pubblico in prevalenza sardofono. Ci si pose dunque la questione della lingua. I vescovi sapevano che non ci sarebbe stato rinnovamento del popolo se non tramite l'azione del clero, che viveva a diretto contatto con la gente. Per questa ragione si approntarono dei catechismi in lingua sarda, affinché i chierici, prima di ogni altra cosa, fossero in grado di insegnare almeno i rudimenti della fede. A questo punto pare probabile che all'interno della serie di iniziative volte a riportare all'antico splendore le feste dei martiri turritani, trovasse posto la pubblicazione del poemetto, e che la commissione della stampa fosse dello stesso arcivescovo Alepus, e che fosse stata affidata dall'istituzione ecclesiastica o ad una officina non locale o appunto ad un tipografo itinerante che risiedeva in quel periodo in Sardegna. (Manca, introduzione LVI-LVIII)

Though it was Archbishop Alepus that urged its publication, little doubt exists that a work such as this would be well-received because of the familiarity of the topic among the faithful of the city and because of the popular style in which it was written. Both M.L. Wagner and

⁶⁹ Francesco Alziator in his introduction to 1976 edition to *Sa vita et sa morte et passion de sanctu Gavinu Prothu et Januariu*, includes Fara's reference. When speaking about the three famous saints, Proto, Gianuario and Gavino, Fara wrote, "hi multis miraculis clari patroni sunt Ecclesiae Metropolitanae Turritanae, in qua eorum corpora decenter recondite magna totius insule populorum frequentia coluntur ut ex antique Ms. Eiusdem Ecclesiae codice, et in historia ab Antonio Cano, et Salvatore Salepusio Archiepiscopis Turritanis constat" (12).

⁷⁰ "La prima tipografia stabile sarebbe entrata in funzione a Cagliari, per iniziativa di Nicolò Canelles (anche lui religioso e poi vescovo, a Bosa), soltanto nel 1566" (Tola, *La Letteratura*, 41).

Damiano Filia comment on Cano's popular style. Filia writes, "Esso [il poema] viene attribuito ad Antonio Cano [...], ma per la fresca ingenuità del polimetro, spesso rozzo, e spoglio di grazie stilistiche, pare certamente d'età più antica" (Filia, vol. 2 p. 193).

First, let us look broadly at the story of these three saints who are always presented together as their stories are intertwined and the sources from which Cano drew. Regarding the sources for Cano's poem, Filia states that "il Cano è partito da un preesistente nucleo popolare che egli ha ingrandito, ripulito e interpolato, innestando all'antico tronco l'elemento dotto" (Alziator, Sa vitta 15). Before Alziator's discussion of the poem's sources in the introduction to his edition, he raises an interesting point about the myths behind these hagiographic tales and their connection with the legends that arise. Alziator references the famous study of hagiography by H. Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (1905), and a number of the elements found in these legends about the lives of the saints. Delehaye mentions "imperatori tutti ugualmente *impiissimi* e insensati nella persecuzione contro i cristiani, sia che si tratti di Nerone, di Decio, di Diocleziano, di Traiano, Di Marco Aurelio o di Alessandro Severo; presenza di un emissario persecutore *pro rege*; atrocità dei supplizi, mai applicati neppure nel caso dei più grandi delinquenti; intervento divino che rende vana la crudeltà imperiale" (Alziator, Sa vitta 17). There is also an element of atemporality in these legends that allows them to be applicable and relatable in any given time. One difference between the legends of the Sardinian saints and those mentioned above by Delehaye is the lack of a specific Roman emperor's name because of the separation between the island and Rome (Alziator, Sa vitta 17). Another difference is the enemy, which is often identified as a

Saracen, given the history of the island and the constant threat of attack in the 8th and 9th centuries. In this story, the enemy role is filled by Barbaro.

These three martyrs, Gavinus, Prothus and Januarius of the city of Torres, are almost always presented together and are first mentioned by St. Gregory in the year 599. Perhaps the earliest written examples of their legend, according to Filia, can be dated because of the construction of the Church of San Gavino in the first half of the 11th century. As Filia points out, for a church to be constructed and dedicated to a saint, it is likely that there was already a well-established tradition of this saint's fame by the time the church was built. Regarding the date of the *passio*, another source for Cano, French scholar Baudouin de Gaiffier writes, "Le clergé de la nouvelle basilique aura voulu posséder un texte pour commémorer le martyre de son saint patron. De son mieux, l'agiographe a agglutiné quelques éléments qu'il trouvait dans le martyrologe hiéronymien, dans la tradition locale" (Alziator, Sa vitta 22). According to Tola, there are three versions of the *passio* of these three saints. G. Calligaris identified one of them in an *ufficiium* from Venice that "sebbene edito solo nel 1497 ha caratteri tali di antichità che non esterei a crederlo anterior al poema del Cano."⁷¹ There was also an *inventio*, related to Prothus, Gavinus and Januarius. It has been proven by Motzo in his book, *La Passione dei Santi Gavino, Proto e Gianuario*, that the *passio* and the *inventio* are composed by two different authors and that a significant period of time passed between the two compositions. The *passio* would have been written prior to the construction of the

⁷¹ G. Calligaris. *Di un poema sardo logudorese del Secolo XVI*. Verona, 1896. p. 25.

basilica, while the *inventio* is instead significantly later and demonstrates the way in which the story continued to develop over time (Alziator, *Sa vitta* 24).⁷²

The story of Gavinus, Prothus and Januarius, as told in the *passio*, begins in the time of the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian and after their edict promising the punishment of anyone known to be practicing Catholicism. Both Prothus and Januarius were reported to Barbaro who was in charge of the administration in Corsica and Sardinia. They were called to appear in front of Barbaro, who sought to convince them of their error and encourage them to renounce the Christian faith risking death should they refuse. Through the course of the conversation with Barbaro, we learn that the soon to be saints are Sardinian originally from Porto Torres.⁷³ To Barbaro's questions regarding their origin, the saints respond, "Se ci interroghi della nostra genealogia, siamo nati in Sardegna, cresciuti nella città turritana, detta metropolis" (Ciomei 127). When each of them refuse to give in to the threats of Barbaro,⁷⁴ Prothus is sent off to the island of Cornicularia (=Asinara) and Barbaro keeps Januarius in custody in the hopes that he might succeed in changing his mind.⁷⁵ After a

⁷² Bachisio Raimondo Motzo dates the *Inventio corporum sanctorum martyrum Gavini Prothi et Januari* to no later than the 13th or 14th century. B.R. Motzo, *La Passione dei ss. Gavino, Proto e Gianuario* in Studi cagliaritari di Storia e Filologia, I, 1927. 129-161.

⁷³ In retelling the stories of the lives of the Sardinian saints according to the existing *passio*, one of the most helpful books has been P. Fortunato Ciomei's book *Gli antichi martiri della Sardegna*. In the introduction to this work, Ciomei explains how he put together his book, "Ho creduto opportuno riferire di tutti la leggenda intera, tradotta alla lettera dai testi latini, perché il popolo sardo possa conoscere tutto dei suoi martiri; poi ho discusso più o meno diffusamente la leggenda nella parte critica per estrarne ciò che vi può essere di più attendibile nel tessuto leggendario" (9). All quotes in Italian in the following retelling of the story will be taken from Ciomei's book found in the bibliography. When citing the text in Logudorese, I have used the Alziator edition of the poem and provide the line numbers for the corresponding quotations.

⁷⁴ Their response is "Conosciamo bene gli ordini degli imperatori, ma bisogna ubbidire a Dio più che agli uomini; a lui solo serviamo, immolando ogni giorno a Dio eterno un sacrificio di lode, ritenendo il chiedere aiuto alle pietre una stupidissima insensatezza della mente" (Ciomei 127).

⁷⁵ The variation in the name of the island where Proto is sent by Barbaro is explained in the text by Cano: "Tandu su rey Barbaru infiamadu totu / de ira et de militia contra sanctu Prothu / deyt per sententia qui esset

second unsuccessful attempt by Barbaro to convince the two men to renounce their faith, they are once again held in custody, this time guarded by the soldier Gavinus who is assigned to them. When Gavinus is moved to convert to Christianity after time spent with the two men, he asks them “Vi prego, Santi di Dio, per il Signore Dio vostro, che mi mostriate chi è quel vostro Dio, che voi dite autore del cielo e della terra, e quale ricompensa vi attendete di ricevere da lui per i tanti tormenti che patite” (Ciomei 130). Not only does Gavino convert, but he also releases Prothus and Januarius from his custody. When Barbaro calls him to bring the two men back, Gavinus openly professes his new faith to Barbaro and thus confirms his martyrdom by beheading. To avoid the site of Gavinus’ martyrdom becoming a place where Christians gathered to worship and honor the martyr, Barbaro orders “Andate e decollatelo presso il lido del mare affinché né il suo corpo né la sua testa si possano più trovare, e gettatelo giù dalla rupe” (Ciomei 131). After Gavinus appears to Prothus and Januarius, they are more motivated than ever before to meet the same fate as he did, All three are martyred by beheading. (Alziator, Storia 59-60).

Cano’s poem is composed of 1096 lines and written in Logudorese, one of the primary vernaculars of Sardinia. Scholar Dino Manca notes that the Logudorese used in this poem had already advanced from the Logudorese used just centuries earlier in the *condaghi*. Manca sees this Logudorese as “un vero e proprio microcosmo babelico” because of its mix of Logudorese with Latin, Italian and Iberian words. Cano’s work begins with an invocation to God,

O Deu eternu, sempre omnipotente

deportadu / quena victuagia et solu lassadu / in sa isola deserta qui sa gente nara / et totue si chiamat como s’Asinara / que si nominaat per issos de Italia / antigamente sa Cornicularia” (ln. 49-56). The name of this island where Proto was exiled was called Asinara by all except it was known as Cornicularia on the continent.

In s' aiuda meu ti piachat attender
 Et dami gratia de poder acabare
 Su sanctu martiriu in rima vulgare
 De sos santos martires tantu gloriosos
 E cavaleris de Cristus victoriosos
 Sanctu Gavinu Prothu e Januariu
 Contra su demoniu nostrum adversariu
 Fortes defensores et bonos advocaos
 Qui in su paradisu sunt glorificados
 De sa corona de sanctu martiriu,
 Cussos sempre siant in nostru adiutoriu. (In. 1 – 12)⁷⁶

In the invocation Cano asks *Deu eternu* to give him the ability and the grace to be able to tell the story of these important martyrs. Specific reference to the *rima vulgare*, or the Logudorese, in which he writes are also included. The invocation calls to mind one of the primary functions of hagiographic works, the need to seek the intercession of the saints and martyrs. We will see this aspect in another hagiographic genre, *the gosos*. Similar invocations will appear repeatedly in the remaining works to be presented in this study.

Much has been said about the meter, mostly because of the lack of any real consistency. In Alziator's opinion, the text was "un vero campionario di dodecasillabi, endecasillabi, rime al mezzo, decasillabi, e perfino di versi bisognosi di un pietoso ortopedico" (Tola, La Letteratura 41). When speaking of the meter, Antonio Sanna raises a point that, in my opinion, is very indicative of one of the origins of the story for Cano. Sanna

⁷⁶ As indicated before, the following quotations in Logudorese of the poem written by Antonio Cano in the 15th century are taken from Francesco Alziator's edition of this poem. Cano, Antonio, Francesco Alziator, and Petrus de Quarengiis. Sa vitta et sa morte et passione de Sanctu Gavinu, Prothu et Januariu. Cagliari: Editrice sarda F.Ili Fossataro, 1976.

Translation is mine: "O Eternal Father, every powerful, may it be pleasing to you to come to my aid. Give me the grace to be able to finish this holy martyrdom in vulgar tongue of the holy martyrs so glorious, victorious knights of Christ, Gavinus, Prothus and Januarius. Against the daemon, our adversary, they are strong defenders and wonderful advocates who are glorified in paradise with the crown of holy martyrdom, May they always be our advocates" (In 1 – 12).

writes about “un fenomeno di anisosillabismo legato all’esecuzione orale” (Tola, La Letteratura 42) and Nicola Tanda supports this idea explaining that Cano’s work shows “familiarità con i procedimenti dell’improvvisazione, perché il calcolo delle sillabe e l’uso delle rime non risulta esatto e rigoroso dal punto di vista della letteratura colta, mentre alcuni versi ipermetri e ipometri si potrebbero spiegare con l’uso prevalente nella tradizione orale di poesia e canto e dell’impiego conseguente di sinalefe ed elisione” (Tola, La Letteratura 42).

Citing oral tradition as one of the primary sources for this story lessens one of the harsh critiques against the meter of Cano’s work. At the same time, it speaks to the popularity of these hagiographic works and the fact that these stories were familiar to the Sardinian audience as they were often stories of the patron saints of the town. An element of oral tradition seems very likely when looking at the structure of the poem itself. Because of the structure of the Cano poem, it seems like the intended performance was to be read aloud. In the Latin tradition there was a genre called the “closet drama” which was never intended to be performed. As Edward Kennedy explains in his chapter on Medieval Drama, “The habit of reading drama written in Latin also continued; the plays of Terrence and to a lesser extent Plautus were read, and there is some evidence that at times the plays were read aloud by the reader and actors pantomimed the action” (82). The reason that this is important is because as Kennedy then goes on to cite the 10th-century example of Hrothsvita of Gandersheim, who “wrote several plays, modeled upon Terence, but concerned with the lives of the saints and the martyrs. So far as we know the plays were never acted but were intended to be read at her monastery” (83). Kennedy’s argument about the closet drama establishes a precedent for these earlier examples of the lives of the saints not yet read for performance but to be read

aloud. If we were to look at this poem as laying the groundwork for future hagiographic dramatic works in Sardinia, as there are some distinguishable elements of drama. The poem allows us to see the dramatic possibilities that lie in these stories, such as the inclusion of dialogue between the characters instead of simply telling the story in a strictly narrative format. The dialogues are not glossed but are instead broken up in the text of the poem to indicate a break in the narration. Some of these conversations include the questions and answers about their fate between Prothus and Januarius and Barbaro and the exchange between Gavinus and the two saints later in the story.

Another scene from the *passio* of the three martyrs that is depicted in Cano's poem is the exchange between a faithful woman and Gavinus as he is being led to his death. The woman was described as "Una dona sancta [...] de sa quale fuyt vighina de jana/ et in su secretu fuyt bona cristiana" (ln. 701-3).⁷⁷ She was a neighbor of Gavinus and as the text states, "Et umpare acostumaant cum su beadu Gavinu / faghersi piagheres comente vighinos" (ln. 704-5).⁷⁸ She is deeply saddened to see Gavinus being led away, especially when she heard the reason for which he had been condemned. "Apit dispraghere videndelu portare / per issu bochinu, cum funes atroxadu, / et pius pro qui li naynt qui fuyt condemnadu / a cussa morte pro qui fuyt cristianu" (ln. 707-10).⁷⁹ The exchange between this woman and Gavinus as he is being led to his death is a clear reference to the exchange between Veronica and Jesus as he is being led to his crucifixion. Instead of the *velo* used to wipe his face as in the story of

⁷⁷ "A holy woman [...] who was one of his neighbors and also a good Christian woman in secret" (ln. 688-90).

⁷⁸ "And together with the blessed Gavinus she was accustomed to exchanging favors as neighbors do" (ln. 704-5).

⁷⁹ "She felt great sadness seeing him carried away by the executioner and tied up with ropes, and she felt even worse when they told her that he was condemned to die because he was a Christian" (ln. 707-10).

Veronica, this holy woman presented Gavinus with a *velo* to be used to blindfold himself before his beheading. For the spoken exchange between these two characters, Cano wrote, “Li nayt: ‘O Gavinu, vighinu meu belu, / per amore meu leu custu velu, / posca atera cosa non ti poto dare / et dae sa morte non ti poto aiutare / et cum cussu ti as poder bindare sos oglos / quando ti ant ochier custos manigodos” (ln. 712-7).⁸⁰ Gavinus takes the handkerchief graciously while those leading him to his death chide the silly woman for throwing away a present, “Cras podes racier / sa paga de su velu qui li as prestadu / podes fagher contu qui est perdu o donadu” (ln. 721-3).⁸¹

The story of this woman, her gift and Gavinus does not end there. Immediately following his death, the spirit of Gavinus leaves to go find Prothus and Januarius. Along the way he encounters a man by the name of Calpurnio, who happens to be the husband of the kind Christian woman. Returning the *velo* to Calpurnius, Gavinus asks him “Refferi / gracias infinidas de sa cortesia / a sa mugere tua de sa parte mia” (ln. 786-7).⁸² Returning home, Calpurnius finds his wife in tears and when asked why she is crying, she responds, “A cussu beadu / de Gavinu nostru lu ant hoe decapitadu, pro quantu querfit esser bonu cristianu lu at condemnadu a morte cussu rey paganu” (ln. 792-5).⁸³ Calpurnius explains that she is mistaken for he has just encountered Gavinus along the road and he presents her with the

⁸⁰ “She said to him: ‘Oh Gavinus, my good neighbor, with love, take this cloth, because I have nothing else to give you and I can not save you from your death, but with this you can blindfold your eyes when these rogues are about to kill you” (ln. 712-7).

⁸¹ “Tomorrow you will receive your pay for having given him that cloth, for you will realize that it either lost or given away” (ln. 721-3).

⁸² “Give infinite thanks to your wife on my behalf” (ln. 786-7).

⁸³ “Because that blessed neighbor, Gavinus, was decapitated today because he wanted to be a good Christian and that pagan king condemned him to death” (ln. 792-5).

handkerchief that Gavinus asked him to return. In shock, the woman takes the cloth and examines it only to find drops of blood that attest to the martyrdom of the saint. “Et a su maridu contayt totu quantu / su ministeriu comente fuyt sequidu. / Asora firmament cretit su maridu / su quale fuyt anchu asora paganu / si fetit batizare et fuyt cristianu” (794-98).⁸⁴

After hearing the story told by his wife, Calpurnius, previously a pagan, converted and was baptized immediately. It is easy to imagine how scenes such as this lay the groundwork for a future dramatic work because the rich dramatic possibilities are already present thanks to the dialogue, the movement in the scenes and the entertainment quality of the stories told.

This first literary work written in Sardinian was very harshly criticized by the modern scholars for its scarce literary value. Salvatore Tola summarizes these criticisms in his second chapter dedicated to the 15th-century literature in *La letteratura in lingua sarda*. Raffa Garzia considers the poem to be “primitiva, stilisticamente ingenua, priva di sveltezza e di movimento anche per colpa della lingua dura e spesso scabra” (Tola, La Letteratura 42). Alziator criticizes it instead for its “mano forzata e priva di ispirazione” (Tola, La Letteratura 42) Tanda calls it an “elaborazione lenta dal punto di vista narrativo e faticosa dal punto di vista metrico” but recognizes that it was written “in assenza di una tradizione nell’uso della lingua letteraria e poetica del volgare sardo” (Tola 42). It was significant because it was the first time that the Sardinian language was being elevated to a literary level instead of being used solely for official documents such as the *condaghi*. Even with this Sardinian language for the first time in a literary context, Cano still managed to play to his audience. Tola reminds us that Cano “doveva poi fare i conti con un pubblico costituito soprattutto dai

⁸⁴ And to her husband she told the entire story and how it had happened and he believed strongly in the story. While he was still at the time pagan, he was baptized right away and became Christian” (ln. 807-11).

contadini e pastori dei villaggi, tutt'al più gli artigiani dei centri urbani: da qui la ricerca di una forma popolareggiante, l'adesione a stili e metri della circolazione orale. La letteratura in lingua sarda presenta così sin dalle origini quella fusione di elementi colti e di componenti popolari che la caratterizzerà sino ai giorni nostri" (43).

The conclusion of Cano's poem presents another aspect of the dedication to the saints and their cults of the saint and also provides a wonderful transition into our second hagiographic work. Cano's poem ends with the discovery of the bodies of the three martyrs along the shore by some members of the faithful community who were in search of their remains in order to provide them with a more appropriate burial. The poem reads, "Et comente fuyt note, certos religiosos venint a quircare cussos corpus gloriosos; et los acataynt in su litu de su mare, corpus et capitas de totu tres umpare" (ln. 1063-6).⁸⁵ In fact, the bodies are taken and given a more suitable burial where they remained for over 40 years before being transferred to the site of the church built by Comita in their honor. This church that provided the martyrs a proper burial because they were now in a place where the faithful could come to worship. Cano wrote, "Fini a su tempus de juyghe Comida"⁸⁶ homine iustu et

⁸⁵ "And as night fell, certain religious men came to look for those glorious remains of the saints; and they found them on the shore of the sea, the bodies and the heads of all three together" (ln. 1063-6).

⁸⁶ Further information about Comida, or Comita as it is often written, tells us that he was born of a noble family and that he was a faithful man. From the *inventio* of these three martyrs, we know that Comita "accoglieva volentieri in casa sua poveri ed erranti, rivestiva i nudi, e molte volte gli dava da mangiare con le proprie mani, faceva di cuore giustizia alle vedove e agli orfani. Nessuno aveva mai potuto corromperlo in giudizio per mezzo di doni o denaro" (Ciomei 135). However, Comita suddenly gets incredibly sick and discovers that he has incurable leprosy. In the middle of the night, he has a very interesting dream in which the martyr Gavino appears to him and explains that he is here to help him. The image of Gavino explains, "Se vuoi guarire ed essere pienamente mondato da questa lebbra che hai, va al predetto lido del mare e prendi i nostri corpi e portali in luogo più salubre, venerato e sicuro, e ivi seppelliscili in un monumento nuovo. Nello stesso luogo costruisci una chiesa in onore di Dio e nostro, e nel fare le fondamenta della chiesa, tu stesso, per prima scaverai la terra col sarchiello con le stesse tue mani, e subito la tua carne tornerà sana" (Ciomei 136). In the story of the *inventio*, Comita does exactly as he was told in this dream and he is healed. The *inventio* ends, "Così è confermata soprannaturalmente la traslazione e la passione dei santi martiri che si celebra nello stesso giorno" (Ciomei 137). This dream was not included in the poem of Antonio Cano but similar visions of the martyr

de sancta vida, su quale dedicayt a sos martires sanctos custa bella ghesia com perdonos tantos. In cussu lis fetit sepulture digna, comente custu ateru condaghe designat, in sa quale fuynt sos sactos transferidos et comente merexint megius reveridos” (ln. 1077-84).⁸⁷ The final acts of the poem provide an example of events that will occur throughout the later part of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century during the War of the Relics. Relics of the saints in a particular town and the construction of churches in their honor would brought a certain level of notoriety to a town. This is confirmed by the final lines of Cano’s poem, “Per tantu fatu fine a laude de Deu de custa istoria et de su narrer meu, pregande sempre sa divina magestade qui totu custu regnu et issa citade nostra de Sasser fatat prosperare” (ln. 1085-9).⁸⁸

Antioco Del Arca: *El sacco imaginado*

Francesco Alziator describes the 17th century in Sardinia as follows, “Il Seicento ha per la Sardegna una fisionomia tipicamente spagnola” and continues, “l’intero secolo si colorò di luci ispaniche” (Alziator, *Storia* 135). When discussing the debate between Spanish and Sardinian scholars concerning how the 400-year period of Spanish rule should be judged, I mentioned Joaquin Arce who wishes that the contributions of the Spanish to the island were

Gavinus on a white horse will play an important role in the next dramatic hagiographic work I will analyze, *El sacco imaginado* by Antioco Del Arca.

⁸⁷ “And since the time of the *giudice* Comida, a just man who lived a holy life, and who dedicated to these whole saints this beautiful church with many indulgences. In this he made for them a worthy burial, as this other *condaghi* reported. It is a church in which their bodies have been transferred and how they deserved to be honored better” (ln. 1088-84).

⁸⁸ “For in, concluding in praise of God, this story and my telling of it, praying as always that the divine majesty make prosper this entire reign and this our city of Sassari” (ln. 1085-9).

recognized and acknowledged more often. Regarding the numerous cultural contributions, Arce writes, “En la literatura sarda, solo iniciada a partir del siglo XVI y que, vinculada estrechamente a la tradición literaria española, produce en la centuria barroca algunas obras que merecerían ser incluidas en la historia de las literaturas hispánicas” (213). He also references the Spanish contributions to religion and education, stating, “en la fundación cuantiosa de iglesias, cofradías, congregaciones de caridad y escuelas; en los estudios particulares, de órdenes religiosas y municipales, que aparecieron con gran retraso, pero con abundancia inesperada, en la capital al menos, en el siglo XVII, el siglo también de la creación de las dos únicas Universidades que tuvo y sigue teniendo Cerdeña” (213). These particular contributions mentioned by Arce are all very relevant to the analysis of the next author. Antioco del Arca was a Jesuit priest of Sardinian descent and the author of *El sacco imaginado* (1658), a play that, according to Alziator, “è nato, come teatro gesuitico, dalla tradizione scolastica che voleva che l’insegnante di retorica componesse un lavoro drammatico perché fosse recitato dai suoi scolari nella rappresentazione annuale del Collegio (Alziator, Testi drammatici 78).

At first, the biographical information about Antioco del Arca, as is often the case with earlier Sardinian authors, was limited to the information included on the title page. This provided us with little more than his name, his identification as a Jesuit priest and the date and place of the printing. Because of a reprinting by the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Jesuit Carlos Sommervogel proposes that del Arca was born in Alghero around 1594 and that he died on July 3, 1632 in Cagliari. These dates are not accurate in Alziator’s opinion, because of research he did in “l’Archivio romano dei Gesuiti, nel quale sono

conservati i Cataloghi annuali e triennali della Provincia Sarda” (Alziator, Testi 68). He explains that the date of birth of del Arca is actually one year later in 1595 and that the place of birth was in Ozieri and not Alghero.⁸⁹ What these dates do tell us though is that *El sacco imaginado*, like the work of Antonio Cano, was published after the author’s death, in this case roughly a quarter of a century after del Arca’s death.

On the title page of *El sacco imaginado*, after the author’s name and his identification as a Jesuit, there are three words that have sparked quite the reaction by many scholars. The title page reads “Del M.R.P. Antiogo Del Arca de la Comp. de Iesus, Aguila de los laureados, y primer Lope Sardo” (Alziator, Testi 81). The three words that grab the attention of most scholars are “primer Lope Sardo,” because of their equation of Antioco del Arca with the famous Spanish playwright, Lope de Vega. In *Bibliografía española de Cerdeña*, E. Toda y Guell writes, “El Lope de Vega sardo, como modestamente se llama este Jesuita, era muy inferior al español y hacia malos versos, como lo demuestra plenamente su comedia” (74). Del Arca does not appear in Pietro Martini’s *Biografia sarda* nor in Tola’s *Dizionario biografico degli uomini illustri di Sardegna*, which is rather surprising as it is generally easy to find almost all Sardinian authors in these two multi-volume collections. Alziator’s opinions are very similar to the assessment of Toda y Guell. In reference to the words that appear on the title page of del Arca’s work, Alziator comments, “*Primer Lope sardo* si autodefinì Antioco del Arca quando, nel 1658, pubblicò la sua opera, presuntuoso titolo se si pensa che siamo a poco più di vent’anni dalla morte di Lope de Vega, nel periodo cioè nel quale la gloria del drammaturgo madrileno è all’apogeo” (Alziator, Storia 203). Alziator’s

⁸⁹ According to the Alziator, the error on the part of Sommervogel was a misunderstanding of the following information, “in oppido Ottieri, dioc. Algarens” (68). Sommervogel mistook the in name of the diocese in this area for a variation on the name of the city Alghero.

discuss of the “evidente immodestia del gesuita sardo” (203) at least serves as evidence that the work of Lope de Vega was known on the island and that Sardinian religious drama had taken on Spanish element. This is confirmed by Arce who cites del Arca’s “intento [...] de adaptar la técnica de Lope de Vega en Cerdeña” (168). Given the dates of his death and the date of the publication of *El saco imaginado* some 26 years later, it is important to restate that “Primer Lope sardo” was not a title that del Arca attributed to himself, but instead a title given to him by others at the time of printing. It is, however, confirmation of “una duratura fama” (Alziator, Testi 67) of our author.

Before beginning the analysis of *El saco imaginado* and identifying the Spanish developments that had become a part of the theatrical traditions on the island, it is necessary to take a brief look at two of the religious dramatic genres coming out of Spain’s *Siglo de oro*. In *A Companion to Golden Age Theater*, Jonathan Thacker stresses that the *comedia de santos* in Spain “remained a fixture from the 1590s until the mid-to late eighteenth century when growing moral concerns finally saw its demise along with that of the *auto sacramental*” (146). The plays depicting the lives of the saints were greatly popular at the time because, “Apart from enjoying the chance to witness the life of a saint, perhaps known from hagiography or a painting in church, dramatized on stage, audiences were attracted to their more elaborate staging” (Thacker 147). The composition of saint plays were at times an effort to honor the saint for the celebration of the feast day or on other occasions were personal and driven by a certain author’s desire to honor a particular saint. At least in part, their motivation is always to edify and to provide an example for the faithful to follow. Thacker points out that these plays were not have to be “monotonously pious” (146) but

instead “Despite this fundamental difference from the conventional reception of the *comedia*, many religious plays contained a large number of elements common to the other two genres” (147). Some of the common elements that Thacker identifies were the presence of the *gracioso* character, the love/honor plot line and also a courtly setting.

The *auto sacramental* differed from the *comedia de santos* in that it was identified as “one-act play performed in the street in many Spanish towns and cities to celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi” (Thacker 162). The earliest examples of the Corpus Christi plays are dated to the Feast instituted by Pope Urban IV in 1264 and represented a distinct and very separate tradition from the Easter and Christmas plays in the Spanish theater tradition (Thacker 162). As we have already stated, the *comedia de santos* were written with the intent to edify while the goal of the *autos* according to Thacker was “to teach and to re-express dramatically (by moving the emotions and the intellect of the audience through the eye and the ear) the redemptive power of Christ, present in the Eucharist” (162). Associated with the *autos* were processions through the town with *carros*, or carts, that served as a moving temporary stage set-up that could be stationed anywhere. These carts varied in how elaborate they were, and at times, “They were two storeys high, elaborately decorated and designed often to produce spectacular appearances or effects” (162). Two aspects of the *auto*, also present at times in the *comedia de santos*, are the *loas* that began these plays as well as some allegorical techniques, similar to what we see in *El saco imaginado*.

Earlier in this chapter I provided an overview of hagiography focused primarily on the stories and legends and not as much on how these hagiographic legends then translated into the vernacular plays. In establishing four fundamental aspects for the *comedia de santos*,

Elma Dassbach, author of *La comedia hagiográfica del Siglo de Oro español*, cites first “la presencia en la obra de un santo oficialmente reconocido por la iglesia, es decir, un santo canonizado” (1), because it was not uncommon in popular tradition for the people to “canonize” a particular saint without the official recognition of the church. The second essential element consists of the dramatization of the protagonist’s sanctity and thirdly, “las reiteradas alusiones en la obra en torno a la santidad del protagonista, por ejemplo, a través de los comentarios que hacen los demás personajes de la comedia sobre el santo, a quien perciben como tal y no como a un ser simplemente virtuoso o devoto” (Dassbach1). The final element noted by Dassbach is the inclusion of miracles or other supernatural elements that play a role in the life of the saint. It is easy to imagine how this last aspect will add to the dramatic possibilities of the *comedias de santos*.

Dassbach breaks these elements down further into the religious aspect and the spectacular element of the *comedia de santos*. To understand the connection between these two elements, Dassbach writes that it is the author’s goal that “a través del desarrollo del elemento religioso, es decir, de la vida del santo, el autor trata de crear suficiente interés y tensión dramática para permitir que la obra avance a nivel dramático” (12). Neither can be overlooked or overshadowed by the other. Without a certain focus on the life of the saint and his or her miracles, the edifying factor is lost and without focusing on creating a visual spectacle for the audience, a simple story of the life of a saint may not be enough to maintain their attention.

Part I of Dassbach’s book provides a look at four types of saints (El mendicante, el convertido, el mártir, el hacedor de milagros), similar to those described earlier in the

chapter, and she explains the dramatic possibilities present in a *comedia de santos* for each type of saint. For example, a story that tells of a saint who converted to Christianity provides a number of dramatic possibilities in the process of conversion and the temptations faced by the future saint shortly after converting (Dassbach 44). The temptations often included temptations from the devil and other supernatural appearances. The scene of the public confession could easily be presented in a way that would draw the audience into the story. Consider the confession of Gavinus, the Sardinian saint from Cano's 15th century poem, and the reaction of Barbaro to the soldier's confession easily translatable into a dramatic scene. Cano describes Barbaro's response as follows,

Tando su rey Barbaru totu furious
stringhiat sos dentes que lupo rabiosu,
chiamayt sos bochinos cum furia cridende:
“Leademi daenanti custu de presente,
leadelu prestu portadelu a sa morte,
posca qui at querfidu cussa tale sorte
a custu inimigu de sos Imperadores
ligadeli sas manos comente traydore.” (663-70)⁹⁰

This scene depicting the rage of Barbaro during the public confession of the soldier, Gavinus, under whose watch he had placed the two condemned Christians, Prothus and Januarius, provides the dramatic possibilities similar to the stories of the converted referenced by Dassbach. The seed for future Sardinian *comedia de santos* is there.

The third type of saint often the subject of the *comedia de santos* is the martyr, whose stories provide endless dramatic possibilities. The three elements that represent of the story of a martyred saint are a violent death, the suffering of tortures and the miracles associated

⁹⁰ “Then the king Barbaro, entirely furious, gritting his teeth like a rabid wolf, called the executioners with great rage: ‘Take away from me this one that is in front of me, lead him away immediately and bring him to his death. After all, he asked for this fate, as an enemy of the Emperors tie him up like a traitor’ (ln. 676-83).

with their death (Dassbach 54). This brings up an interesting question regarding the presence of violence on the stage. It is a question not easily answered because it often depended on the time, the subject matter and the country in which the play was being performed. In his book *Medieval Theater in Context*, John Wesley Harris discusses how much the standard medieval audience loved the torture scenes. Harris explains, “In saints’ plays, the action often grew too rough for simple acting. The medieval audience loved its tortures. Saints were continually being decapitated, roasted on gridirons, burnt in ovens, torn limb from limb, or otherwise carved up” (Harris 145). This is not the case for the violence in the theater of the *Siglo de Oro*. These plays, “Por lo general, en el teatro del Siglo de Oro, se evitan las muertes violentas en escena, o se presentan veladamente en el foro, situado al fondo del escenario, que es el lugar que se utiliza para ‘mostrar los resultados de actos violentos’”.⁹¹ At times, however, the violence involved in the torture of the martyr before his or her death was represented in the play. Dassbach cites the example of Lope de Vega’s *El niño inocente de La Guardia* (1604-17), in which the character “Juanico es victim de un asesinato ritual a imitación de la Pasión de Cristo en el que cada uno de los horrores tiene lugar en escena: golpes, azotes, coronación de espinas, crucifixión, extirpación de corazón y muerte” (Dassbach 56). Other times, in an effort to avoid depicting such violence on stage, it was glossed and recounted through a conversation between multiple characters instead of actually depicting the violent acts on the stage.⁹² In her conclusion to this section, Dassbach explains

⁹¹ This quote appears in the notes of Dassbach’s book, but it is taken from: John E. Varey, “Comsmovisión y niveles de acción,” en *Teatro y prácticas escénicas. II. La comedia*, ed. Joan Oleza Simó, London: Tamesis Books Ltd., 1986, p. 58).

⁹² The use of “Glossing” is a technique that we will see later in the 7th part passion play that brings to a close Delogu Ibba’s *Index libri vitae*. The torture suffered by Christ is described and retold a number of times in this play, however, at no point is any aspect of the violence actually depicted on the stage.

“En cuanto a los aspectos desagradables de torturas y muertes, éstos, por lo general se evitan en escena. El autor se limita a poner en boca de otros personajes una sucinta narración de los hechos ocurridos al santo” (Dassbach 59-60). The martyrs’ stories in the *comedia de santos* are without a doubt full of dramatic possibilities. From the depiction of the tortures suffered by them before their death to the miracles that surround their death, there are a number of opportunities for the elements of the supernatural to be presented visually. The most common supernatural elements presented are “profecías, voces celestiales, visiones, apariencias, levitaciones y milagros en sentido más estricto, como son curas, resurrecciones, transubstanciaciones, milagros de protección y vuelos al más allá” (Dassbach 99). In the following analysis of Antioco del Arca’s *El sacco imaginado*, we will see a number of these elements of the supernatural not previously found in the earlier Sardinian dramas.

Turning our attention back to Antioco del Arca’s play *El sacco imaginado*, Alziator has called del Arca “figlio del suo tempo” meaning that he is “l’esponente della Sardegna ispano-culturizzata, nonostante l’ambientazione sarda dei fatti e i personaggi sardi” (Alziator, Storia 73-4). Unlike Cano before him, Antioco del Arca writes his play in Castilian, abandoning the use of Sardinian, which does not appear anywhere in his work. It is possible to see a number of elements of the theater of the Siglo de Oro in del Arca’s work. Bullegas stresses the importance of *El sacco imaginado* as the first real example of the developments to Sardinian theater thanks to the contact with and the awareness of the Spanish theater of the Siglo de Oro. Bullegas writes,

È indubbio che quest’opera costituisce una tappa importante e fondamentale nella storia del teatro sardo: essa si pone come primo modello ‘dichiarato’ di quei moduli culturali ispanici che avevano sempre informato i contenuti delle produzioni drammatiche indigene; e che s’erano venuti man mano sovrapponendo

inconsiamente e non – sempre però secondo un ‘assorbimento’ latente-, al pensiero degli intellettuali sardi, fin dagli ultimi del XV secolo. Ne *El saco imaginado*, per la prima volta, abbiamo la esplicita ‘confessione’ di aderenza a un ben definito modello culturale – in questo caso teatrale – nell’ambito di un contenuto d’altro canto, tutto indigeno: la ‘scena religiosa’ spagnola è già arrivata a dar consistenza al contenuto drammatico sardo. (Bullegas, Il teatro 149-50)

Similarly, Alziator sees Del Arca’s work as “un punto d’incontro tra la sacra rappresentazione locale e l’*auto spagnolo*” (Alziator, Storia 204). There are a number of reasons why this play falls in the middle of the two religious dramatic genres of Spain. It is not an *auto* because first, it is too long (3 acts), and second, there are no references to the Eucharist in this play. As Ángel Valbuena Prat explains in *Historia del teatro español*, “La referencia al Sacramento, ya sea tangencial o central, es igualmente necesaria, ya que se trata de obras destinadas a las Fiesta del Corpus” (325-6). At the same time, this play does not fit the definition of a *comedia de santos* because it does not focus on the life of the three saints at all, but instead on their burial and the transportation of their remains back to their native city of Torres from Sassari. However, elements of each of these two genres can be found in *El saco imaginado*.

First there has been some confusion about when this play was first performed. Enrico Costa claimed that it was first performed in the Cattedrale di Sassari (Alziator, Testi 37) in the year 1615, which scholars now agree is impossible for a number of reasons. Alziator clarifies, “La recente scoperta della scheda biografica di Antioco del Arca, attraverso i documenti dell’Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu, risolve per sempre il problema. Nel 1615 il del Arca aveva solo vent’anni, non era ancora sacerdote, né era mai stato a Sassari. Immaginarsi quindi se si può pensare alla rappresentazione di un suo lavoro nella cattedrale di quella città” (Alziator, Testi 37). In his book *Il teatro in Sardegna fra Cinque e Seicento*:

Da Sigismondo Arquer ad Antioco del Arca, Bullegas reports the date of the first representation of *El sacco imaginado* as May 1622, “anno in cui vennero riportati a Torres i resti dei santi Gavino, Proto e Gianuario” (Bullegas 146).

The play is divided into three different acts and preceded by a *loa*, totaling 3035 lines. The inclusion of a *loa* to begin the play is the first element of Spanish theater that makes its way into Del Arca’s drama. Alziator explains, “La *Loa* che precede la *comedia* ha il carattere tradizionale degli *Introitos* o *Argumentos*, come erano chiamate da Juan del Encima sino a Lope de Vega, le brevi composizioni nelle quali si esponeva l’argomento del lavoro che stava per andare in scena e si traeva la morale dell’andamento dei fatti rappresentati” (Alziator, Testi 70). It is more similar to a *prologo argumentativo* because of its focus on presenting the subject matter instead of addressing the audience. This *loa* starts with a detailed description of the sack of Rome in the year 386 “Al tiempo que florecia mas la sobervia Romana en sus ilustres vitorias y en el valor de las armas” (Alziator 82).⁹³ The *loa* then explains the topic of this work, another sack, this time “el sacco de nuestras Reliquias santas de como fueron del Templo de San Gavino sacadas: y de que la sacan oy desta Ciudad Turritana” (Alziator 87). It is not until the end of the *loa* that the attention turns to the audience and what they are about to see. After announcing the topic, del Arca continues with what seems to be an address to the audience “Quiero dezir si hai silencio, / si los oyentes no parlan: / sera el sacco Imaginado / que assi la farsa se llama. / De otra suerte, dende luego / mando al Sacristan que os abra: / y que os dè sacco de Iglesia, / que en la Iglesia no se parla. / Que dizen Señores? Quieren / oyr por tres horas largas / el Sacco? Dizen que sì? / Pues queden todos si callan” (Alziator, Testi

⁹³ Because no lines are numbered in this play, I will cite the page numbers that appear in the Alziator edition of *El sacco imaginado* found in *Testi di drammatica religiosa della Sardegna*. The bibliographical information is found in the works cited list.

87). In this *loa*, there is no invocation asking God for assistance so that del Arca might have the ability to tell this story justly as we see in other hagiographic works. It could be because there is less pressure to tell the story in a way that inspires the audience to follow the model of the saint as there would be in a standard *comedia de santos*.

The development of the staging techniques to heighten the dramatic quality of a scene is another aspect of this play that demonstrates the clear influence of Spanish theater on the drama of the island. The first two examples from *El saco imaginado* that come to mind are the use of voices being heard from off stage and the clouds as a way to hide and then reveal the saint in the middle of the scene. Dassbach identifies the use of the off-stage voice as the least spectacular of all the stage techniques and yet there is no doubt it is still effective. Dassbach describes them saying, “Generalmente, suelen ser voces no identificadas con un personaje divino en concreto, y que posiblemente resonarían en el escenario como un eco lejano y misterioso, portador de algún mensaje divino. Ese mensaje suele referirse al destino que, a partir de un momento dado, vinculará al santo con la misión divina que se le encomienda” (99-100). This is exactly what we see in *El saco* when the voice that is heard from off stage is that of the saint Gavinus, responding to the calls of the ghost of Comida. In this scene, Comida is complaining to his son, Orgodori, about the disappearance of the town’s relics of the three saints, which he believes to have happened at the hands of *i corsari*, or pirates. He calls out continually to the saint asking for his intercession and asking him and his two companions to come back to the church where they were buried because they brought great honor to Tures. Comida cries, “Bolved piadosos Patrones, / bolved a vuestra morada, /que assi sera frequentada / esta Casa de oraciones” (Alziator, *Storia* 96). When Gavinus

responds to him, the voice, which is not immediately identifiable, is coming from a cloud that is visible on stage. At first the voice does not respond to the questions. Del Arca identifies the voice as an Eco and therefore the only dialogue at first is the repetition of the last two syllables of the preceding statement of Comida. For example, Comida says, “Cielos” and the Eco repeats “elos.” Comida “que es esto?” and his Eco counterpart “esto?” (97) This continues until suddenly the cloud breaks open and San Gavinus appears to them. Until the revelation of the voice, this interaction between Comida and the echo adds to the suspense and increases the audience’s curiosity regarding the mysterious origin of the voice. Dassbach also suggests the possible comic situations created by these offstage voices. This interaction between Comida and the echo that repeats the last two syllables of every statement he makes is certainly an example of this.

While the stage directions provided by Del Arca do not give us any indication of the movement of the cloud, it is likely that some vertical movement was involved, bringing the saint who has died for his faith and ascended to heaven back down to earth. In William Tydeman’s book, *The Theater in the Middle Ages: Western European Stage Conditions, c. 800-1576*, he describes the use of clouds in the staging techniques,

Contributing more to the spectators’ sense of the marvelous was the employment of clouds to makes the machinery necessary for ascents and descents simulating flight or translation from one sphere to another. It seems to have been common for scenic clouds to be suspended on wires or strings from some suitable high point, and then lowered to very effective purposes by means of a pulley at certain important junctures in the action (171).⁹⁴

In the text of Del Arca, the only indication given by the stage directions was, “Aqui responde un Eco dende la nube cerrada” and “Aqui se abre la nube, y parece solo San Gavino”

⁹⁴ Tydeman, William. *The Theater in the Middle Ages: Western European Stage Conditions, c. 800 – 1576*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978. Print.

(Alziator, Testi 98). There is no way to know the sophistication with which these clouds were used in the scene by Del Arca; however, it certainly indicates an awareness of certain staging devices being used in Spain and elsewhere to increase the dramatic capabilities of the play. This same technique will be used again later in the play for the appearance of Sant'Antioco. The use of these *tramoyas* "incorporan diferentes planos espaciales a la escena" (Dassbach 104). They represent an aspect of the supernatural and a way in which to represent this separation of worlds visually to the audience. In his chapter on "*Apariencias and Tramoyas*," in the larger work *The Spanish Stage at the time of Lope de Vega*, Hugo Rennert explains, "The help of stage machinery of various kinds, under the name of *artificios, invenciones, apariencias, and tramoyas*, has been invoked in the religious representations of Spain since very early times" (98). *Apariencias* or *tramoyas* were just the technical terms used to describe any type of stage machinery used. Another example that was very often used on the stage was a trap door that would aid in surprise appearances or even disappearances. For example, in the case of the *comedia de santos* when the real actor was about to undergo the violence associated with the martyrdom and he was often switched out through the trap door and replaced with a dummy.

Another connection to be found between Spanish theater and the work of Antioco del Arca is the use of the personifications of the two cities, Torres and Sassari. The topic of this play is related to the relics of the three patron saints of Porto Torres, Gavinus, Prothus and Januarius, and the desire of the town of Torres to have these relics safely returned after they had been transferred to Sassari in 1614 by the archbishop of Sassari, Manca Cedrelles.⁹⁵ This

⁹⁵ To explain how the relics of the three martyrs were in Sassari instead of Torres, Spada writes, "Nel 1614 l'arcivescovo di Sassari Gavino Manca Cedrelles effettuò un grande scavo nella navata centrale della basilica

was an actual historical event that took place during the War of the Relics in Sardinia, as Sassari competed with Cagliari for the title of supremacy in the eyes of the Church. Besides providing the topic for this play, this period in history manifests itself during the second act of the play. In a later scene, the allegorical personification of the two cities, *Porto Torres*, birthplace of the saints and town where they were patron saints, and *Sassari*, the town where the relics were found in that period, appear to *El Castellano*. The stage directions explain, “Duermese, y Salen Torres, y Sacer con pendones: Torres sobre una torre, y Sacer sobre Roselo” (Alziator, Testi 128). *El Castellano* is in a semi-dreamlike state and does not understand what is happening or who is speaking to him. He is chosen to serve as the judge in the debate regarding the fate of the relics of Gavinus, Porthus and Januarius. The personification of each city will present their case to him and he will make the final decision. Torres is the first to speak and says that the city is currently “sin alma, porque le faltan los cuerpos” (Alziator, Testi 131). Sassari instead claims that it was the saint Gavinus that led him, the personification of the town, to the place where he discovered the relics of the three saints and therefore they rightfully belong in Sassari. In the end the verdict delivered favors of Torres so that these relics may be returned to their rightful owner.

This scene is presented as if it were a dream or as Bullegas describes, a “sogno, dove i confini fra realtà e fantasia si sfrangiano” (Il teatro 162). On one hand, this scene is representative of the importance of the cults of the saints and the idea that the relics brought notoriety to the cities in which they resided. It is also a significant scene for its connection to

per riportare alla luce i corpi dei tre Martiri, e nel suo tentativo sembrò fortunato. Infatti quasi subito rinvenne un sepolcro, che fu detto di Gavino, tra l'altare maggiore e quello del S. Crocifisso, e in seguito i sepolcri degli altri due Santi. Compilò allora accuratamente il suo 'giornale di scavo' e inviò una relazione al re di Spagna Filippo III” (Spada, vol. 1 p. 186-7).

the Spanish *autos* and *comedias* and the representation of a supernatural element depicted on stage. These two cities were not represented in the scene as just a voice off stage but instead took on a human form. In a chapter on the “Manifestaciones de lo sobrenatural,” Dassbach explains, “Las intervenciones angelicas, diabólicas, y de demás personajes sagrados, resultan siempre espectaculares en escena, pues ya no se trata de presentarnos simplemente una voz, imagen, cuadro o personaje inmóvil en una apariencia, sino que estos personajes cobran vida en escena: hablan, participant en la acción y, en ultimo término, determinan su curso” (110).

The last two connections raised by Alziator were the presence of the figure of the *gracioso* and the way in which Del Arca has divided up his play into episodes with continual scene changes. In *El saco imaginado*, Alziator identifies the character Lucero as a variation of the typical *gracioso* character of Spanish theater, and particularly that of Lope de Vega. Thacker describes the *gracioso* as “often loud, indiscreet, gluttonous, cowardly, and lewd, at other times loyal and shrewd” (46). He was a comic servant character not unlike that of the Italian *commedia dell’arte* character, Arlecchino. There are two scenes of importance with Lucero, the figure of the *gracioso*.⁹⁶ The first is a festive dance scene at the end of the play when the town of Torres is preparing for the return of the relics. Bullegas points out the similarities between this scene and one from Lope de Vega’s *La dama boba*, a scene that presents a comic dance lesson because of the presence of the *gracioso*. Lucero’s second scene of importance in *El saco imaginado* is an entire conversation between him and Carino that is dominated by a constant play on the word “saco,” “saca” and “sacar,” that as Alziator points out is of “carattere tipicamente barocco” (Alziator, *Storia* 201). Here is just a small excerpt of this conversation:

⁹⁶ This character’s name appears spelled both Lucero and Luzero.

Luzero: ... que saca es esta?

Carino: Saca de huessos sera.

Luzero: No me meto en esse escollo: saca de huessos no mas?

Carino: Ya entiendo que me diràs que falta el saca meolla. (Alziator, Storia 202)

Alziator later describes this exchange as “la incredibile e insupportabile tiritera dei bisticci di parole, di concetti e di equivoci sul vocabolo *saco* della scena tra Carino e Luzero” (Storia 204). In regards to the scene divisions reminiscent of Lope de Vega, Alziator writes, “L’azione, frammentata in episodi, risulta meno monotona, anche se non ha nulla di eccezionale. Domina il clima lopiano” (Alziator, Testi 78).

There are many other examples of 17th-century hagiographic plays that could be used to further demonstrate the encounter between the very simple earlier sacred representations of Sardinia with the *auto sacramental* and the *comedia de santos* of Spain. I chose to present the mid-15th -century hagiographic poem of Antonio Cano, *Sa vita et sa morte et passione de sanctu Gavinu Prothu et Januariu*, and the mid-17th century play by Antioco del Arca, *El sacu imaginado*, because they both focus on the same three famous saints of the island, Prothus, Gavinus and Januarius, and yet they do so in a very different way that demonstrates the progress made from one century to the next. Cano’s work represented the first actual example of writing in Sardinian for solely literary purposes. It does not present the entire lives of these three saints, as a *comedia de santos* might, but instead focuses on the conversion of Gavinus and the martyrdom of all three. While critics have stated that it is not very valuable in terms of a literary work, its linguistic importance is undeniable. It is the first time that this Sardinian language is elevated to a literary level, thus breaking the hierarchy that was in place. While this work by Cano is correctly identified as a poem and not a dramatic production; in this poem, I see the a number of dramatic possibilities, including the

dialogues between Barbaro and Prothus and Januarius or Barbaro and Gavinus, and also the scene changes from one location to another. Not to be forgotten is the sheer connection that the people of the island felt for the Sardinian martyrs and saints. It is an early example that allows us to look back at the significant developments made from these earliest examples of Sardinian literary compositions.

Antioco del Arca's *El saco imaginado* represents this progress made by Sardinian theater as it entered into the 17th century, a century that was colored entirely by Spanish character. Del Arca embraced the Castilian language for his play and Bullegas describes him saying, "Affiora nel del Arca, a tratti, una Potenza di parole inconsueta, una fastosità di immagini e di metafore che rivelano in lui non solo l'uomo del Seicento, ma anche il letterato cresciuto in una determinata area culturale: quella ricca ed esuberante spagnola" (Il teatro 168). As the quote starts to suggest, Del Arca demonstrates a knowledge of the theater of the Iberian peninsula that he has incorporated into his very different telling of the story of the three Sardinian martyrs. Some of these Spanish features were the presence of a *loa* surrounding the argument at the opening of the play, the staging machinery that added new dramatic possibilities to what was previously a very simple theater tradition, personifications and the presence of the famous *gracioso* character. Gavinus, Prothus and Januarius appear in this play, but are not by any means the protagonists. The saints instead make appearances aided by the newly introduced *tramoyas* and *apariencias*. Through the use of a cloud the saints are hidden from the eyes of the audience and their voices seem as though they are coming from off stage. It is also through these clouds that they are able to appear suddenly in the scene. It is likely that the use of the cloud demonstrated the saint descending down from

his heaven to the earthly realm, thus providing the audience with a visual representation of the saints' holy nature. This is not stated specifically in the stage directions of del Arca, but that is not surprising because his stage directions are mostly limited to very simple indications of the arrival and departure of characters. *El sacco imaginado* highlights the situation in the 17th century in Sardinia. The debate between personified Torres and Sassari, over the rightful owner of the relics was indicative of what was happening in the major cities on the island as they searched desperately for relics to fill their churches.

Antonio Cano and Antioco del Arca provide two entirely different approaches to the representation of the stories of the three Sardinian martyrs and patron saints, each one indicative of the time period in which it was composed. Cano represents the first example of a literary composition written in Logudorese and while there are a few embellishments by the author, Cano stuck very closely to the story of the *passio* and the *inventio* of these saints. Composed in the mid-15th century, Sardinia was still in a period in which they were not accepting of the foreign rulers present on the island, the Aragonese. The fact that it was published posthumously in the 1557 is evidence of the popularity of these hagiographic works and the fact that the people would have very well received it. Antioco del Arca instead represents a shift in Sardinian culture that saw many embracing the language and the culture of Spain. He demonstrates a knowledge of many elements of the major playwrights of *comedia de santos* and *autos sacramentales* and an ability to incorporate them into his own work. The developments made by del Arca's *El sacco imaginado* represent a middle phase between Cano and what was to come later in the early 18th century in Giovanni Delogu

Ibba's work, *Index libri vitae*, when we will see Delogu Ibba's appropriation of these elements of Spanish drama in an entirely Sardinian context.

CHAPTER IV

GOSOS AND POPULAR RELIGION IN SARDINIA

“Se i vescovi avessero capito la ricchezza dei *gosos*, ne avrebbero raccomandato la recita o il canto con numerose indulgenze” (Turtas, Pregare 108). Raimondo Turtas reports this statement made often by Fr. Giovanni Battista Manzella of Sassari in reaction to the *Concilio Plenario Sardo I*'s definition of the *gosos* as “semplici lodi in onore dei santi” (Turtas, Pregare 108). Luckily the opinions of the bishops involved in the *Concilio Plenario Sardo II* changed significantly. They recognized in the *gosos* an undeniable element of *pietà popolare*, which is described as “quell’insieme cioè di gesti e parole in cui si estrinseca la ‘religiosità innata’ del popolo sardo, ‘intimamente e quasi pudicamente vissuta a livello personale, eppure manifestata ed espressa in forme artistiche e corali di grande e fervente celebrazione” (Turtas, Pregare 110).⁹⁷ In this same article, the bishops address the *gosos* and recognize their role in the lives of the faithful on the island. The bishops of the CPSII explained, “Nell’ambito di questa *pietà popolare* sono fioriti i canti e le preghiere in lingua sarda. Sono per lo più formulari di antiche novene, preghiere che accompagnano diverse azioni della giornata e situazioni varie; poesie e canti: ‘gosos’, canti per il Natale, per la settimana santa” (Turtas, Pregare 110).

An interesting comparison is made between the *gosos* and their catechistic role for the people of Sardinia. It is well-documented that during certain points in Sardinian history, even the clergy on the island did not possess the level of education or instruction suitable

⁹⁷ Here Turtas is quoting from the “un capitolo, il sedicesimo, dedicato alla *pietà popolare*”(Turtas, Pregare 10) in art. 112.1 of the *atti* of the *Concilio Plenario Sardo II*, published in 2001.

to carry out their duties, so it is not hard to imagine the inferior level of education of the members of the church. The *gosos* served as a means through which the clergy could communicate the teachings of the Church. Turtas explains, “I *gosos*, in effetti, hanno da sempre costituito una forma di catechismo comprensibile a tutti, non solo per la lingua usata, ma anche per la forma semplice con cui vengono preposte le verità della fede cristiana. Si tratta di un catechismo non libresco, non sistematico, facile da ricordare e adattato a tutti i periodi dell’anno liturgico” (Turtas, Pregare 111). Don Salvatore Merche, a parish priest in Oniferi, highlighted the usefulness of the *gosos* when he stated that they “Per parecchi secoli sono stati la sua Bibbia, il suo Vangelo, il suo Martirologio, la sua Agiografia” (Turtas, Pregare 111).

The narrative tales of the lives of the saints, such as those presented in chapter three, are not the only foundation upon which Sardinian religious drama is established. In fact, when discussing the pre-existing dramatic material that is at the very foundation of the *teatro sacro*, Sergio Bullegas also proposes the rituals of Holy Week and the *gosos*, both of which will be the focus of this chapter. Bullegas’ statement, as Alziator before him, affirmed, “Nè vanno dimenticati i popolareschi ‘goggius’, dei quali alcuno si presenta anche in forma drammatica” (Alziator, Storia 183). As is already clear from the varied terminology in this section’s title and the words used by Alziator, there are a number of words used to identify this religious lyric form.⁹⁸ The terms “gosos” and “goggius” are the terms used in Sardinia, in the North and in the South of the island, respectively. The term in Spanish is “Gozos” and “Goigs” is the word used in Catalan. The *gosos* can be defined as “composizioni poetiche,

⁹⁸ The etymology of the word *gosos* is from *gaudium* in Latin meaning “joy or enjoyment.” In my study, I will use the word *goigs* when referring to the works written in Catalan and *gosos* when referring to those in Sardinian.

religiose, cantate, con schemi metrici ben precisi e definiti (ottava, sestina, quintilla), che si indirizzano in circostanze determinate in lode della divinità, della Madonna e dei Santi e per invocarne protezione ed aiuto, nelle varie necessità spirituali e temporali” (Dore II).

Their origins are not found on the island of Sardinia but instead can be traced to the Catalan culture and even further back to the Provençal literary tradition. The rise of the use of *gosos* in Sardinia is directly related to the cultural exchange that was a result of the Catalan occupation of the island. As presented stated, the Aragonese rule of Sardinia began in 1297 when Jaume II of Aragon was named as the King of Sardinia by Pope Boniface XIII in exchange for control of Sicily. The occupation of Sardinia by the Aragonese only began in the year 1323 under the reign of Jaume II of Aragon, after he claimed control of the island by force. The first of the Iberian languages to arrive in Sardinia was Catalan, until the introduction of the Castilian language on the island towards the end of the 15th century. In a chapter on the Spanish acculturation in Sardinia, Mario Azori writes,

Con la conquista militare spagnola la Chiesa sarda passò definitivamente sotto il ‘patronato’ della Chiesa castigliana. Con i soldati, i mercanti e gli amministratori spagnoli giunsero anche molte forme di religiosità popolare delle comunità iberiche. La nuova ondata di cristianizzazione fondò chiese, santuari dedicati a santi e a Madonne che erano propri della tradizione religiosa spagnola. I sardi appresero dai popolani spagnoli e dal basso clero preghiere e canti religiosi che da tempo si usavano nelle feste e nelle chiese di Spagna. (Credenze 37)

Besides the clear reference to the *gosos*, one of the most interesting aspects about the quotation is the reference to “religiosità popolare.” Giovanni Dore, in his introduction to *Gosos e Ternuras*,⁹⁹ defines *religiosità popolare* as “tutto un complesso di atteggiamenti spirituali e di manifestazioni culturali” (I) and also states that “Tutte le manifestazioni di vita

⁹⁹ The translation of the word *ternuras* means *dolori* or “sorrows,” (Dore XXII).

sarda, da quelle di lavoro, di famiglia, di società, a quelle di divertimento e di svago, sono intessute di religiosità popolare” (I). *Religiosità popolare* seems as if it is where religion, language, cultural customs and traditions all meet and therefore the concept of *religiosità popolare* is unique to each society.

August Bover i Font, in a conference presented on the origins and transformations of the *goigs*, states that, given the Catalan occupation of the island, it can be assumed that the first *goigs* coincide with the Catalan arrival on the island and were most likely written in Catalan even in Sardinia (Estudis 33). Mario Atzori, in his article “Rapporto tra canzoni religiose catalane e canti religiosi sardi: i goigs e i gosos: un esempio di acculturazione,” credits the clergy with the process of acculturation that took place on the island. He writes, “Ma il clero soprattutto era veicolo della più capillare penetrazione culturale, nella misura in cui, per mezzo delle proprie diramazioni gerarchiche e delle associazioni collaterali, aveva la possibilità di controllare il monopolio della produzione e diffusione dell’ideologia religiosa” (577).¹⁰⁰

A number of Sardinian scholars had previously dated the first appearance of *gosos* much later, well into the 18th century. Alziator cited the 1726-7 manuscript of San Vero Milis as the earliest appearance of *gosos*, while Bullegas pushes this date up to 1718, citing a manuscript belonging to the Confraternita del Rosario that contained a number of *gosos*. Contrary to both of these opinions, Dore instead cites two early 14th-century examples, “Laudes a sa Rejna de sa Rosa” and “A sa santa Rughe” found in the *Laudario lirico quattrocentista*, found by Damiano Filia. Alziator describes the edition as “un breve laudario

¹⁰⁰ Atzori, Mario. “Rapporto tra canzoni religiose catalane e canti religiosi sardi: i goigs e i gosos: un esempio di acculturazione.” *Studi sardi*, Vol. 24 (1975-1977), p. 575-91.

quattrocentesco italiano del paese di Borutta in provincia di Sassari” and explains that it was “posto in appendice ad un *Officium Disciplinatorum Sanctissimae Crucis* della Confraternita di Sassari” (Alziator, *Storia* 69). The compositions present in this *laudario* are “laudi della santissima Trinità, della Santa Croce, della Vergine” (Alziator, *Storia* 69) in addition to the two compositions written in Sardinian mentioned above. These genre of the *laude* was a genre that had already been firmly established in the thirteenth century. As Ennio Rao explains in his chapter on “Italian Drama” in volume *Western Drama through the Ages*, “The thirteenth century saw a vast production of mystical poems called *laude*, or ‘lauds.’ They were written in the vernacular and recited by the lay confraternities of the Umbrian ascetics, popularly known as ‘The Disciplined Ones’ or ‘The Flagellants,’” (188). An interesting point made by Rao is that this was a movement that “went from the public square to the church’s interior” (188), when we generally expect the opposite as a genre continues to develop and perhaps breaks off from the rites of the Church.

Because of the undeniable Catalan influence upon the Sardinian *gosos*, I would like to discuss the early origins of the *goigs* in Catalan. The literary origin of the *goigs* does not begin in Catalonia but instead can instead be traced to the works of Provençal troubadours whose poetic composition, the *dansa*, provides the basic literary form of the *goigs*.¹⁰¹ While this Provençal verse form had previously been used to praise a worldly woman, they were eventually used for praising the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹⁰² J. Amades in “Un aspecte de la

¹⁰¹ Joan Roig i Montserrat defines the *dansa* Provençal as a composition that was used very often by Provençal troubadours made up of an opening quatrain, from which the final two verses will be taken to be repeated at the end of the remaining strophes, all of six lines (eight counting the 2-lined refrain). At the end of the *dansa* there is another strophe of four verses, often identical to the opening quatrain. (*Estudis* 21)

¹⁰² This is primarily a result of the Albigensian Crusades in the beginning of the 13th century in the South of France. With these Crusades against the Albigensian heretics in the south, the feudal courts which had been the

influenza de la cultura catalana a Sardenya” draws the connection between the *danses* and the *goigs*, claiming “*I goigs*, ai tempi delle letterature auree dei popoli provenzali, occitanici e catalani, costituivano un genere particolare della poesia trobadorica e figuravano tra i versi di amore e le arti del *bel trobar*; infatti i *goigs*, considerati poeticamente, appartengono alla categoria delle *danses*” (Atzori 580). The first *dansa* in Catalan featuring religious content is *Mayre de Déue fylha* by King Jaume II of Mallorca in 1305 (Estudis 27). The original subject matter was the seven earthly joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary as seen in the Provençal example, *Los set gautz de nostra Dona*, written by Guiu de Foulquet in the late 13th century. The seven joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary are: “Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity of Jesus, Epiphany, Finding Jesus in the Temple, Resurrection, and Assumption” (Estudis 29). As the subject matter expands, we also find *goigs* that praise Jesus Christ as well as *goigs* that tell the story of the lives and miracles of the saints. There was always a dual objective to the *goigs* written in honor of the saints: first, to praise and honor them and second, to ask for their aid or protection through intercession. According to F. Almarche Vasquez, “Le caratteristiche popolari dei *goigs* emergono dal modo in cui presentano, in forma poetica e narrazione storica, la vita e l’immagine protettrice del santo venerato” (Atzori 578-9).

The original Catalan *goigs* had certain rules for their versification, which followed very closely the versification of the Provençal *dansa* outlined above. As this literary tradition was adapted by the Sardinians, a number of these rules were modified. The first part of the composition was a quatrain, from which the last two lines served as a refrain and were repeated at the end of each of the remaining strophes. In the Catalan tradition, each strophe

fostering grounds for the Provençal lyric tradition and which had also provided the inspiration for this tradition were eventually disbanded or destroyed. The Provençal lyric poets therefore were forced to turn their attention to other topics, mainly those of a religious nature.

was composed of eight lines, but this is one aspect that often varied in the Sardinian *gosos*. In his introduction, Dore states that the *ottava* (eight-lined strophe) was the oldest metric form of the *gosos*, the *sestina* (six-lined strophe) was the most commonly used, and the *quintiglia* or *chimbina* (five-lined strophe), though not used often, found more often in the works written for the Christmas season and for Holy Week (XIV). The number of strophes in the Catalan *goigs* is generally limited to seven. In the Sardinian *gosos* tradition, there is no set number of strophes and this number generally exceeds the seven strophes of their Catalan predecessors. The Sardinian *gosos*, as time passes and the genre continues to develop, also allow for variation in the two-line refrain repeated at the end of every strophe. In certain Sardinian *gosos* from the 1700's, we see either a refrain of a single line or even the elimination of these refrains all together. The *goigs* traditionally closed with an additional quatrain that often repeated the rhyme scheme of the initial quatrain, following the model of the Provençal *dansa*.

The *goigs* and the *gosos* were always and will remain culturally important for a number of reasons. For Catalonia, the *goigs* were an influential literary genre because, as Joan Roig i Montserrat explained during a conference talk, *Els goigs entre la poesia popular i la culta*, “És una composició autòctona, genuïnament catalana, i d'aquí s'han escampat al llarg de segles a altres indrets d'influència religioso-popular del nostre país” (*Estudeis* 21). He also explains that the *goigs* were a means by which the Catalan people were able to preserve their written language, even during times when it was threatened by foreign conquerors who attempted to impose their language upon the people. The Sardinian *gosos* are particularly important because they are representative of the traditions and customs of the

island. Dore explains that engrained in the traditions of the people of Sardinia is prayer through song and that “Attraverso questo canto, le singole voci dei sardi trovano motivo per fondersi meglio, per sfogare l’insoddisfazione repressa, eliminare la tossicità della vita, condannare le ingiustizie, recuperare la consapevolezza di non essere soli a lottare e sperare e per riscoprire il senso di gioia di vivere” (II). This is indicative of one of the principles of the Sardinian concept of religion, the importance of a sense of communion and knowing that these prayers are never just individual prayers but that of an entire island of people.

The *gosos* are also important both in Catalonia and in Sardinia, as they represent the easiest way to communicate some of the messages of the Church. In the Catalan tradition, the *goigs* were a way for the people to participate in a liturgy, which was in Latin and therefore difficult for them to understand. This reality is echoed by Dore, who explains, “È doveroso infine, ricordare, che in quest’isola dimenticata, ad economia depressa, afflitta dalle malattie e dalla piaga dell’analfabetismo, i ‘gosos’ costituivano il miglior veicolo di cultura, accessibile a tutti; e forse l’unico!” (XI) As in the quotation by Don Salvatore Merche that began the chapter, for many the *gosos* were their Bible and the easiest way to receive the messages of the Church.

Inseparable from the composition of the *gosos* were the confraternities. In the latter part of the 16th century there was a confraternity established in practically every area of the island. In order to carry out their role in the promotion of the faith in their regions, Turtas explains that “Per le loro particolari devozioni le confraternite si servivano di preghiere e canti non solo in latino, ma anche in lingua volgare” (Turtas, Pregare 111). The role of the confraternities in the composition of the *gosos* is confirmed by Dore who states, “Non c’è

stato villaggio della Sardegna che non avesse la sua Confraternita e dal quale, in ogni giorno dell'anno, quasi seguendo un turno prestabilito, non si sia cantato in onore del Signore e dei Santi” (Dore XII). In regard to these prayers, Spada references the fact that “durante le più importanti feste venivano invitati a pregare e cantare con testi paraliturgici in italiano e in sardo” (Spada, vol. 2. p. 177). This explains the *laudario* such as the 15th-century example found by Damiano Filia mentioned earlier. The most common confraternities in Sardinia were dedicated to Santa Croce, Santissimo Rosario, and a number of versions of Mary, such as the *Confraternita dei Sette Dolori di Maria*, *Confraternita di N.S. d'Itria*, *N.S. di Bonaria*, etc (Spada, vol. 2, p. 181-3).¹⁰³ According to Turtas, the oldest confraternity on the island is most likely *I disciplinati di Santa Croce di Sassari* (Turtas, Pregare 111) of Umbrian-Tuscan origin. This confraternity had a number of *laudes drammatiche* written in Italian but “già a partire dagli anni Settanta del Cinquecento, quei testi vennero tradotti in sardo logudorese e diffuse nelle altre confraternite che venivano fondate nelle parrocchie della stessa diocesi e di quelle vicine” (Turtas, Pregare 111). The members of these confraternities will have a very important role in the rites and traditions of Holy Week that along with the *gosos* represent a profound experience of *religiosità popolare*.

There is a strong connection between the *gosos* and the celebration of Holy Week and many of these rites are intrinsically linked to the para-liturgical celebrations led by the members of the confraternity. In the book, *I riti della Settimana Santa in Sardegna*, Giulio Concu writes, “Anche in Sardegna spettò alle Cunfràrias (Confraternite) il compito di tramandare i riti paraliturgici; i Cunfràdes Cantores intonano i canti a quattro voci della

¹⁰³ These examples are taken from: Spada, Antonio Francesco. *Storia della Sardegna Cristiana e dei suoi Santi*. 3 vols. Oristano: Editrice S'Alvure, 1998. Print.

tradizione latina (Stabat, Miserere, Ottava Trista) e sos gòsos (o gòccius o gòtzos), laudi religiose senza accompagnamento musicale” (9).¹⁰⁴ This brings up an important point about the position of these rites within the mass. Generally these compositions were either before or perhaps even connected to the end of the mass itself or instead were part of a procession. These paraliturgical forms of devotion, the processions, the singing of the *gosos* and eventually the performances of the *sacre rappresentazioni* have a more profound impact on the people of Sardinia because as Concu writes, “Il popolo riusciva ad interiorizzare i riti, spesso incomprensibili anche a causa dell’uso della lingua latina, partecipando agli eventi della vita di Cristo come attore e spettatore” (Concu 8).

Holy week and the paraliturgical celebrations that take place during this week without a doubt provide some of the more moving and intense moments for the faithful members of the Church that have a front row seat and bear witness to the action. Many of the rites of these holy days have corresponding *gosos* that are performed, many of which are provided in Dore’s book. I would like to present a few of the more interesting rites of Holy week in Sardinia, starting with *Sos misterios*, which depending on the town on the island takes place either on Monday or Tuesday of that week. Concu describes “Sos Misterios” as “oggetti-simbolo della sofferenza del Cristo: il calice, il guanto (rappresenta gli schiacci dei soldati), la corda, la catena, la frusta, la scala, la corona di spine e così via” (14). In other cities, instead of the suffering of Christ represented through the objects, there are instead “statue condotte su sas andias (portantine), rappresentanti scene della Passione” (Concu 14). In the celebration of this rite in the town of Bosa, along the western coast of Sardinia, specific reference is

¹⁰⁴ The photographs that are presented *I Riti della Settimana Santa in Sardegna* besides being incredibly helpful and informative are nothing short of stunning. The pictures are taken by Franco Stefano Ruiu and the text is written by Giulio Concu. See the works consulted page for the bibliographic information.

made to the *gosos* that accompany this procession. On Thursday of Holy week, the church celebrates *Su lavabu*, a rite that remembers when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, “un umile e pratico amore verso il prossimo” (Concu 30). Besides the inclusion of *gosos*, there are no further paraliturgical elements to this rite given that it is performed within the mass. One very dramatic rite that takes place between Thursday evening or Friday morning, depending on the town, is *Sas chircas*, in which “ci si immagina che Maria abbia disperatamente cercato il figlio, e per rimembrare questa ricerca le Confraternite conducono il simulacro dell’Addolorata in una processione chiamata *de sas Chircas*” (Concu 36). The confraternities carry through the city or town the image of *Maria dolorosa* as she searches for her son. Accompanying these processions are *gosos* and even the presence of some instruments, *i tamburi*. The members of the church follow the image of Mary until they arrive in Church and all present participate in the *adorazione del sepolcro*.

There are several paraliturgical rites linked to Good Friday and the representation of the Passion of Christ. The first of these, *S’inscravamentu*, or the crucifixion of Jesus, is represented in almost every town on the island. Concu explains that in the last two centuries the depiction of this moment of the Passion “è reso agevole dall’utilizzo di simulacri snodabili che rendono più realistica la messa in scena” (Contu 44). Christ is raised up on the Cross by two members of the Church who hoist the statue by a white sheet so as not to touch it directly. The dramatic aspect of this scene is increased by a running commentary “in limba da un predicatore capace di suscitare profonda commozione fra i fedeli” (Contu 44) as well as the singing of the *Miserere* and the *Stabat Mater*. Taking place later in the evening is the representation of *S’iscravamentu* or the deposition of Christ from the cross, almost the exact

parallel of the previous rite. However, there are a number of additions to this rite, including the characters of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, represented by two members of the faithful community. Another character actually present on the scene, just in the form of a simulacrum, is the Madonna, who is placed on the altar “come se viva, ma paralizzata dal dolore” (Contu 76). The two male characters representing Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea process into the church and are called forward by the same narrator who will tell them *in limba* each step in order to take Christ down from the cross. Each person holds in their hand a hammer, used to take out the nails, and the white sheet is still present so that they do not directly touch the body. The cross in the middle of the altar dominates the scene and positioned directly behind it is a large ladder, which the characters of Nicodemus and Joseph will ascend to complete their task. Before removing each nail, they first remove the crown of thorns from Jesus’ head and present it at the foot of the statue of Mary. Once the nails are removed one by one, there is a dramatic moment in which the statue of the body of Christ hangs down supported only by the white sheet as the *Miserere* sung in the background. The figure of Jesus is then taken in *sa processione de s’interru* (the burial procession) where he is placed until the time of his Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

The final paraliturgical rite represented on the island on Easter Sunday morning is *S’incontru*. Contu explains, “Il rito si svolge in tutti i centri dell’isola: due cortei gestiti da diverse Confraternite, uno con Maria e l’altro con Gesù, partono da due chiese diverse e s’incontrano in un punto prestabilito” (Contu 86). This meeting is to represent the joy surrounding Christ’s resurrection. The music that accompanies this encounter is the *Gloria* and in towns such as Orosei, also *Sos gòtzos de s’Incontru*. Something that should be noticed

is the changed dress of the simulacrum of Mary, as a means of expressing her joy surrounding the events.

It is important to outline these paraliturgical celebrations attached to Holy week in Sardinia because of the profound role they play in the Sardinian tradition. Raimondo Turtas when speaking from his own childhood experience, recalls,

Ricordiamo, a questo proposito, *s'Ispravamentu e s'Incontru*, che garantiscono la partecipazione di tutta la comunità del villaggio alla passione e morte di Cristo e alla sua risurrezione. Tra i miei ricordi d'infanzia vi è quello che l'insieme dei riti – liturgici e non – della settimana santa creava nel paese un'atmosfera nella quale la morte di Gesù era sentita come la morte – e che morte! – di una persona di casa. In altre parole, quelle composizioni poetiche e quelle rappresentazioni drammatiche davano sostanza alle scarse formule del catechismo o delle preghiere elementari: esse svolgevano una vera e propria funzione catechetica. (Turtas, Pregare 108)

The paraliturgical rites of Holy Week coupled with the deep-seeded sense of *religiosità popolare* and the *gosos* provided the foundation for later liturgical drama and *sacre rappresentazioni* and at the same time provide the faithful with a deeper understanding of the teaching of the Church.

In the next part of this chapter, I would like to analyze some of the *gosos* included in the works of 17th century-writer Juan Francisco Carmona and 18th century-writer Giovanni Delogu Ibba in order to identify the inherent dramatic qualities of the *gosos*, as a precursor for the *sacre rappresentazioni* of the island. I have chosen to look at the *gosos* of Carmona because, as with del Arca, he is very representative of the time period in which he was writing, the Seicento in a Sardinia that was very *ispanizzata*. The *gosos* of Giovanni Delogu Ibba represent something very different, not only because they are written almost entirely in Logudorese, but also because of their place in the *Index libri vitae* as a whole. But before taking looking at the *gosos* of these two Sardinian authors, it is important to take a moment to

discuss what the essential elements of drama are in order to try to identify these elements in the texts of the *gosos* that will follow.

The Essential Elements of Drama

Before continuing the discussion of the inherent dramatic qualities of the *gosos* and their role as one of the sources for later Sardinian *sacre rappresentazioni*, it is first important to clarify what constitutes *drama*. There are two different theories about the elements of drama that I would like to outline here: first, there is the theory of Hardin Craig and secondly, that of Paolo Toschi. Craig claims that there are three essential factors that must be present for drama to be produced: impersonation, dialogue and action. He is very careful to point out the distinction between this description of the dramatic and the way in which this word is commonly used to describe something that is simply attention grabbing. Craig writes, “The origin of the religious drama must be thought of as a special act of invention in which impersonation, action, and dialogue happened to come together; it must not be thought of as something that emerged of itself by natural process from a complex of vividness, excitement, and human interest” (4).

The first of these three elements creates a delicate situation for the actor of certain religious subjects. Having the opportunity to participate in these dramas was thought of in the same way as being able to participate in a “very genuine act of worship” (Ogden 174) and the actors always let this guide their performance. However, the impersonation of the Lord Jesus Christ or one of the martyrs is a difficult task and in some people’s opinion it may

hover on the edge of being sacrilegious. It is at least known that even after certain roles were offered to those outside of the ecclesiastical order, the important and sacred roles were reserved for the members of the ecclesiastic community, who have been more suited to reverently handle this challenge.¹⁰⁵ To explain this difficult dynamic between the desire to render a good performance as an actor and the desire to make the mysteries of the Christian rites evident to the congregants, all the while maintaining religious integrity, Dunbar H.

Ogden writes,

This is the foundation of the acting style and at the same time the cause of a fundamental conflict for the player which we find reflected in what we have termed ‘touches of verisimilitude.’ First, there is the drive in every actor to resemble that figure whom he impersonates, yet the embodiment of particularly sacred figures in this context had to stop short, for one could only present Christ. (174)

The entire representation process is a didactic experience that hopefully results in the better understanding of the life of Christ.

The opinion of Ogden about verisimilitude, expressed in his book, *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church*, raises another interesting aspect of the representational dramas of the Middle Ages. O.B. Hardison also stresses the importance of verisimilitude and describes it as “a corollary of the shift from ritual to representation. Its manifestations include imitative costumes and stage props, correlation of action with dialogue, use of popular lyric forms instead of liturgical antiphons and scriptural paraphrase, character consistency, anachronism...” (251). What Hardison considers as the making of representation from the ritual seems very similar to the requirements previously stated by

¹⁰⁵ In Dunbar H. Ogden’s book entitled *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church*, he writes, “From the beginning it was the lower-ranking members of the ecclesiastical community who took the roles—cannons, priests, deacons, brothers, *clerici* (clerks or priests), *pueri* – and one often perceives a recognition of hierarchy in the assignment of more important roles to more important participants” (154).

Craig. The “correlation of action with dialogue” is essential because it is the difference between a priest standing at the lectern reading the Gospels and the initial phases of the representation of these stories from the Gospel by multiple people. It is the difference between a simple telling of the conversion of a saint and a dialogue between that saint and the emperor during his or her public confession. There is movement required in order to depict a continuation of time and space in a sequence of events. Dialogue is required to bring the scenes from the bible or the legends of the saints to life. For example, this dialogue already exists in the Gospels on account of the many didactic stories in which Christ is preaching to the disciples and teaching them. His message often required explanation, creating a continuous conversation between Christ and his followers throughout the four Gospel accounts. In the legends of the saints or the *passio*, the scenes that come to mind are the public confession, the opportunity to renounce the faith before being condemned and the way in which the martyr meets his fate.

The imitative costumes and stage props described by Hardison can be seen early in the development of the famous start to the Easter play, the *Quem Quaeritis* in terms of the scenery, in the form of the sepulcher, which is suddenly present, as well as the depiction of the three Marys and the ointments that they are carrying to the tomb. The costumes used began as simple albs taken from the ecclesiastical garb. However, certain identifiable features were added in order to make the characters more recognizable to the spectators. For example, Odgen notes “The finest angels in the *Visitatio Sepulchri* are equipped with wings—first mentioned in the thirteenth-century texts—and sometimes draped with a stole” (126). The objects carried by each of the prophets, that we will see in Delogu Ibba’s passion

play in chapter five of this study, provide another example of the addition of costume elements to help recognize certain characters. All of these additions to the original text taken from the Vulgate are a part of what Craig outlines as the essential features of creating drama.

Paolo Toschi's outline of the essential features of a drama is not entirely different from that of Craig. However, he introduces other aspects not previously mentioned. Toschi writes,

Il rito, nelle forme spettacolari che assume, si compone di vari elementi che si trovano, ben riconoscibili, nelle diverse feste da cui nasce il teatro. Tali elementi sono: la processione, il canto lirico in coro, la narrazione, la danza e l'azione scenica vera e propria; anche la musica vi ha la sua parte, o integrativa o autonoma. Non in ogni caso questi elementi si trovano tutti e con eguale sequenza, nella composizione del rito-spettacolo. Ma di regola sí.
(Origini 25)

Throughout the following chapter, Toschi outlines one by one the ways in which these aspects are present in the sacred drama and cites several examples for the reader. I will briefly describe the importance of each of these elements because many of them will be revisited as I begin to talk about specific examples of the *gosos* of Carmona and Delogu Ibba.

The procession was a very important aspect of the liturgical drama that found its roots in the rituals of the Church. Each mass begins with the priest processing in and ends with a procession out of the church. There are also special ceremonies that are anchored by processions, such as Palm Sunday, featuring a large procession of the congregation outside and around the church carrying their palms. If we think of other examples of the procession in today's church, one might think of the presentation of the gifts, at which time the host and the wine are brought up to the altar or even the *via crucis*, the Stations of the Cross. Toschi also points out that the origin of the procession dates back thousands of years when it had a

specific purpose, that of marking out the sacred space in the pagan setting. In the Christian tradition the procession helped to extend the blessing, generally received in the church, to anyone who waited along the path of the procession. The key to the procession according to Toschi is that it allows the congregants to participate in the ceremony because in a way, “I partecipanti vi diventano attori (non solo come ‘comparse’, ma come coro)” (Origini 26). An important example of the procession cited by Toschi is the *Ordo prophetarum*, which appears in many of the liturgical dramas looked at, including the Sardinian text of Giovanni Delogu Ibbà. The procession of the prophets obviously served as a way of connecting the Old Testament with the New Testament. Toschi makes a very interesting statement about the powerful effects of the procession when he describes it as,

Un’intensa vibrazione psicologica, una profonda commozione mistica s’impadronisce dei processionanti e degli spettatori, i quali partecipano anch’essi in qualche modo al rito con invocazioni di grazia, con atti di devozione, e col fare eco ai canti e alle preghiere. Qualcosa avviene nell’intimo animo di quanti eseguono o seguono la processione con spontaneità di sentimento religioso: qualche cosa che non è poi molto lontana dalla catarsi. (Origini 26-27)

Of all of the elements mentioned by Toschi, the procession seems to be one of the most notable and also one of the most present in the liturgical dramas.

Let us consider *il canto lirico*, *la musica* and *la danza* together because of the interrelationship between these three elements. While the *canto lirico* was very important in the profane tradition, its presence is also felt in that of the Church through hymns and *le laude*. Toschi states that these hymns and *laude* are taken from the liturgical books and “dagli statuti e laudari delle confraternite e compagnie devote” (Origini 47), just like the *gosos*. One of the most well-known examples of one of these *canti*, also mentioned by

Toschi, is the *Te Deum* which is featured at the closing of many ceremonies. Passing to the music, Toschi notes that the Italian theatrical tradition was always connected in some way to the music, which in turn is connected to all other aspects of drama outlined above by Toschi.

It seems strange to discuss the topic of dance in the same context as the liturgical drama because of the stigma that has, at times, accompanied it. Because of the lack of evidence of these dances in our practices today, the inclusion of dance in the liturgical ceremonies is out of our frame of reference. But there was a time when dance was accepted and included in the Church's liturgy. Toschi writes, "E in Italia? Che per tutto il Medioevo sia continuato anche da noi a ballare in chiesa, anche quando già da secoli l'autorità ecclesiastica condannava l'uso come estremamente riprovevole, lo possiamo dedurre da alcuni passi molto significativi di sermonisti e predicatori del Trecento" (Origini 62). In his introduction to the edition entitled *Testi di drammatica religiosa della Sardegna*, Francesco Alziator notes the importance of dance in the Sardinian religious tradition. Alziator states, "Al limite, danzare dentro la chiesa non era per i Sardi compiere un atto profano, ma tutt'altro: la danza era per essi un completamento degli atti liturgici, anzi, potremmo dire addirittura un atto liturgico essa stessa. Né più né meno di quello che era il dramma liturgico medioevale con i suoi dialoghi latini recitati da chierici e da sacerdoti" (16).

The last element to examine is the element of *narrazione* which has a strong connection with drama because the origin of these dramas is in the narration of the events of the life of Christ as written in the Gospels, the life of Mary, or the lives and martyrdom of the saints. To give an example of narration in the liturgical context, Toschi calls to mind the dramatic readings of the four accounts of the Passion throughout Holy Week, which he states,

“si fa risalire a papa Alessandro I, cioè al secolo II d.C.” (Origini 49). Even though the development of the Passion play is not a direct result of these dramatic readings, in the reading of the Passion and the eventual distribution of the narration into three parts, it is possible to see clearly this connection between narration and drama. In Delogu Ibba’s Passion play, narration is a very integral part because of the highly concentrated scope of the action he portrays. As the title implies, Delogu Ibba’s tragedy focuses exclusively on the *depositio*, or “isclavamentu” in the Logudorese dialect. However, it is not possible to simply ignore the events that led up to the crucifixion of the Christ. The audience would not have the opportunity to see the action of earlier events, but a description of the betrayal and the torture leading up to the moment when Christ expires on the cross is narrated clearly by the various characters of the play. The centurion and the soldiers represent a few of the primary narrators during the moments when they recall and debate the justness of the punishment. For example, it is in the dialogue of one of the soldiers that we learn of the betrayal of Jesus by one of his disciples. The soldier says, “Unu in sa compagnia sua matessi à quie imparaiat, naran, lo hàt acusadu, Et pro trinta dinaris intregadu Iudas Ischariotes a sos summos sagrados sacerdotes” (Delogu, Index 576-8).¹⁰⁶ Another example from this play is seen in the laments of Mary, also known as the *Planctus Mariae*, while she stands at the foot of her son’s cross. During these laments, she recalls some of the torture that her son endured, for example, the crown of thorns he was forced to wear as well as the wound he received in his side. Delogu Ibba clearly uses narration in his drama as a way to recall integral events of Christ’s life that he did not choose to focus on in the visual representation. It is evident that narration is

¹⁰⁶ Translation is mine: “One of his group to which he was teaching, as they say, accused him and for thirty pieces of silver, Judas Iscariot turned him over to the high priests” (Delogu, Index 576-8).

essential to the author because it allows him to provide the context of the Passion for the viewers while at the same time allowing uninterrupted progress toward the conclusion of the play.

The two different definitions concerning what constitutes drama according to Hardin Craig and Paolo Toschi are not entirely different. Each one focuses on the small changes made in order to move from a simple reading of the Gospel during the mass or a *passio* of a saint to an actual representation of that which was previously read for the faithful to see. The explanations of Craig and Toschi provide the student of liturgical drama and drama in general a framework for the essential elements of a dramatic representation. The clear outline of these frameworks will aid in the next section's examination of the initial stages of liturgical drama and the transition that occurred during its development from the earlier *gosos*.

The *Goigs and Gozos* of Juan Francisco Carmona

When discussing the *gosos* in the 17th century, Sergio Bullegas explains that they “venivano cantati durante lo svolgimento delle celebrazioni liturgiche e durante le processioni. In tal modo esse assumevano carattere drammatico: le statue e le scene dipinte avevano il compito di rappresentare i miracoli e le azioni più salienti della vita dei santi” (Bullegas, Il tragico73). In this statement alone we see a number of elements of the essentials of drama presented above, music, processions and narration. It is also possible that there were elements of dialogue in the midst of this narration. Bullegas stresses the frequency of these types of dramatic processions during the 17th century in Sardinia and how well-received they were by audiences. Bullegas stresses that, “La rappresentazione non sorgeva

spontaneamente dall'intera comunità: non era, cioè, l'esecuzione di un rituale, ma il compimento di un atto socio-religioso: e è ciò essenzialmente il teatro” (Bullegas, Il tragico 73). Bullegas focused on these dramatic processions as a means to present some of the most important events in the lives of the saints. It was not uncommon for a dramatic procession to end at a stage, upon which the dramatization of the life of the saint might continue (73). This is similar to what we previously found in the paraliturgical rites of Holy Week. These scenes depicted through “scene dipinte o da gruppi statuari” together with the singing of *gosos* were “un genere composito di rappresentazione dove si incontrano e si fondono musica, canto, narrazione e dramma” (Bullegas, Il tragico 76). You will notice that these are four of the main elements of the essentials of drama presented by Paolo Toschi.

The early 17th-century work of Carmona, *Alabanças de los santos de Sardeña*, is composed of four separate parts. The first part, “Alabanças de San George Obispo Suelense Calaritano,” has been called *un dramma misto* because, as Bullegas describes, it is “un incontro-scontro, senza integrarsi, un contrasto farsesco, vivo e scoppiettante nelle sue trovate mimico-gestual-linguistiche, e una rappresentazione encomiastico-religiosa, prolissa e statica” (Bullegas, Il tragico 46). It is not at all what one expects given the title and the reference to San George Obispo. In fact, the saint does not come into play at all, except for the fact that the two men, a city-dweller and one farmer, find themselves at a celebration of the feast of that saint. This portion of Carmona’s work in addition to the following *Passión de Christo Nuestro Señor* are both written in Castilian. The simple nature of Carmona’s passion play is the reason why Carmona has often been called simply a “translator” into

Castilian of passages of the Bible or even *goigs* and *gosos* related to the subject matter (Bullegas 51).

The *goigs* written in Catalan by Carmona celebrate, “Les llaors del beneventurat san Baldiri martir glorios advocate y apropiat per qualsevol enfermetats y per totas malalçias per totas congoyas tribulacione y adversitats qui a quell advoca y declama tan promptament ha la gracia que demana la sua necistat” (Bullegas, Il tragico 69). In this description of the *goigs* dedicated to San Baldiri, we see one of the essential aspects of the traditions of the *goigs*, the intercession of the saint who was the subject of their prayers and who was being asked to come to their aid. This *goig* to San Baldiri is important because it perfectly follows the Catalan model for the *goig*, featuring the opening quartain whose last two lines serve as the refrain. The refrain of this example is “Socorreu a qui us reclama, San Baldiri glorios” (Bullegas, Il tragico 69), and it will end each of the remaining seven strophes. The content of this *goig* is what is to be expected. At the beginning reference is made to his martyrdom, though strangely no additional details about his life and what led to his martyrdom are included. All that we learn is “Martir sou de gran valia/, y dest nom victorioso” and “Molt turments us per deu pasareu / y de tots agues victoria” (Bullegas, Il tragico 66). In the remaining strophes Baldiri is asked to save, heal and grant miracles to all that turn to him in prayer. This *goig* closes with a *responsorium* and an *oremus*. It clearly demonstrates Carmona’s familiarity with the standard Catalan *goig*.

In the same manuscript of Carmona, there are also *gozos* written in Castilian that are relatively different from those in Catalan and in Bullegas’ opinion represent innovations in the genre. Carmona’s *gozos* in Castilian are dedicated to the following saints: S. Saturnino, S.

Bartolomeo, S. Antioco, the group of three saints Bertorio, Giustinio e Fedele and finally Our Lady of Buon Cammino. Whereas Carmona strictly followed the rules of the Catalan model for the *goigs* in the example dedicated to Baldiri, there are a number of differences in his Castilian *gozos*, mainly in meter and the use of a one-line refrains from the opening quatrain instead of the standard two lines. Also missing from Carmona's *gozos* are the final quatrain, a *responsorium* and an *oremus*. And yet, at least in the example of S. Saturnino, there is a significant amount of information regarding his life and his martyrdom, including how he died and what happened to his body afterwards ("Dios u sangre degollado / por su dios acà en el suelo / mas bolando el alma al çielo / fue en una cueva enterrado / o martir esclaresido / Invensible y valerozo / grandiosa palma has tenido / San Sadorro milagroso" – Bullegas, II tragico 69). In reference to the time period in which he lived, at the early 17th century in the height of the War of the Relics, the last two strophes provide information about the *inventio* of Saturnino's remains and the Church that was built to honor him, where a number of miracles have taken place. Just as the hagiographic literature presented in the earlier section tells the stories of the lives, the miracles and the martyrdom of the saints, so do the *goigs* and *gozos* of Carmona.

Part VI of the *Index libri vitae*: *Sos Gosos* of Giovanni Delogu Ibba

The sixth part of Giovanni Delogu Ibba's *Index libri vitae* is described by the author as "continens Laudes Multorum Sanctorum, et Sanctarum Dei. Partim Hispanico, et partim

Idiomate Sardo ad diversorum commoditatem” (Martini 133).¹⁰⁷ With regard to the *gosos* written in Castilian, Alziator credits him with “una qualche dolcezza di espressione e fluidità di verso” (Alziator, *Storia* 226). There are over seventy of these sacred hymns present in Book VI, and those individuals receiving a dedication range from individual saints special to the island, the souls stuck in Purgatory, the apostles and all saints. The sixth book of the *Index libri vitae* is significant because of Giovanni Delogu Ibba’s participation in a literary tradition that was already established on the island and that was greatly popular. Martini writes,

Certamente l’ispanizzazione ha determinato un gusto per lo spettacolo e la festa barocca che in Sardegna trovava alimento negli aspetti drammatici della situazione sociale ed economico e nella tensione religiosa: e valga, come esempio del fenomeno, lo sviluppo assunto in ambito sardo dai *gosos-goccius*, che riprendono un modulo della poesia religiosa catalana ma finiscono col divenire un’espressione tipica di una poesia sarda fortemente legata alle forme dell’oralità e della recitazione pubblica. (Martini XXIII)

Delogu Ibba’s intended audience differed from that of his predecessors. In his introduction to Part VI, Martini writes, “Se il Cano e l’Araolla, infatti avevano composto poemi per ambienti ecclesiastici colti con pretese squisitamente letterarie, i *Gosos* e la *Tragedia* del Delogu Ibba erano rivolti ad un pubblico più ampio, quello delle processioni e delle sacre rappresentazioni, che difficilmente avrebbe potuto comprendere appieno testi dello stile aulico” (Marci 134). This statement about the intended audience of Delogu Ibba’s *gosos* is reminiscent of how deeply this genre was felt by the people of the island and how easily they could identify with it.

¹⁰⁷ The introduction to the 6th part of Giuseppe Marci’s 2003 CUEC edition of Giovanni Delogu Ibba’s *Index libri vitae* is written by Abdullah Luca de Martini.

In an analysis of the meter of the *gosos* presented by Delogu Ibba in Book Six, Martini explains that Delogu Ibba also generally respects the Catalan structure of the *goigs* and begins his *gosos* with an introductory quatrain, from which the last two lines will serve as a refrain to be repeated at the end of each of the following strophes. In the printed edition of the *Index libri vitae*, Martini is careful to note that, “Le sestine sono date senza l’aggiunta dei due versi che fungevano da ritornello (rendendo quindi le strofe delle ottave), perché l’autore li omette”¹⁰⁸. There appears to be no rule for the number of strophes as we have previously seen in the Catalan tradition. Instead the number of strophes that Delogu Ibba dedicates to each saint varies depending on the story, that saint’s importance and the dramatic possibilities of this story.

Book VI of the *Index* is composed of 71 *gosos* in total, 57 of which are written in Logudorese and 14 of which are written in Castilian. Book 6 is divided up by month and each saint appears in the month in which their feast day was celebrated. The saints chosen by Delogu Ibba to be praised in these *gosos* are varied and range from an address of *Totu sos santos*, the souls of Limbo, and individual saints, from Spain, Italy and Sardinia. Many dramatic elements that we have already seen in the hagiographic tradition are present in the *gosos* of Book 6, such as the presentation of the life story of the saint, information about the martyrdom, and miracles performed by them while still alive or even after their death. So as not to present over seventy *gosos*, I have chosen a few representative *gosos* that provide examples of good hagiographic narratives, dramatic qualities, poetic elements, and common

¹⁰⁸ This is just to clarify why each of the strophes in the printed edition of *Book VI* appears as a *sestina* instead of the *ottava* that we would expect with the addition of the two-lined ritornello. (Martini 144).

Medieval literary elements to illustrate the importance of Delogu Ibba's Book VI poetic compositions.

There are a number of examples throughout Book VI that provide a complete and interesting hagiographic accounts of certain saints. One such example is *V. Gosos de sa gloriosa V. et M. S. Caterina*, which recounts her entire life within the *gosos*. Referring back to the topoi for the saints presented in chapter two, Saint Catherine is representative of the young female virgin that has decided to devote her life to the Lord and must instead fight off the attacks or advances of others. She was born of a royal family (“De progenie Reale Nasquegis Virgine santa cun bellesa, et grassia tanta” p. 172, ln. 5-7) but sought out her baptism at a young age and thought of herself as married to “la seconda persona divina” or in other words married to the Lord.¹⁰⁹ The *gosos of St. Catherine* tells of her persecution at the hands of Massimino, who “A su tempus Maximinu Crudemente persiguiat totu sos qui conosquiat qui siguian su caminu de Christos Verbu Divinu Cun fide purificada” (Book VI, p. 174 ln. 35-40).¹¹⁰ Having openly professed her faith to Massimino, she is imprisoned and is then subjected to a number of tortures including an 11 day fast, some sort of torture device involving knives, beatings, having her back broken with lead balls and finally decapitation by sword. Those who witnessed the torturing of the young girl were said to have converted immediately. Not to be forgotten is the *ritornello* that states “Honra, et gloria Alexandrina

¹⁰⁹ In order to aid in comprehension of the texts, I have provided my own translations of the Latin and Logudorese quotations. All line numbers will be cited according to the Marci edition of the *Index libri vitae*, for which the bibliographical information can be found in the Works referenced section.

“Of a noble lineage you were born Virgin saint with such beauty and such grace” (Book VI, p. 172 ln. 5-7)

¹¹⁰ “At that time Maximinus was cruelly persecuting all those that he knew followed the path of Christ, the Divine Word with purified faith” (Book VI, p. 174 ln. 35-40)

Siadesnos Avocada” (p. 173, ln. 3-4).¹¹¹ This is a wonderful example of the use of the *gosos* because through its narrative of Catherine’s life and martyrdom, it provides a number of dramatic possibilities to be represented visually, such as the scenes of the torture and her martyrdom. It is also representative of the didactic nature of the lives of the saints and indicative of the way in which these saints were invoked for protection.

Two other examples that demonstrate the dramatic possibilities of the *gosos* are XIX *Gosos a sa adorassione de sos Rees* and XXV *Gosos de su gloriosu Archangelu Santu Gabrielle*, both of which tell stories relating to Christ’s birth. These two examples have many of the elements essential to *drama* laid out by Craig and Toschi: dialogue, changing of scenes, movement, and character divisions. The first play tells the story of the three kings making their way to Bethlehem upon the announcement of the birth of Jesus. In the *gosos*, as they are on their way to Bethlehem, they are met by Herod who has heard the news of the birth of Jesus. This first scene is perfect to be incorporated into a procession and would open the *gosos* up to participation by the followers. A dialogue takes place between these four characters as Herod attempts to convince them to tell him where the child is. Not only does this *gosos* tell of the birth of Christ, but it also tells another important story from the Scriptures, the slaughter of the innocents. In the *gosos* dedicated to the Archangel Gabriel, we have another example of the dramatic capabilities of these compositions. As in the previous example, because the story of Gabriel involves the story of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, there is a great deal of motion and changing of the scenes involved. The inclusion of an angel that must come down from the heavens to speak with the Virgin Mary (“Dae sa suprema altura de su empyreu remontadu volende segis faladu a sa Virgine pius

¹¹¹ “Honor and glory of Alexandria, be our advocate” (Book VI, p. 172 ln. 3-4)

pura” – p. 276, ln. 23-6),¹¹² also creates two levels of space to distinguish between the heavenly angel and those on earth. The holy character of Gabriel, were this to be represented as it is performed musically, would be identified by a costume, most likely a white robe, and through spatial distinction between Heaven and Earth. Beyond these more practical matters of a visual representation of this story together with the singing of the *gosos*, this provides us with another example of the confraternities’ tendency to represent visually and reinforce with song *in limba* some of the more important stories of the Church.

There are also some poetic devices clearly used in the *gosos* of Giovanni Delogu Ibba that set a few of them apart from the rest. One such example is *XLII Gosos a sa gloriosa virgina Santa Chara*. It is evident in the opening quatrain that this *gosos* is different from the others that we have seen. The opening lines read, “Fiore bellu seberadu de virtude soberana, Qui sa meggius Hortulana pro su quelu hat allevadu” (Book VI, p. 372, ln. 1-4).¹¹³ While beautiful, the last two lines that would in theory constitute the *ritornello* do not invoke the saint to come to the protection of those who praise her, as is generally the case in the refrain. The remaining strophes address Chiara by the names of many different flowers, such as “fiore bellu, bellu fiore de soverana virtude” (ln. 5) or “Rosa bella et olorosa, rosa frisca et incarnada de charidade infiammada” (ln. 11-3) or “Liggiu candidu olorusu” (ln. 17).¹¹⁴ Each flower mentioned is coupled with a saintly trait, such as chastity, modesty or obedience. There is no other *gosos* like it among Delogu Ibba’s compositions; however, it is easy to see

¹¹² “Having taken off from the extreme altitude of the kingdom, flying down you descend to the Virgin most pure” (Book VI, p. 276 ln. 23-6).

¹¹³ “Beautiful flower chosen for your supreme virtue, what the best gardener grew for the heavens” (Book VI, p. 372 ln. 1-4)

¹¹⁴ “Beautiful flower, flower so beautiful of supreme virtue” (ln. 5) / “Beautiful perfumed rose, rose so fresh and embodied and burning with compassion” (ln. 11-3) and finally, “Bright white perfumed lily” (ln. 17).

that the description of each flower relates to her purity and her faithfulness to the Lord. This is not an uncommon attribute for female saints as certain flowers, especially the lily, represented virginity and purity, as evidenced by the fact that it was often associated with the Virgin Mary. This is clear in the second to last strophe which reads, “Pianta bella, pianta rara d’un fiore solamente, a Dio onnipotente davvero sommamente cara, pianta chiamata *Chiara*, fiore, fiore rimarcato” (ln. 59-64). This example of Delogu Ibba’s *gosos* is more indicative of the poetic quality of Book VI that is recognized by the critics.

Another example of a poetic device that is used in the *gosos* of Delogu Ibba is anaphora, or the repetition of words at the start of the strophes. One such example is the very next composition dedicated to *XLIII Gosos a sa Assumptione gloriosa de Maria Santissima*. Every single strophe starts with the word “Hoe” in Logudorese or “Today” and continues on. This does not seem at all strange given the position of the *gosos* in the oral tradition and given the need to make these compositions something easy to recall. As Dore states in the introduction, “In questo periodo, com’è facilmente intuibile, l’innologia sarda, si è sviluppata e trasmessa, solo oralmente” (VIII); so certain poetic devices would have been beneficial for the oral tradition of these *gosos*. This not the only example of a *gosos* that uses this type of poetic device in its composition. *XLVIII Gosos de Santu Micheli Archangelu* also uses this trick starting twelve of its thirteen strophes with “Bois qui...” or “you all who...”

One of the most important *gosos* in Delogu Ibba’s collection is the one that ends the collection, *A la dolorosissima Virgen de la Piedad (LXXI)*. This is one of our thirteen compositions in Spanish and given the subject matter and the Spanish Marian tradition, this is not surprising. The opening line in Latin immediately calls the audience in, “Decimas

super, o vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite, et videte si est dolor similis, sicut dolor meus” (Book VI, p. 520, ln.1-2).¹¹⁵ It is a form of a *Planctus Mariae* that will end the collection of *gosos* just as it is a *Planctus Mariae* that ends the passion play of Bk. 7. Maria calls the audience into the story and urges them to contemplate the suffering faced by Christ during the last 12 hours of his life. She also asks the audience to think of her and her own suffering. The Maria character cries, “De una espada filos son, que mi amante coraçon traspasan de parte à parte sin que alguien pueda ser parte para mi consolassion” (p. 522, ln. 5-10). Beyond speaking of the suffering that she endures, Maria also presents another teaching of the church that is perhaps not the easiest to understand, when she references her role as daughter, mother and spouse. She always turns back to the heart of the *Planctus Mariae*, “Dexadme sola que llore si acallar no me podeis en el dolor que me veis; basta que muerto le adore, y solo su auxilio implore paraque lo me mantenga con qualquier dolor que venga y siempre firme, y constante como piedra de diamante con su voluntad me avenga” (p. 526, ln. 81-90). Not only does she call the audience to adore him but also to pray to him.

It is interesting to end this long collection of *gosos* with one dedicated to the Dolorosissima Vergine della Pietà for a number of reasons. First, it is a perfect segue into Book 7 of the *Index*, which is a passion play centered around the deposition of Christ from the cross that begins with the cross front and center on the stage immediately drawing the attention of the audience. *Planctus Mariae* were generally associated with Mary the Virgin mother at the foot of the cross looking up at her son. With this *gosos* calling the audience to contemplate the death of Christ for them and to focus on the cross, it is a proper set up for the

¹¹⁵ “Oh you all that pass through the streets, stop and see if there is a pain that can match mine!” (Book VI, p. 520 ln. 1-2).

final part of Delogu Ibba's *Index*. Second, the events of Holy Week often provide the most powerful examples of *gosos* for the faithful and it is easy to see how this type of composition would speak to the audience. Finally, it is an interesting choice because of the importance of the *goigs* dedicated to the joys and also the sufferings of Mary that provide the Provençal and Catalan origins of this genre on the island of Sardinian. And the fact that this is one of Delogu Ibba's poetic compositions that was written in Castilian certainly reiterates this Iberian connection.

CHAPTER V

INDEX LIBRI VITAE

It is important to review the earlier books of Giovanni Delogu Ibba's *Index libri vitae* because they receive the least amount of attention, unless they are being criticized by scholars for their lack of literary value. Each book, however, is important when considering the overall motivation of this work. If we think back to the *Benigno lectori* that precedes Book I, Delogu Ibba makes his purpose clear when he writes,

Quoniam vero, ut dixi, omnia continent, et in immensum se extendit, offero tibi charissime lector parvulum, et brevissimum indicem, qui te ad principalia saltem utcumque capita manu ducat, ut sic saltem aliquid praelibans, immergaris in profundum mirabilium Dei abyssum, ubi quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, et quae non licet homini loqui, ipso docente Domino disces.
(20)¹¹⁶

The first four books are strictly didactic in nature and do not pretend to be composed with an eye toward poetic composition. Book one begins in a way that is not unfamiliar to these religious compositions. Delogu Ibba begins with an invocation of the Holy Spirit,

“Ascendens lumen sensibus in tenebris, Illustra nunc, oro, caecam hanc lumine mentem, Ut recte sapiam, verbaque Sancta loquar,”(22)¹¹⁷ in which he asks for his divine help in his task,

¹¹⁶ “Therefore on one hand, as I said, this book contains everything and it extends into infinity. I offer to you, my dear reader, a small and very brief index, that can at least guide you to principal sections, in order that, enjoying at least certain parts, you can immerse yourself in the profound abyss of the wonders of God, where you will learn the teachings of the Lord: that which the eye cannot see, the ear can not hear, that which does not reach the heart of man, and the things about which it is not allowed to speak about with you” (*Index libri vitae* p. 20).

¹¹⁷ “Enlighten these obscured senses, I beg you to clear up my mind with your light, in order that I might be able to know and to speak righteously the sacred Word” (*Index libri vitae* 23).

that his mind might be enlightened. He repeats this idea when in the second epigram he writes, “Quae deplorando, carmine forte canam” (22).¹¹⁸ We saw a similar beginning to Antonio Cano’s poem about the lives of the three saints. Delogu Ibba then outlines the structure of his work in the section “Argumentum operis etc.” explaining the topics for Books II through VI: the major events in the life of the Virgin Mary in Book II, a number of the main mysteries surrounding the faith in Books III and V (“Matrisque, et Nati quaedam post mystica solva Exquisita quidem, clarius ut potero”),¹¹⁹ and finally the many stories about the lives of the saints in Books IV and VI. He even references the tradition of the *gosos* more specifically when he says that he “Multaque praeterea psallam diversa venuste, Spectant quae ad laudem Virginis, aut Domini”¹²⁰. His description of the way in which he will approach the passion play in Book VII is very telling of what was important to him. He did not plan to stray much from the telling of the actual events surrounding the final hours of the life of Christ and he intended to use the proper meters for such a topic. He wrote in Logudorese and do his best to avoid foreign words so that his words will be clear to all people, as he stated in his note to the reader.¹²¹ His decision to write in Logudorese, the language of the island, instead of Castilian is very important because Castilian was still very present in Sardinia until 1760 when the use of this language was banned by the House of Savoy. The rest of Book I reviews the main events in the life of Jesus, at times drawing

¹¹⁸ “From my sobs / hiccups, I will sing a song” ([Index libri vitae](#) 22).

¹¹⁹ “I will solve, as clearly as I can, some of the mysteries about the Mother and the Son” ([Index libri vitae](#) 22).

¹²⁰ “I will write with some very pleasing hymns that which is due in order to honor the Virgin Mary and the Lord” ([Index libri vitae](#) 22).

¹²¹ “Io rifiuto l’invenzione, e non invoco muse bugiarde; Canterò in metri gravi, come è giusto, le sacre imprese. Pietro e Paolo lasciarono a ragione questi sacri lumi nei loro scritti. Non mi servirò di termine ignoto o greco, avrò solo parole note e chiare, scrittura perspicua agevole a tutti” ([Index libri vitae](#) 23).

direct quotations for the incipit from the Bible, and following no apparent structure for the length of each composition, which tend to range from four to ten lines.

While the first book has been criticized for its lack of literary style, there are some interesting elements to the first book. There are several instances in which Delogu Ibba himself interjects his own thoughts and opinions concerning the events. For example, in the garden, after Judas has led the Jews to Jesus, Delogu Ibba seems to cry out into the text “Judaei insani, duri, caecique, furentes, / Eia duramen tollere nitimior / Numquid non sensistis vos abijisse retrosum / Omnesque in terram praecipites cadere / Ad Iesu vocem?” (32).¹²² Again in an episode involving Judas, Delogu Ibba interjects to address him directly asking why he would have ignored everything that he learned about loving thy neighbor and still turned Jesus over. Also interesting is the direct address of his readers in the penultimate composition of Book I that serves as almost an exhortation for them to follow what they are learning in the *Index*. Delogu Ibba concludes, “Ne cuncteris homo, sequitor vestigia sancta, Expectans, illuc te quoque vult trahere. Si trahit ergo te, num quisquam obsistere quibit? Si tu non obstas, caetera non oberunt” (52).¹²³

Book 2 does not provide much relief from this rather monotonous review of the major events in the life of Jesus. The only difference in Book 2 is that the stories are told from Mary’s perspective, with a few additions that relate directly to her life before the birth of Jesus. Even Delogu Ibba’s treatment of “Ad passionem et crucem Domini etc.” does not at all

¹²² “Mad Jews, obstinate, blind and ferocious. I am amazed that you preserve such toughness! You do not understand how far you fallen behind” (Index libri vitae 33).

¹²³ “Do not hesitate but instead follow the tracks hopefully: he wants to lead you with him. If he guides you, can anyone put up an opposition for you? If you do not block yourself then others will not do so” (Index libri vitae 52).

resemble the passion with which this same scene was presented in the final *gosos* of Book 6. His treatment of the passion is limited to six lines only that manage to cover the events from the time of the betrayal to the grief and suffering of the Virgin. Take any and all emotion out of this otherwise always dramatic scene, Delogu Ibba wrote, “Ex quo cepit Iesum orantem turba sinistra / Militum iniquorum, traditor atque latro, / Pilatus quoque praeses condennaverat illum / Ad mortem usque humilem, duraque flagra crucis. / In te facta fuit Virgo contritio magna, / Profundum sicut, vel mare, vel pelagus” (60).¹²⁴ It is interesting that Delogu Ibba here chooses to give such little attention to the scene of the *Planctus Mariae* that held such a prominent part in both Books VI and VII. It is this monotonous tone that opens Delogu Ibba up to criticism because as we have said, the story of the Passion and the rites of Holy week are some of the most important and profound.

In Chapter IV I spoke about the *gosos* and the way in which they have been considered a catechism for the illiterate and the uneducated. With that in mind and considering also the third book of the *Index libri vitae*, it is hard to understand the inclusion of this version of a catechism written in Latin. In the notes to Book III, it is described as “il momento più intenso anelito teologico da parte dell’autore, ancorché espresso poeticamente per brevi cenni, e non nella distesa riflessione e sistematicità del trattato” (126). The section is divided up in questions and answers, defined by Delogu Ibba as *quaesita*. There are fifty examples of these and each one alternates their response between Jesus and the Virgin Mary. The notes call attention to the similarities between this format and the fact that “alcuni aspetti

¹²⁴ “It is the traitor and the thief from which a foot soldier flanked by his ungodly fellow soldiers took Jesus away while he was in prayer. Pilato condemned him to a humble death and the harsh pains of the cross. In you, o Virgin, there is immense sorrow, deep as the sea, a sea in storm” (Marci, *Index libri vitae* 61).

del fraseggio echeggiano la tradizione tardo-antica e medioevale degli *aenigmata*” (126), which were similar to Latin riddles. As with the catechisms, the structure of this entire book of the *Index* is very formulaic and consistent throughout its fifty examples. The first line of the *quaesita* always “enuncia in forma interrogativa un mistero teologico di tipo cristologico o mariano, o più spesso vi allude” (126). What follows this question is a warning to be aware not to be fooled, “Si tu non credis, falleris, et graviter” (64).¹²⁵ Then there is the answer to the question and this too is always formulaic and is either “Eterni Patris Iesus est filius almus” or “Est Josephi sponsa, sed incorrupta Maria” (64),¹²⁶ depending on whether the answer was Jesus or Mary, respectively. The final line of the four-line composition is “un rinnovato invito alla fede” (126).

My question about this catechism written in Latin remains. On one hand, it seems consistent with the overall didactic driving force behind the *Index* and, on the other hand, it seems to contradict Delogu Ibba’s desire to make his text easily understood by all. It can be argued that because of the highly formulaic nature, in which three of four possible lines will always repeat, it was not that much of a stretch for the reader to understand. It can also be argued that perhaps the common person was not the intended audience for this particular book as we know was the case for the 6th and 7th book of the *Index*. Perhaps, in this case, the intended audience was his fellow clergy who would have had less difficulty with both the subject matter and the language. The topics covered are always relatively simple because the answer to each question must be solely Jesus or Mary. Some examples of topics covered are

¹²⁵ “If you do not believe, you would be wrong and severely” (Index 64).Index libri vitae 64).

¹²⁶ “It is Jesus that gives life, the son of the Eternal father” e “It is Virgin Maria the wife of Joseph” (Marci, Index libri vitae 65).

“Who is the son born of a Virgin mother?” or “Who is the one that is always present but not always visible?”

The catechisms published on the island have always been a fascinating topic because of what it reveals about the linguistic situation at the time. Through the different phases of Spanish rule in Sardinia, it is interesting to note the languages in which the catechisms were being published. Raimondo Turtas dedicated a number of short articles, to this topic of the catechisms printed on the island.¹²⁷ I would just like to share a few of those statistics to shed light on the choice of Delogu Ibba in the *Index*. According to Turtas, in the 16th century, only six editions of catechisms are printed in Sardinia and the language breakdown is: 2 in Sardo-Logudorese, 1 in Campidanese, 1 in Spanish and 1 in Italian (Turtas, Pregare 99). In the 17th century there were a total of 8 editions printed: 4 in Logudorese, 1 in Campidanese and 3 in Spanish (99). These two statistics are still too early to tell us anything about the time in which Delogu Ibba was writing. In the 18th century, there was a large increase and a total of 26 editions printed, 8 of which were in Spanish, 6 in Logudorese, 1 in Campidanese, 3 in Sassarese and also a number of bilingual editions (italiano-campidanese, italiano-logudorese and catalano-algherese) (Turtas 99-100). There is no reference to any form of catechism published in Latin like what we see in Book III. It is still, however, an interesting addition to the *Index libri vitae* as a whole because of the interactive element and the exchange between presumably a member of the clergy or the confraternity and the faithful.

¹²⁷ The following statistics will all be taken from Chapter 22 “I catechismi stampati in Sardegna durante i periodi spagnolo e sabaudo” from *Pregare in Sardo: Scritti su Chiesa e Lingua in Sardegna*. 99-101.

Delogu Ibba states that Book IV is a book of “vitae, ad honorem aliquorum sanctorum, et sanctorum Dei” (74).¹²⁸ As in Book VI containing the *gosos*, the saints are divided up by month and placed in the month in which they are celebrated. The notes to Book IV identify the sources for these very short hagiographic compositions as the various *passio* and *acta martirum, vitae* of the saints and *translations and Miracula* (Marci, Index 126). There is not a single composition that exceeds 10 lines and there are at least a few of them that are as short as two lines. A significant amount of crossover between the saints included in Book IV and those in Book VI exists. Because of the brevity of these compositions there are no real dramatic qualities to be developed in Book IV. Instead, they tend to give the most basic information about the saint, not unlike an index. Included in Book IV are a number of identifiable Spanish saints, including: San Raimondo Nonnato, San Pietro Nolasco, Santa Maria de Socòs and San Francesco Borgia just to name a few. Delogu Ibba demonstrated an ability to incorporate hagiographic sources into these short compositions as well as the *gosos* of Book VI. Yet Book IV seems to have a very different tone and scope as compared to Book VI whose *gosos* are open to dramatic representation, inclusion in processions and engage those present. The fourth book instead seems to just provide small bits of information about the saints.

According to the outline given by Delogu Ibba, the reader knows that the fifth book is dedicated to some of the major mysteries of the faith in an effort to explain them to the faithful. The majority of these epigrams are dedicated to topics surrounding the Passion, including the torture leading up to the crucifixion and the crucifixion itself. For example, there are more than thirteen compositions with the title *Ad inclinationem capitis Jesu* that

¹²⁸ Book 4 is a book “about life and honoring some of God’s saints, both male and female” (Index libri vita 5).

recount specific moments surrounding the Passion, such as when Jesus calls out to his Father from the cross asking him to forgive his torturers for what they are doing or the famous Harrowing of Hell scene in which Christ descends from the cross to free the Prophets from Hell. The most interesting part of Book V is the note to the reader with which Delogu Ibba closes. He states, “En ostendi, Lector mi bone, varia puncta de libro vitae. Perlege. Compatere” (122).¹²⁹

There are some curious parallels and connections that can be drawn between the different books in *Index libri vitae*. The first three books I would group together because Book 1 is dedicated to the events of the life of Jesus and Book II to that of Mary and the third book, similar to a catechism, is the review of what has just been presented in the first two. There is an obvious connection between Book IV and Book VI because of the hagiographic sources and the common motivation of honoring the lives of the saints. There is a simplicity to Book 4 that makes it seem as if it were the *table of contents* for Book VI. The sixth is the longest of the seven and provides us with 71 *gosos* written in both Logudorese and Castilian. It is easy to identify in Book VI the dramatic possibilities and elements that could open up the *gosos* to a visual representation of the story of the saints to accompany the songs. These types of developments are what lead scholars to identify the *gosos* as an early source of the later *sacre rappresentazioni*. A similar connection can be drawn between Books V and the final Book VII because of both books focus on the events surrounding the Passion of Christ. Book 5 is very simple in terms of presentation, we are given just brief allusions to certain events that will all be made visible during the Book 7 passion play. It is also noteworthy that

¹²⁹ “Here my good reader, I have proposed different points of the Book of Life before you. Read it carefully and and feel compassion” (*Index libri vitae* 123).

Book 5 closes with a call to the reader to “prova compassione” for all the stories that we have just heard about the life of Jesus, Mary and all the saints. Similarly, the prologue of the play is a call to look at Christ on the cross and to contemplate and to have compassion. Its prologue closes with the following call to the audience, “Acudi anime fidele / valedi de sa occasione / Qui sinde hàs compassione / Comente, et tenneru amante / Ti det donare galante / de quelu sa possessione” (568 ln. 75-80).¹³⁰ This call to contemplate the sacrifices made to save them from their sins is in line with the shift in focus made during the Medieval Period that moved away from a concentration on the joys of the Resurrection to the contemplation of the pains suffered during the Passion.

BOOK VII: *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu*

The Passion play in the Middle Ages was a rather rare occurrence when one considers how many versions of the Resurrection play existed in Europe. Why was this topic initially avoided? In one of his many articles on the subject matter, Sandro Sticca explains that the focus of the liturgical drama up until this point had always been the joy of the Resurrection and not the sadness of the Crucifixion. And Karl Young proposes that “the Mass itself was felt to be sufficiently effective. Since by visible and audible means the celebrant could bring about daily an actual repetition of the great Sacrifice, what need was there of imitating it through the imperfect means of impersonation and stagecraft?” (Drama 492). Another explanation for the lack of Passion plays was that the crucifix, prominently displayed in any Church, served as a constant reminder of the significance of the Passion and the sacrifice that

¹³⁰ “Run dear soul, take advantage of this occasion and if you have compassion as a dear lover might want to give to you access to heaven ” (Marci, Index 569, ln. 75-80).

was made that did not need further elaboration. It is also important to mention the many events of Holy Week, such as the *Adoratio Crucis*, the *Depositio Crucis* and the *Elevatio Crucis* which were also representative of the Passion of Christ. What then specifically changed to lead to the development of the Passion play alongside the Resurrection play that previously dominated the field of liturgical drama?

There are two explanations for the development of the Passion play that seem important to mention here. In his book, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages*, Hardin Craig describes the Passion play as,

Either (1) as one or probably more scenes prefixed to an already fully developed Resurrection play, since there would have been a natural desire to provide earlier events in order to explain the happenings at the time of the Resurrection; or (2) as an independent *ordo* dealing with the events of Christ's ministry and with His death—the Ministry itself, the Betrayal, Capture, Trials, Crucifixion, Death, and Burial. (42-3)

The first of his two propositions is not at all different from the way in which the Resurrection play developed, as an introduction to the moment of the realization of Christ's resurrection at the tomb. The Passion play therefore serves as a preface or an introduction to the Resurrection, just as scenes in which the Marys purchase the ointments from the *unguentarius*, is a preface to the *Visitatio Sepulchri*. The idea of the Passion play as an entity in itself will be examined after discussing the other scholarly opinions surrounding some of the sources for the Passion play.

In addition to the very logical hypothesis of Craig mentioned above, there are two different sources for the Passion play proposed by scholars that are rather debatable. Several scholars originally proposed the *Planctus Mariae*, often an integral part of most Passion plays, as the source. E.K. Chambers asserts, "The *planctus* must be regarded as the starting-

point of a drama of the Passion” (40) and Young originally supported him by claiming, “When we turn from traditional ceremonies of the Church and seek a source for the Passion play outside, we discern a particularly promising nucleus in a form of extra-liturgical composition called the *planctus*” (Drama 548). However, an important point to make is that the first appearances of the *Planctus Mariae* do not predate the Passion play. Sticca explains, “Since we now possess a text of the Passion older than or contemporary with the *Planctus*, the latter loses its importance as the creative element of the Passion” (*Planctus Mariae* 6).¹³¹ The second proposed source of the Passion play is in the reading of the Passion itself, which occurs four different times during the Holy Week. In the later tradition, the Passion was divided up into three different parts, creating a dialogue that recounts the events of the Passion of Christ. However, at the time of the birth of the Passion play, the Passion was still being read by a single deacon without the elements of impersonation being present. Young, in a later article entitled “Observations on the Origin of the Mediaeval Passion-Play,” points out that “the delivery of the *passio* in dialogue form by several persons was unknown until a century or two after the date of the earliest passion-plays” (350).

Returning to the second part of the explanation for the rise of the Passion play presented by Craig, that is the Passion play as an independent *ordo* dealing with Christ’s ministry and death, does not seem out of place considering the chaotic world which was described beforehand. In Sandro Sticca’s book, *The Latin Passion Play: Its Origins and its Developments*, he speaks about this shift in focus when he mentions the changes in the

¹³¹ Here Sandro Sticca is referring to the few remaining lines of a *Planctus Mariae* that are found at the end of the Montecassino Passion Play which will be discussed later in this paper. This excerpt of the *Planctus Mariae* is written in the vernacular and closes the fragment of the Montecassino play that remains.

artistic representations of the death of Christ during the 11th and 12th centuries. Sticca explains,

The literary genesis of the Latin Passion Play must be found in the shift in emphasis that took place both in art and in literature. The realization of the first Latin passion was made possible by general artistic and cultural changes which, starting in early Christian art, liturgy, and literature, reached their climax in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These new manifestations brought about a growing interest in and concentration on the Christocentric piety, which found its greatest expression in an increased dwelling on the subject of the Passion. (Origins 42)

With this shift in the artistic representation and the new focus on the suffering of Christ during his sacrifice, there were new dramatic possibilities that were not ignored. The new attention paid to the suffering of the Christ is consistent with the idea that the Catholic Church, throughout its history, is capable of shifting what aspect of Christ's life is focused on depending upon the needs of the people in any given time period. Perhaps in the Latin West, a world that was described as chaotic during the 11th and 12th centuries, Christ's suffering and the new focus upon his suffering was used as an example for the people. Focusing on the Passion of Christ and the torments that he went through shows the people that they are not alone in their hardships and that God's only son was not above human suffering while on earth.

Turning our focus to Delogu Ibba's Passion play in Book VII, from the title alone, the reader is immediately aware of Delogu Ibba's focus, the *depositio* from the cross. The word *isclavamentu* in Logudorese, which can also be written as *iscravamentu*, is defined by Pietro Casu in his *Vocabolario sardo-logudorese-italiano* as "La deposizione di Gesù dalla croce; l'ultima parte del mistero sacro che anticamente si rappresentava nelle principali chiese sarde la sera del Venerdì Santo" (760). This is not a resurrection play but instead focuses on the

Passion of Christ, ending with Christ still in the tomb. However, the resurrection is certainly foreshadowed in the play because of the fear of Annàs and Caiaphas that the body of Jesus will be taken by his disciples as a way to convince the people that he truly was the son of God. The features of a typical Passion play, from the betrayal of Jesus by Judas to the *depositio* and burial by Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus are present, even if all of them are not represented visually in this drama. As mentioned previously, this is a trick used by authors in order to provide the background information to a scene featured in the Passion, without requiring his play to start at the time of the Last Supper. The betrayal of Judas and his subsequent guilt and suicide are a few of these scenes that are not deemed necessary or worthy of visual representation. At the same time, they are important elements of the story of the Passion, for they show the regret felt by Judas knowing that he had betrayed an innocent man. Another example would be the crucifixion. Christ is shown on the cross during the drama; however, the moments leading up to his actual death are recited many times by several different characters. This happens presumably because the repetition of this key element to the story of Christ reminds the viewers of the ultimate sacrifice that he endured in order to open the gates of heaven to them and reminds them of the call to contemplate this fact, as they were told at the end of Book V. This technique of glossing the previous events of the play, especially when those events involve the torture and crucifixion of Jesus, are to be expected because of the seriousness of the topic and the risk of misrepresenting it.

This technique of glossing certain scenes from the Passion is not new and actually dates back to the oldest surviving example of a Passion play, the *Montecassino Passion play*,

first published by Dom Mauro Inguanez in 1936.¹³² What is immediately noticeable when reading the existing fragment of the Montecassino Passion is the simplicity with which it is written. There is very little dialogue in the Montecassino Passion and instead more time and space in the manuscript of the play is devoted to the stage directions which are very detailed. It is safe to say that the lack of dialogue does not represent a distaste for the creation of drama on the part of the playwright but instead a conscious choice. In the place of original dialogue, the author of the Montecassino Passion uses a technique that Robert Edwards, in his book *The Montecassino Passion and the Poetics of Medieval Drama*, describes as *autocommentary* or *glossing*. Throughout the entire play an action or event that is about to happen will be described in the stage directions and then immediately following these stage directions, this action will take place with possibly a single declarative statement made by one of the characters. For example, during Jesus' trial before Pilate, the stage directions state "Meanwhile let the armed men lead Jesus bound before Pilate saying" (Edwards 15) and the line of dialogue following these directions says "Let us lead Jesus tightly bound to Pilate, ruler of the Jews." Another good example, noted by Edwards, involves the scene in which Jesus is finally betrayed in the Garden and Peter, in his rage, cuts off the ear of Malchus. The stage directions call for Peter to "strike off Malchus' ear" and the dialogue pronounced by Peter provides an *explication de texte* when Peter says, "You want to seize the teacher; now I'll make you deaf" (Edwards 12). So whether the spoken dialogue of the characters is an

¹³² This was an important discovery because it now placed the birth of the Passion play in the Benedictine abbey in the south of Italy. We do not have the complete text but instead only a fragment of the text which begins with the opening scene of Judas' meeting with the judges to set up the betrayal of Jesus and closes with short *Planctus Mariae*, also a fragment, written in an Italian vernacular. David Bevington in his work, *Medieval Drama*, has suggested that the entire Montecassino Passion would begin with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and conclude with a scene depicting Jesus and his appearance to the apostles after his Resurrection.

exact replica of the stage directions or the dialogue glosses the stage directions, as in the case of Peter, there is still no real engagement in conversations or elaborate dialogue carried out by the characters. This is certainly not the case in Delogu Ibba's *Tragedia* which features elaborate conversations among the soldiers at the start of the play, but the technique of glossing used by Delogu Ibba has a similar motivation behind it.

In its history *autocommentary* or *glossing* is generally used in order to clarify texts and make them more easily understood, however, in the case of the Montecassino play and Delogu Ibba's *Tragedia*, the scenes being presented in this play are not particularly difficult to understand because most of the audience would certainly be familiar with the events of the Passion of Christ. When considering possible explanations for the autocommentary or glossing, it is not necessary to look any farther than who the playwrights were and the subject matter for our explanation. As was indicated before, playwrights often avoided the subject of the Passion because any representation of Christ's suffering could be thought of as an imperfect representation of these events. There is a fine line that exists for the playwrights of a Passion play between faithfully portraying Christ's Passion and sensationalizing this integral part of the Catholic faith. Edwards explains, "From the very outset, then, the dramatist faces a crucial limitation that involves the relation of aesthetics to doctrine. He cannot re-create the events of the Passion because his audience already perceives them as unable to be repeated. Instead, he has to devise a structure that allows a sense of recovery for the events that are now beyond repetition" (59). It is interesting to see how these two passion plays, separated by hundreds of years, used certain techniques in a more or less elaborate form in order to tell their stories.

Because the *isclavamentu* is the primary concern of the author in this sacred representation, it is obvious that the cross plays an essential role, not only in the *mise en scène* of the drama, but also in its story. The play opens up with a prologue, recited by two unidentified individuals, described only as wearing long dark cloaks and appearing in low light, who immediately call attention to the cross where Jesus hangs. One of these characters says, “Reparade Christianos, alçade homines sa mente, vidide su omnipotente ligadu in pees, et in manos. O ministros soberanos de su altissimu Signore non bos causat horrore vider su eternu, et immensu in duos fustes extensu...?” (Delogu, Index 564)¹³³ Here the two *fustes* represent the cross to which Jesus has been nailed. The cross is now and has always been very symbolic. Sticca cites the words of Longpré who explained, “le Crucifix vint occuper la place central dans la plus haute synthèse qu’ait jamais élaborée la théologie contemplative” (*Planctus Mariae* 16). In addition to the initial attention paid to the cross, much of the action takes place around the cross. For example, after the holy fathers from the Old Testament have been freed from Limbo by Christ, they process to the cross, where the body of Jesus still remains since only his soul was needed to free them. As we are told in the stage directions, all of the holy fathers genuflect in front of the cross and begin to sing the following song in Latin: “O crux, ave spes unica, hoc passionis tempore piis adauge gràtiam, reisque dele crimina. Te, fons salutis Trinitas, collaudet omnis Spiritus; quibus Crucis victoriam largiris, adde praemium” (Delogu, Index 600).¹³⁴ It was very common in the

¹³³ “Look, O Christian men, turn your attention and see the Omnipotent bound by both his feet and his hands. O sovereign ministers of the most high Lord, does it not give you great fear to see the Eternal and the immeasurable there spread out on two branches?” (Index 564)

¹³⁴ “O dear cross, our one and only hope, in this time of the passion, increase your grace to not just the pious but also for the wicked, cancel their faults. You, o Trinity, source of our health, praise be to each spirit; to those to whom you give the victory of the cross, add a reward” (Index 600).

medieval lyric tradition to address the cross directly. Some examples that come to mind are the meditative works of St. Bonaventure the Franciscan or the 8th-century Old English poem, “The Dream of the Rood,” which features an unknown poet’s dream of encountering the tree from which the cross for Christ’s crucifixion was formed. This direct address was also frequently a part of the lament of Mary at the foot of the cross when she begs the cross to bend just a little that she might touch her son who is suffering so much.

So much of the action seems to return continuously to the cross as the central element of this play. Every procession leads there and the play both begins and ends at the foot of the cross. The very last rubric of the stage directions, which involves once again a procession of those holy fathers from the Old Testament to the foot of the cross, reads, “Et si retiran totu, et forman sa procissioni in ordine à Santa Ruge” (Delogu, *Tragedia* 186)¹³⁵. Unfortunately, there is no remaining description giving the layout of the stage for this play, such as what we saw in the prologue of *La Seinte Resureccion* or other earlier examples across Europe.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ “Everyone withdraws and forms a procession around the holy Cross” (Marci, *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu* 187).

¹³⁶ Two very well-known French examples that illustrate very clearly some of the advancements in the liturgical drama are *Le Mystère d’Adam* and *La Seinte Resureccion*. With the increased complexity of the liturgical drama, the *mise en scène* also became more complex. This Anglo-Norman Easter play from the 12th century provides an excellent description of the scenery used that helps the student of drama understand the logistics of performing one of these plays in the church setting. *La Seinte Resureccion* begins with a prologue in which the setting is described as follows:

En ceste manere recitom	E puis le ciel ; e as estals
La seinte resureccion.	Primes Pilate od ces vassals—
Primerement apareillons	Sis u set chevaliers avra ;
Tus les lius e les mansions,	Cayphas en l’altre serra—
Le crucifix primerement	Od lui seit la Juerie—
E puis après le monument ;	Puis Joseph d’Arunanchie ;
Vne jaiole i deit aver	El quart liu seit danz Nichodemus—
Pur les prisons enprisoner ;	Chescons i ad od sei les soens—
Enfer seit mis de cele part	El quint les deciples Crist ;
Es mansions del altre part	Les treis Maries saient el sist.

(1-2)

However, it is possible to assume that the cross would have occupied the central position with the remaining stations, such as the house of Pilate, the tomb and the house of Caiaphas stationed around it.

Even though Delogu's tragedy lacks a description of the set design, the information provided in the stage directions is incredibly detailed and gives a great deal of insight into the production of this play. The stage directions provided by Delogu Ibba are as detailed as those of another important example of liturgical drama, *Le Mystère d'Adam*.¹³⁷ The stage directions are the author's opportunity to give information about the costumes, the movement, the visual effects and any other information deemed important in the production. In a rather harsh critique of the play itself, Alziator writes, "La *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu* di Giovanni Delogu Ibba –già lo si è detto –vale assai poco...essa è tuttavia molto interessante per i dettagliati appunti di scenografia contenuti nelle sue didascalie" (*Storia* 229). The very first set of stage directions, "Den bessire duos vestidos de gramallas ò capas longas cun paga lague, pero qui si potan divisare dae su pobulu, et den recitare su prologu alternativamente" (*Index* 564) give the reader, or the actor as the case may be, information on the costumes, the

Based on the description contained in the prologue, Chambers has designed what he envisioned the decor of the church to look like. The crucifix appears where one would expect it, at the head of the church on the altar, and the different "lius e les mansions" are situated down the nave of the church.

¹³⁷ In her book *Medieval French Drama*, Grace Frank states the importance of this work when she writes, "its comprehensive stage-directions [...] show the poet's professional concern for its correct performance in matters of diction, *mise en scène*, and costume, and [...] also give us much more information about medieval dramatic techniques" (77). The very first paragraph alone gives the reader information about the staging, the costumes and the acting. The opening scene's setting is described as "Constituatur paradisus loco eminentiori; circumponantur cortine et panni serici, ea altitudine, ut persone, que in paradiso erunt, possint videri sursum ad humeros; serantur odoriferi flores et frondes; sint in eo diverse arbores et fructus in eis dependentes, ut amenissimus locus videatur" (*Mystère* 1). As the description states, the audience is looking at the creation of a *locus amoenus* filled with trees, flowers and fruits. And we learn that those in paradise are seen at an elevated position in which they are only visible from the shoulders up.

lighting and the delivery of the dialogue.¹³⁸ The two men are to be dressed in dark clothing in front of very dim lighting which no doubt would create a very dramatic effect for the prologue they are about to deliver concerning the crucifixion of Jesus. One particularly interesting description of costumes appears during the scene of the “Harrowing of Hell.” Here Delogu describes the clothing and the general appearance of the prophets. Having just been freed from Limbo, the prophets are following Jesus in the first of many processions, and Delogu describes them as “totu cun lugues, et palmas, vestidos de habitos biancos, et cun barbas canas longas, et sas insiñias, qui lis den señalare”(Index 594)¹³⁹ The prophets are dressed in long white robes with long flowing white beards, creating a certain uniformity that does not aid in their recognition by the audience. Therefore each carries in hand an identifying object related to their story, thus making them instantly recognizable to members of the religious community familiar with the Old Testament. For example, according to the stage directions, Moses carried the usual cane or a rod and David had a scepter in hand signifying his status as king. The addition of these props allowed for easier recognition of the characters, without having to rely upon their dialogue for proper identification by the audience and it also represented a distinct attempt to impersonate these Old Testament characters.

A second theme that receives a great deal of attention throughout the stage directions of *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu* is the contrast between light and dark. In the first stage direction, quoted above, the author calls for dim lighting providing just enough light for these

¹³⁸ “Two figures dressed in dark clothing and long capes exit, with the light very low but not low enough that the people can not see them. Alternating, they must recite the prologue” (Index 564).

¹³⁹ “All the men have lights and palms. They are dressed in white clothing and with long white beards and they are holding the signs or symbles necessary to be identifiable” (Index 594).

two men to be seen by the audience, yet at the same time creating a particularly ominous atmosphere. From these directions, it is evident that the church is filled with candles that are lit and extinguished in order to play with the concept of light and dark according to the moment in the story of the life of Christ. One of the best examples of this use of light and dark is the exact moment of Christ's death during Delogu's play, when the stage directions read, "Istudan totu sas candelas, exceptu sa tramoya de su quelu istelladu, et tocan tres corpos de campana comente, et reloggiu"(Delogu, Index 580).¹⁴⁰ There is no need for the visual representation of the moment in which Christ takes his last breath because that moment is communicated through the sudden darkness and the ringing of the bells to tell the hour. The Gospels speak about the sun being eclipsed in the middle of the afternoon, approximately three o'clock, when Jesus died and this would be a part of the mysteries of the church known by the members of the religious community.

Giovanni Delogu Ibba was also very specific in his directions concerning the visual representation of his work. There is always the question of what needs to be seen and what will remain unseen. The actual death of Christ remains unseen, yet at the same time, it was represented through the use of lighting and a number of special effects. In addition to the ringing of the bells to signal the hour, primitive special effects, created solely by the banging of a few rocks together, are used to create the noise of the accompanying earthquake. The stage directions read, "Faguen intro remore corpendesi sas pedras pari pari, et naran totu" (582). These sounds, along with the eclipse of the sun, marked Christ's death for any viewer regardless of their familiarity with the Scriptures. Delogu chooses not to depict the death,

¹⁴⁰ "All the candles go out, except for the stage machinery used to represent the stary sky, and there are three strikes of the clock to communicate the hour" (Index 580)

but there are also times when he specifically states in the stage directions that Christ, nailed to the cross, will be made visible to the audience. On one such occasion, the stage directions read, “Su Santu Christos tando det esser patente, pro qui à su tempus qui lu inclavaian intro, det esser cobertu foras et torrende suas lugues si de iscoberrer” (Delogu, Index 604).¹⁴¹ This appearance of Christ on the cross occurs immediately before the emotional lament of the Centurion who recounts the events of the last few hours in which Christ was punished, tortured and crucified. A note to the stage directions in Marci’s edition explains this type of sudden appearance stating, “Abbiamo già trovato questo espediente teatrale per cui personaggi, che pure sono sulla scena, restano *oscurati* agli occhi degli spettatori da una cortina che viene rimossa al momento opportuno” (776). This appearance or reveal is reminiscent of the Spanish theater and the use of *apariencias*. Rennert explained that, “Sometimes a change of scene was indicated by simply drawing a curtain aside, whereby the essential object became visible, the rest of the stage remaining unchanged, only a small scene, as it were, stepping out of the larger one” (90). With the sudden appearance of Christ on the cross, the Christian people need to direct their attention towards the cross and truly contemplate the ultimate sacrifice of Christ as Delogu urged in the prologue. This narration of these events by the Centurion will certainly be aided by the visual representation of Christ on the cross.

In addition to all of these elements of special effects, costumes, and lighting, the majority of the stage directions included by Giovanni Delogu Ibba in his text are simple explanations of the movement of the actors. From these stage directions we are aware of the

¹⁴¹ “The holy figure of Christ must now be visible, because while he was being crucified inside, the figure had to be covered and now with the lights back on, his must reappear” (Index 604).

presence of at least two different doors on the stage because with each entrance or exit of a character, the author is very clear about the designated door through which the actor must go. This a way to indicate very easily a scene change, and this type of staging is known as a *décor simultané*, or “simultaneous staging.” According to Grace Frank in her book *Medieval French Drama*, it has many advantages for liturgical drama. She explains,

It made possible a splendid and highly diversified spectacle. It allowed the action of a play to move from station to station without scene-shifting so that the sequence of events could proceed without breaking the illusion no matter where the action occurred...Above all, in the religious plays, such staging kept a synthesis of the play’s meaning constantly before the audience. (91)

Therefore, with the simultaneous staging, the most important elements of the resurrection play, such as the cross, the sepulcher and heaven would always be seen by the congregation.

For example, in the shifting of scenes from the conversation between ten soldiers to the *Intramesu de sos Santos Padres de su limbu*, there is no need to pause because as soon as the soldiers were exiting the stage, the Archangel Gabriel was already entering from the other door. The inclusion of multiple doors also serves a functional purpose in this scene in particular because immediately after entering, the angel Gabriel proceeds to the opposite door which represented the entrance into Limbo and the door which kept the prophets locked up. Later in the play these two doors are named in the stage directions, identifying one as “sa porta de su evangeliu” and the other as “sa porta de sa epistola” (662). The stage directions also indicate the occurrence of a procession, the joining of hands in prayer, genuflecting before the cross as well as the kissing of the cross, because all of the actions associated with the actions and movements of the play are a very important part of the representation. There is no doubt that Delogu Ibba wrote the *Tragedia* fully intending for it to be performed.

“Vestiario, effetti di luce, movimenti sulla scena sono sempre indicati con precisione dall’autore e confermano, ancora una volta, come questi copioni non fossero pure esercitazioni letterarie, ma servissero effettivamente per allestire le sacre rappresentazioni della Settimana Santa” (Alziator, Storia 229).

Delogu’s *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu* is generally a very simple representation of the events of the Passion. In fact, in his entry on Giovanni Delogu Ibba, Tola proposes that,

La tragedia del Delogu, che potrebbe meglio chiamarsi dramma, è sparsa dello stesso ridicolo di cui ridondavano queste sacre rappresentazioni, allorchè erano in uso in Ispagna, in Francia ed in Italia; però è purgata dalle tante oscenità e bestemmie delle quali erano ripiene siffatte tragedie spagnuole, francesi e italiane...ridusse a forma di azione tragica la passione e morte del Renditore, ond’eccitare con tali materiali dimostrazioni la pietà dei fedeli. (La letteratura 25)

As Tola’s quote confirms, it is not similar to one of the sacred representations that caused the Church to worry on account of its straying from the sanctity of the Scriptures in order to create a drama that would grab the attention of the congregants and capable of competing with secular theater. However, as in many developed liturgical drama, Delogu’s original source, that of the Gospels’ account of the Passion, has been modified by the addition of some scenes and the embellishment of certain pre-existing scenes. In general, the scenes chosen for modification had an inherent dramatic quality and did not receive a large amount of attention in the Scriptures, leaving the author room to create and use his imagination. Three clear examples of scenes that are created and embellished by Delogu to add to the action in *Tragedia de su Isclavamentu* are the *Intramesu de sos Santos Padres de su limbu*, the episode with Longinus and the lament of Mary at the foot of the cross. While there may

be different motivations for the inclusion of each of these scenes, without question, each one adds to Delogu's text.

The *Intramesu de sos Santos Padres de su limbu*, also referred to as the "Harrowing of Hell" or the "Descensus Christi ad Inferos," depicts the freeing of the souls of the Old Testament patriarchs who have been awaiting the salvation that will come as a result of Christ's death on the cross. Only the soul of Christ that comes to the gates of Hell because the body of Christ still remains nailed to the cross. It is the Archangel Gabriel who clarifies this in the play stating, "Mas si su corpus restat in sa rugue sa anima venit pro vos dare lugue" (Index 584).¹⁴² There are a number of references to this event throughout the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament; however, in no place in the Bible is the story told in the detail that it is here in Delogu's text.¹⁴³ Craig notes, "The story comes, as said before, from the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and according to it Christ is led by two angels to the gates of Hell. There he recites a portion of the twenty-third psalm, familiar for its use in many ceremonies: *Tollite portas, principes, vestras et elevamini portae eternales, et introibit rex gloriae*" (39). In Delogu's composition of this story, the scene is referred to as an *intramesu*, or a break in the original drama. This identification as an interval is similar to the way in which Craig describes the typical version of this story, "But the Harrowing of Hell is perhaps best accounted for not as an ordinary amplification of the Easter play but as a small independent drama that was introduced as a scene into that play" (39). However, I would argue that in Delogu's composition of the story, this scene plays an

¹⁴² "But if his body remains on the cross, it is his spirit that comes to bring you to the light" (Index 584).

¹⁴³ For a list of references to the *Descensus Christi ad Inferos*, see The Gospel of Nicodemus (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973) p. 5.

important role in both the continuity of the drama as a whole and the didactic motivation behind all of Delogu's writing.

When the holy fathers of the Old Testament first have the opportunity to speak, after being informed of their upcoming liberation from Limbo, each of them speaks about a particular moment in the life of Christ. Delogu Ibba uses another staging tactic here before the start of these speeches. According to the stage directions, "Si retirat su Archangelu, et immediantamente cantan (ò recitan à copla copla sos Santos Padres.) intro, à su iscuru, pero de modu qui sian intesos dae su pobulu, sas coplas siguientes" (Delogu Ibba, Index 586).¹⁴⁴ This idea to have the voices first appear off stage without the audience being able to see who is speaking is a dramatic feature that was seen earlier in the presentation of the *comedia de santos* and the *auto sacramental*. Adam begins this series of speeches by recalling the birth of Christ during the cold of winter and the image of Christ lying in the manger and being fed by his mother, the Virgin Mary. Abraham continues with the adoration of Christ by the three kings who followed the star to the place where he lay. Isaac tells of the flight of Jesus and his family into Egypt as a result of the wrath of Herod. The four remaining characters, Jacob, Moses, Noah and David, jump to the events of the Passion and praise Christ for the courage that he showed during that time. Their speeches, taken together, seem very similar to the first book of the *Index libri vitae* which narrated all the key moments of the life of Christ.

The second round of speeches mark a change not only in the content, but also the format as both Christ and the holy fathers' speeches are written in *ottave* instead of *sestine*, used by them in the earlier set of speeches. According to Dore, the *ottava* is the oldest metric

¹⁴⁴ "The archangel withdraws and immediate they all sing (or recite coplas after the coples of the holy fathers) from behind the curtains, in the dark, but in a way that the following coplas are heard by the people" (Index 587).

form used in the *gosos*, while the *sestina* that was previously used by the prophets is the most common and used form (Dore vol. 1 XIII-XIV). The second round of speeches given by the holy fathers speak not about the life of Christ, but about their own lives and the way in which Christ was there to help them in the challenging moments that they encountered. This connection is also represented physically as dictated by Delogu Ibba in his stage directions, “et den siguire sos ateros cun sa octava sua doñi unu per ordine alcende à su quelu sa cara faeddende cun Deus” (Index 594).¹⁴⁵ Adam speaks of his mistake in the Garden of Eden and the resulting punishment placed upon his descendants. Both Abraham and Isaac speak of the test of faith that they encountered when Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac, and how God actually did have to sacrifice his son on the cross to save them. Noah speaks of the famous ark given to him by the Lord in order to escape the flood. These two sets of speeches represent the tie that binds the Old Testament and the New Testament characters in Delogu’s drama. In his chapter on “Medieval Drama” in the volume, *Western Drama through the Ages*, Edward Kennedy notes this connection and explains, “Some Old Testament stories were chosen because they were thought to foreshadow or correspond to events in the New Testament: thus Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of his son Isaac was seen as a ‘figure’ of a later, greater event, God’s sacrifice of his son” (87-8). Besides the fact that it is Jesus who came to liberate them, he was also a part of their stories then. All of these stories serve as a way to communicate the events of the life of Christ to the audience and also inform them about the important events and figures of the Old Testament at the same time. Delogu has

¹⁴⁵ “And they all must follow each other, and in order each one sings their *ottava*, raising their face to the the heavens and speaking with God” (Index 594).

included one of the scenes widely accepted in the Middle Ages and yet has shaped this scene to add continuity to his drama and serve his own work's didactic purposes.

The episode of Longinus, presented as a blind soldier in Delogu's text, is another embellishment on the part of the author. The character of Longinus differs from one text to another. For example, in the Bible, the scene in which Christ receives the wound in his side is as follows: "Sed unus militum lancea latus eius aperuit et continuo exivit sanguis et aqua et qui vidit testimonium perhibuit et verum est eius testimonium et ille scit quia vera dicit ut et vos credatis facta sunt enim haec ut scriptura impleatur" (John 19.34-36). In the Bible's account, the soldier is unidentified, and there is no miracle by which this soldier has his sight restored after the water and blood that drip from the wound fall into his eyes. The miracle in the Bible's version is simply that blood still drips from Christ's wounds even though he died hours before. In the version of this story taken from the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, this soldier is identified as Longinus, but again the soldier is not blind and there is no miracle. In the Anglo-Norman play, *La Seinte Resurreccion*, the character of Longinus is not identified as a soldier but instead an unknown blind man chosen out of the crowd to inflict the wound upon Jesus.

So why does Delogu add these embellishments to his drama? Throughout this play, Delogu has not only retold the story of many important moments in the life of Christ, but he also has taken the opportunity to remind the audience of many of the miracles performed by Christ throughout his time on earth. In the beginning of the drama, ten soldiers gather together and express their different opinions about whether or not Christ was an innocent

man punished without cause. One character identified as the first soldier recalls many of the miracles that he performed in order to assert the innocence of Christ. The soldier claims,

No bos arregordades, comente cumandàt sas tempestades? Sos mares cun sos ventos faguiat sossegare per momentos. A unu cegu nadu cun sa salia, et terra vista hat dadu. Su cegu surdu, et mudu lu hat curadu isse solu senza adjudu. A unu trinta otto annos paraliticu sempre cun afannos ndelu hat fatu pesare subitu, et cun su lectu camminare. Quantos mortos à vida isse hat torradu. Ya esta cosa isquida Lazaru bator dies sepultadu su ateru die lu hat resuscitadu. (Delogu Ibba, Index 580)¹⁴⁶

Perhaps the inclusion of this miracle is simply meant to provide one last record of a miracle performed by Christ to be added to the other miracles mentioned by the soldiers in their heated debate about whether or not an innocent man was put to death. The miracles performed by Christ are recounted in two separate scenes in addition to the miracle of Longinus performed in front of the audience's eyes. The second scene in which Jesus' earthly miracles are recalled is during a scene in which the Captain has approached the cross on which Christ hangs and laments the events of the day. After glossing once again the events surrounding the Passion and the death itself, the Captain starts to recall all his miracles aloud as proof that they have killed an innocent man. He recalls,

Ite portentos no hat fatu in vida? Mortos et quantos hat resuscitadu? Sa sanidade han apidu cumplida infirmos quantos li hana presentadu. In vinu sa abba no la hat convertida? Cun quimbe orzatas no hat sustentadu ed duos pisques solu in su desertu homines quinbe miza et pius? Est certu cegos, surdos, et mudos, et leprosos de ispiritus immundos sos vexados paraliticos meda et asquerosos, lunaticos et topos istropiados facilmente cun modos ispantosos in unu istante no los hat curados? (Delogu Ibba, Index 634-6)¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ "Do you all not remember how he calmed the storms? The seas and the winds were calmed down for moments. How he gave sight with the mixture of saliva and dirt to a man blind since birth. The blide, the death, the mute, he cured them by himself, without help. One man, paralyzed, with uninterrupted pain, he made to rise right away, and to walk from the bed. How many dead did he bring back to life; is is known; Lazarus, buried already four days, was revived by him the other day" (Index 580)

¹⁴⁷ "How many miracles did he do in life? And how many dead did he bring back to life? Healing they all experienced, all the sick that were brought to him. Did he not turn water into wine? Did he not with just five

The narration of the Captain is even more complete than that of the soldier. Even though these miracles are not represented visually, they are stories that would have been familiar to the faithful and served Delogu Ibba's didactic purpose. The conversion of Longinus represents the ultimate conversion because the character of Longinus initially shows no sympathy for the crucified man but instead longs to satiate his strong desire to participate in the torture and the beatings, just as the other soldiers had done. His change of heart was immediate once he realized that he had been cured. It is a scene that is used to explain in a visual representation the mysteries and miracles of the life of Christ that the members of the church were asked to believe on faith alone.

The actual scene of the *isclavamentu* as presented in Delogu Ibba's passion play is exactly what we find still today during Good Friday paraliturgical rites and ceremonies such as those that were presented in Chapter 4's discussion of Holy week. In the stage directions provided by Delogu Ibba, we read, "Alçan cun sa pausa, et reverencia decante, et sende reposados subra sas iscalas contemplende compassivamente cuddu sancratissimu, et apiagadu corpus si leat Nicodemus una toca fine dae su coddu et dat su cabu à Iusepe" (672).¹⁴⁸ They then proceed to use this cloth to take the crown of thorns off of his head without touching him directly. After they remove the crown of thorns, Nicodemus addresses the crown directly, saying, "O corona ispinosa fata in testa de Christos preciosa! Ispinas consagadas, et cun

loaves of bread and two fish feed five thousand men in the desert? It is true! The blind, the deaf, the mute, the lepers, those tormented by horrible spirits, the paralyzed and the vile, the crazy and the lame, and the mangled, with easy in his miraculous ways did he not cure them all in an instant?" (Index 634-6)

^{148.} "They climb up, with pause and reverence, and still on top of the ladder, contemplating with compassion that most holy and broken body, Nicodemus takes out a thin cloth and gives one end to Joseph" (Index 672).

sagradu samben ismaltadas!” (674)¹⁴⁹ They continue by taking the nails out of the hands of Jesus all without touching him directly. They address also the nails and then present everything to his mother Mary. There are a number of video testimonies of modern day representations of the *isclavamentu* that are very similar to the action of Delogu Ibba’s play.¹⁵⁰ In the video testimony referenced here, “La Settimana Santa a Castelsardo : La Prucessioni e S’Iscravamentu” from 1981, the scene follows perfectly the scene written by Delogu Ibba in the *Tragedia*. The description accompanying the video testimony explains, “La giornata di Venerdì è dedicata a S’Iscravamentu, sacra rappresentazione della deposizione del Cristo dalla croce. La processione parte dalla Chiesa di Santa Maria fino ad arrivare alla Cattedrale dove il Cristo viene liberato dalla corona di spine e dai chiodi.” The two men chosen to play Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea at Castelsardo listen carefully to the directions given and carry out each action only after receiving instruction to do so. As Delogu Ibba’s actors, they two are equipped with a hammer and the white sheet in order to avoid touching Jesus directly. In the video, Mary is actually present but in the form of a simulacra that is most likely used in the other processions of Holy Week as well. It is interesting to see this modern representation of what could have easily been a representation of Delogu Ibba’s play.

Before the dramatic inclusion of the *Planctus Mariae*, Delogu Ibba includes another very interesting scene in which four angels appear to collect the blood of Christ as he still

¹⁴⁹ “O crown of thorns, on Christ’s precious head! Consecrated thorns and with holy blood shed” (Index 675).

¹⁵⁰ One such video testimony of the modern day *isclavamentu* can be found on the website *Sardinian Digital Library* at the following link:
<<http://www.sardegnaadigitallibrary.it/index.php?xsl=626&s=17&v=9&c=4460&id=555631>>.

hangs on the cross. This scene is important for a number of reasons. First, it provides us with an example of Delogu Ibba's adopting of *tramoyas*, such as the clouds used by the angels in the scene to ascend and descend from the cross as they collect Christ's blood. The stage directions read, "Alçan sos Anguelos subra de unas nues à sas manos et pees sacrosantos de Christos, acollin su samben" (Index 640).¹⁵¹ We have already seen his expert use of lightening and sound effects to render his scenes, but this is one of the first examples of more advanced machinery used by Delogu Ibba. This movement on the part of the angels establishes the third and final level of space that until this point had been limited to primarily horizontal movement, with the exception of Jesus' descent into Hell to free the Old Testament characters. The scene is also important in terms of the plot of the rest of the play. It is through conversation with the angels that Mary understands that she must go through the proper course of action in order to obtain her son's body. The second angel tells her, "Non presumat isclavare si lissencia non dimandat" (Index 644).¹⁵² It is because of this advice that Mary will need the help of the two men to obtain the permission to bury her son. It would not be far off to also see in this scene elements of Eucharist and the blood of Christ is gathered and offered to his mother.

The final element of the Delogu Ibba passion play that I would like to address is the *Planctus Mariae* that is near the end of the play. After Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea have carefully taken Jesus' body from the cross, they present Mary with her son. In this lament Mary is joined by Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene, the same group of women

¹⁵¹ "Some angels raise themselves up upon a few clouds up to the holy hands and feet of Christ, collecting his blood and then descending back down" (Index 640).

¹⁵² "Do not think you will be able to take down the body from the cross without asking permission" (Index 644).

that known for the scene of the famous *Quem Quaeritis*, in which it is discovered that Jesus' body is no longer in the tomb. The lament of the Virgin Mary is driven by her disbelief at the sight of her son and what has been done to him. There are a number of questions driving her speech, such as "Custas grassias edduncas ti han torradu qui de ispinas ti hana coronadu?" and "Prite ergo su costaggiu ti hat abbertu unu de cussos perfidos soldados?" (680-2)¹⁵³ In her lament, Mary Magdalene uses an element of the Medieval tradition when she addresses the different parts of Jesus' body and comments on how they have been beaten and bruised in the torture leading up to the crucifixion. She laments, "O sacrosanta testa coronada de crudeles ispinas venenosas" (690) and "O cara de bellisa tota piena cun samben et carraschos afeada" (690).¹⁵⁴ She also addresses his chest, his shoulders and back, his eyes and his hands, each one having been brutalized by the events of the Passion.

This form of meditative poetry that has been deemed "one of the noblest raptures of compassion ever expressed by the human heart" (Sticca, *Planctus* 8). One famous example is the poetic work of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) and his hymn to the sufferings of Christ. In this hymn Bernard, as Mary Magdalene in Delogu Ibba's play, addresses the crucified body of Christ beginning with the feet, continuing on to his knees, his hands, his sides and his breast, his heart and finally concluding with an address to his dear face.¹⁵⁵ The

¹⁵³ "And this is how they thanked you? They crowned you with a crown of thorns?" and "Why then is it that one of those evil soldiers opened up your side?" (*Index* 681 -3)

¹⁵⁴ "Oh holy head crowned with velenous cruel thorns" and "O beautiful face, entirely defeated and dirtied by the blood and the spit" (Marci, *Index* 691).

¹⁵⁵ We can look solely at the first two stanza's of St. Bernard's meditative poem, the stanzas in which he addresses the feet of Jesus, in order to better understand not only St. Bernard's devotion to the Passion of Christ and the transmission of the suffering he endured, but also meditative poetry in general.

*Ad pedes
Clavos pedum, plagas duras,*

tradition of meditative poetry really becomes commonplace during the Middle Ages, not just in the Latin literary traditions but also in a number of examples written in the vernaculars. In a chapter entitled “Meditative Poetry,” Louis L. Martz describes religious meditative poetry and its relationship between religious meditation and meditative poem by saying,

The relationship shown by the poem’s own internal action, as the soul or mind engages in acts of interior dramatization. The speaker accuses himself; he talks to God within the self; he approaches the love of God through memory, understanding, and will; he sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches by imagination the scenes of Christ’s life as they are represented on an inward, mental stage. (142).

Just as Martz describes in his explanation of meditative poetry, Mary Magdalene here in her lament is imagining one of the final scene of Christ’s earthly life, and providing herself with a much more realistic experience.

The play ends with the Holy Fathers, those that had been liberated by Christ, leading a procession around the cross and reciting or singing a closing prayer in Latin. The play closes, as it began, with the focus on the Cross in the middle of the stage in an effort to aid the audience to focus on what is important and what they were called to contemplate at the start of the play. For a drama that intends to focus solely on the *isclavamentu*, Giovanni Delogu Ibba succeeds in doing much more. It is a Passion play that focuses on the events from the last thirty-six hours of the life of Christ and closes before any visual representation

*Et tam graves impressuras
Circumplector cum affectu,
tuo pavens in aspectu,
Tuorum memor vulneratum...*

*Plagas tuas rubicundas,
Et fixuras tam profundas,
Cordi meo fac inscribi,
Te modi amans omnibus...*

St. Bernard provides a visual description when he writes about the nails in Christ’s feet (“clavos pedum”), the severe or harsh wounds (“plagas duras”) that are also bloodied (“plagas tuas rubicundas”) and the deep piercings (“fixuras tam profundas”).

of the resurrection. While he does incorporate some stage devices and simple special effects through the use of light and sounds, his drama is not extravagant and does not rely upon a number of extra-liturgical features in order to entertain and attract the attention of the viewer. Instead Delogu relies upon the events of the Gospels as his model and follows their lead as he retells the story of the life of Christ. As with the composition of any liturgical drama, Delogu has added to the text of the Scriptures and chosen specific scenes to highlight or embellish in order to communicate the most important lessons to his viewers, but he has never lost sight of his starting point, the Scriptures, and his goal, a better understanding of the rites and mysteries of the Church by the faithful.

CONCLUSION

One very recognizable story from the Bible is the story of the “Doubting Thomas,” which illustrates to the reader, both past and present, the concept of faith. The development of the liturgical drama and that of the sacred representations is very similar to this story of the “Doubting Thomas” because these theatrical performances were born out of the need to display to the faithful members of the religious community what they were being asked to believe by faith alone. They were asked to believe in Christ’s earthly miracles, which included giving sight to the blind, making those who were paralyzed able to walk and even raising a man from the dead, and they were also asked to believe in the truth of his death and ultimate resurrection as reported in the Gospels. All of these beliefs that are presented to the followers of Christ, without faith, leave them questioning the truth just as Thomas does. The development of liturgical drama was thus created to portray these events for the faithful in order to help them believe. It was not a condemnation of their inability to trust in the sacred rites and scriptures of the Church, but instead a means of strengthening their faith and rendering aspects of the religion, that were not easily understood, in a more approachable form. In her book entitled *L’origine del dramma liturgico*, Maria Sofia De Vito explains this development by writing,

Non bastò più rievocare con la lettura del testo evangelico, col canto delle antifone e dei responsori le vicende della vita terrena di Cristo. Non bastò più sentire, fu necessario vedere. E la Maddalena, gli Apostoli, la Vergine, più tardi Cristo, presero corpo e parlarono ai fedeli. Ed essi si esaltarono e commossero dinanzi a tali rappresentazioni, che adeguavano alla loro statura il divino, il soprannaturale, rendendolo tangibile. (4)

The faithful embraced the liturgical dramas, and their faith and understanding of the rites of the Church grew because of them. As was proposed earlier, when discussing the origins of the *sacre rappresentazioni* specifically on the island of Sardinia, Alziator states,

Ritrovare le origini prime della drammatica religiosa di Sardegna non è cosa facile, ma pensiamo di non essere molto lontani dal vero se ci orienteremo verso talune forme della produzione agiografica e, soprattutto, se terremo presenti le divozioni delle confraternite religiose del tipo di quella dei Disciplinati bianchi di Sassari, di cui si è parlato altrove. Né vanno dimenticati i popolareschi ‘goggius’, dei quali alcuno si presenta anche in forma drammatica. (Alziator, Storia 183)

In this study, I have traced the development of this genre from the inherent dramatic quality of hagiographic literature and the religious poetic compositions known as *gosos* to the Passion plays, such as *Tragedia in su Isclavamentu*. Along the way it has been necessary and very interesting to examine what influence the nearly 400 year Iberian rule had on the island. This influence is undeniable, as evidenced by the arrival of the Catalan *goigs* and the *comedia de santos* and *autos sacramentales* that aided in developing what had previously been a very simple dramatic tradition.

The 17th and the 18th centuries in Sardinia composed the period in which the most important and the most interesting productions of liturgical drama were written. As we have already mentioned, Sardinia was experiencing a period of renewed religious belief as a result of the Counter-Reformation. Liturgical drama, which had gained importance early in the Middle Ages throughout Europe, was now firmly establishing itself as a part of the Sardinian tradition, thanks in part to the presence of the Spanish culture on the island. This type of drama was popular for the same reasons that it had succeeded elsewhere. It was a way for the faithful members of the religious community to come together to see a visual representation of many of the mysteries of their faith. Its popularity among the people is also due to the religious experience of attending one of these dramas. Alziator describes this religious experience by

saying, “il teatro era un supplemento della liturgia, o, in ultima istanza, una parte della liturgia stessa. Assistere o prendere parte ad una di queste rappresentazioni era per il popolo lo stesso che assistere ad un servizio religioso, ascoltare una predica o frequentare la scuola del catechismo” (Testi 23). As a theological writer and priest during this period, Giovanni Delogu Ibba capitalizes on this attitude of the people and finds an audience for his *Index libri vitae*.

While the critics have not been kind to the *Index libri vitae* as a whole, it does not negate the importance of this work. Just as the title suggests, taken as a whole, the *ILV* is an index that allows the reader or the audience to receive the information regarding the most mysteries of the church in an often rather short and concise format. As a man of the Church, Delogu Ibba’s didactic motivation is clear as he summarizes and reviews a number of times the events in the life of Jesus, Mary and the saints. Yet it will always be Books VI and VII that receive the most attention because they play right into the Sardinian concept of *religiosità popolare* and the tendency of the Sardinian people to pray and celebrate collectively. What is so impressive about Delogu Ibba’s *gosos* and the *Tragedia*, both of which were written primarily in Logudorese, is that he maintains the pious nature of the Sardinian visual representations of events such as the Passion of Christ or the martyrdom of the saints. He does not avoid using the innovations arriving from Spain, such as *tramoyas* and *aparencias*, or the processions associated with the *gosos*, but he never strays from a clear desire to incorporate these innovations from abroad into the Sardinian concept of drama and it is for this that Delogu Ibba and his *Index libri vitae* will be remembered.

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