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978-0-521-03800-3 - The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in  
Early Modern Italy

Edited by Nicholas Terpstra

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Confraternities were the most common form of organized religious life in medieval and early modern Europe. They were at once the lay face of the church, the spiritual heart of civic government, and the social kin who claimed the allegiance of peers and the obedience of subordinates.

In this collection, fifteen scholars examine the development of confraternities in Italy, where they emerged first and where they had the greatest social, political, and religious impact. Individual essays explore a common set of themes across Italy from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries: the ubiquity of confraternities; their social construction, and devotional ethos; their ritual culture and civic religion; their antagonistic and collaborative relations with both civic and ecclesiastical authorities; and their role in social welfare and social control of marginal groups. The authors demonstrate how the ritual kinship expressed in confraternities emerged in the middle ages, was transformed in the sixteenth-century Catholic Reformation, and became a powerful force in 'civilizing' early modern Italian society.

NICHOLAS TERPSTRA is Associate Professor of History, University of Toronto. Previous publications include *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge, 1995).

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CONFRATERNITIES AND SOCIAL ORDER IN  
EARLY MODERN ITALY

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EDITED BY  
NICHOLAS TERPSTRA



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Angela, Nigel, Christopher, and Alison reminded me daily that life with blood kin gives ritual kinship its persuasive pull.

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