

*Erasmus +: European Heritage:
Opening Minds for integration
and progress*

*The Legend of
Delicata Civerra
and Fonzo
Mastrangelo*

Poland, Grudziadz
24-30 March 2019



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**LICEO SCIENTIFICO MARIO PAGANO
- CAMPOBASSO -**



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Introduction

In the XVI century Campobasso, today's capital of Molise, developed along the slopes of the Monforte hill. The city was surrounded by towers and walls. The terrible plague that hit Italy causing so many deaths, made many victims even in Molise. As a consequence the population in Campobasso found comfort and refuge in religion. This reconciliation with God allowed the birth of many associations devoted to Him and they were called confraternities. The two major brotherhoods that started to rule the city were: The Crusaders, who had for long the city power, and whose principal seat was the Church of Saint Mary of the Cross, and whose members were mainly artisans, workers and farmers; and the confraternity of the Trinitarians made up by merchants, nobles and professionals, who lived outside the city walls and whose main seat was the New Church of the Holy Trinity – today's Cathedral.

Chapter 1

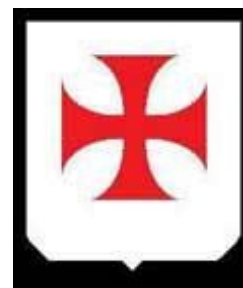


1. The Trinitarian coat of arms

Since 1504 the two brotherhoods began to fight against each other , the official reason was to precede the most solemn processions: the one of Corpus Domini and the one of Good Friday . But this was only a pretext to have the social, political, economic and religious control of the city. So Campobasso became the setting of a conflict between these religious confraternities and the struggle soon transformed in a real civil war marked by violence and blood. The riots exploded especially during the processions, events that showed to people who owned the city power.

In this context marriages between couples of the different factions were severely prohibited. Notwithstanding this, it happened then that Delicata Civerra , “a wond

erful young woman, of gentle manners , and of the utmost virtues” , fell in love with Alfonso Mastrangelo , “ a well behaved gentleman, able to use the sword and of fine studies “ . But these young people had a terrible misfortune , Delicata belonged to the Crusaders and Fonzo to the Trinitarians. They had never been involved in any riots but their parents were harsh enemies, so the poor lovers had to be careful in showing their love. In fact Delicata and Fonzo decided not to tell anything about their love to their families: they met and loved secretly, they used to write long and sweet letters full of tender and noble feelings .



1. The Crusaders coat of arms



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Chapter 2



Terzano Tower

During a beautiful spring day Delicata was on her house balcony enjoying the amazing view that nature offers in this season. She found pleasure in savouring the gentle breeze and the flowers' scents and colours. She sat down and started to read , but from now and then she wondered about Fonzo and her deep love for him. How often she had prayed God at night

time to enlighten her parents' minds , and to make them stop those absurd and ferocious conflicts. How often she thought to put an end to her relation. But she didn't have the heart to do that. Broken hearted she started to cry and to pray for herself, for Fonzo and for her parents. While crying she heard a noise from outside, a sort of a roar of a horse willing to run away. She looked out and saw her beloved one on his horseback, with a mantle and a shining sword. Delicata astonished said: *“ Are you crazy? And if someone sees us..? and if my father sees us..? Go away! Go away immediately!”* . Fonzo replied: *“I'll go away immediately, but first I want to see you. Wait!* (and he gave her a rose while reciting these verses) :

“Pure rose grown amid harsh horns ,

when in life she finds her peer!”

They wanted to kiss each other, but Delicata gathered a few flowers from some vases on her balcony to throw them to him. Just then Mr Civerra saw the horse , saw Alfonso , and he rushed upstairs to his daughter who was throwing the flowers to her beloved. He was so furious and shouted: *“Delicataaaa...Delicataaaa!!! You are*



2. Red rose

conspiring against me, against your family, against your house. There is no more space for you here. Come, come I'll show you where to stay! “ He took her to a dark cellar of an abandoned tower , Tower Terzano. *“Here no one will look for you. Everyone will forget you, as you forgot about me, about us.”* Delicata spent several days in this prison , she was alone, sad, and thought always about Fonzo. Her father proposed her to marry a Crusader, to stop thinking about that Trinitarian , a shame for the entire family. He also suggested her to become a nun. These proposals were useless, she loved Fonzo and preferred staying in that prison rather than anything else. A month had gone by and Mr Civerra to make her change her mind, told her that Mastrangelo had married a woman from another country and he would never come back again. Delicata started to be silent, to suffer , to close herself off the world , to have nightmares, to sweat, feel really sick. Therefore she was taken back home , but her relatives' cares and attention nothing could do to change her situation.



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Chapter 3

Fonzo Mastrangelo came to know about Delicata's father's rage, about his threats, his lies to make Delicata forget about her first love, and this worsened Delicata's situation, already affected by the terrible illness that will bring her to death. Alfonso began to despair, he rejected both Crusaders and Trinitarians, he cursed those hostilities. It was difficult to console him. Unable to stand this life, he decided to leave for the Flanders to fight at the side of his city lord, but he wanted Delicata to know that and to swear his eternal love to her. Therefore he goes to Saint George's Church to talk to friar Nunzio, Delicata's uncle. - "Friar



1. Delicata's feeling bad

Nunzio, is it a good thing to separate two young people that are so deeply in love? That are so bonded to each other? You that read the Gospel, can God share these animosities, these sins?" - "My dear young man, you are right, but she has got such a strict father, he will never give in and accept your wishes. Forget about these passions and think about God!" - "I am leaving tomorrow, but I'll come back and if these conflicts haven't finished yet, I'll take her away with me by any necessary means." Friar Nunzio tried to calm him down, and they spoke for a long while; the Friar told him that Delicata was really bad. Alfonso was about to go when he took the Friar's hand and with his voice broken from crying said: *"Please tell her that I will love her forever. I am going away so that her father can stop tormenting her, but I'll*



3. St George church



count the days and I'll pray for her!" - "God may be with you! I'm sure you'll come back; and I do hope that by then, God may have touched these hardheaded hearts so that they may be peaceful and happy."

The two greeted, the Friar was so visibly moved and Fonzo left the city on his horseback.

Chapter 4

Meanwhile, the conflicts in town between the confraternities worsened more and more, for one reason or another : a Crusader had been killed, a bishop risked his life. It was a damned way of living: everyone wanted to beat the others, to win against the others for silly problems, as being the first in a procession. The members of the two congregations were stubborn and proud. They needed a guide . It was almost Lent and the bishop thought to call a good preacher able to bring peace among those quarrelsome people. There hadn't been one for a long time, the pulpit infact had been empty for too many years.



2. Friar Geronimo from Sorbo

On 9th of February 1587 arrived a Capuchin monk, Friar Geronimo from Sorbo , a man of great fame for virtues and doctrine, and during Lent , thanks to his eloquent sermons, he led them to listen to God, so he succeeded in making those people better. He also had a new Church built and the Convent of the Capuchin Monks. He rebuilt a hospital and found a place for the foundlings . But what matters most is that he succeeded in assuring peace between the two brotherhoods in Campobasso by celebrating marriages between the couples of the two rival congregations.



4. Crusaders and Trinitarians

dreams and be happy.

It was great seeing people that a moment before were ready to kill one another, and now , instead, they were hugging , rejoicing and celebrating religious marriages within their children. That was an unforgettable day for Campobasso , many young people could finally fulfill their

Chapter 5

In the city people started to appreciate peace, in every family there was tranquillity, and everyone seemed to be happy and satisfied. But there was still Delicata's dramatic story. She was aware of being about to die, so she asked to see her reliable childhood friend, Fiorella, who knew about her love story and to whom she wanted to talk about Alfonso, about their deep love, her hopes and pains. Then as she knew that she had little time left, she said: *"Lucky you that had the possibility to fulfill your love dream! I am alone and unhappy, and I will have as a bridal room, my tomb! But what makes me really sad is the idea that Alfonso might not overcome my death! Oh if he could come back!"* and she started to cry. *"Please tell him to forgive me, and that I die with the regret of not being able to see him again, and for causing him so much suffering .."*. She probably would have liked to say more, but she was too weak. Her friend tried to console her, to give her hope, but that young woman knew that everything was about to end. Notwithstanding this she asked to see friar Geronimo to receive the religious service.

Fiorella looked for Friar Geronimo and she told him that sad love story. Friar Geronimo already knew everything, since Friar Nunzio had told him, and sent a letter to the Flanders asking Fonzo to come back. He went to Delicata to give her a religious comfort.

Delicata's relatives felt really sorry for what they had done, but now they could do very little for that young lady. They cried and Friar Geronimo reproached Mr Civerra for being so harsh.

On 12 March 1587 Delicata got worse, all her relatives, Fiorella, Friar Geronimo were standing by her bed, she looked restless, as if something tormented her.

All of a sudden, they heard a horse noise on the road outside, and then someone rushing up the stairs; the door opened, a soldier appeared ... it was Alfonso! All were astonished and looked at Delicata, who put up a feeble smile.

Alfonso tossed himself at the foot of her bed , he took her hand, kissed it and brought it to his heart and slipped the ring onto her finger. *“I’ll wait for you up there, in Heaven...”* and died.

The following day she was buried in Saint George’s Church.



1. *Delicata dead*



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Chapter 6

The day after Delicata's funeral, Fonzo went to Rome where he became a monk at the Arcaeli Convent. In 1594, 7 years later, in the Church of that Convent, the friars prayed for Alfonso Mastrangelo's soul.



St Bartolomeo church

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