

Negotiated Lives: Third Order Women Religious and Their Communities in Seventeenth-
and Eighteenth-Century Italy

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Abbreviations

AAB	Archivio Arcivescovile di Bologna
ADBN	Amministrazione Demaniale dei Beni Nazionali
AGFR	Archivio Generale del Fondo di Religione
AFR	Amministrazione del Fondo di Religione
ASB	Archivio di Stato di Bologna
ASBg	Archivio di Stato di Bergamo
ASDBg	Archivio Storico Diocesano Bergamo
ASM	Archivio di Stato di Milano
BA	Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna “Archiginnasio”
MV	Micellanea Vecchia
PS	Parocchie Soppresse
VP	Visite Pastorali

Introduction

This text is about third order women religious and their communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. Third order communities were monastic communities that followed a third order monastic rule and voluntary enclosure. Many third order women religious also lived outside an organized monastic community, donning a third order habit but living in small groups or parental homes. Until now, third order women religious have been considered largely a medieval phenomenon. Officially, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) suppressed women's third order communities through its prescription of monastic enclosure for women religious. Focusing predominately on enclosure and its application, current scholarship on early modern female monasticism suggests that third order communities disappeared after Trent. This study contests the erasure of women's third order communities in the aftermath of Trent. Numerous female third order communities existed in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy, and new communities were founded. I focus on six women's third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna, all of which were founded either in the seventeenth or in the eighteenth centuries.¹ These third order communities were institutions of the urban middling ranks. Third order women religious engaged actively with urban society and economy, filling gaps in urban poor relief, credit, and care mechanisms. Moreover, the third order communities filled a gap in the institutional structure that framed the lives of women in

¹ Three new women's third order communities were founded in seventeenth-century Bergamo, and another five in smaller localities around Bergamo. In Bologna, nine new women's third order communities were founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; a total of thirteen third order communities existed in Bologna during this time period. A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi, and L. Vaccaro, eds., *Diocesi di Bergamo*, Storia religiosa della Lombardia (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1988), 230–231; Mario Fanti, *Abiti e lavori delle monache di Bologna in una serie di disegni del secolo XVIII* (Bologna: Tamari Editori, 1972), 104–127.

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early modern Italy. I argue that third order women religious and their communities were flexible and adaptable: they responded to the needs of local societies and both neighbors as well as ecclesiastical and secular authorities welcomed their presence. Much of the activity of these women and their communities is still, however, lost to the scholarship on early modern women and women religious.

The study of female third order communities is complicated by their flexible and adaptable character. No two third order communities were alike, even if they belonged to the same religious order and were located in the same town. Consequently, in this text I focus on the social and economic roles of third order women religious and their communities in Bergamo and Bologna in the period from c. 1630 to c. 1810.

Reconstructing how third order women religious and their communities related to the society around them reveals how third order communities elicited and responded to a multitude of expectations that were placed upon them by their contemporaries.

Institutional flexibility allowed third order women and their communities to carve out spaces in the contemporary institutional framework, as well as respond to local conditions and needs. Nevertheless, this history from below reveals also many similarities in the social and economic functions of women's third order communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. Third order communities were enmeshed in their contemporary society and our understanding of early modern Italy, and the lives of its women in particular, is incomplete without a study of these communities.

Already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the contemporaries of third order women religious struggled to define who the tertiaries were, especially in relation to enclosed nuns. In the later-eighteenth century, when an increasing number of women

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sought to enter third order communities with charitable dowries, the tertiaries became involved in a number of legal debates in Bologna. Traditionally, charitable dowries were intended for marriage or monacization in an enclosed convent.² To receive a dispensation and use one of these dowries to enter a third order community, women and third order communities repeatedly appealed to local ecclesiastical authorities as well as the pope in Rome.³ In one such petition to the pope, the Carmelite third order community of S. Maria delle Grazie underscored the value of third order women religious – rather than enclosed nuns – to the urban society:

Taking into consideration the voluntary enclosure of these women religious and the common good they bring to this city, it would be desirable that they could continue to live in this way and increase their numbers, rather than that they adopted enclosure in order to be eligible for dowry subsidies.⁴

On a different occasion, one Anna Pacini entered the Franciscan third order community of S. Elisabetta in 1760. Pacini had received a dowry subsidy from the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi in Bologna, which the Opera now refused to pay out to a third order community. The tertiaries of S. Elisabetta appealed to the archbishop of Bologna,

² For an overview of the complex dowry subsidy system of Bologna, Mauro Carboni, *Le doti della "povertà". Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999); Isabelle Chabot and Massimo Fornasari, *L'economia della carità: Le doti del Monte di Pietà di Bologna (XVI-XX)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997). Terpstra gives an English-language overview of some of this Italian-language research in Nicholas Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 2013. Carboni and Chabot both show that until the mid-eighteenth century charitable dowry subsidies as well as the communal Monte del Matrimonio dowry scheme remained, for the most part, closed for women seeking to enter a third order community; only marriage or monacization in an enclosed convent were considered premissable. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the dowry subsidy market saw what Chabot has called "the social and juridical valorization of tertiary congergations" and sixty women who received a Torfanini dowry subsidy, one of the largest dowry subsidy schemes is Bologna, entered a third order community between 1747 and 1795 (Chabot and Fornasari, *L'economia della carità: Le doti del Monte di Pietà di Bologna (XVI-XX)*, 128.

³ AAB, MV, 271, nr. 19; AAB, MV, 283, fasc. 1.

⁴ AAB, MV, 283, fasc. 1, April 9, 1791.

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Vincenzo Malvezzi. The legal council of the tertiaries referred to the bulls *Supra montem* of Nicolas IV and *Intercetera* of Leo X (1521), which decreed that only the tertiaries who had professed the vow of enclosure were required to observe enclosure. Based on this, he then masterfully rejected the applicability of Tridentine enclosure on third order communities like S. Elisabetta, which required no vow of enclosure from its tertiaries. The legal council also called for a clear differentiation between various communities of third order women religious and oblates, stressing that each community was different and generalizations about all communities were impossible. S. Elisabetta was *like* an enclosed community, or at least more so than many other third order and quasi-religious communities that had already benefitted from charitable dowries, he argued.⁵

These petitions highlight two things. First, third order communities presented themselves as communities with distinct identities arising from their social functions and each community's particular rules and constitutions. Second, the social identity of third order communities was not fixed. Third order women religious were regularly compared to and considered *like* nuns by religious orders and episcopal authorities, who introduced sacraments and religious celebrations into the chapels and churches of these communities and exempted the women religious from oversight by parochial clergy, treating them as nuns.⁶ Yet the episcopal authorities also considered third order communities different

⁵ AAB, MV, 265, fasc. 8, "Le Suore Terziarie di S. Elisabetta ricorrono per ottenere i sussidi dotali loro dovuti dall'Opera de Vergognosi".

⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 4/4452, nr. 3; *ibid.*, 7/4455, nr. 15; *ibid.*, 50/4702, nr. 51; *ibid.*, 6/6283, Oct 17, 1747. Benefactors also bequeathed to those third order communities that could celebrate religious services in-house like regular monastic communities, as implied by the last will of Antonio Giusti from 1630, which left a legacy to the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta in Bologna "in case they accept enclosure, or receive the license to celebrate Mass in their house" (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4450, nr. 13). Many seventeenth-century notarial documents called the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta *moniale* or *moniales terzi ordini* interchangeably with *sorores vitam commune poentibus* (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4450, nrs. 1 secondo, 6; *ibid.*, 3/4451, nrs. 1, 3, 5, 6). Later notarial documents that were written in Italian consistently use *suore terziarie*.

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from enclosed convents. In 1744, the archbishop Prospero Lambertini (already elected to papacy as Benedict XIV) issued a decree to all tertiary women religious in the city and dioceses of Bologna. The decree recognized the existence of both women who had taken the tertiary habit and continued to live in their homes as well third order women religious who lived in communities.⁷ Pastoral visits completed both before and after the 1744 decree reveal episcopal acceptance of third order communities as different from enclosed communities.⁸ Third order communities in Bologna were negotiated spaces that were shaped by both the women inhabiting these communities as well as the many external parties involved with these communities, from benefactors to episcopal authorities and religious orders.

A similar picture emerges from Bergamo. The episcopal authorities in Bergamo also frequently compared third order communities to monastic institutions. The bishops of Bergamo sent annual pastoral letters to all women's monastic communities in town, including the Franciscan third order communities of S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio. These letters advised obedience to rules and monastic superiors, humility, chastity, poverty, and enclosure – the qualities expected with a renewed vigor from all women religious after Tridentine reforms, but also qualities that homogenized all women religious, forcing them into the frame of enclosed monasticism.⁹ Both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe were

⁷ AAB, VP, 57, Regole, ed ordini della Santità di Nostro Signore Benedetto Papa XIV per le Terziarie che sono in Bologna, e nella Diocesi. April 15, 1744.

⁸ AAB, VP, 53 (1737), 57 (1744), 86 (1772); AAB, MV, 283, fasc. 1.

⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2945, 'Pastorali, 1699 al 1788'; ASM, AGFR, 2970, 'Pastorali'. The letters were most regular during the bishopric of Antonio Redetti (in office 1730-1733), who sent one pastoral letter to all women's communities almost every single year during his time in office. Redetti's letters functioned like serial lessons that frequently referred back to earlier letters and used repetition to emphasize a point. Only two surviving pastoral letters from the eighteenth century – first by Redetti in 1768 and second by Giovanni

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also under close episcopal supervision from the late-seventeenth century onwards, with episcopal authorities approving all women seeking entrance in these communities as well as supervising the communities' internal affairs, such as the elections of mothers superior for example.¹⁰ Moreover, the third order women religious themselves also considered their communities to be like other monastic communities. In 1751, the tertiaries of S. Antonio declared to live under voluntary enclosure, adding that “not once has anyone abandoned her sacred vows made during the profession.” The same year, these tertiaries petitioned the local bishop to have their church recognized as a church of an enclosed convent, with all the same privileges.¹¹ In an eighteenth-century petition to authorities in Venice, the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe asked to receive a tax subsidy granted to all other monastic institutions in Bergamo.¹² Yet, in the late-seventeenth century, the parish clergy of S. Alessandro in Colonna, the home parish of both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio, struggled to consider S. Giuseppe as a monastic community, but rather saw it as a congregation of laywomen that fell under the jurisdiction of parish clergy.¹³ Around the same time, S. Giuseppe's institutional status was also questioned in an inheritance dispute, which saw *suor* Claudia Girelli of S. Giuseppe being called a “woman who was

Paolo Dolfin in the 1780s – draw a clear difference between third order women religious and enclosed nuns. For further discussion of these pastoral letters turn to Chapter 6.

¹⁰ ASDBg, *Monasteri femminili*, I, S. Antonio di Padova, ‘Elezioni’ and ‘Personali suore’; *ibid*, S. Giuseppe, ‘Elezioni’ and ‘Personali suore’.

¹¹ ASDBg, *Monasteri femminili*, I, S. Antonio di Padova, *Varie*.

¹² ASM, AGFR, 2970, ‘Privilegi, Immunità, Statuti’, *undated*.

¹³ ASM, AGFR, 2970, ‘Privilegi, Immunità, Statuti’; ASM, AGFR, 2991, ‘Religiose P.G.’

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neither a nun nor a wife” by a Venetian councilor.¹⁴ And indeed, when it was convenient, also the women religious of both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio stressed the communities’ status as lay congregations. They did this, for example, to acquire and retain real estate without running afoul of the Venetian law on ecclesiastical real estate in vigor since 1605. And indeed, the Venetian Republic and its representatives in Bergamo considered both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe to be congregations of laywomen throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.¹⁵

The contemporary confusion, or deliberate obfuscation, about third order women religious and their communities reveals dissonances that point towards the contested and flexible nature of third order communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. These dissonances are the key to understanding the many roles of third order women and their communities in the early modern Italian society, which this text explores. However, third order communities had always been institutions that defied ready classification. This introduction now presents a short overview of the medieval origins of third order communities and the current state of historiography, which has led to the erasure of third orders from studies of early modern female monasticism.

i. The medieval history of third order communities

Third order communities first flourished in the High Middle Ages. The twelfth and the thirteenth centuries saw new forms of piety that centered on apostolic way of life and rejected church hierarchy as the conduit of salvation. This period gave rise to a number of

¹⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2983-2984, quote from ASM, AGFR, 2984, “Per le R.de Madri Tertiare di San Giuseppe di Bergamo ex Adversariis”, emphasis mine.

¹⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2942; ASM, AGFR, 2970, ‘Privilegi, Immunità, Statuti’.

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new female religious movements both in northern and southern Europe. According to Herbert Grundmann, these movements expressed women's desire to realize the ideal of voluntary poverty, but also their rejection of the socio-economic impediments on female lives in medieval urban societies. Yet, to be recognized by the Church, these often loosely organized groups of pious women had to regularize within the existing religious orders. Many groups became part of the new mendicant orders, which also emerged at around this time. Other groups failed to regularize and faced charges of heresy. One group that received only partial recognition from the Church were the Beguines.¹⁶ The Beguines have received perhaps the most scholarly attention of all medieval non-monastic female religious movements. Like other women's movements of the time, the Beguines drew upon the new, apostolic piety of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, but also helped to resolve the *Frauenfrage* – the perceived problem of increasingly high number of women who remained single in the developing cities of the High Middle Ages.¹⁷ To escape accusations of heresy, the Beguines had to surrender their informal organization and adopt a monastic-like lifestyle. However, the organization of the Beguines remained institutionally fluid and the women religious actively engaged in the

¹⁶ Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Links between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women's Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, with the Historical Foundations of German Mysticism*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), chaps. 4–6. On lay piety in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983). Little, like Grundmann, considers the economic and social changes underway in urban centers as central to the rise of new forms of piety in the high Middle Ages.

¹⁷ Ernest W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture, With Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969). In a more recent study, Walter Simons also argues that a particular female piety and a changing socio-economic and demographic context led to the foundation of Beguine communities, Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

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urban societies that surrounded them into the sixteenth century, when the lifestyle of the Beguines that combined active and contemplative spirituality fell victim to the Council of Trent and the papal imposition of monastic enclosure according to current scholarship.¹⁸

Also on the Italian peninsula, the period from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries was one of unprecedented female presence in religious culture.¹⁹ Anna Benvenuti Papi has highlighted the urban nature of the female penitent movements in medieval Italy.²⁰ Like in the rest of Europe, the penitential communities fulfilled clear socio-economic functions in medieval Italian urban centers and in the lives of widows and singlewomen.²¹ However, in contrast to the German and Northern-European historiographical focus on the *Frauenfrage*, the historiography of female communities in medieval and Renaissance Italy is characterized by a careful analysis of the institutional structure of the penitent communities.²² On the one hand, Anna Benvenuti Papi and

¹⁸ Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565*. Sarah Moran contests this assessment in her recent Ph.D. dissertation, Sarah Joan Moran, "Unconventual Women: Religion, Politics, and Image in the Court Beguinages, 1585-1713" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, 2010).

¹⁹ Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi, eds., *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

²⁰ Anna Benvenuti Papi, *"In castro poenitentiae" Santità e società femminile nell'Italia medievale* (Rome: Herder Editrice e Libreria, 1990).

²¹ Sally Mayall Brasher, *Women of the Humiliati: A Lay Religious Order in Medieval Civic Life* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Worldly Saints: Social Interaction of Dominican Penitent Women in Italy, 1200-1500* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1999). The study of 'singlewomen' or never-married women emerges from the groundbreaking work of Judith Bennet and Amy Froide; for Italy, Maura Palazzi has studied the Italian never-married women, but mostly for the modern period, see Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide, eds., *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Amy M. Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2005); Maura Palazzi, *Donne sole: Storia dell'altra faccia dell'Italia tra antico regime e società contemporanea* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997).

²² As Mary Dayno stresses in her historiographical review, the recent scholarship on religion in medieval Italian urban centers has in general witnessed a turn towards a close study of the links between religion and

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Mario Sensi have highlighted the quick regularization of medieval penitent communities in central Italy, even when these communities remained fluid and faced a multitude of institutional ruptures until the late Renaissance.²³ On the other hand, Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner argues that mendicant orders began to incorporate penitent groups only in the late-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; she cautions against equating medieval penitent women with third order religious.²⁴ Yet, in her study of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century ‘living saints’, women who were venerated as saints during their lifetime or immediately thereafter, Gabriella Zarri firmly places female apostolic spirituality in the context of regular third orders, which housed most living saints.²⁵ According to current scholarship, first female third order communities in Italy as well as elsewhere in Europe thus emerged in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries as part of a top-down regularization of the

politics, of which the study of the institutional make-up of the religious movements is part. Mary Dayno, “Urban Religious Life in the Italian Communes: The State of the Field,” *History Compass* 9, no. 9 (2011): 720–30. Some case studies of lay communities and their regularization include, James R. Banker and Kate Lowe, “Female Voice, Male Authority: A Nun’s Narrative of the Regularization of a Female Franciscan House in Borgo San Sepolcro in 1500,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 40, no. 3 (2009): 651–67; Anna Esposito, “St. Francesca and the Female Religious Communities of Fifteenth-Century Rome,” in *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Katherine Gill, “Scandala: Controversies Concerning Clausura and Women’s Religious Communities in Late Medieval Italy,” in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-*, ed. Scott L. Waugh and Peter Diehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 177–203; Mary Martin McLaughlin, “Creating and Recreating Communities of Women: The Case of Corpus Domini, Ferrara, 1406-1452,” *Signs* 14, no. 2 (1989): 293–320.

²³ Papi, “*In castro poenitentiae*” *Santità e società femminile nell’Italia medievale*, 531–588; Mario Sensi, *Storie di bizzoche: tra Umbria e Marche* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1995). The contributors to the volume edited by Daniel Bornstein and Robert Rusconi also highlight the quick regularization of pious women in groups that adopted monastic or monastic-like lifestyles, Bornstein and Rusconi, *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*.

²⁴ Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Worldly Saints: Social Interaction of Dominican Penitent Women in Italy, 1200-1500*.

²⁵ Gabriella Zarri, “Dalla profezia alla disciplina (1450-1650),” in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994); Gabriella Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra ’400 e ’500* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990).

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penitent movement.

Central to this regularization were three papal bulls: *Supra montem* (1289), *Periculoso* (1298), and *Sancta Romana* (1317). *Supra montem* by pope Nicholas IV approved the Franciscan Third Order and gave it a rule. In light of *Periculoso* by pope Boniface VIII, which mandated strict monastic enclosure for nuns throughout Latin Christendom, and *Sancta Romana* by pope John XXII, which condemned Franciscan Spirituals but also other penitential communities that had adopted communal practices and monastic habits, *Supra montem* laid out the only apostolically-recognized quasi-religious way of life in the early-fourteenth century. The bull gained further importance in 1311, when the Council of Vienne excommunicated the Beguines.²⁶ Elizabeth Makowski underscores, however, that *Supra montem* and the other bulls did not grant monastic status to third order religious unequivocally; the “three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as pronounced upon formal profession into an approved religious order” remained the substance of the true religious (*moniales*).²⁷ The legal and the social status of third order women religious remained fluid until the sixteenth century, despite ecclesiastical and secular authorities’ as well as the female penitents’ own desire for

²⁶ Mario Sensi, “*Mulieres in Ecclesia*” *Storie Di Monache E Bizzoche*, vol. 2. vol. (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 2010), 788–794; Sensi, *Storie di bizzoche: tra Umbria e Marche*, 15–17. See also Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Worldly Saints: Social Interaction of Dominican Penitent Women in Italy, 1200-1500*, 34–41; Elizabeth Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and Its Commentators, 1298-1545* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997). On the history of monastic enclosure before *Periculoso*, Jane Tibbets Schulenberg, “Strict Active Enclosure and Its Effects on Female Monastic Experience (500-1100),” in *Distant Echoes* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 51–86.

²⁷ Elizabeth Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman: Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 89.

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regularization.²⁸ Most groups of third order religious and individual tertiaries professed to a rule – first the Franciscan Third Order rule, but later also the Servite, the Dominican, the Carmelite rules as well as an updated Franciscan Third Order rule (the 1521 *Intercetera* by Leo X) – and one or more of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in various ways and combinations, picking and choosing which rule and which vows to profess.²⁹ A range of third order communities thus dotted the cities of medieval and Renaissance Italy and Europe, offering a malleable institutional model to many women religious.

ii. The Council of Trent and the historiography of enclosure

The second half of the sixteenth century brought a radical disruption in the institutional histories of these women's communities according to current scholarship. The pervasive historiographical focus on the institutional setting of the medieval and Renaissance women religious facilitates the emergence of the Council of Trent as a watershed event in the history of female monasticism on the Italian peninsula. During its last session in 1563, the Council of Trent re-instituted monastic enclosure by re-introducing *Periculoso* (1298). However, as both Raimondo Creytens and Francesca Medioli have highlighted, the Council's decree was neither made nor received unequivocally. From the wording of

²⁸ Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner, "Writing Religious Rules as an Interactive Process: Dominican Penitent Women and the Making of Their 'Regula,'" *Speculum* 79, no. 3 (2004): 660–87; Catherine M. Mooney, "Nuns, Tertiaries, and Quasi-Religious: The Religious Identities of Late Medieval Holy Women," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 41 (2006): 68–92; Alison More, "Institutionalizing Penitential Life in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Third Orders, Rules, and Canonical Legitimacy," *Church History* 83, no. 2 (2014): 297–323; Alison More, "Tertiaries and the Scottish Observance: St Martha's Hospital in Aberdour and the Institutionalisation of the Franciscan Third Order," *The Scottish Historical Review* 44, no. 2 (2015): 121–39.

²⁹ Raimondo Creytens, "La Riforma dei monasteri femminili dopo i Decreti Tridentini," in *Il Concilio di Trento e la Riforma Tridentina: Atti del convegno storico internazionale, Trento 2-6 settembre 1963*, vol. 1 (Rome: Herder, 1965), 48–49.

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the decree, it was not clear, whether it applied to second order nuns alone or also to third order women religious. In 1566, the *Circa pastoralis* of Pius V sought to clear the confusion that the Tridentine decree had created by equating third order women religious living in communities to second order nuns and demanding that those tertiaries who had professed simple vows take solemn vows. Further papal decrees stipulated the few occasions on which women religious were allowed to leave their communities (*Decori et honestati*, 1570) and sought to ensure the financial stability of the now-enclosed women's communities (*Deo sacris virginibus*, 1572). In his seminal study, Creytens argues that the Tridentine decree and the following papal bulls recognized and institutionalized only one type of woman religious – the enclosed nun who professed solemn vows – within the Church.³⁰ Enclosure became an end in itself for the Counter-Reformation church, as Mario Rosa has argued.³¹

However, in a conclusion that has been mostly overlooked by later scholars, Creytens also underscores that many unenclosed monastic communities survived with the support of local bishops, powerful benefactors, or due to lacking funds to ensure enclosure.³² This part of Creytens's conclusions prefigures Francesca Medioli later call to move beyond top-down views of Tridentine enclosure towards a study of its application. "Strict enclosure was modified by the uses to which it was put; it thus emerges as an interchangeable and paradoxically elastic instrument that was readily adaptable to the historical moment and the particular or general situation of its administration over the

³⁰ Creytens, "La Riforma dei monasteri femminili dopo i Decreti Tridentini."

³¹ Mario Rosa, "La religiosa," in *L'uomo barocco*, ed. Rosario Villari (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1991).

³² Creytens, "La Riforma dei monasteri femminili dopo i Decreti Tridentini," 77–78.

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longue durée,” writes Medioli.³³ And in practice, unenclosed third order communities continued to exist also after the Tridentine reforms. In 1616, the Congregation of Regulars recognized the continued existence of third order communities with the formula “non si approvano, se ben si tollerano” (“not approved but tolerated”). Finally, in 1749, pope Benedict XIV recognized the legitimacy of non-enclosed women’s religious communities with the bull *Quamvis iusto*.³⁴ Scholarship on post-Tridentine monasticism has, however, focused on enclosure rather than on the moments of elasticity within seventeenth- or eighteenth-century monasticism. Even when discussing the application of enclosure, as suggested by Francesca Medioli, scholars nonetheless focus on top-down imposition of enclosure and resistance to it. Enclosure did not only become an end in itself for sixteenth-century churchmen, as Mario Rosa argues, but has also become an end in itself for many scholars of early modern female monasticism.

Consequently, studies of women’s institutions in early modern Italy focus on either contemplative, enclosed convents or custodial institutions, such as houses for spinsters, battered women, and repentant prostitutes. Scholars consider the Council of Trent as a turning point that together with other contemporary social changes, among which the rise of primogeniture and institutionalization of charity, led towards, on the one hand, enforcement of monastic enclosure and, on the other hand, confinement of

³³ Francesca Medioli, “La clausura delle monache nell’amministrazione della Congregazione Romana Sopra i Regolari,” in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia dall’alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l’oggi*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997), 279.

³⁴ Medioli, “La clausura delle monache nell’amministrazione della Congregazione Romana Sopra i Regolari”; Francesca Medioli, “Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33 (1997): 670–93; Mary Peckham Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women, Religion, and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6–9.

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‘irregular women’ (i.e. women who had neither married nor entered a convent).³⁵ Most studies of post-Tridentine convents tend to focus on the social, political, and economic functions of women’s monastic institutions in early modern Italian societies, and among the social elites in particular.³⁶ Enclosure is discussed as something that was both imposed by the Church but also perceived as necessary by the contemporary society, even if individual nuns and convents repeatedly violated enclosure.³⁷ Studies of the early modern custodial institutions also engage with enclosure by discussing the institutional transformation of many charitable institutions into monastic institutions; the acceptance of enclosure is considered a litmus test for such a transformation.³⁸ The analytical

³⁵ On changes in charity and rise of primogeniture, Maura Piccialuti Caprioli, *L’immortalità dei beni: fedecommissi e primogeniture a Roma nei secoli XVII-XVIII* (Rome: Viella, 1999); Paolo Prodi, ed., *Disciplina dell’anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994); Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Giovanni Ricci, *Povertà, vergogna, superbia: I declassati fra Medioevo e Età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); Vera Zamagni, ed., *Povertà e innovazioni istituzionali in Italia: Dal Medioevo ad oggi* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000); Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

³⁶ P. Renee Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Elisa Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII* (Milan: F. Angeli, 2001); Elissa B. Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³⁷ Silvia Evangelisti, “Wives, Widows, and Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in the Historiography of Early Modern Italy,” *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000): 233–47; Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Penguin, 2003); Craig A. Monson, *Disembodied Voices: Music and Culture in an Early Modern Italian Convent* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*.

³⁸ Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women’s Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Lucia Ferrante, “Honor Regained: Women in the Casa Del Soccorso Di San Paolo in Sixteenth-Century Bologna,” in *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido

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patterns I have identified here continue to characterize up-and-coming scholarship. A recent doctoral dissertation on monastic communities in seventeenth-century Rome divides institutions into the two categories of contemplative convents and conservatories and/or Case Pie, with the latter described as being not properly monastic and staffed by *sanctimoniales* rather than by *moniales*.³⁹

Such binary divisions only recreate in historiography the classifications of canon law, which recognized as nuns those women religious alone, who professed the solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and submitted to strict enclosure. All other women religious were not considered *moniales* by canon law, even if their lifestyles were imitative of the ‘true women religious’.⁴⁰ Katherine Gill has pointed out this tendency of historians of penitential and quasi-religious women to fall in with monastic rules and ecclesiastical law; this tendency together with highly-localized case studies of quasi-religious women has created a vacuum in our understanding of how these women religious reflected on the wider frames of social and religious history of medieval Italy.⁴¹ The same holds true for early modern Italy. Despite Gabriella Zarri’s work on the “third way” in the late-fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, and her calls for further study of

Ruggiero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Angela Groppi, *I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma dei Papi* (Rome: Laterza, 1994).

³⁹ Alessia Liroso, “I monasteri femminili a Roma nell’età della Controriforma: insediamenti urbani e reti di potere (secc. XVI-XVII)” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Università di Roma - La Sapienza, 2009).

⁴⁰ Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman”: Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages*, xxix.

⁴¹ Katherine Gill, “Penitents, Pinzochere and Mantellate: Varieties of Women’s Religious Communities in Central Italy, C. 1300-1520” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1994). Lori J. Ultsch arrives at similar conclusions for the sixteenth century in Lori J. Ultsch, “Maddalena Campiglia, ‘Dimsessa Nel Mondano Cospetto’?: Secular Celibacy, Devotional Communities, and Social Identity in Early Modern Vicenza,” *Forum Italicum* 39, no. 2 (2005): 365–367.

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third order women religious, current scholarship fails to consider early modern third order communities in any substantial manner.⁴² At best, third order women religious and other quasi-religious women find passing mention in studies of early modern custodial institutions or female life-cycle, particularly widowhood.⁴³ Quasi-religious and third order communities are described, on the one hand, as a cheaper alternative to enclosed convents, which experienced a rapid dowry inflation between the late-sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, or, on the other hand, as communities that inevitably bowed to social and ecclesiastical pressures to become enclosed in the course of the seventeenth-century. The latter also characterizes recent scholarship on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France. Studying late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century foundations that did not follow the traditional convent model, historians of France argue that ecclesiastical and royal pressure forced these new institutions to accept enclosure and become convent-like by the mid-seventeenth century.⁴⁴ Yet, these convent-like institutions continued to

⁴² Zarri, "Dalla profezia alla disciplina (1450-1650)"; Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*; Gabriella Zarri, "The Third State," in *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anne Jacobson Schutte, Thomas Kuehn, and Silvana Seidel Menchi (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2001).

⁴³ P. Renee Baernstein, "In Widow's Habit: Women between Convent and Family in Sixteenth-Century Milan," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994): 787–807; Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789*; Erin J. Campbell, "Prophets, Saints, and Matriarchs: Portraits of Old Women in Early Modern Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2010): 807–49; Monica Chojnacka, "Women, Charity and Community in Early Modern Venice: The Casa Delle Zitelle," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1998): 68–91; Virginia Cox, "The Single Self: Feminist Thought and the Marriage Market in Early Modern Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1995): 513–81; Lucia Ferrante, "Il sostegno alle giovani declassate: L'Opera Pia dei Poveri Vergognosi di Bologna e il Conservatorio di Santa Marta," in *Povert  e innovazione istituzionali in Italia*, ed. Vera Zamagni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000); David Gentilcore, "The Church, the Devil and the Healing Activities of Living Saints in the Kingdom of Naples after the Council of Trent," in *Medicine and the Reformation*, ed. Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell (London: Psychology Press, 1993); Laura J. McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), chap. 4; Nicholas Terpstra, *Abandoned Children of the Italian Renaissance: Orphan Care in Florence and Bologna* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

⁴⁴ Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life:*

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educate local girls and thus engage actively with their local society also after the imposition of enclosure, both in France and in Italy.⁴⁵ As Craig Harline's comparison of active and contemplative women religious in the Low Countries before and after Trent underscores, communities of quasi-religious and third order women survived to the Counter-Reformation and existed and grew in parallel with contemplative, enclosed communities in the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ Amanda L. Scott has recently examined the central role of quasi-religious women in local societies in early modern Spain.⁴⁷ In Italy as well, the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries saw the growth of new as well as reorganized enclosed convents, but also quasi-religious and third order communities.⁴⁸ Yet, the eighteenth-century expansion of the latter is discussed as the pre-history of a

French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Elizabeth Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

⁴⁵ Laurence Lux-Sterritt, "Between the Cloister and the World: The Successful Compromise of the Ursulines of Toulouse, 1604-1616," *French History* 16, no. 3 (2002): 247-68; Danielle Culpepper, "'Our Particular Cloister': Ursulines and Female Education in Seventeenth-Century Parma and Piacenza," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 4 (2005): 1017-37.

⁴⁶ Craig Harline, "Actives and Contemplatives: The Female Religious of the Low Countries before and after Trent," *The Catholic Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (1995): 541-67.

⁴⁷ Amanda L. Scott, "Seroras and Local Religious Life in the Basque Country and Navarre, 1550-1769," *Church History* 85, no. 1 (2016): 40-64.

⁴⁸ On enclosed convents, Liroso, "I monasteri femminili a Roma nell'età della Controriforma: insediamenti urbani e reti di potere (secc. XVI-XVII)," chap. 2; Gabriella Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente," in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia dall'alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l'oggi*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997). On quasi-religious and third order communities, current scholarship is much less detailed than on enclosed convents, even though scholars agree that these communities expanded across the Italian peninsula during the late-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, Marina Caffiero, "Dall'esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all'apostolato sociale (1650-1850)," in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994); Medioli, "Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento"; Jean-Michel Sallmann, "Eremitismo e terzi ordini dalla fine del secolo XV alla metà del secolo XIX," in *Clero e società nell'Italia contemporanea*, ed. Mario Rosa (Rome: Laterza, 1992); Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente."

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nineteenth-century explosion of non-enclosed, socially engaged women's communities in Italy, while the eighteenth century is described as a "closing of an epoch", devoid of new monastic institutional development.⁴⁹ Implicitly, but also explicitly in studies that argue for the top-down imposition of Tridentine enclosure, third order communities remain excluded from scholarship on early modern female monasticism that tends to focus on elite, enclosed convents and assigns the quasi-religious and third order women religious to a marginal space that is only hinted at, but never studied in a focused manner.

iii. A bottom-up history of early modern third order communities in Italy

This study focuses on six third order communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bergamo and Bologna. Third order communities emerge as institutions of the middling and professional ranks. Well integrated in urban society and economy, third order women and their communities adapted to the society that surrounded them and filled a gap in the institutional scaffolding of early modern Italy. Chapter 1 examines the foundation and growth of third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Third order communities emerge as an alternative female space that developed in dialogue with the society that surrounded them. Chapter 2 analyzes the population of third order communities, which remained small throughout the period considered here. Third order communities sought to maintain a stable population size and any great demographic fluctuations resulted from deliberate measures to control

⁴⁹For a discussion of the eighteenth-century as a pre-history of the nineteenth-century expansion of socially-engaged female religiosity, Giancarlo Rocca, *Donne religiose. Contribuito a una storia della condizione femminile in Italia nei secoli XIX-XX* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1992). For assessments of the eighteenth century as a closing of an epoch of early modern monasticism, Giorgio Penco, "Aspetti e caratteri del monachesimo nel Settecento italiano," in *Settecento monastico italiano*, ed. Giustino Farnedi and Giovanni Spinelli (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1990), 32; Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente," xvii.

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communal populations. The small size of third order communities reflected their status as local, neighborhood institutions, as I explore in Chapter 3. Both in Bergamo and Bologna, third order women religious belonged to the middling and professional ranks. For them, entrance into a third order community offered an alternative to marriage or enclosed convent, which were both increasingly unattainable due to dowry inflation. However, a third order dowry also represented a substantial financial burden for the middling ranks and should not be considered as a simple economical alternative to a monastic dowry in an enclosed convent. This chapter highlights the centrality of third order communities in the institutional framework of early modern Italy, and in early modern women's lives. I explore this theme further in Chapter 4, which focuses on the secular boarders who entered third order communities for shorter or longer time periods. Third order communities occupied a central position in the life cycle of many women of the middling and professional ranks and responded to the needs of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian societies. Third order communities were closely integrated in urban society and economy also through the economic and charitable activities of the women religious and their communities. Chapter 5 discusses third order communities as important nodes in the economic and social networks of their neighborhoods and towns. The close integration of third order communities in early modern Italian societies was reflected also in the governance of these communities, which was shaped by a number of internal and external authorities. Chapter 6 examines the complex matrices of power that enveloped third order communities and how the women religious navigated the network of different authorities who came to bear upon their communities. Finally, in Chapter 7, I turn to the monastic suppressions in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy. This chapter

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reveals continuities in the function of third order communities between the seventeenth and the early-nineteenth centuries and highlights, again, the flexible character of third order communities and the ability of the women religious to negotiate for their communities.

In this brief overview, I have highlighted the main contributions this study makes to current historiography. Third order women religious and their communities fulfilled an active, multi-faceted function in their neighborhoods and towns. These communities were integrated into the social, economic, and political fabrics of their localities and reflected the dynamics of such social fabrics in their institutional organization and development between the early-seventeenth and the early-nineteenth centuries. Current historiography unequivocally considers early modern convents part of early modern societies. In recognition of the enduring early modern dictum *aut maritus, aut murus* ('either the husband or the wall'), historians of women see monastic institutions as central to the early modern Catholic female experience.⁵⁰ However, historians of female monasticism in Italy concern themselves with the institutions of the elite that reflected the social and cultural preoccupations of the highest strata of the early modern Italian society. The study of third order communities broadens and deepens our perspectives on the role of monastic and semi-monastic institutions in early modern Italy. Not only institutions for the elite – depositories of daughters who could not marry, centers of patronage, and source of cultural and social capital – the inclusion of third order communities in scholarship allows monastic institutions to emerge as structural pillars of early modern

⁵⁰ Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe* (New York, 1996); Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd ed. (New York, 2008).

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Italian societies that provided for women across the social spectrum and throughout the female life cycle. Moreover, the study of third order communities highlights that early modern monastic institutions were not only shaped by the societies around them but in continuous dialogue with these societies. Third order communities emerge as flexible institutions because they negotiated continuously the multitude of expectations and prescriptions placed upon monastic and quasi-monastic institutions in the post-Tridentine period. These negotiations, moreover, underscore that religious institutions were like all other early modern institutions part of the complex matrices of power that characterized governance in early modern Italy, especially in peripheral locations such as Bergamo or Bologna.⁵¹

The study of third order communities also problematizes the current periodization of early modern monasticism. Historians rarely study monastic institutions beyond the later-seventeenth century. Instead, they consider the well-documented decline in the population of enclosed convents in the eighteenth century as evidence for the diminishing social and cultural role of female monasticism in contemporary Italy.⁵² Yet, the number

⁵¹ Caroline Castiglione, *Patrons and Adversaries: Nobles and Villagers in Italian Politics, 1640-1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Angela De Benedictis, *Repubblica per Contratto: Bologna: Una Città Europea Nello Stato Della Chiesa* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995); Joanne M. Ferraro, *Family and Public Life in Brescia, 1580-1650: The Foundations of Power in the Venetian State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Irene Fosi, *Papal Justice: Subjects and Courts in the Papal State, 1500-1750*, trans. Thomas V. Cohen (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011); Julius Kirshner, ed., *The Origins of the State in Italy 1300-1600* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Nicholas Terpstra, "The politics of confraternal charity: centre, periphery, and the modes of confraternal involvement in early modern civic welfare," in *Povert  e innovazioni istituzionali in Italia: Dal Medioevo ad oggi*, ed. Vera Zamagni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

⁵² Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente," pp. xvii-xviii. On decline of the enclosed monastic population, Athos Bellettini, *La popolazione di Bologna dal secolo XV all'unificazione italiana* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1961), 58-59; Hanns Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The Post-Tridentine Syndrome and the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 67-70; Volker Hunecke, "Kindbett Oder Kloster: Lebenswege Venezianischer Patrizierinnen Im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 18 (1992): 454-455; Richard B. Litchfield, "Demographic

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of third order communities grew in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁵³ This study re-evaluates the view of the eighteenth-century as one of monastic decline in Italy. Even if enclosed convents experienced an irreversible decline by mid-eighteenth century, third order communities maintained their populations, despite numerous internal and external pressures. The institutional focus of female monasticism was changing and increasingly embraced the more flexible third order communities, underscored also by the mid-eighteenth century papal recognition of quasi-monastic congregations.

These shifts in later-seventeenth and eighteenth-century monasticism only become apparent, if we re-focus the study of female monasticism on the activities of the women religious and thus away from the questions of enclosure, with which the current scholarship on female monasticism in post-Tridentine Italy has mostly engaged. *Clausura* has been studied either directly, in research focusing on the prescriptions of enclosure and its application in monastic communities, or it has been studied indirectly as the enabling or the curtailing mechanism to spiritual, social, and cultural life in early modern convents. Within this scholarship, the activities of women religious are considered through a submission/subversion binary that characterized much of the history of women and feminist scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s, of which the current scholarship of female monasticism is part of and upon which it builds. In this study, drawing on recent criticisms of the earlier feminist scholarship, I focus on the activities and functions of

Characteristics of Florentine Patrician Families, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries,” *The Journal of Economic History* 29 (1969): 197; Mario Rosa, *Settecento religioso: Politica della Ragione e religione del cuore* (Venice: Marsilio, 1999), in passim.

⁵³ Zarri, *Recinti*, pp. 131-133; Anna Jacobson Schutte, *By Force and Fear: Taking and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, 2011), pp. 250-255.

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third order religious communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy to uncover a historically and culturally located female experience. The anthropologist Saba Mahmood writes, “I want to suggest we think of agency not as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination but as a capacity for action that historically specific relations of subordination enable and create.”⁵⁴ The contributors to Deborah Simonton’s and Anne Montenach’s recent volume on women’s economic activities in early modern European towns also define agency as a capacity to act within a particular institutional and structural framework to great effect.⁵⁵ Focusing on the activities of third order women religious and their communities, which were shaped but not defined by the many institutional frameworks of early modern Italy, including that of enclosure, allows me to move from a study of third orders as defined by enclosure to a study of third order communities as institutions that played a central role in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century societies.

This text examines the history of six third order communities in the period from c. 1630 to c. 1810. Two of these third order communities – S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio – were in Bergamo; the remaining four communities – Ognisanti, S. Elisabetta, S. Maria della Carità, and S. Maria delle Grazie – were in Bologna. In the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, Bergamo was a small town that was situated at the western-most reaches of the Venetian *terraferma* holdings. Bologna, on the other hand, was the second-

⁵⁴ Saba Mahmood, “Agency, Performativity, and the Feminist Subject,” in *Bodily Citations: Religion and Judith Butler*, edited by Ellen T. Armour and Susan T. St. Ville (New York, 2006), p. 180. See also Saba Mahmood, “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflection on the Egyptian Islamic Revival,” *Cultural Anthropology* 6, no. 2 (2001): 202–36; Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁵⁵ Deborah Simonton and Anne Montenach, eds., *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640-1830* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

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largest city after Rome in the Papal States. The two towns thus belonged to two distinct polities, each with its own particular socio-political context. Studying third order communities in these two towns together allows me to explore the impact of local context on the organization and activities of these communities. This text breaks with the profound regionalism that characterizes much of the scholarship on pre-modern Italy. Only by comparing and contrasting the activities of third order women and their communities, necessitated also by the limited archival material on individual third order communities, is it possible to understand the functions that these communities fulfilled in early modern Italian societies. I build upon Paula Findlen's assessment that, despite very real regional differences, eighteenth-century Italy was a "cultural unity."⁵⁶ By discussing third order women religious and their communities, this text explores the social and urban history of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy.

⁵⁶ Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassing Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama, eds., *Italy's Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 13.

Chapter 1: Founding a Third Order Community

The later-sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries saw a renaissance of female monastic life across Europe: not only did existing convents see increased professions but a wave of new foundations innovated the institutional landscape of female monasticism.¹ Historians have proposed that changes to family, society, and the religious landscape of Europe underpinned this growth of female monastic communities, which assumed a central position in family politics and economies but also in the social and political re-organization of Reformation Europe.² Numerous new foundations, among which Mary Ward's English Ladies, the Ursulines, and the Visitation Sisters, represented a female response to the Reformation, a new female spirituality that sought an active role for women within the Church and in society.³ Scholarship on these new foundations highlights the struggle of these communities for social approval, particularly because

¹ Silvia Evangelisti, "Wives, Widows, and Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in the Historiography of Early Modern Italy," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000): 241–242; Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, "Convents as Litigants: Dowry and Inheritance Disputes in Early-Modern Spain," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 3 (2000): 645; Francesca Medioli, "Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33 (1997): 675–678; Elizabeth Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 20.

² Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginty: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2004); Claire Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and in the Low Countries* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

³ Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Linda Lierheimer, "Redefining Convent Space: Ideals of Female Community among Seventeenth-Century Ursuline Nuns," *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History: Selected Papers of the Annual Meeting* 24 (1997): 211–20; Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*.

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most initially rejected enclosure.⁴ Elizabeth Rapley argues that a ‘intermediate state’ between enclosed monasticism and marriage emerged for women by the seventeenth century. Negotiations between apostolic, ecclesiastical, and secular authorities, on the one hand, and the new foundations, on the other, determined the institutional form the new congregations assumed and the extent to which the women religious were able to engage in the society.⁵

Also on the Italian peninsula, the later-sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries saw a renaissance of female monastic communities. According to much of current scholarship, this was, however, a renaissance of enclosed monasticism.⁶ Gabriella Zarri has identified this period as “a turning point”, a period that saw the “reconstitution of rigid monastic enclosure”.⁷ Scholars argue that the spread of new, non-enclosed congregations remained limited in Italy until the eighteenth century.⁸ Only in the eighteenth century did the ‘French model’ of active female religiosity, as Marina Caffiero

⁴ Anne Conrad, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: Ursulinen und Jesuitinnen in der katholischen Reformbewegung des 16./17. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1991); Danielle Culpepper, “‘Our Particular Cloister’: Ursulines and Female Education in Seventeenth-Century Parma and Piacenza,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 4 (2005): 1017–37; Laurence Lux-Sterritt, “Between the Cloister and the World: The Successful Compromise of the Ursulines of Toulouse, 1604-1616,” *French History* 16, no. 3 (2002): 247–68.

⁵ Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*.

⁶ Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Elisa Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII* (Milan: F. Angeli, 2001); Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

⁷ Gabriella Zarri, “Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente,” in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia dall’alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l’oggi*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997), xvii.

⁸ Medioli, “Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento,” 680–681.

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defines it, spread in Italy, giving rise to new congregations and legitimizing third order women religious.⁹ This historiography considers enclosure as the *sine qua non* of post-Tridentine female monasticism in Italy and proposes an effective disappearance of non-enclosed female monasticism in the wake of the Council of Trent.¹⁰ Zarri herself has studied Ursulines and other similar congregations in seventeenth-century Italy in the framework of contemporary social and cultural changes, including the rise of primogeniture, dowry inflation, and sacralization of marriage. The new congregations, which Zarri calls the ‘third way’ or the ‘third state’, “contributed to giving a social identity and institutional structure to female celibacy that emerged as an early modern Italian female condition.”¹¹ Yet, according to Zarri, this ‘third state’ included only secular congregations, not monastic institutions.

In this chapter, I examine the foundations of regular third order communities in Bologna and Bergamo in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Rather than disappearing after the elaboration of the conciliar and papal decrees on enclosure in the later-sixteenth century, third order women religious and their communities negotiated post-Tridentine landscape and were recognized as socially useful female spaces in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Without the support of archival evidence, Francesca Medioli has proposed that third order communities survived Trent and the subsequent decrees on enclosure because the contemporary societies desired their

⁹ Marina Caffiero, “Dall’esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all’apostolato sociale (1650-1850),” in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994), 351–355.

¹⁰ Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, 105–106, 140; Gabriella Zarri, “Dalla profezia alla disciplina (1450-1650),” in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994), 210–11.

¹¹ Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, 447.

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existence.¹² This chapter lends support to Medioli's intuition but, more importantly, it highlights the steady evolution of third order communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bergamo and Bologna. Third order communities flexibly adopted contemporary expectations for female monastic communities without losing their original character and, in the process, integrated closely in local societies. Consequently, this chapter contributes to the overarching argument of this study that third order communities were negotiated and flexible spaces, which emerged and evolved in dialectic relationships with the societies that surrounded them. The institutional landscape of female monasticism in seventeenth-century Italy was more varied than the current scholarship suggests. I rely on foundation narratives and notarial sources. Foundation narratives are both historical and literary sources. Kate Lowe, Charlotte Woodford, and Christine Schneider have shown that foundation narratives served political, educative, or commemorative functions in the communities that produced them; these texts had a community creating function.¹³ Notarial sources permit to unpack the layered foundation narratives, as well as study the foundation of those communities for which no retrospective narratives survive. To provide a reference to the reader, the main features of the six foundations are summarized in Table 1.

¹² Medioli, "Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento," 683. Studies on third order communities in north-central Italy are almost non-existent. Mariana Caffiero has, in fact, proposed that tertiaries were a southern Italian phenomenon and some studies for that region do exist, Giuliana Boccadamo, "Le bizzoche a Napoli tra '600 e '700," *Campania sacra* 22 (1991): 351–94; Caffiero, "Dall'esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all'apostolato sociale (1650-1850)."

¹³ K. J. P. Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Christine Schneider, "'Zu Nuzen, Trost und Unterricht aller nachfolgenden [...].' - Die österreichischen Ursulinenchroniken im 18. Jahrhundert.," in *Frauenklöster im Alpenraum*, ed. Brigitte Mazohl and Ellinor Forster (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2012); Charlotte Woodford, *Nuns as Historians in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

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	Town	Order	Date of foundation	Founders
S. Antonio di Padova	Bergamo	Franciscan	1621/1645	- suor Elisabetta Bidesi - suor Margharita Belloli
S. Giuseppe	Bergamo	Franciscan	1638	- Lafranchi sisters - suor Diomira Bernardi
Ognisanti	Bologna	Servite	1662/1664	A group of Servite tertiaries
S. Elisabetta	Bologna	Franciscan	1598/1630s	A group of Franciscan tertiaries
S. Maria della Carità	Bologna	Franciscan	1602/1622	- fra Antonio Silli/ Franciscan friars of S. Maria della Carità - a group of Franciscan tertiaries
S. Maria delle Grazie	Bologna	Carmelite	1723	suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi

Figure 1.1: Main features of third order foundation accounts

i. The seventeenth-century foundation of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo

To present my sources and highlight my approach, I begin my examination of the foundation of third order communities with an extended study of the Franciscan community of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo. Four retrospective narratives relate the foundation of S. Giuseppe. First of them is the handwritten “Informationi e racconto della Fondazione del Collegio di S. Gioseppe in Berg.mo delle M.ri del Terzo ordine di S. Francesco”, which highlights the shared role of one woman religious and a group of her students in the founding of the community. The students were related to one another either by blood or guardianship. The narrative covers the history of S. Giuseppe from pre-foundation to the 1660s, which leads me to assume that this undated narrative was written in the late-1660s or shortly thereafter. The author of the narrative, which appears to be an informational account intended for ecclesiastical authorities, remains unknown.¹⁴

This handwritten narrative relates the following story. In the early-seventeenth century, a signora Giustina Bernardi, who had clothed the Franciscan tertiary habit and taken the name *suor* Diomira, was teaching *zitelle* (unmarried women) in an educational institution in Bergamo. In 1638, *suor* Diomira inspired three of those *zitelle* to clothe the Franciscan tertiary habit in the church of the Reformed Franciscans. The three *zitelle* were the fifteen-year-old *suor* Francesca Serafina Lafranchi, the thirteen-year-old *suor* Elisabetta Lafranchi, and the twenty-year-old *suor* Laura Meris. After clothing the religious habit, the women lived in the parish of S. Alessandro in Colonna in Borgo S. Leonardo, in the lower town of Bergamo, and received their sacraments from local parish clergy as well as the Theatines friars, one of whom was the personal confessor of *suor* Diomira. After 1641, the parish clergy

¹⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, “Informationi e racconto della Fondazione del Collegio di S. Gioseppe in Berg.mo delle M.ri del Terzo ordine di S. Francesco”.

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alone was responsible for the spiritual care of these women religious and in 1644 the growing community appointed its own confessor, dom Alessandro Benaglio.¹⁵ To better guide the women, dom Benaglio wrote an appendix for the Franciscan third order rule,¹⁶ decreeing poverty, communal life, and the simple vow of chastity for the community. The women also had to lead retired lives and were allowed to leave their house only to attend Mass and receive sacraments. Around the same time, the community purchased a bigger house in the same neighborhood of Borgo S. Leonardo and adjusted it to “monastic form”. By the late 1640s, the community had swelled to eighteen women, who received their habits from the Reformed Franciscans. In 1647, the women received episcopal permission to build a sepulcher and an oratory, which they dedicated to S. Giuseppe (St. Joseph).¹⁷ When the oratory was completed, the women started to observe voluntary monastic enclosure. Dom Benaglio died in 1651. In 1653, the tertiaries asked dom Clemente Suardi, a canon of the cathedral and the vicar general of nuns in Bergamo, to be the community’s new confessor. Suardi held

¹⁵ Alessandro Benaglio (1600-1651), from a noted patrician family in Bergamo, was educated by the Jesuits in Milan, after which he professed as a Jesuit himself. Benaglio was sent on a mission to Corsica but returned to Bergamo after seven years, having exchanged his Jesuit habit for that of a secular priest. In Bergamo, Benaglio worked as a spiritual director to several enclosed convents and as a reformer of some secular congregations. Benaglio’s family was from Borgo S. Leonardo. His literary corpus included several books and booklets of spiritual exercises (Barnaba Vaerini, *Gli scrittori di Bergamo ossia notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alla vita, e alle opere de’ letterati bergamaschi*, vol. 1., (Bergamo, 1788), pp. 182-184.). Jodi Bilinkoff has noted the preponderance of secular priests and Jesuits as promoters of holy women in the seventeenth century (Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450-1750* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 8.). A consoling letter that Benaglio wrote to the Capuchin nuns in Bergamo during the 1630 plague year is included in the corpus of late-fifteenth to late-seventeenth century printed works on female identities, religious and familial, collected and organized by research groups in the universities of Udine and Florence, both directed by Gabriella Zarri. (“Repetorio” in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo*, Gabriella Zarri, ed. (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1996), p. 444; also Paola Tantulli, “Nascita del repertorio”, in the same volume).

¹⁶ S. Giuseppe seems to have followed the *Supra montem* (1289) of Nicholas IV, the first third order rule approved by a pope.

¹⁷ The cult of St. Joseph acquired new prominence in post-Tridentine Italy, where the Holy Family was increasingly depicted as a nuclear family and St. Joseph as a protective *pater familias* figure. Sara F. Matthews Grieco, “Modelli di santità femminile nell’Italia del Rinascimento e della Controriforma,” in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994), 306–308.

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the post until 1660. In this period, and particularly after the death of *suor* Diomira, the “founding rock” of the community,¹⁸ the women were considering “the settlement, preservation, and conservation” of their community to counteract “that what with the passing of time could destruct the observance” in S. Giuseppe. The women perceived the multiplicity of superiors to whom they were subjected – episcopal, parish, and Reformed Franciscan – as a potential source of disorder. Thus, in 1660, they voted to submit exclusively to episcopal authority. Over the next three years, cardinal Gregorio Barbarigo, the bishop of Bergamo, considered the matter, after which time the women came under episcopal jurisdiction, to which the Reformed Franciscans did not object.

This above narrative focuses on the turning points in the early history of S. Giuseppe. It identifies the community’s founders and first inhabitants, early spiritual authorities and confessors, the moments when S. Giuseppe received its rule and oratory, and began to observe voluntary enclosure. The account ends with the women religious subjecting to local episcopal authority, which clarified divided jurisdictions and established a clear hierarchy. Two other handwritten accounts by anonymous authors – “Informatione, e Racconto della Fondazione del Collegio di S. Gioseppe in Bergamo delle M. M. del Terz ordine di S. Fran.co” and “Informatione e Racconto della Fondazione del Collegio di S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, Delle M. M. del Terzo Ordine di S. Francesco” – outline the same story with minor changes in wording.¹⁹ The focus of these accounts on the progressive regularization of S. Giuseppe leads me to conclude that all three accounts were directed at local episcopal authorities and

¹⁸ *Suor* Diomira Bernardi died in 1655. Donato Calvi, *Effemeride Sagro Profana di quanto di Memorabile sia Successo in Bergamo sua diocesi et territorio*, vol. I (1676) (Sala Bolognese: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1974), 23.

¹⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, “Informatione, e Racconto della Fondazione del Collegio di S. Gioseppe in Bergamo delle M. M. del Terz ordine di S. Fran.co”; ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, “Informatione e Racconto della Fondazione del Collegio di S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, Delle M. M. del Terzo Ordine di S. Francesco”.

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sought to present S. Giuseppe as a well-ordered religious community that followed the prescriptions of the Church, despite being a third order community.

A different narrative emerges from the fourth foundation account, the printed “Relatione della Fondazione del Collegio delle Rev. Madri Tertiare di S. Francesco Sotto l’invocatione di S. GIOSEPPE nel Borgo S. Leonardo di Bergamo”.²⁰ The author of this account also remains anonymous. Moreover, the surviving copy is incomplete. Some of the events included in this fourth account post-date the events in the other three accounts. This fourth account thus seems to be a later narrative, written in the late-seventeenth or even the early-eighteenth century. The account focuses on the Lafranchi sisters – Angela, Laura, and Catharina – who displayed “the most singular divine prodigy”.²¹ The girls received their first Christian education at home from their parents. Later, they entered a *convento*, where they were under “the escort and guidance of good and wise Mistresses, so that they would be preserved unspoiled from every sin.” The girls were mature beyond their years and lived in the manner of nuns among the other educational boarders in the convent. The sisters planned to found a *convento* or a *colleggio* for virgins, as well as an *accademia* for girls. The sisters’ uncle left them legacies for dowries, marriage or monastic, in his last will; however, if the sisters neither married nor became nuns, the uncle designated the girls his full heirs and beneficiaries. The uncle, as well as the girls’ parents and other siblings all died of plague in 1630.²² After this, the sisters, aged twelve, eleven, and

²⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, “Relatione della Fondazione del Collegio delle Rev. Madri Tertiare di S. Francesco Sotto l’invocatione di S. GIOSEPPE nel Borgo S. Leonardo di Bergamo”.

²¹ The account switches between mentioning two and three sisters. Notarial accounts, analyzed below, refer to three Lafranchi sisters who entered S. Giuseppe, two together at first and the third one later.

²² The 1629-31 plague was the most devastating plague to hit the Italian peninsula since the Black Death. It was the deadliest in northern Italy, along the Po river, and in Tuscany, killing an estimated third of the total population. When the plague infected a household, it tended to kill more than one household member in quick succession. Guido Alfani, “The Effects of Plague on the Distribution of

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nine at the time, left the Ursuline institution, where they had boarded, and moved to live under the tutelage of *suor* Diomira Bernardi, a Franciscan tertiary.²³ The sisters clothed the Franciscan tertiary habits some years later and assumed the names of *suor* Francesca, *suor* Elisabetta, and *suor* Anna. *Suor* Anna died shortly thereafter. *Suor* Francesca became the mother superior and *suor* Elisabetta the vicaress of a new, developing tertiary community. Some people tried to dissuade the sisters, because they “had chosen a habit that was neither monastic nor secular,” and encouraged them to enter an enclosed convent instead. However, the “honest hearts” of the sisters were not discouraged. The sisters bought a house in Borgo S. Leonardo, in front of the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna, and moved there under the guidance of *suor* Diomira. There they set up “a comfortable and very noble *colleggio*” for forty tertiaries and sixty young boarders. The tertiaries educated the boarders in the spirit of virtues and religion. Once the community had grown to twelve tertiaries, they “unanimously and without regard to cost” decided to build an oratory and dedicate it to S. Giuseppe to serve the spiritual needs of both the tertiaries and the boarders. Furthermore, since the Franciscan third order rule was not appropriate for “a community living an enclosed way of life”, the women’s first confessor and spiritual father, the Jesuit dom Benaglio wrote a new constitution for the community. In 1663,

Property: Ivrea, Northern Italy 1630,” *Population Studies: A Journal of Demography* 64, no. 1 (2010): 61–75; Carlo M. Cipolla, *Fighting the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981); Samuel K. Cohn Jr. and Guido Alfani, “Households and Plague in Early Modern Italy,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38, no. 3 (2007): 177–205.

²³ The Lafranchi sisters appear to have lived in the Ursuline institution active in Bergamo at the time. There had been a company of women in Bergamo, who followed the active institutional model proposed by Angela Merici, since 1573. The women abandoned the Ursuline model and accepted the Carmelite monastic rule and enclosure in the convent of S. Orsola only in 1656. Giovanni Spinelli, “Gli ordini religiosi dalla dominazione veneta alle soppressioni napoleoniche (1428-1810),” in *Diocesi di Bergamo*, ed. A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi, and L. Vaccaro, *Storia religiosa della Lombardia* (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1988), 229. On Angela Merici and the Ursulines, Querciolo Mazzonis, *Spirituality, Gender, and the Self in Renaissance Italy: Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula (1474-1540)* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

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S. Giuseppe came under episcopal authority. In the same year, and with the help of the bishop Barbarigo, S. Giuseppe received apostolic permission to keep the holy sacraments in its oratory. In 1672, the women renewed their religious vows in front of the bishop and adopted the black veil, which resembled the veil of enclosed nuns. By that time, women also had to pay a dowry to enter the community. The Lafranchi sisters had donated their inheritance to S. Giuseppe as their dowry.

This fourth foundation account thus focuses on the Lafranchi sisters and presents S. Giuseppe as an institution founded by the three prodigious girls. *Suor* Diomira receives passing mention, in great contrast to the other three accounts as well as a seventeenth-century chronicle of Bergamo that identifies *suor* Diomira as the “director and guide” of the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe.²⁴ Instead, the fourth account points out that the Lafranchi sisters left an Ursuline community to found a third order community, drawing attention to a contemporary perception of difference between the Ursulines and the tertiaries. Moreover, the narrative stresses that the sisters wore neither a monastic nor a secular habit – being a tertiary was a unique state, which, as this account highlights, caused unease among some people. Nonetheless, similarly to the other three accounts, this account also highlights the progressive regularization of S. Giuseppe by pointing out the community’s acquisition of an oratory and a rule, its move under episcopal authority, renewal of vows and the adoption of a black veil similar to that of enclosed nuns. The account describes S. Giuseppe as both active and contemplative. As scholarship on monastic history writing has demonstrated, institutional histories served a function. Convent histories were “members of the convent community and in service of the convent,” according to Christine

²⁴ Calvi, *Effemeride Sagro Profana di quanto di Memorabile sia Successo in Bergamo sua diocesi et territorio*, I (1676):113.

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Schneider.²⁵ Even though S. Giuseppe's foundation accounts cannot be compared to the intricate convent chronicles studied by Kate Lowe, Charlotte Woodford, and Christine Schneider, these accounts also served a function. A confrontation of the accounts with other documents from S. Giuseppe's archives helps to understand this.

S. Giuseppe's books of professions record the clothing, profession, and death of every tertiary who entered the community from its foundation to 1796. According to an early book of professions, *suor* Diomira Bernardi together with *suor* Francesca Lafranchi and *suor* Elisabetta Lafranchi were the three founders of S. Giuseppe. *Suor* Diomira had professed as a Franciscan tertiary in 1630.²⁶ The two Lafranchi sisters clothed the habit in 1638, with the help of a *suor* Chiara. The book reveals nothing more about this *suor* Chiara, but her appearance in the book indicates that the Lafranchi sisters clothed their habits in a pre-existing tertiary community before they went on to found S. Giuseppe, just like *suor* Diomira. However, the sisters professed their religious vows already in S. Giuseppe, with the assistance of *suor* Diomira and a Reformed Franciscan friar.²⁷ In addition to the two Lafranchi sisters, a Margarita Meris, who had also already clothed the habit elsewhere, entered S. Giuseppe in 1638.²⁸ Margarita Meris was the maternal cousin of the Lafranchi sisters: the

²⁵ Schneider, “‘Zu Nutzen, Trost und Unterricht aller nachfolgenden [...]’ - Die österreichischen Ursulinenchroniken im 18. Jahrhundert.” 69.

²⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, 2r.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2v. Entering a monastic community was, and still often is, a three-step process. An aspiring nun first had to express her desire to become a nun and live as a postulate. At the end of this first period, the clothing ceremony, during which the postulate received her religious habit and became a novice, took place. Finally, after the end of the novitiate period, the profession ceremony, during which the novice pronounced her religious vows and became a nun, occurred. Francesca Panini has completed a beautiful ethnographic study of religious habits, past and present, Francesca Panini, *Nei panni di una monaca: Abito narrato e valori intessuti* (Milan: EncycloMedia, 2012).

²⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, 4r. See also ASM, AGFR, 2986, 1646, January 20.

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women's mothers were sisters.²⁹ Shortly thereafter, the merchant Antonio Meris, the father of Margarita Meris, became the legal guardian of the Lafranchi sisters.³⁰ Except for *suor* Diomira, the first inhabitants of S. Giuseppe were thus family. The new community allowed to settle the lives of a group of cousins. Moreover, if we include *suor* Diomira, S. Giuseppe regularized the lives of four women who had all clothed their habits elsewhere and now built a new community that allowed them to organize their lives according to their own specifications. It was a female space outside the early modern framework of *aut maritus aut murus*. The Lafranchi sisters' inheritance, which they had received in usufruct – and not in inheritance, as the fourth foundation account claimed – provided the starting capital for the new community.³¹ S. Giuseppe started to grow in 1641, when yet another woman who had clothed the habit elsewhere entered.³² An explosive growth occurred in 1644, when a third Lafranchi sister clothed the habit together with four more women.³³ Both the Lafranchi and the Meris families remained involved with S. Giuseppe throughout the later-seventeenth century.³⁴

²⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2982, “Testamenti del S.r Bartolomeo Malazzi 1595, di Cosimo Malazzi 1623, del Margarita Malozzi 1625”.

³⁰ In December 1638, Meris became the guardian of the Lafranchi sisters, thus replacing the guardian appointed by Filippo Lafranchi, the girls' father, in his last will (ASM, AGFR, 2985, n. 13). Filippo Lafranchi was an oil merchant (ASM, AGFR, 2985, 1625, September 27).

³¹ ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, 2v.

³² *Ibid.*, 2v-3r.

³³ *Ibid.*, 3r-4r, 6r. The Olmo sisters who entered in 1644 had also clothed the religious habits in their home prior to entering S. Giuseppe.

³⁴ In addition to Margarita, Antonio Meris's daughter from his first marriage, both Meris's second wife Bartolomea and grandchild Aurelia Rossi entered S. Giuseppe (ASM, AGFR, 2981, Testamento di Antonio Meris, 1665, February 22; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, 9v. and 12r.). In addition to the three Lafranchi sister, of whom the third entered S. Giuseppe in 1644, also the second maternal cousin of the Lafranchi sisters entered the community in 1685; she was the daughter of the painter Giacomo Cotta, who painted the church of S. Giuseppe (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Religiose Cotta Margarita poi Suor Anna Margarita; Nives Gritti, “Cotta Giacomo,” in *Dizionario*

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Comparing the book of professions and related notarial sources to the foundation accounts, the accounts tell a story that mostly agrees with the book of professions. The Lafranchi sisters and *suor* Diomira are represented as the founding figures of S. Giuseppe. However, when the book of professions and the notarial records show S. Giuseppe as a family foundation and an alternative female space, the foundation accounts focus on the progressive regularization of S. Giuseppe. The foundation accounts present S. Giuseppe as a well-directed community – under the supervision of local parish and the local bishop, observing a rule and voluntary enclosure. The foundation accounts served to placate any concerns about the institutional format and organization of this community.

The fourth foundation account is particularly interesting in this regard. The orphaned Lafranchi sisters are presented at a turning point of their young lives after the 1630 plague, “anxious to fulfill” a religious vocation.³⁵ After leaving the Ursuline institution and moving to live with *suor* Diomira Bernardi, they clothed the tertiary habit and founded a community that was ‘neither monastic nor secular’. According to the account, such institutional organization was the wish of the sisters, but also of their uncle.³⁶ Herein seem to lie the origins of the fourth foundation account, which was probably produced as part of an inheritance dispute between S. Giuseppe and the School of the Holy Sacrament in Sorisole, a commune north of Bergamo from where

biografico dei pittori bergamaschi, ed. Noris Fernando (Azzano San Paolo (Bg): Bolis, 2006), 175–78.).

³⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, “Relatione della Fondazione del Collegio delle Rev. Madri Tertiari di S. Francesco Sotto l’invocazione di S. GIOSEPPE nel Borgo S. Leonardo di Bergamo”; Giulia Calvi has studied responses to the 1630 plague across socioeconomic ranks in Florence. Calvi considers people’s responses to plague as emotional responses that sought to make sense of the unfolding crisis. Giulia Calvi, “A Metaphor for Social Exchange: The Florentine Plague of 1630,” *Represebtations*, no. 13 (1986): 139–63.

³⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, “Relatione della Fondazione del Collegio delle Rev. Madri Tertiari di S. Francesco Sotto l’invocazione di S. GIOSEPPE nel Borgo S. Leonardo di Bergamo”.

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the Lafranchi family originated. The oil merchant Antonio Lafranchi's last will designated Filippo Lafranchi and his children the usufructuaries of Antonio's inheritance until Filippo and his children lived or, in case of the girls, until they either married or entered a convent; the universal heir of Antonio Lafranchi was the School of the Holy Sacrament in Sorisole.³⁷ By stressing that the new community was neither monastic nor secular, the fourth account countered any arguments against the sisters' continued enjoyment of the usufruct after they had clothed the tertiary habit. S. Giuseppe was an alternative space, outside the marriage-convent binary. Yet, the fourth account also reveals criticism that the sisters faced for founding an unconventional institution instead of entering an enclosed convent. The author of the account thus recognized that third order communities lacked social legitimacy and meticulously narrates the progressive regularization of S. Giuseppe in the seventeenth century. However, the author also represents criticisms of the sisters' choice to found a third order community as a test of the girls' spirituality, thus emphasizing the third order way of life as a positive choice. On the one hand, thus, this account shows S. Giuseppe as an innovative community that defied the established institutional forms; on the other, it emphasizes institutional characteristics such as a rule, an oratory,

³⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2985, 1625, September 27. After the death of their father Filippo Lafranchi and all their siblings in 1630, the three Lafranchi sisters were the only surviving usufructuaries of Antonio Lafranchi's last will. The girls' father assigned a man from Sorisole as the legal guardian of the sisters in his last will. A biography of *suor* Francesca Lafranchi, found in the archives of S. Giuseppe, states that Francesca and her sisters left the Ursuline institution in the 1630s because their guardians considered the fees there too high. Antonio Meri's assumption of the Lafranchi sister's guardianship was contested by the legal guardian appointed by Filippo Lafranchi as well as by Niccolò Cotta, the husband of another maternal aunt of the sisters. The guardianship of the Lafranchi sisters, and thus of the sisters' usufruct of Antonio Lafranchi's inheritance, was vigorously contested. One uncle, Antonio Meris seems to have won out, supporting the sisters in their founding of S. Giuseppe, which also became home to his own daughter. After the foundation of S. Giuseppe, the School of the Holy Sacrament in Sorisole contested the sisters' continued usufruct of the inheritance, claiming that the sisters had become nuns. In response, the lawyers of S. Giuseppe claimed that S. Giuseppe was neither a monastic nor a secular institution (ASM, AGFR, 2985; ASM, AGFR, 2991, Lafranchi Francesca).

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voluntary enclosure, and other measures that all rendered S. Giuseppe similar to enclosed communities. The foundation account served to placate both the concerns of those who considered S. Giuseppe too monastic for the Lafranchi sisters to enjoy the usufruct of their uncle's inheritance as well as those who perceived S. Giuseppe not monastic enough for a group of women dedicated to God.

The characterization of the Lafranchi sisters in the fourth account adds to its negotiating power. Simon Ditchfield has highlighted the constructed nature of early modern sanctity and argues that sanctity had a functional role to fulfill in early modern societies.³⁸ The fourth account narrates the Lafranchi sisters' prodigious childhood and appears to draw heavily on the late-fifteenth and sixteenth-century hagiographic portrayals of third order women. It situates the sisters in a tradition that was widespread in north-central Italy.³⁹ Similarities between the Lafranchi account and earlier hagiographies are aplenty: like the fourth foundation account, earlier hagiographies emphasized tertiaries' pious childhood, early religious vocation, acts of virtue, and success despite obstacles.⁴⁰ A biography of *suor* Francesca Lafranchi also emphasizes her pious childhood under the watchful eye of her mother, her early spirituality and charity, courage during the 1630 plague and maturity after the plague, obedience to superiors, and success despite frequent obstacles.⁴¹ Gabriella Zarri has associated such character and life traits with a model of sanctity that spread in north-

³⁸ Simon Ditchfield, "Thinking with Saints: Sanctity and Society in the Early Modern World," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 3 (2009): 552–84.

³⁹ Gabriella Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990). Not only holy women but also learned women were considered prodigious in late-fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy. Virginia Cox has studied the gynephile discourse that emerged in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy and argues that this discourse allowed for the rise of female muses and well as a number of prominent female writers in this time period. Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy 1400-1650* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

⁴⁰ Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500*, 104.

⁴¹ ASM, AGFR, 2992, Lafranchi Francesca.

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central Italy in the later-fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. This model of sanctity combined contemplative and active spirituality at a time that saw the rise to prominence of several socially- and politically-engaged third order nuns. According to Zarri, the Council of Trent and a changing political climate put an end to the activities of these tertiaries and forced female monasticism into strict enclosure.⁴² More recently Zarri has argued for the emergence of new, socially-engaged women's congregations in the later-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, stressing, however, that these were non-monastic congregations that were subject to secular authorities alone.⁴³ According to Zarri, the new congregations draw on the example of pre-Tridentine third order communities as they attempted to combine active and contemplative lives.⁴⁴ The fourth foundation account's reliance on these tropes problematizes the current institutional genealogy of female monastic institutions in seventeenth-century Italy. Socially-engaged female spirituality did not disappear after the Council of Trent; instead, new third order communities negotiated post-Tridentine landscape by also referring to earlier hagiographic models. The institutional landscape of female monasticism in seventeenth-century Italy was more varied than current scholarship suggests.

Rather than becoming a traditional monastic community in the decades that followed its foundation, as current scholarship suggests for seventeenth-century non-enclosed institutions in Italy, S. Giuseppe remained a negotiated and flexible

⁴² Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500*, chaps. 1–3. Zarri sees the end of the spiritual moment that she describes in the context of post-Tridentine social disciplining and the Spanish dominance of the Italian peninsula in mid-sixteenth century. On social disciplining in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe, Paolo Prodi, ed., *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994).

⁴³ Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, chap. 6 and 7.

⁴⁴ Zarri, "Dalla profezia alla disciplina (1450-1650)," 186.

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institution.⁴⁵ In order to preserve the usufruct of Antonio Lafranchi's inheritance, the Lafranchi sisters and their representatives stressed the secular character of S. Giuseppe. When the tertiaries completed an *inter vivos* donation to implement common property in S. Giuseppe in 1645, the notarized donation text included the following paragraph:

The undersigned Angela, Laura and Catarina, natural sisters Laffranche [sic!], daughters of the deceased don Filippo, in addition to their other property, donate to the common good also the usufruct that belongs to them according to the last will of the deceased don Antonio Laffranco [sic!]. This usufruct belongs to them as long as the sisters do not become nuns or intend to become nuns. It is clearly apparent that these women live as secular women with a simple communion of life and goods, and not in the form and art of a convent, or a regular congregation, or any other spiritual institution. They wish to be fully secular and subject to secular authorities both in their property and their persons.⁴⁶

The laws of the Venetian Republic also imposed a secular character upon S. Giuseppe. In 1605, Venice passed a law to prevent the accumulation of property in the hands of the Church.⁴⁷ Throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, S. Giuseppe had to prove its secular status to Venetian authorities in order to acquire new property or retain existing property. As early as in 1641/42, when S. Giuseppe began to petition for an oratory, the women religious and their allies underscored the

⁴⁵ Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chap. 4; Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Angela Groppi, *I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma dei Papi* (Rome: Laterza, 1994). Also Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*, chap. 5.

⁴⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2991, "Copia dell'Istromento della Congregazione di S. Giuseppe, Anno Domini 1645".

⁴⁷ William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defence of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), chap. 7 and 8. The law on ecclesiastical property was one of the causes of the 1606-1607 Venetian interdict. On the interdict, see also Gaetano Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini: Ricerche sul patriziato veneziano agli inizi del Seicento* (Venice and Rome: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1958); Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Filippo De Vivo, *Patrizi, informatori, barbieri: Politica e comunicazione a Venezia nella prima età moderna* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2012), chaps. 1-3.

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secular character of the new community. The witnesses for S. Giuseppe – who included Antonio Meris and the community’s neighbors in Borgo S. Leonardo – all stated that S. Giuseppe was a community of laywomen in their testimonies to local authorities in Bergamo. The witnesses also emphasized that S. Giuseppe educated girls at a lesser cost than the monastic institutions in Bergamo and a girl did not need a special apostolic permission to enter the community for education.⁴⁸ Finally, the witnesses argued that a new oratory would benefit the street on which S. Giuseppe was located, because no church existed there.⁴⁹ The petition was successful and S. Giuseppe received the permission to build an oratory. The Venetian authorities expressly recognized the secular status of S. Giuseppe again in 1668,⁵⁰ 1685,⁵¹ and 1718.⁵² The testimonies from 1641/42 also highlight the social contribution of a third order community to its neighborhood and town. Such communities fulfilled social roles like providing education and opening new places of devotion; they were also able to provide these services more easily and to a broader social base than enclosed convents, since they were unhindered by apostolic regulations placed on the latter.

⁴⁸ In 1567, the papacy issued new guidelines regarding educational boarders that sought to integrate educational boarders into the Tridentine framework of monastic enclosure. Educational boarders could only be admitted, if their presence did not violate the constitutions of a convent. Apostolic permission was needed before the mother superior could decide whether or not to admit the boarder. The boarders were subjected to monastic enclosure and could only remain in the convent until their twenty-fifth birthday. Francesca Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2012), 21, 31–37; Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, 174–175.

⁴⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2970, “Supplica nr.a pro Construit.ne Oratorij”. The church of S. Giuseppe, which still stands today, was situated around the corner from the front of the community, which faced the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna.

⁵⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2969, Funzioni Sacre.

⁵¹ ASM, AGFR, 2969, Amministrazione e amministratori.

⁵² ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statute.

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Yet, despite being recognized as a secular congregation, S. Giuseppe also exhibited clear monastic traits. In 1673, the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe sent a petition to the bishop of Bergamo. In the petition, the women asked for episcopal interference to force *suor* Francesca and *suor* Elisabetta Lafranchi into continuing as the leaders of S. Giuseppe. The petition dramatically recounts how the long-time mother superior *suor* Francesca entered a ten-day spiritual retreat, after which she renounced her office in front of the community. The announcement left the tertiaries “emotionally unstable, almost dead and without consciousness [at the prospect of being] deprived of a mother superior who had the universal approval of the community.” They pleaded with *suor* Francesca for her to continue as mother superior, but she refused. Following divine inspiration, the tertiaries petitioned the bishop to appoint *suor* Francesca as the perpetual mother superior of S. Giuseppe, and *suor* Elisabetta as the perpetual vicaress:

not only because they were the founders of this *colleggio* of S. Giuseppe and shouldered the related expenses, struggles, and hard work, but also because of their rare personal qualities and virtues, the good example they provide, and the good work they have done in their respective offices over the last nineteen years.⁵³

The bishop, in fact, ordered the Lafranchi sisters to continue in office.⁵⁴ *Suor* Francesca Lafranchi died in 1692, while still being the mother superior;⁵⁵ *suor* Elisabetta Lafranchi died a few years later, also still in office.⁵⁶ S. Giuseppe thus continued to center around the Lafranchi sisters until late-seventeenth century. The

⁵³ ASM, AGFR, 2991, “Libro ove si descrivono li nomi delle officiali del Collegio di Santo Giuseppe e de Capitoli”, Supplica datta all’Ill.mo e R.mo Daniele Giustiniani Vescovo di Bergamo.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1670, October 30.

⁵⁵ ASM, AGFR, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, 2v.

⁵⁶ Elisabetta Lafranchi’s last will dates to December 22, 1695. The time of her death remains unclear. ASM, AGFR, 2981, “Legati Lafranchi suor Elisabetta”.

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petition to the bishop evidences that regular spiritual exercises and practices of communal life were part of the daily life in S. Giuseppe within a few decades after the community's foundation. Moreover, the petition highlights episcopal authority over the community and the bishop's role in confirming the community's in-house officials, a role the bishops of Bergamo continued to perform throughout the later-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁵⁷ Over the same time period, S. Giuseppe also received regular pastoral letters that the bishops of Bergamo sent to all female monastic institutions in town.⁵⁸ In its relationship to episcopal authorities, S. Giuseppe resembled monastic institutions.

This extended analysis of the foundation of S. Giuseppe has highlighted the flexible character of the community and how such flexibility helped S. Giuseppe to find support from a range of social, political, and religious actors. The four foundation accounts emphasize the progressive regularization of S. Giuseppe; yet contemporary notarial documents and petitions testify to a continued lay character of the community. S. Giuseppe was a community of women who clothed the third order habit and followed a third order rule. The women observed voluntary enclosure and were subject to episcopal authority. Yet, neighbors and civic authorities also recognized S. Giuseppe as a community of secular women. Finally, S. Giuseppe was a community that started as a family foundation and continued as such for decades thereafter. It was a female space where women who had clothed the third order habit elsewhere mixed with women who first clothed the habit in S. Giuseppe or who entered S. Giuseppe as educational boarders.⁵⁹ Danielle Culpepper and Laurence Lux-

⁵⁷ ASDBg, *Monasteri femminili*, I, S. Giuseppe, "Elezioni". See also chapter 2.

⁵⁸ Turn to chapter 6 for an extended discussion of these pastoral letters.

⁵⁹ S. Giuseppe hosted educational boarders by 1644. ASM, AGFR, 2970, *Educande*.

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Sterritt have argued that the Ursulines in Italy and France found approval since they adopted some monastic characteristics and gained wide-based social legitimacy in their localities.⁶⁰ S. Giuseppe's institutional flexibility also permitted it to respond to local conditions and expectations, and to overcome both social and legal challenges to its institutional organization.

ii. Continuities and change in the foundation of third order communities

S. Elisabetta, Ognisanti, and S. Maria della Carità in Bologna and S. Antonio in Bergamo also regularized the lives of women who had already clothed the tertiary habit elsewhere. As in the case of S. Giuseppe, such regularization occurred over a period of several decades and shows how third order communities adapted to local conditions. Continuities together with constant change characterized the early institutional histories of third order communities.

An eighteenth-century account dates the foundation of S. Elisabetta in Bologna to 1598, when "some honest young women, citizens of Bologna, came together and put into practice the necessary virtue to live a true Christian life."⁶¹ The account was presented to pastoral visitors in 1760 and claims to rely on an earlier narrative, which does not survive in the archives of S. Elisabetta today. The identity of the author of the 1760 account remains unknown. However, since the author states that the earlier narrative, on which they drew, missed some dates, the author must have been able to access the community's archives and was most probably a woman religious or a confessor. Without the possibility to compare the 1760 account with the

⁶⁰ Culpepper, "'Our Particular Cloister': Ursulines and Female Education in Seventeenth-Century Parma and Piacenza"; Lux-Sterritt, "Between the Cloister and the World: The Successful Compromise of the Ursulines of Toulouse, 1604-1616"; Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*; Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, chap. 7.

⁶¹ ASB, Demaniale, 32/4480, Fondazione del Monastero di S. Francesco di della Nosadella.

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earlier narrative, it is impossible to establish what was added in 1760. The pastoral visitors received the following account of the foundation of S. Elisabetta.

A group of women clothed the Franciscan penitent habit⁶² and, with the help of relatives and religious supervisors, moved into a communal house in 1598. The women had realized that, “living in their paternal homes when wearing the [tertiary] habit was improper towards the habit and a hindrance to the uniformity of their actions.” The nobleman Silvio Albergati donated the house to which they moved. The five women were Elisabetta Chiesa, Maria Bertinelli, Orsola Pasquali, Veneranda Forrsi, and Eufrosina Fabri, who was elected mother superior in 1601. The first confessor of the community was Father Andrea Olivieri, the general commissioner of the Franciscan Conventuals in Bologna. The women also used the chapels in the basilica of S. Francesco, the church of the Conventuals, for their chapter meetings, which were always attended by the confessor. In 1615, the confessor *pro tempore* wrote the first constitutions of the community. The constitutions prescribed the vow of chastity for the women religious and asked them to live in community and obey their mother superior. In 1622, *suor* Gioanna Arsanelli became the mother superior, opening a period of communal growth. The tertiaries moved into a bigger house on Via della Nosadella in 1631, where they also set up an oratory for spiritual exercises and chapter meetings. In the following decades, the community bought other properties on Via della Nosadella and grew further.⁶³ During this period, Giovanni

⁶² The account explicitly refers to *Supra montem* (1289) of Nicholas IV.

⁶³ In 1654, *suor* Palma Maria Vittoria Lana was elected the first mother superior of the community. *Suor* Lana continued to expand the community’s property during her tenure, buying a neighboring house from *magnifico* Antonio Maria Magnani for £1700, another neighboring house from *magnifica* Camilla Giuliana for £900, and another one for £1000. All these properties were restructured into a house for the tertiary community. In 1679, the mother superior *suor* Ludovica Serri bought two more houses that abutted the community at the back and opened to Strada Sozzonome: one from the heirs of Filolauro Piò for £1246.16 and the other from Giovanni Battista Riccardi for £2000. Both houses were levelled to make space for a carriage entrance. ASB, Demaniale, 32/4480, Fondazione del Monastero di S. Francesco di della Nosadella.

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Andrea Toselli donated 10,000 lire to the tertiaries, “since he much liked this community.” The terms of the Toselli legacy foresaw the conversion of the community’s small oratory into a public oratory, where Mass would be celebrated daily. Toselli commissioned Giovanni Andrea Donducci to paint the altarpiece depicting St. Elisabeth of Hungary for the new public oratory.⁶⁴ The public oratory was consecrated in 1653, when the local parish priest celebrated Mass there for the first time. A sepulcher for the tertiaries was added in 1730; until then, the women religious were buried in the basilica of S. Francesco.

The account presented to the pastoral visitors in 1760 follows a narrative structure similar to the foundation accounts of S. Giuseppe, particularly the three earlier accounts that were intended for episcopal authorities. Like the accounts from Bergamo, the account about S. Elisabetta also underscores the gradual regularization of the community by discussing how the women religious formed their community, how this community was governed, and where the women received their spiritual care. Two aspects of this foundation account stand out, however. First, the account presents the new oratory supported by Toselli’s legacy as an asset to the local neighborhood, approved also by parish clergy. Second, the account depicts the life of the women religious in their parental homes as offensive to their religious habit; such

⁶⁴ Giovanni Andrea Donducci (1575-1655), also known as Mastelletta, was a painter of the School of Bologna. Anna Coliva, *Il Mastelletta (Giovanni Andrea Donducci, 1575-1655)* (Rome: Multigrafica Editrice, 1980). St. Elizabeth of Hungary (S. Elisabetta d’Ungheria), who died in 1231 and was canonized in 1235, was one of the most important (female) saints in medieval Europe. Widowed at a young age, St. Elizabeth used her dowry to build a hospital in which she served the sick and the poor. The Franciscan order recognized her as a Franciscan tertiary in the fifteenth century, after which time she became part of the Franciscan hagiography. The cult of St. Elizabeth was prominent among Franciscan religious women, particularly the tertiaries, who identified themselves with St. Elizabeth’s socially active form of piety. Christa Bertelsmeier-Kierst, ed., *Elisabeth von Thüringen und die neue Frömmigkeit in Europa* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008); Otto Gecser, *The Feast and the Pulpit: Preachers, Sermons and the Cult of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, 1235-ca. 1500* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi dell’Alto Medioevo, 2012); Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *The Life and Afterlife of St. Elizabeth of Hungary: Testimony from her Canonization Hearings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

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offence was only mitigated by the women entering an organized community. The account thus highlights resistance to the third order way of life; however, it is unclear whether this judgment was expressed by the author of the 1760 account or included in the earlier narrative on which the eighteenth-century author drew.⁶⁵ The foundation account of S. Elisabetta thus focuses on regularization, but also underscores both social unease with the third order way of life as well as the contribution third order communities made to local neighborhoods.

Notarial sources from the archives of S. Elisabetta problematize this foundation account. An index of early notarial acts and a list of first tertiaries reveal two separate communities: one on Via della Nosadella, which existed there already in the sixteenth century, and another one on the near-by Borgo delle Casse.⁶⁶ In 1613, a tertiary community on Via della Nosadella received episcopal permission to elect a priest to celebrate Mass in their external church. The foundation account refers to S. Elisabetta opening a public oratory several decades later. The 1613 episcopal permission lists the names of the tertiaries living in the community on Via della Nosadella, among who *suor* Giovanna Arsanelli; yet none of the names on this list match the five women singled out as the founders of S. Elisabetta in the 1760 account.⁶⁷ *Suor* Giovanna Sighicelli, who is listed in the 1613 episcopal permission, paid her dowry to a Franciscan tertiary community on Via della Nosadella in 1636.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Zarri discusses ambivalent public opinion about non-enclosed monastic institutions in early-seventeenth century Bologna in Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, chap. 6 and 7.

⁶⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4449, Index 1; ASB, Dem, 32/4480. Via della Nosadella and Borgo delle Casse are situated in opposite directions from the church of S. Francesco and the adjacent monastery of Franciscan Conventuals; both are a short walk (ca. 300m) from S. Francesco.

⁶⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4450, num 1.

⁶⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451, num. 5.

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Her dowry contract includes the names of ten women who lived in this tertiary community on Via della Nosadella in 1636. Even though none of the names in the dowry contract match the five women presented as the founders of S. Elisabetta in the 1760 account, the dowry contract does name *suor* Giovanna Arsanelli, who became the mother superior of S. Elisabetta in 1622 according to the 1760 account, as well as two other women religious whose names were on the episcopal permission in 1613.⁶⁹ Another woman included in the 1613 episcopal permission, *suor* Ottavia Maria Fabri, paid her dowry to S. Elisabetta in 1639.⁷⁰ Comparing and contrasting the names on these various documents allows to conclude that another tertiary community existed on Via della Nosadella before the foundation of S. Elisabetta and the tertiaries from this community gradually entered S. Elisabetta in the course of the early-seventeenth century. Moreover, with the 1613 permission, the episcopal authorities in Bologna allowed this earlier tertiary community to have an oratory open to the public. Since many of the tertiaries in this early community paid their dowries to S. Elisabetta only several decades later, at the time of the episcopal permission, these women led lives outside the legal confines of dowry, which according to current scholarship legitimized the status of early modern Italian women either as wives or nuns.⁷¹ A third order community offered an alternative space in this system.

⁶⁹ These were *suor* Agata Campari and *suor* Maria Antonia Marchi.

⁷⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451, num. 15 and 26.

⁷¹ Giulia Calvi and Isabelle Chabot, eds., *Le ricchezze delle donne: Diritti patrimoniali e poteri familiari in Italia (XIII-XIX secc.)* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1998); Isabelle Chabot and Massimo Fornasari, *L'economia della carità: Le doti del Monte di Pietà di Bologna (XVI-XX)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); Anna Esposito, "Diseguaglianze economiche e cittadinanza: il problema della dote," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Moyen Age* 125, no. 2 (2013); Alessia Liroso, "Le doti monastiche. Il caso delle monache romane nel Seicento," *Geschichte und Region/ Storia e regione* 19, no. 1 (2010): 51–71.

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Another earlier third order community that later merged with S. Elisabetta existed on Borgo delle Casse. In a codicil in 1619, a Lucrezia Rossi left a legacy to her charge, *suor* Flaminia Maestri, so that Maestri could enter a tertiary community on Borgo delle Casse. If Maestri chose not to enter the community, the codicil left her with only half of the legacy and assigned the other half to the tertiaries, as long as they lived together in a community.⁷² A dowry contract of a *suor* Chiara Giusti in 1629 and the last will of *suor* Chiara's father Antonio Giusti in 1630 also referred to a community on Borgo delle Casse. Antonio Giusti's last will instituted commemorative Masses on the condition that, "the Franciscan tertiaries, who now reside in their house on Borgo delle Casse, [must] accept enclosure or have the license to celebrate masses in their house and church."⁷³ *Suor* Chiara Giusti was later a tertiary in S. Elisabetta; the fate of *suor* Flaminia Maestri remains unclear.⁷⁴ The community on Borgo delle Casse merged with the one on Via della Nosadella at some point in the early-seventeenth century.

The conditions Lucrezia Rossi and Antonio Giusti's placed on their legacies draws further attention to the social unease surrounding third order communities in the seventeenth century. As S. Elisabetta's foundation account, these legacies evidence social pressure to regularize that the women religious and the early communities felt before coming together in S. Elisabetta. Andrea Toselli, another benefactor of S. Elisabetta, included the following condition in his last will in 1656:

He leaves a legacy of £10,000 to the rev. tertiaries of S. Francesco, who live on Via della Nosadella. The sum must be invested [...] and the resulting income used to celebrate a daily perpetual Mass for his soul in the church of the tertiaries. *The obligation to invest the legacy and celebrate Mass applies*

⁷² ASB, Demaniale, 2/4450, num 6.

⁷³ Ibid., num. 12 and 13.

⁷⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 32/4480, "Religiose state professe".

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*only to those tertiaries who have made their confession in this convent, or house, and live communally; those who lack the above qualification are expressly forbidden to benefit from this legacy [...] He does not wantt any other tertiary, who does not live communally, to have rights to or interest in the property of this testator; he even does not want that any such tertiary could manage his property and expressly forbids it.*⁷⁵ [emphasis mine]

Toselli's last will benefitted only those tertiaries who lived communally in S.

Elisabetta, even if he also recognized that some women religious linked to this third order community lived outside S. Elisabetta. Toselli was careful to exclude the latter from his last will. The will, nonetheless, evidences that some women religious continued to live separate from the main community of S. Elisabetta in the mid-seventeenth century.

Notarial acts thus reveal a more nuanced picture of the origins of S. Elisabetta than the foundation account presented to pastoral visitors in 1760. S. Elisabetta was formed from the merger of pre-existing third order communities on Borgo delle Casse and Via della Nosadella in the early-seventeenth century. After its foundation, S. Elisabetta remained a point of reference for women religious who still lived outside this more regularized community. Notarial acts, like the foundation account, reveal that social pressures may have led to the foundation of S. Elisabetta to regularize the life of groups of women religious. Such regularization occurred much later than the date suggested in the foundation account, however. Notarial acts reveal that the earlier communities merged only in the 1630s or even later.⁷⁶ Notarial acts thus introduce complexity into the narrative of regularization, proposing a less linear institutional history for S. Elisabetta and highlighting more the social pressures that may have caused the foundation of S. Elisabetta.

⁷⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 4/4452, num. 12.

⁷⁶ Mario Fanti dates S. Elisabetta's foundation to 1653, Mario Fanti, *Abiti e lavori delle monache di Bologna in una serie di disegni del secolo XVIII* (Bologna: Tamari Editori, 1972), 118.

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The origins of Ognisanti, a Servite third order community in Bologna, were also more complex than the surviving foundation account suggests.⁷⁷ Similarly to S. Elisabetta and S. Giuseppe, Ognisanti's foundation is narrated in a document that the women religious presented to local episcopal authorities, in this case the archbishop Giacomo Boncompagni. Dating from 1693, the account recounts how several loosely organized Servite tertiary communities existed in mid-seventeenth century Bologna. In 1664, one of these communities rented a house on *strada* San Petronio Vecchio, close to the Servite monastery, and the women religious adopted communal life under the direction of a mother superior and a confessor. This newly organized community welcomed pastoral visitors for the first time in 1671. Around this time, the women religious attended both the church of the Servite friars as well as their parish church; the parish clergy administered Easter communion and the last rites to the women. For daily prayer, the community had a small private oratory. The tertiaries followed voluntary enclosure and only left their house with the permission of mother superior and in company of other tertiaries. "Old and decrepit" tertiaries were permitted to exit unaccompanied. Occasionally, the women religious were allowed to stay away from the community overnight, but only with parents or close relatives. The community accepted boarders and fees from boarding contributed to the community's finances. The women religious also worked for pay and relied on charitable donations as well as on their own private income. In 1693, a dowry of 1000 lire was needed to enter the

⁷⁷ The name Ognisanti only dates to the eighteenth century. The community was known as "Terziarie de'Servi" until 1720/21. Around 1720, the tertiaries moved from Strada San Petronio Vecchio to Via Braina, where they had bought a house previously occupied by the confraternity of S. Gabriele, that included a church dedicated to All Saints [*Ognisanti*]. After this re-location, the community was referred to interchangeably as "Terziarie de'Servi", "Ognisanti", and "Tutti i Santi". While the records of this purchase have not survived, an inventory of all the church vestments and furnishings in All Saints and a transfer of an emphyteutic lease to the tertiaries in 1720, as well as a renouncement of a spiritual legacy by the confraternity of S. Gabriele in 1721, indicate that the women's community moved around 1720. A contract from December 6, 1720 records the *suore* already living on Via della Braina (ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281). To avoid using multiple names for this community, I use the name Ognisanti throughout, even though it is anachronistic for the period before 1720/1721.

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community. Moreover, in order to gain acceptance, the applicant had to have honest parents and relatives, have good reputation, be healthy of body and mind, be able to work and have modest looks and know the Christian doctrine.⁷⁸

This account clearly differs from the retrospective accounts that narrate the foundations of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and S. Elisabetta in Bologna. The text focuses on the day-to-day organization of life in Ognisanti in the later-seventeenth century and mentions only in passing the women religious' relationships to Servite friars, parish clergy, and the episcopal hierarchy. The account recounts little of the foundation of Ognisanti. Nevertheless, it does mention that Ognisanti resulted from the regularization of a group of women religious who had clothed the third order habit and lived in loosely-organized communities. Moreover, like the foundation accounts of S. Giuseppe and S. Elisabetta, also this account refers to communal life, a mother superior, and a confessor as signs of regularization and institutional evolution, which also included voluntary enclosure and dowry. We begin to see how one third order community after another presented narratives of regularization to their local episcopal authorities in the seventeenth century. The accounts from S. Giuseppe, S. Elisabetta, and Ognisanti highlight that third order communities were expected to acquire certain traits by the episcopal authorities. Or at least the authors of these accounts expected that the episcopal authorities wished to see signs of monastic life in these reports.

Notarial acts from the archives of Ognisanti confirm the existence of loosely organized Servite tertiaries in early seventeenth-century Bologna. In her last will, *suor* Giustina Bittilani – who lived close to the church of S. Cecilia, not far from the Servite complex on Strada Maggiore, in 1641– bequeathed all her clothes to those

⁷⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, “Ill.mo e Rev.mo Signore....”. The document includes a note that it was handed over to archbishop Boncompagni's vicar general on June 13, 1693. The document is heavily annotated on the margins; the annotations summarize the contents of the document.

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Servite tertiaries who would be present at the moment of her death.⁷⁹ In 1658, *suor* Maria Gentile Sandri, who lived in a “house of tertiaries” in the parish of S. Biagio, designated Servite tertiaries as her universal heirs.⁸⁰ Finally, in 1659, a laywoman named Diamante Zaccarini addressed Servite tertiaries in her last will:

she leaves to the Servite tertiaries of Bologna £100, with the obligation that the tertiaries must invest this money and keep this money perpetually invested and use the returns for the tertiaries. *The tertiaries are not allowed to spend these £100, unless they wish to build a house for their habitation.* [...] In return for this charity, the testatrix obligates the tertiaries to recite, *all together* and with loud voices, an annual fifteen-decade rosary in perpetuity.⁸¹ [Emphasis mine]

These three wills reveal groupings of Servite tertiaries and connected laywomen in seventeenth-century Bologna. These women depended on one another in their daily lives and cared for one another at deathbed as well as beyond death. The dwellings of these women emerge as female spaces where women either lived alone or in the company of other women without the presence of kin and without formal vows of religious profession. The will of Diamante Zaccarini created a perpetual investment that could only be used to build a common house of inhabitation for these women religious. Zaccarini’s last will reveals again that outside pressure – or incentives – facilitated the regularization of loosely-organized groupings of third order women.

The regularization of these Servite women religious in the 1660s and the institutional organization of Ognisanti as it was reported to archbishop Boncompagni in 1693 remained, however, contested throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth

⁷⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, 1641, July 30. The S. Cristina in question seems to be the church of S. Cristina della Fondazza, part of the convent of S. Cristina della Fondazza. Marcello Fini, *Bologna sacra: Tutte le chiese in due millenni di storia* (Bologna: Edizioni Pendragon, 2007), 54–55.

⁸⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, 1658, March 8. The parochial church of S. Biagio used to stand on the present-day street of Via Guerrazzi, at number 32. It was just around the corner from Strada San Petronio Vecchio, the location of the first communal house of Ognisanti, and down the street from the Servite complex, which still stands on the corner of Via Guerrazzi and Strada Maggiore today. The parish of S. Biagio included Strada San Petronio Vecchio. Fini, *Bologna sacra*, 43.

⁸¹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, 1659, March 29.

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centuries. Some Servite tertiaries continued to live apart from the newly-founded Ognisanti until the later-seventeenth century.⁸² A dowry contract from 1724 states that by the early-eighteenth century the women religious lived a *vita communis* in the manner of a convent: all inhabitants received room and board food from the community, both in sickness and in health. This dowry contract dates Ognisanti to 1662, when groups of Servite women religious started to live collegially in rented houses and had to pay a 1000 lire dowry to enter one of these houses.⁸³ By 1742, the dowry to enter Ognisanti was 2000 lire, “because the religious women are no longer required to work or do manual labor for the *collegio*, as they did in the past.”⁸⁴ In 1745, the Servite supervisors of Ognisanti sought to make dowries property of the community to stop dowry restitutions that had occurred in the past:

In order to avoid any difficulty that may arise in the future with regard to the non-repayment of dowries, a decree must be issued by the superiors that has to be included in all future dowry contracts. It has been the practice until today that the dowries of our Servite tertiaries who live together in a regular community called Ognisanti in this city of Bologna become the property of this community and the religious women only preserve the usufruct during their lifetime. Some decrees and statutes have been produced on this topic, which we now confirm, approve and re-announce and wish that these decrees and statues be considered the new law, regardless of [any different practices in] the past, and that all future dowry contracts would include this condition and law, without which new tertiaries cannot be accepted into our tertiary community in Bologna.⁸⁵

In this decision, the Servite supervisors listed a number of cases from the seventeenth and the early-eighteenth centuries when dowry had been restituted in full to tertiaries who had left Ognisanti after profession. The supervisors thus confirmed that

⁸² AAB, PS, S. Tommaso di S. Maggiore, Stati delle anime, 42/8, 1670-1695. The parish of S. Tommaso di Strada Maggiore neighbored the parish of S. Biagio.

⁸³ ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, 1724, September 27.

⁸⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, 1742, December 22.

⁸⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, 1745 “Irrepetibilità della elemosina dotale delle n.re Terziarie del Collegio Regolare di Ogni Santi”

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Ognisanti had remained a porous and flexible community, despite the steps towards regularization described by the women religious in the account to archbishop Boncompagni in 1693. Now, in the mid-eighteenth century, the Servite supervisors sought to end this flexibility, but with limited effect. In 1770, the provincial supervisors of the Servite order decided on a new policy of dowry restitution. The dowry contract of *suor* Maria Costanza Taruffi from 1778 included the following:

Finally, in case this *suor* Maria Costanza wishes to exit from this community after her profession, the tertiaries promise and are obligated according to the decree of the provincial superiors of the Servite from November 23, 1770 to restitute without any objection all personal items as well as the dowry to this *suor* Maria Costanza, with £50 subtracted from the dowry for each year that *suor* Maria Costanza lived in this community.⁸⁶

And *Suor* Taruffi did, indeed, leave Ognisanti and reclaim her dowry in 1785.⁸⁷ In contrast to the description of a well-regulated institution delivered to archbishop Boncompagni in 1693, Ognisanti remained flexible and constantly-changing over the *longue durée* of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Ognisanti, perhaps more than any other third order community I have discussed until now, evidences how these communities responded to the different expectations of various authorities, benefactors, and the third order women themselves.

For the Franciscan third order community of S. Antonio in Bergamo, several written foundation accounts exist. Mother superior *suor* Gioanna Belloli wrote one of these accounts in 1705; it was, again, intended for the eyes of a pastoral visitor. *Suor* Belloli informed her reader that the narrative drew on “the tradition of our tertiaries and authentic documents,” and thus presented the account as one told and re-told among the women religious of S. Antonio. In the early-seventeenth century, before the 1630 plague, a Franciscan tertiary *suor* Elisabetta Bidesi owned houses in

⁸⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, 1778, November 7.

⁸⁷ Turn to chapter 4 for a discussion of third order women leaving their communities after profession.

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Bergamo that she bequeathed to a woman named Anna, *suor* Elisabetta's companion, in her last will. The last will asked Anna to clothe the third order habit and recruit another young woman to also clothe the habit and live with Anna. In a later codicil, *suor* Elisabetta appointed a woman named Marta Belloli from Gorlago, a locality east of Bergamo, as Anna's companion. If either Anna or Marta died, the surviving woman had to recruit a new woman of honest character to clothe the habit. *Suor* Elisabetta died of plague in 1630. *Suor* Maria (Anna) and *suor* Margharita (Marta) lived together until 1640, when *suor* Maria (Anna) left to serve in a mendicant hospital. In her place, *suor* Margharita (Marta) found Francesca Foresti from Borgo S. Catterina in Bergamo. The two women led a retired life, leaving their dwellings only to attend Mass in the neighborhood church of S. Rocco. In 1645, the two women accepted a third woman, *suor* Catterina Cattara into their company. The account credits *suor* Margharita Belloli with the growth of S. Antonio after this date and names *suor* Margharita as the founder of the new community. *Suor* Belloli was also the mother superior of S. Antonio until her death in 1685. In 1658, the community acquired episcopal permission to build a church, which they dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua (S. Antonio di Padova).⁸⁸ The church as well as a contemporary expansion to the women's dwelling were financed with the dowries of the tertiaries. The tertiaries started to observe voluntary enclosure and *vita communis* in 1660. Until 1671, the tertiaries remained under the supervision of Reformed Franciscans, after which time they moved under episcopal jurisdiction. In the late-seventeenth century, the tertiaries of S. Antonio received episcopal permission to keep the Eucharist in

⁸⁸ St. Anthony of Padua, canonized in 1232, was an early follower of St. Francis. Drawn to the Franciscans for the promise of a missionary martyrdom, St. Anthony emerged as a prominent teacher within the new order. He was also known for his activities against heretic groups like the Cathars. Franciscan hagiography styled St. Anthony as a cultivator of humility that was supposed to safeguard friars against arrogance. Michael Robson, OFM Conv, *St. Francis of Assisi: The Legend and the Life* (London: Continuum, 1997), chap. 6.

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their church and have the last rites performed by their confessor. *Suor* Gioanna Belloli concluded her account by stating that since 1695 the tertiaries of S. Antonio had lived like enclosed nuns.⁸⁹

The minutes from S. Antonio's chapter meetings record a slightly different foundation account in 1728. This account highlights *suor* Elisabetta Bidesi as the founder of S. Antonio and *suor* Margarita Belloli as directing the later expansion of the community. Originally from Casnigo, north-east of Bergamo, *suor* Elisabetta, lived together with other Franciscan tertiaries in the "houses of charity" on Strada Cavette di Broseta in Borgo S. Leonardo in Bergamo in the early-eighteenth century. In 1621, *suor* Elisabetta together with one other woman religious bought the "houses of charity" to "eternalize service to God in perfect observation of Franciscan third order rule." In her last will and in its codicil, *suor* Elisabetta named her companion Anna (*suor* Maria) and a woman named Marta Belloli from Gorlago (*suor* Margharita) as her heirs and beneficiaries. *Suor* Maria left to serve in a mendicant hospital in 1640; *suor* Elisabetta Foresti joined *suor* Margharita. Two years later, *suor* Margharita bought two more apartments from local Franciscan friars to "expand the glory of God" and the women's community began to grow. In 1658, *suor* Margharita spearheaded the construction of the community's church and a further expansion of the women's dwellings. "From this time onward," the 1728 account notes, "the tertiaries of our *collegio* lived a retired life and did not exit the community even to hear the holy Mass, as they had done until now in the church of S. Rocco; instead, in 1660 the tertiaries voted to follow voluntary enclosure." In 1669, the tertiaries

⁸⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2942 "Informazione del Collegio delle Terziarie di S. Antonio di Padova fata al Rd.mo Monsig. Ruzzini Vescovo di Bergamo in occasione della visita di esso Monastero, 1705".

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completed an *inter vivos* donation to start communal life. Finally, this account mentions that the tertiaries operated an educational academy in their convent.⁹⁰

Both foundation accounts stress the role of *suor* Margharita Belloli in the expansion and regularization of S. Antonio.⁹¹ In these two accounts, as in all foundation accounts, the steps towards regularization included the acquisition of a church, voluntary enclosure and communal life, and the establishment of clear supervisory authorities. Both foundation accounts of S. Antonio, however, also refer to the period before regularization. And the two recounts of the early history of S. Antonio are not the same. The 1705 account includes only a brief narrative of the early history of S. Antonio and then focuses in great detail on the expansion of S. Antonio under *suor* Margharita Belloli. The account was written by *suor* Gioanna Belloli, the great-grandniece of *suor* Margharita; it is possible that *suor* Gioanna wished to honor her relative. Around the time of *suor* Gioanna Belloli's writing, S. Antonio also started to accept educational boarders, however, and *suor* Gioanna's account helped to present S. Antonio as a well-organized monastic community.⁹² In 1703, the women religious had decided to reject married women from boarding in S. Antonio and admit only girls with good background, or those supported by local merchants.⁹³ The 1705 account seems to have been part of a campaign to present S. Antonio as an institution suited for the education of girls from good families. The

⁹⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Registro de Capitali del V. Colleggio di S. Ant.o di Padova".

⁹¹ Donato Calvi also identified Margharita Belloli as the "director and guide" of a group of devote women, who had formed a congregation and clothed the habit of Franciscan tertiaries. Calvi, *Effemeride Sagro Profana di quanto di Memorabile sia Successo in Bergamo sua diocesi et territorio*, I (1676): 365.

⁹² ASDBg, Monasteri Femminili, S. Antonio di Padova, "Varie", Giustiniani to S. Antonio, February 13, 1696.

⁹³ ASM, AGFR, 2942, Istromenti, Testamenti, e Donazioni, 1578 a 1741, p. 62v.

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1728 account, on the other hand, was included among minutes of chapter meetings. In this internal document, the early history of S. Antonio received much greater attention and dated back to the 1610s and 1620s to recount the activities of *suor* Elisabetta Bidesi and her companions, among which the foundation of an early community in 1621. Among the women religious of S. Antonio, this second foundation account remained influential throughout the eighteenth century. In 1777, the mother superior *suor* Laura Tiraboschi dated the origins of S. Antonio to 1621, even while declaring to Venetian authorities that she lacked documentary evidence to support this assertion.⁹⁴ Tiraboschi's dating affords us a sneak-peak at how the history of S. Antonio was recounted inside the community. Kate Lowe and Charlotte Woodford have shown that foundation accounts had a community creating function in Renaissance and early modern monastic communities; the same was true for third order communities.⁹⁵

Finally, I return to Bologna to discuss the foundation of the Franciscan third order community of S. Maria della Carità. This is the only community for which no foundation account survives. Yet, the story seems familiar by now. Giuseppe Guidicini's nineteenth-century history of Bologna dates S. Maria della Carità to 1602, when fra Antonio Silli of Bergamo, the general master of the Franciscan friars of della Carità in Bologna, founded a female community. Sisters Guiditta and Paola Giovanetti had bought a house on *strada* S. Felice for the new community two years earlier. According to Guidicini, S. Maria della Carità – like S. Elisabetta – was

⁹⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache, e converse, vestizioni... al 1795.

⁹⁵ Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy*; Woodford, *Nuns as Historians in Early Modern Germany*.

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dedicated to St. Elizabeth of Hungary.⁹⁶ Various notarial acts problematize this history by Giuseppe Guidicini. Notarial documents date S. Maria della Carità to the early-seventeenth century. In 1615, one Lucrezia Calzolari Guidotti bequeathed 4000 lire to the “Tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità”; the legacy was to be paid out after the death of Guidotti’s husband and used “to buy a house in the city of Bologna that would be suitable and in which the *suore* must live and pray for the soul of the testatrix.”⁹⁷ The Guidotti legacy was used by a group of tertiaries in 1622, when they bought a house with a garden, a well, wine-cellar, and running water in the parish of S. Maria della Carità.⁹⁸ The group of tertiaries included twenty-four women who lived according to the rules they had received from the Franciscan friars of della Carità. Before 1622, this group seems to have lived separately from one another. The mother superior *suor* Maria Pellegrini represented the whole group during the purchase of the house in 1622; prior to the purchase, the women religious met and granted the mother superior their power of attorney. Each tertiary received an individual invitation to this meeting, which was held in the parish church of S. Maria della Carità.⁹⁹ Notarial sources thus suggest that the women religious moved into a common dwelling only after they bought the house in 1622 and thus post-date the foundation of S. Maria della Carità compared to Guidicini’s history. Yet, the community that Guidicini identified as living on *strada* S. Felice, a street that extended across the parish of S. Maria della Carità, could have been an early grouping of the same women religious,

⁹⁶ Giuseppe Guidicini, *Cose notabili della città di Bologna: ossia Storia cronologica de’ suoi stabili sacri, pubblici e privati*, vol. 2. (Bologna, 1869), p. 97.

⁹⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 10.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, num. 12. The parish of S. Maria della Carità, which still exists today, is situated in the eastern part of Bologna, where Strada (Via) San Felice meets the Reno.

⁹⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 11.

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since, as the Guidotti legacy indicates, earlier groups of women known as tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità did exist before 1622.

The transfer of the women religious to a common dwelling in 1622 did not, however, spell the birth of a unified community. The last will of *suor* Anna Maria Rossi from 1630 reveals a continued lack of a communal identity among these women religious. *Suor* Rossi assigned legacies to the daughters of her niece, various religious institutions in Bologna, and the friars of S. Maria della Carità; she left nothing to the community or the individual women religious of S. Maria della Carità.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, no surviving record explicitly shows the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità living in one community before 1644. In 1644, Cecilia Belloni Gualandi bequeathed 400 lire “for the construction and edification of their [the tertiaries’] house on *via* San Felice, where these *suore* live communally.”¹⁰¹ Three years later, in 1647, Domenica Trombelli declared the tertiary community of S. Maria della Carità as her universal heir.¹⁰² The community started to grow only in the 1660s, however.¹⁰³ The surnames of the women religious suggest, however, that many of the tertiaries were related to one another.¹⁰⁴ Yet, S. Maria della Carità reached many of the other milestones

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., num. 15.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., num. 17.

¹⁰² Ibid., num. 18.

¹⁰³ In 1666 and 1667, S. Maria della Carità bought two neighboring properties to accommodate the growing community. ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 26 and 27.

¹⁰⁴ In 1662, *suor* Maria Giovanna Stanzani, *suor* Maria Catterina Valentini, *suor* Maria Giuliana Maffei, *suor* Elisabetta Catterina Menegati, *suor* Ippolita Maria Francesca Mugiani, *suor* Maria Gesualda Mugiani, *suor* Bianca Maria Stanzani, and *suor* Barbara Francesca Masi made up the tertiary community (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 22). In 1666, *suor* Elisabetta Catterina Menegati, *suor* Maria Giuliana Maffei, *suor* Giovanna Stanzani, *suor* Maria Teresa Nizzoli, *suor* Francesca Riatti, *suor* Anna Maria Maffei, *suor* Bianca Maria Stanzani, *suor* Francesca Barbara Catterina Navi, *suor* Maria Francesca Catterina Riali, and *suor* Chiara Maria Silveria Menegati made up the tertiary community (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 24). In 1667, *suor* Elisabetta Catterina Menegati, *suor* Maria Giuliana Maffei, *suor* Giovanna Stanzani, *suor* Maria Teresa delli Nobili, *suor* Anna Maria Maffei, *suor* Bianca Maria Stanzani, *suor* Francesca Barbara Catterina Navi, *suor* Maria Francesca Catterina Riali, *suor*

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included in the foundation accounts of other third order communities only at the turn of the seventeenth century. In 1685, the women religious received permission to use a chapel and a sepulcher in the church of S. Maria della Carità. The tertiaries commissioned Marcantonio Franceschini to paint an altarpiece depicting St. Elisabeth of Hungary for this chapel.¹⁰⁵ The community acquired its own church only around 1704, when the women religious received episcopal permission to celebrate Mass “in their church, or oratory that functions as such” on *strada* S. Felice.¹⁰⁶ However, the educational boarders who lived with the women religious could only use this church after 1722, and the community had to wait until 1740 for a permission to have holy sacraments in their church.¹⁰⁷

Notarial documents reveal a slow, non-linear institutional history for S. Maria della Carità. As the other communities considered in this dissertation, S. Maria della Carità resulted from a merger of loosely-organized groups of Franciscan tertiaries. Yet, when other foundation accounts narrate stories of quick expansion and regularization, including acquisition of a church, adoption of voluntary enclosure and communal life, the notarial documents form the archives of S. Maria della Carità evidence a much slower adoption of monastic traits by the women religious.

Chiara Maria Silveria Menegati, *suor* Maria Candida Catterina Fornasari, *suor* Maria Antonia Catterina Nicoli, and *suor* Angela Maria Antonia Buldrini made up the tertiary community (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 28). In 1674, *suor* Maria Giovanna Stanzani, *suor* Barbara Francesca Masi, *suor* Maria Tera Nizzoli, *suor* Ludovica Francesca Riatti, *suor* Anna Maria Maffei, *suor* Giuliana Maffei, *suor* Bianca Maria Stanzani, *suor* Maria Francesca Riari, *suor* Maria Prudentia Marchi, *suor* Giunipera Gasparini, *suor* Maria Sigismonda Giudetti, *suor* Maria Antonia Nizzoli, *suor* Catterina Briani made up the community (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 35).

¹⁰⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 6. Marcantonio Franceschini (1648-1729) was a Bolognese painter and a member of the School of Bologna. He worked mostly in north-central Italy and was one of the most sought-after fresco painters of his time. His commissions also included the church of Corpus Domini in Bologna (1688-1694). Everett Fahy, ed., *Wrightsman Pictures* (New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 110.

¹⁰⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 3/4839, num. 40.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, num. 41; ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 14.

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Moreover, the women religious also continued to move in and out of S. Maria della Carità throughout the seventeenth century. Some women lived separately from the community; others left the community after having taken their vows to return to homes of parents or patrons while still wearing their religious habit.¹⁰⁸ Only at the turn of the seventeenth century did the tertiaries who left the community also have to leave behind their religious habit.¹⁰⁹ The last wills and the codicil of *suor* Maria Carla Prudenzia Marazzi – written between 1684 and 1703 – highlight the changing characteristics of S. Maria della Carità at the turn of the seventeenth century. In her last will in 1684, *suor* Marazzi left legacies to three tertiaries in S. Maria della Carità, one of who was her roommate. In her last will in 1699, *suor* Marazzi revised the earlier will to leave a small legacy to each and every tertiary in S. Maria della Carità and an annuity to her roommate. Finally, a codicil in 1703 specified which of *suor* Marazzi's personal items were to be distributed between the tertiaries after *suor* Marazzi's death. The codicil also detailed the division of *suor* Marazzi's personal stores of flour, wine, and firewood as well as cutlery, bedding, and clothing.¹¹⁰ While living together, the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità did not live a *vita communis*.

The first references to S. Maria della Carità as a community providing its inhabitants

¹⁰⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 33 (1673), num. 35 (1674), num. 38 (1677), num. 40 (1679). Turn to chapter 4 for a discussion of women religious who left their communities after profession.

¹⁰⁹ In 1696, *suor* Maria Samaritana Rinaldi left the community for her parental home and wished to keep her habit; her request was denied by the chapter meeting of the tertiaries, who restituted part of *suor* Maria Samaritana's dowry (ASB, Demaniale 2/4838, num. 11). In 1704, a *suor* Maria Isabella Balzi wished to leave S. Maria della Carità in order to seek entrance in an enclosed convent; her wish was granted and her personal items returned to her, but she had to give up her habit and was forbidden from ever returning to live in S. Maria della Carità (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 16).

¹¹⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, *unnumbered*. The first will was dated from October 17, 1684 and the second from December 15, 1699. The codicil is included with ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 14. The second will and the codicil were made public after *suor* Marazzi's death in September 1703. On nuns' personal property and its uses, Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women*, 61–100; Silvia Evangelisti, "Monastic Poverty and Material Culture in Early Modern Italian Convents," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 1 (2004): 1–20; Silvia Evangelisti, "Rooms to Share: Convent Cells and Social Relations in Early Modern Italy," *Past & Present*, no. Supplement 1 (2006): 55–71.

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with food, drink, and heat only appear in the 1710s.¹¹¹ The notarial acts from S. Maria della Carità thus highlight a slow process of regularization and many continuities between the early history of S. Maria della Carità and the later periods of the community's development. This institutional history draws attention to the constructed character of the liner foundation accounts I discussed above.

Even though the early histories of S. Elisabetta, Ognisanti, and S. Maria della Carità in Bologna and S. Antonio in Bergamo are similar, almost repetitive at times, it is important to consider all the foundation accounts and notarial acts to understand the underlying similarities between third order foundations in seventeenth-century Italy. The focus of those foundation accounts that were directed at various episcopal authorities is on the regularization of tertiary communities; indeed, regularization is presented as central to the founding of a community in these accounts. Yet, notarial records reveal that regularization was rarely as streamlined or irreversible as the foundation accounts suggest. Third order communities in seventeenth-century Italy were born from the coming together of earlier, loosely-organized groups of tertiary women. The early groups saw women religious moved in and out; they functioned as flexible female spaces. Such flexibility also characterized the third order communities that emerged when some of these women religious come together on more permanent basis. Third order communities remained institutionally flexible and continuously changing also after their foundation and initial regularization. Even when the foundation accounts suggest that communities observed *vita communis* and voluntary enclosure and were subject to episcopal authorities, as prescribed by the Council of

¹¹¹ In 1714, a contract was drawn up between the tertiaries and a Sig.ra Diamante Cavari, who had 'retired' in the tertiary community some years earlier. The contract states that in return for £60 a year, Sig.ra Cavari would be feed and housed by the tertiaries until her death (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 25). In 1718, the dowry contract of *suor* Maria Luigia Elisabetta Parti stated that the community would feed *suor* Parti after her profession (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 43).

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Trent, notarial acts and sometimes even the same foundation accounts show that these communities were also shaped continuously by the expectations of authorities, benefactors, women religious, and the society at large.

iii. The eighteenth-century foundation of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna

In the last section of this chapter, I turn to the foundation of the Carmelite third order community of S. Maria delle Grazie in eighteenth-century Bologna. The foundation account of S. Maria delle Grazie highlights the continuities and changes in how third order communities perceived their own foundation and presented it internally and externally between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

The foundation account of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna is the hagiographic biography of Maria Catterina Mazzoni Sangiorgi, the community's founder. The narrative was written after Sangiorgi's death in 1749 by one of her co-religious, *suor* Marianna Gandolfi. Gandolfi begins her account by stating that she relied on the memories of Sangiorgi's confessor Father Salvi and the tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie, and that she was obligated to write the account by her superiors. Jodi Bilinkoff considers such references to the writing of a hagiography as a task and the reliance on the memories of people who knew the subject of the hagiography as elements of seventeenth-century hagiographic tradition.¹¹² According to Bilinkoff, the exemplars of this tradition were the hagiographies of Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi, written by her confessors. These exemplary hagiographies were copied by other aspiring authors.¹¹³ Catterina de' Pazzi (1566-1607) was a Florentine noblewoman

¹¹² Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450-1750*.

¹¹³ Jodi Bilinkoff, "Confessors as Hagiographers in Early Modern Catholic Culture," in *New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 419–37. The two hagiographies of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, both written by her confessors, were Vincenzo Puccini, *La vita di Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi nobile Fiorentina* (first published in 1609) and Virgilio Cepari, *Vita della serafica vergine S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi fiorentina dell'ordine carmelitano* (first published in 1669).

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who became a Carmelite nun. Her life in the convent, where she assumed the name Maria Maddalena, was filled with frequent ecstasies and diabolic temptations. Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi advocated for the reform of female monasticism, calling for a return to rules, monastic vows, and communal life. She was sanctified by pope Clement IX in 1669 and fits the model of Counter-Reformation sanctity and monasticism that dominated seventeenth-century Italy, according to Anna Scattigno and Gabriella Zarri.¹¹⁴ In the mid-eighteenth century, *suor* Marianna Gandolfi seems to have relied not only on the memories of the members of her community but also on the hagiographies of saint Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi when writing the biography of Catterina Mazzoni Sangiorgi, who Gandolfi claims was heavily influenced by de'Pazzi's spirituality. The narrative penned by *suor* Gandolfi also fits in a wider corpus of writings by Carmelite women that focus on ecstatic experiences and describe frequent encounters with the diabolic; current scholarship describes this as a distinctly seventeenth-century corpus.¹¹⁵ Gandolfi's reliance on these examples shows that the seventeenth-century models also reached third order communities, albeit with some delay, and gave birth to distinctly third order narratives that combined models of contemplative spirituality with active engagement in society.

Suor Gandolfi's narrative tells the following story. Maria Catterina Mazzoni was born in Bologna in 1683. She received a Christian education at home, attended a local parish school for Christian doctrine, and, from an early age, attended daily

¹¹⁴ Anna Scattigno, "“I desiderij ardenti”: Penitenza, estasi e martirio nei modelli di santità,” in *Monaca, moglie, serva, cortigiana: Vita e immagini delle donne tra Rinascimento e Controriforma*, ed. Sara F. Matthews Grieco and Sabina Brevaglieri (Florence: Morgana Edizioni, 2001); Anna Scattigno, "Un commento alla regola carmelitana: Gli ‘Ammaestramenti’ di Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi,” in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia dall’alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l’oggi*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997); Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente.”

¹¹⁵ Nicky Hallett, *Lives of Spirit: English Carmelite Self-Writings of the Early Modern Period* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

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orations. In 1703, the nineteen-year-old Mazzoni married Pier Francesco Sangiorgi. The marriage was organized by Mazzoni's parents, despite her desire to become a nun. Mazzoni bore five daughters and continued her pious practices throughout her married life. In 1704, she miraculously healed a nun of lesions after a doctor ordered the lesions to be sprayed with "the breast milk of a well-fed woman of quiet character." Mazzoni's prayers to the Virgin also helped her five-year-old daughter to start walking; this daughter later became a tertiary alongside her mother. In 1715, Pier Francesco Sangiorgi died, leaving Mazzoni a widow with four young daughters (a fifth daughter had died in early childhood). Sangiorgi had asked his wife to raise their daughters and pray for his soul in widowhood. Mazzoni's relatives, however, wanted her to remarry. Mazzoni refused and cared for her daughters by making veils and doing other "womanly works". Her family abandoned her and she struggled to care for her daughters. At this time, the devil started to tempt Mazzoni and she began to pursue "vane affections, without even a pretense of marriage." In 1721, Mazzoni fell gravely ill. A Carmelite friar, Ferdinando Salvi, visited her and blessed her with a relic of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi; he also left her some texts to read in order to save her soul. Fra Salvi and the texts inspired Mazzoni to repent and, cured of her illness, she confessed to Father Salvi and began a road of repentance. A year later, in 1722, Mazzoni wished to enter an Ursuline community in Rome, but the community lacked space. She continued her devotions in Bologna, did charitable works, and fasted to distribute her food to the poor. She was firm in her desire to retreat from the world. During her devotions, Mazzoni was inspired to clothe the habit of a Carmelite tertiary. Father Salvi first wished to test her, however. In 1723, Mazzoni retired to a room close to the church of the Carmelites that she visited for daily prayer at the altars of the Lady of Carmine and Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi. The same year, she took private

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vows of chastity and obedience. Mazzoni also studied the rule of the Carmelite tertiaries, completed regular spiritual exercises, and pursued frequent charitable acts. During this time, Mazzoni was tested by worldly temptations and rumors, instigated by people who tried to discredit her. Finally, in October 1723, Mazzoni publically clothed the habit of Carmelite tertiaries and assumed the name of *suor* Maria Maddalena.

As a tertiary, *suor* Maria Maddalena dedicated herself to religious and charitable acts. She taught Christian doctrine to the young girls and elderly women in her neighborhood, cared for the sick and the dying, prepared the dead for funeral, visited incarcerated women. Mazzoni inspired some young women to join her, which Father Salvi permitted on the condition that the women also taught young girls in the neighborhood. In May 1724, the new community moved to a house close to the church of the Carmelites and started communal life; the individual tertiaries did not have “even a needle or a sheet of paper to their name.” At the new location, the community opened a school for girls, teaching reading, writing, Catholic doctrine, and ‘womanly works’. Many of the students later professed religious vows; others married and passed their Christian education on to their children. *Suor* Maria Maddalena continued to be tested both by malicious rumors about her person and the new community, as well as by long bouts of illness. She persevered and professed the simple vows in December 1724. Nonetheless, malicious voices continued to question the honor of the new community. Diabolic spirits also tempted *suor* Maria Maddalena frequently in her dreams and she continued to suffer from illnesses. She always confided in Father Salvi and sought to model the community in Bologna after the convent of Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi in Florence. The tertiaries in Bologna wore a wimple, rather than a simple tertiary veil. Over the years, Carmelite superiors sent

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many women to the community, who *suor* Maria Maddalena accepted. These included an older, unmarried woman who needed constant physical care; a two-year old orphaned noble girl who needed maternal attention; a poor woman who later became the community's servant; and a Swiss Calvinist who convert to Catholicism with the help of *suor* Maria Maddalena. Many local matrons visited the community regularly. The daily routine in S. Maria delle Grazie included attending Mass in the church of the Carmelites, silence during mealtimes, weekly sessions of public humiliation, and regular work in the school. In 1733, *suor* Maria Maddalena was officially elected as the community's first mother superior. The community moved to a bigger house a year later and was recognized by the episcopal authority in 1735. In 1736, S. Maria delle Grazie received permission to construct an oratory.

Subsequently, the community began to observe voluntary enclosure, with the tertiaries only leaving the convent to attend religious services in the church of the Carmelites. *Suor* Maria Maddalena died in 1749, having lived her life as “a *zitella*, a wife, a widow, and a religious woman”, always aspiring to “humility, patience, obedience, and charity – the four points of the crucifix.”¹¹⁶

The biography of *suor* Maria Maddalena Mazzoni brings the already familiar narrative of a community's regularization together with a story of one tertiary and her particular spirituality. *Suor* Mazzoni subjected herself to spiritual retreats, public humiliations, and constant prayer; but she and her community also actively engaged with the neighborhood around them, educating girls and caring for the sick.

Moreover, S. Maria delle Grazie became a resting and a healing place, or a place of

¹¹⁶ The hagiography refers to *Suor* Maria Maddalena as a “*zitella*, maritata, vedova e religiosa.” BA, B4342, “Raconto informativo della Vita, e Virtù della Serva di Dio Madre S.r Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi Bolognese dell'Ordine Carmelitano Fondatrice delle Terziarie Carmelitane del Ven: Conservatorio di S. Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi di Bologna di perfetta vita comune... Scritta da S.r Marianna Gandolfi Terziaria Carmerlitana”.

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work, for a number of girls and women who stayed for shorter or longer periods of time. Intense contemplation and bodily expression of spirituality were characteristic to the Counter-Reformation spirituality that swept seventeenth-century Italy; Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi emerged as a model female saint for such spirituality.¹¹⁷ Yet, *suor* Mazzoni and her co-religious also draw upon and embodied an active spirituality not consistent with this Counter-Reformation model, which Marina Caffiero has called the Spanish model; rather, the social engagement of the tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie exemplified what Caffiero calls the French model of spirituality that valorized female engagement beyond the convent wall.¹¹⁸ Caffiero argues that the Spanish and the French models came to co-exist in eighteenth-century Italy, and the biography of Maria Maddalena Mazzoni testifies to this assertion. However, the examples from the five third order communities above testify to a similar co-existence already in the seventeenth century. The remarkable similarities between how *suor* Gandolfi's biography portrays the foundation of S. Maria delle Grazie in the eighteenth century and how the accounts from seventeenth-century Bergamo and Bologna recount the foundation of third order communities in those two towns highlight continuities across the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. All these foundation accounts emphasize the regularization of third order communities, which emerges as a central element in the stories that were told about these communities and their foundation. Most accounts also record the opposition faced by the new communities. The focus on regularization, therefore, seems to have been necessary to legitimize third order communities. However, despite instances of opposition, almost

¹¹⁷ Matthews Grieco, "Modelli di santità femminile nell'Italia del Rinascimento e della Controriforma"; Scattigno, "I desiderij ardenti": Penitenza, estasi e martirio nei modelli di santità."

¹¹⁸ Caffiero, "Dall'esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all'apostolato sociale (1650-1850)," 343–355.

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all accounts also highlight the active role assumed by third order women in their neighborhoods and towns. Finally, these were all female spaces that emerged from earlier groupings of women. S. Maria delle Grazie, like all other third order communities considered here, emerged from a grouping of independent tertiary women. Indeed, the Bolognese historian Giuseppe Guidicini attributed *suor* Maria Maddalena Mazzoni with regularizing an already existing community of Carmelite tertiaries, which he dated to 1701.¹¹⁹

iv. Conclusions

The ‘golden age’ of third order and other non-claustral communities that Gabriella Zarri has dated to the earlier-sixteenth century did not end with Trent but continued through to the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries despite the Tridentine decrees, or indeed in parallel with those decrees. The foundation accounts I have studied in this chapter highlight that both third order women religious as well as their confessors and superiors were aware of the decrees on enclosure as well as the other Tridentine decrees on the organization of monastic life (rule, communal life, subjection to a religious order or episcopal authority). All foundation accounts stress progressive steps towards attaining these traits of monastic life. Yet, even though notarial acts confirm elements of the foundation accounts, they also problematize the linear narratives of regularization that emerge from foundation accounts. Notarial acts underscore continued negotiation of the institutional organization of third order communities throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Third order communities emerge as flexible institutions that were shaped both by the social and cultural expectations placed upon women’s institutions in seventeenth and eighteenth century Italy as well as by the needs of the women who inhabited these institutions

¹¹⁹ Giuseppe Guidicini, *Cose notabili della città di Bologna: ossia Storia cronologica de’ suoi stabili sacri, pubblici e privati*, vol. 4. (Bologna, 1872), p. 311.

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and the societies that surrounded them. At a time when law and custom saw women either marrying or entering an enclosed convent, third order communities provided an alternative female space that was neither secular nor monastic. The seventeenth-century jurist Giovanni Battista De Luca recognized the existence of tertiaries and many other quasi-monastic women in Italy, considering these women neither nuns nor secular women.¹²⁰ De Luca's recognition of quasi-monastic women highlights that such women had social personhood, as defined by Thomas Kuehn, even if they were not recognized in canon law.¹²¹ Third order women were part of the lived experience of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. However, the pressures towards regularization that emerge from the third order foundation accounts raise questions about who was able to adopt the status of a third order woman religious. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the population of third order communities and the women who entered these communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy.

¹²⁰ Pope Benedict XIV first recognized non-enclosed women's communities in canon law in 1749. Until 1749, third order women religious stood clearly outside the system that considered only two legitimate statuses for women: the sacrament of marriage (carnal marriage) or the spiritual marriage (becoming a nun). These two statuses were unchangeable, but a third order woman religious could change her status by either leaving one third order community to enter another or entering one of the two unchangeable statuses. Giovanni Battista De Luca, *Il dottor volgare ovvero il Compendio di tutta la Legge Civile, Canonica, Feudale, e Municipale, nelle cose più ricevute in pratica; Moralizzato in lingua Italiana per istruzione, e comodità maggiore di questa Provincia.*, vol. XIV (Rome, 1673), chaps. 52–54; Elizabeth Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman": Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), xxix; Medioli, "Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento."

¹²¹ Thomas Kuehn, "Person and Gender in the Laws," in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (New York: Longman, 1998), 87–107.

Chapter 2: The Population of Third Order Communities

This chapter examines the population of third order communities between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Third order communities were small congregations that sought to maintain a stable population size throughout the period considered here. Yet, internal and external events and decisions often had a marked influence on a community's size. In current scholarship, we find limited studies of monastic community sizes. Elizabeth Rapley and Robert Rapley have estimated that second order, enclosed convents in France averaged forty women in the late-seventeenth century and twenty-five women in the late-eighteenth century.¹ For Italy, anecdotal evidence suggests that the size of enclosed convents varied greatly, but communities frequently counted fifty or more women.² The eighteenth century has been considered a period of monastic population decline, a period when the convent increasingly lost function in early modern society, and in its family politics in particular, becoming a target of mounting social and political criticism, both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.³ This

¹ Elizabeth Rapley and Robert Rapley, "An Image of Religious Women in the Ancien Régime: The états Des Religieuses of 1790-1791," *French History* 11, no. 4 (1997): 387–410.

² Current historiography tends to refer to the percentage of women religious in the total population of early modern Italian towns, see Athos Bellettini, *La popolazione di Bologna dal secolo XV all'unificazione italiana* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1961), 58–59; Elissa B. Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11–13. Renee Baernstein's work on San Paolo in Milan reveals a population that fluctuated around 60-80 nuns in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, see P. Renee Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Routledge, 2002). The three convents discussed by Kate Lowe – one in Venice, one in Florence, one in Rome – counted population sizes between 25 and 150 to 200 nuns in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, K. J. P. Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 149–155.

³ Gabriella Zarri and Giorgio Penco have discussed the eighteenth century as one of monastic decline, Giorgio Penco, "Aspetti e caratteri del monachesimo nel Settecento italiano," in *Settecento monastico italiano*, ed. Giustino Farnedi and Giovanni Spinelli (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1990); Gabriella Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente," in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia*

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chapter reveals, however, that population decline in eighteenth-century monastic communities often resulted from external events and decision, which the Rapleys have already suggested for France.⁴ The size of a third order community was determined, on the one hand, by its admissions strategies and, on the other, by prescriptions of ecclesiastical and order superiors as well as other external events. The two factors were intertwined and both must be considered to understand demographic trends in third order communities.

I use data garnered from notarized in-house election records; for two communities, I work with more extended data included in books of professions and dowry contracts. Only vocal tertiaries could vote at in-house elections; election records thus exclude the *converse* ('lay sisters').⁵ However, as we see, third order communities included only a limited number of *converse*. In-house election records also exclude all secular boarders who lived in third order communities for shorter or longer time periods. As I will discuss in chapter 4, some third order communities counted numerous boarders

dall'alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l'oggi, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997). Volker Hunecke has pointed out the declining importance of the convent in the life course of the Venetian elites in the eighteenth century, Volker Hunecke, "Kindbett Oder Kloster: Lebenswege Venezianischer Patrizierinnen Im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 18 (1992): 446–76. Mita Choudhury and Barbara Woshinsky have studied the increasingly hostile political and literary discourse against convents in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, Mita Choudhury, *Convents and Nuns in Eighteenth-Century French Politics and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Barbara R. Woshinsky, *Imagining Women's Conventual Spaces in France, 1600-1800: The Cloister Disclosed* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

⁴ Rapley and Rapley, "An Image of Religious Women in the Ancien Régime: The états Des Religieuses of 1790-1791."

⁵ The lay sisters or the *converse* stood hierarchically below the choir nuns and often fulfilled servile duties in early modern monastic communities. The presence of lay sisters permitted the choir sisters to dedicate themselves to prayer, while the physical labors to maintain a community were completed by the *converse*. On social stratification in early modern European convents and the differences between choir sisters (*coriste* or *vocali*) and lay sisters (*converse*), Silvia Evangelisti, "To Find God in Work? Female Social Stratification in Early Modern Italian Convents," *European History Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2008): 398–416; Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), chap. 11.

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at any time. However, the boarders rarely participated in institutional management and their presence seems to have had limited effect on community's population trends.

Notarized election records present the most uniform source to compare the population sizes of several third order communities in two different towns. In-house elections were witnessed by local episcopal authorities or representatives of religious orders. The records include both the number of women religious who voted as well as the number of those who were absent. Some records also list all vocal tertiaries who were living in the community at the time of an election. Additional sources such as books of professions, records of chapter meetings, and dowry contracts have allowed me to create a database of hundred and forty-seven (147) tertiaries, who entered S. Giuseppe in Bergamo between 1638 and 1796, and of fifty-two (52) tertiaries, who entered S. Elisabetta in Bologna between 1660 and 1792. This database permits a more in-depth look at population dynamics in these two institutions and allows to explain certain trends in all third order communities.

i. Population trends in third order communities between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries

In Bergamo, I consider two Franciscan third order communities: S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio. S. Giuseppe was larger of the two (fig.s 2.1 and 2.2). Yet both communities experienced regular and frequent population fluctuations throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The earliest in-house election records of S. Giuseppe date to 1673, several decades after the community's foundation. In S. Giuseppe, the 1690s, 1730s, 1760s, and the 1780s emerge as periods of marked population decline; these periods alternated with decades of growth in the 1700-1710s, 1740s-1750s, 1770s, and the 1790s (fig. 2.1). This fluctuation pattern points towards attempts to maintain a stable

population size by accepting new tertiaries into the community only after the communal population began to decline. The earliest in-house election records of S. Antonio date to 1676. At this time, S. Antonio was still growing, shifting from pairs of tertiary women living together to a community of women religious between the 1660s and the 1680s.⁶ Tallying election records confirms that the 1680s was a period of population growth in S. Antonio, followed by another growth in the 1730s (fig. 2.2). Between these two periods of marked growth, the population size of S. Antonio underwent similar cyclical fluctuations as I noted for S. Giuseppe above. S. Antonio also strove to maintain a steady population size throughout the eighteenth century, and did so with more success than S. Giuseppe since it had more limited population fluctuations, as a comparison of fig. 2.1 and fig. 2.2 evidences.

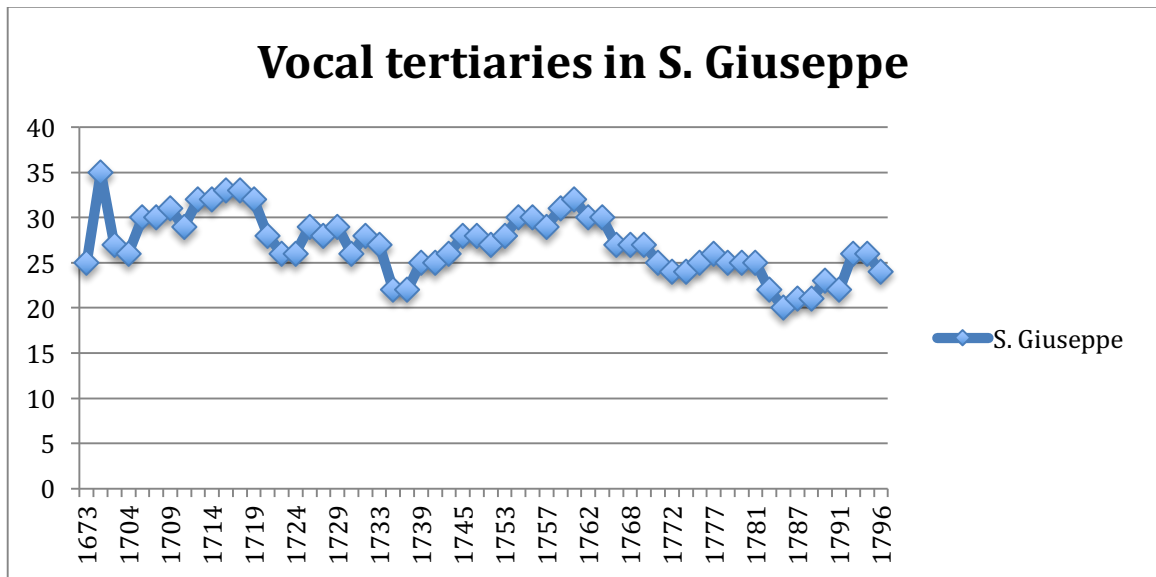


Figure 2.1: Vocal tertiaries in S. Giuseppe in Bergamo (Source: ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Giuseppe, “Elezioni delle priore”).

⁶ See chapter 1.

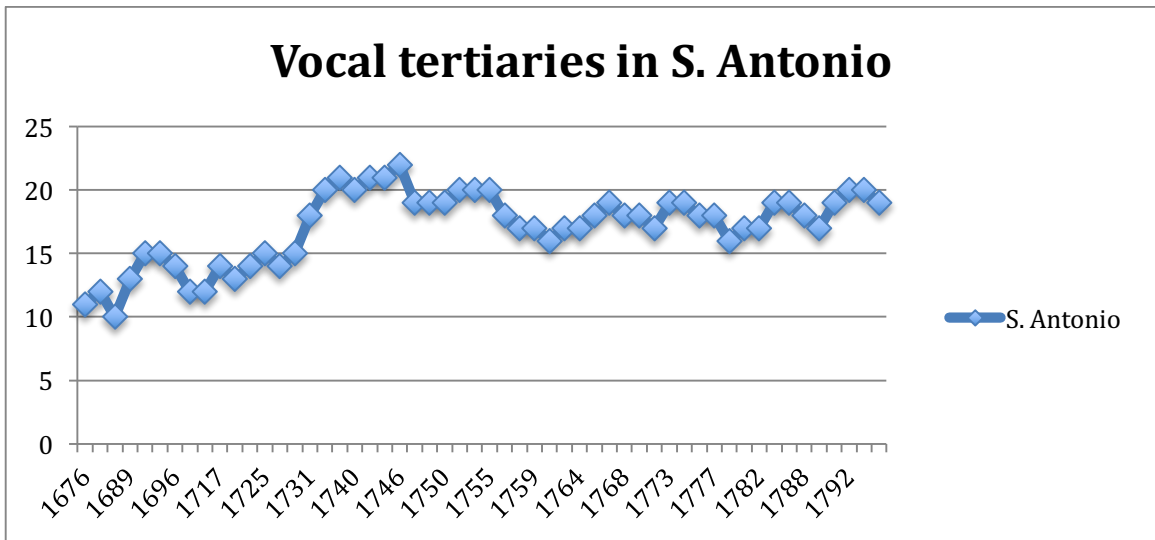


Figure 2.2: Vocal tertiaries in S. Antonio in Bergamo (Source: ASDBg, *Monasteri femminili, I, S. Antonio di Padova, “Elezione delle priore”*).

The database of hundred and forty-seven (147) tertiaries who entered S. Giuseppe between 1638 and 1796 allows to understand the dynamics of such population fluctuations better. For each woman religious in the database, we know the year of their entrance in S. Giuseppe and for some women we also know either the year of their death or the year of their exit from the community.

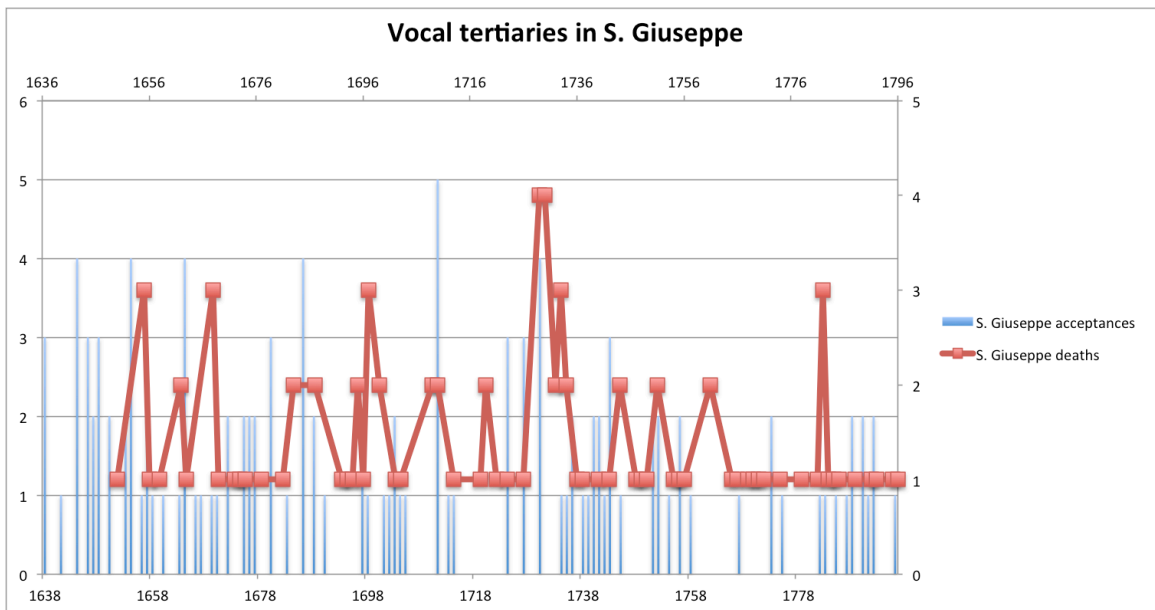


Figure 2.3: Acceptances and deaths/exits of vocal tertiaries in S. Giuseppe, 1638-1796 (Sources: ASBg, *Monasteri femminili, I, S. Giuseppe*; ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C”; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “Libro dell’acettare vestire professa e morte delle R.de Tertiare di San.to Giuseppe di Bergo.mo”).

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On Figure 2.3, the columns mark the number of vocal tertiaries who entered S. Giuseppe in a given year and the marked line records the deaths or exits of vocal tertiaries from S. Giuseppe in a given year. The acceptances tend to group together, particularly in the late-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. After a period of initial growth following the foundation of S. Giuseppe in 1638, the community accepted new vocal tertiaries in cohorts. If we consider the entrances alongside the deaths and exits, we see that a new cohort entered S. Giuseppe only after several women had either died or left. The new cohorts were accepted to maintain the population size of the community stable. In fact, the constitutions of S. Giuseppe stated that the community accepted new tertiaries only after a place opened.⁷ New cohorts were accepted throughout the eighteenth century, with the last cohort of women religious entering S. Giuseppe in the late-1780s and the early-1790s. Figure 2.1 indicates that the later-eighteenth century saw a decline in the population of S. Giuseppe, which arrested at the very end of the eighteenth century. This agrees with the information on fig 2.3.

The *converse* population in S. Giuseppe followed a similar pattern (fig 2.4). A new *conversa* was accepted either after the death of an older *conversa* or, indeed, immediately before such a death, when the ill health of an older *conversa* must have been already evident and interfering with her ability to complete her tasks in the community. The total population of *converse* in S. Giuseppe remained stable at around three lay sisters at any given time. This points towards a limited change in the needs of the community between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Compared to other third order communities considered in this study, S. Giuseppe accepted its first *conversa*

⁷ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, "REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiare di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE dette del Retiramento (Milano, 1673), p. 32.

very early in its institutional history, less than a decade after its foundation.⁸ The consistent, if limited, presence of *converse* in third order communities highlights a similarity between these communities and regular female monastic communities. Like enclosed convents, also third order communities seem to have experienced some social stratification between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

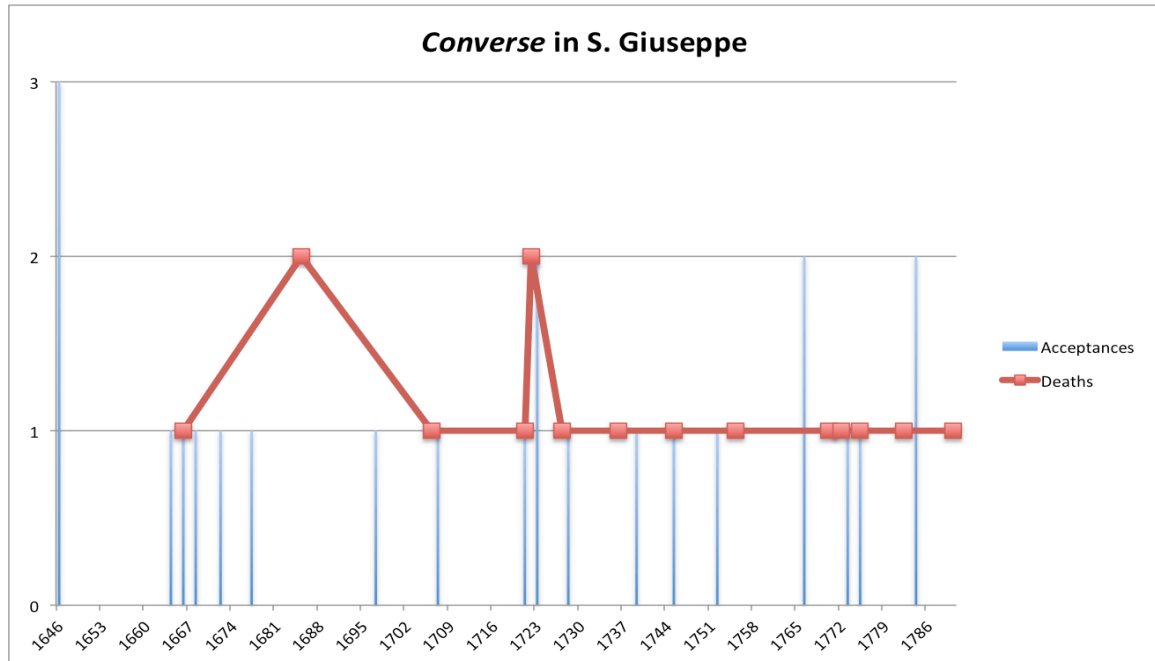


Figure 2.4: Acceptances and deaths/exits of converse in S. Giuseppe, 1638-1796 (Source: ASDBg, *Monasteri femminili, I, S. Giuseppe*; ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C”; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “Libro dell’acettare vestire professa e morte delle R.de Tertiare di San.to Giuseppe di Bergo.mo”).

However, the limited number of *converse* in third order communities contrasts starkly with the increasing numbers of *converse* in regular convents between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.⁹ Current scholarship considers the *conversa* status as one of the

⁸ S. Antonio accepted its first *conversa* in 1681 (ASM, AGFR, 2945, *Doti spirituali*). S. Maria della Carità accepted its first *conversa* in 1720 (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, nr. 41). Ognisanti accepted its first *conversa* in 1725; the woman had already served the community for a couple of years before her acceptance as a *conversa* (ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, 14 December 1725). S. Elisabetta accepted the first *conversa* in 1728 (see below). No *converse* result from the archives of S. Maria delle Grazie.

⁹ Silvia Evangelisti has pointed out that less than 20 per cent of the nuns in Florence were *converse* in mid-sixteenth century, but this figure rose to 28 per cent by the later-seventeenth century; in Naples, the number of *converse* in the total population of nuns represented c. 25 per cent in mid-seventeenth century, but increased to 41.4 per cent by late-seventeenth century, Silvia Evangelisti, “Ricche e povere: Classi di

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few ways available for non-elite women to access monastic life in early modern Italy.¹⁰ Here we see that women of diverse backgrounds accessed quasi-monastic lives in third order communities.

The cohort pattern that emerges when plotting acceptances against deaths and exits in S. Giuseppe is also evident when graphing the database of the fifty-two (52) women, who entered S. Elisabetta in Bologna between 1660 and 1792 (fig.s 2.5 and 2.6). In general, the data from S. Elisabetta is less complete than the data from S. Giuseppe; in particular, the dates of death or exit of tertiaries in S. Elisabetta are mostly unknown. Since the foundation of S. Elisabetta occurred over many decades and involved the unification of several previously separate groups of women, I have only included in my database those tertiaries who entered S. Elisabetta after 1660, when a unified community had formed.¹¹ Between 1660 and 1792, forty-seven vocal tertiaries and five *converse* with a known date of entrance can be plotted; the date of death or exit is known for twenty-five vocal tertiaries and two *converse*.

religiose nelle comunità monastiche femminili tra Cinque e Seicento,” in *Nubili e celibi tra scelta e costrizione (secoli XVI-XX)*, ed. Margareth Lanzinger and Raffaella Sarti (Udine: Forum, 2006), 38–39.

¹⁰ Evangelisti, “To Find God in Work? Female Social Stratification in Early Modern Italian Convents.” Elizabeth Rapley has noted that quasi-monastic communities in seventeenth-century France included a limited number of lay sisters, since lay sisters and their more limited dowries burdened the communities’ finances, Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime*, 183–184.

¹¹ Turn to chapter 1 for the foundation of S. Elisabetta.

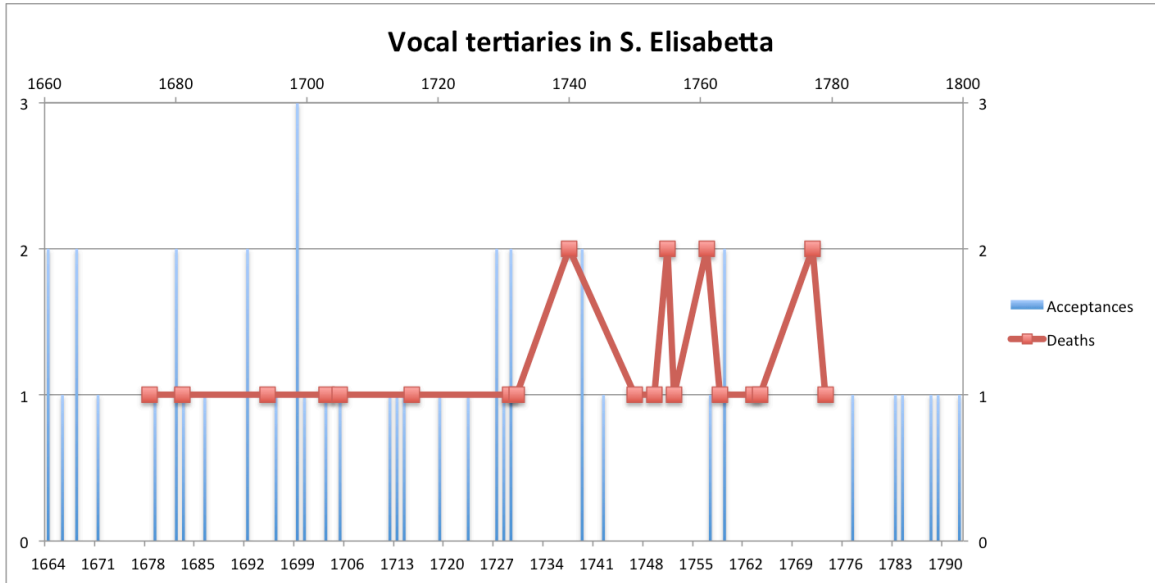


Figure 2.5: Acceptances and deaths/exits of vocal tertiaries in S. Elisabetta, 1660-1792 (Source: ASB, Demaniale 2/4450-13/4461; ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, “Libro Maestro”; ASB, Demaniale, 31/4479, “Libro Maestro”; ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, “Visite”).

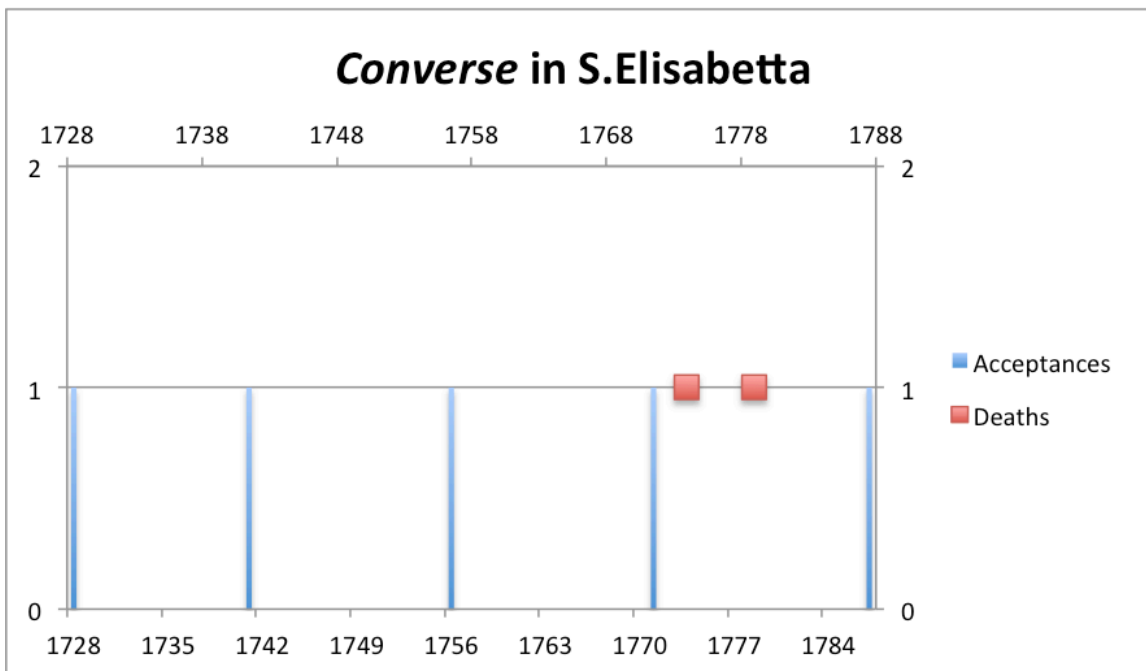


Figure 2.6: Acceptances and deaths of *converse* in S. Elisabetta, 1660-1792 (Source: ASB, Demaniale 2/4450-13/4461; ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, “Libro Maestro”; ASB, Demaniale, 31/4479, “Libro Maestro”; ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, “Visite”).

S. Elisabetta also admitted cohorts of women religious, who entered immediately before or after more experienced women religious either died or left the community (fig 2.5).

Like S. Giuseppe, S. Elisabetta strove to maintain a stable population size. In 1695, a

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notarized dowry restitution document referred to a policy of population control, stating that S. Elisabetta accepted only those women who the community could feed, clothe, and provide with other essentials.¹² The size of the population was thus delimited by the financial means of the community; the cohort pattern suggests that the women religious and their confessors, who together were in charge of the daily operations of the community, sought to manage the population size.¹³ The first *converse* entered S. Elisabetta in the first half of the eighteenth century (fig 2.6), more than half a century after the community's foundation and therefore much later than in S. Giuseppe. After the first *conversa*, new lay sisters were accepted periodically, which suggests that S. Elisabetta also accepted *converse* based on the community's needs, which remained unchanged in the eighteenth century.¹⁴

However, despite S. Elisabetta's attempts to maintain a stable population size, the community experienced first a marked population growth in the 1720s and a significant population decline in the 1750s-1770s, followed by a small recovery towards the end of the eighteenth century (fig. 2.7). Indeed, in the 1720s, a large cohort of women entered S. Elisabetta, after which time only seven new vocal tertiaries entered the community over a period of fifty years, far fewer than died or left during the same time period (fig 2.5).

¹² ASB, Demaniale, 8/4456, num. 7.

¹³ Turn to chapter 6 for the administration of S. Elisabetta and other third order communities.

¹⁴ Ognisanti also appears to have accepted *converse* based on need. Ognisanti accepted its first *conversa* in 1724. Between 1724 and 1738, Ognisanti accepted four women as *converse*. The next *conversa* was accepted only in 1762, after she had completed a probation period during which her work habits had been tested; the next three *converse* were accepted in 1776, 1786, and 1794 respectively. Even though we do not know when these *converse* died or left Ognisanti, the pattern of acceptances indicates that Ognisanti admitted *converse* according to need, keeping a steady population of *converse*. ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Registri degli Atti Capitolari, pp. 32-33, 42, 51, 127.

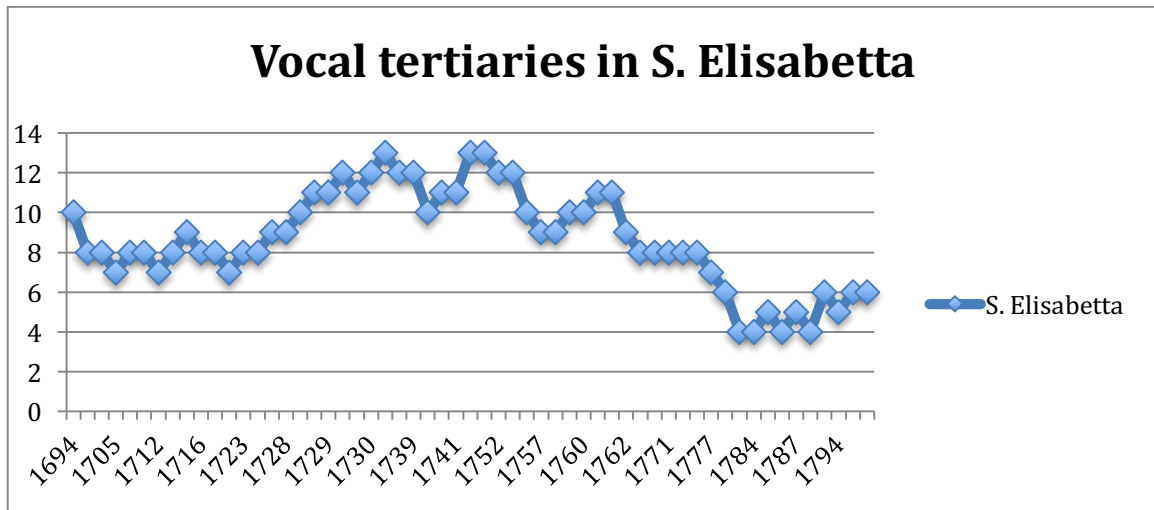


Figure 2.7: Vocal tertiaries in S. Elisabetta (Source: ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, Visite).

This resulted from a deliberate policy. During a regular visit in 1731, a Franciscan visitor assessed that S. Elisabetta was facing financial difficulties because the community had accepted more tertiaries than it could maintain financially. The visitor banned new admissions until “more and more places [in the convent] remain vacant.”¹⁵ By monitoring the community’s finances and population size, the Franciscan visitor fulfilled a duty placed upon him by the Council of Trent, which had decreed that annual income ought to determine the size of female monastic communities and had tasked religious orders and ecclesiastical authorities with monitoring the size of female communities.¹⁶ However, since the cohort pattern suggests that women religious were already seeking to control the population size of S. Elisabetta, the visitor’s intervention also highlights an enduring perception among the ecclesiastical hierarchy that women managed the finances of their monastic institutions badly, a perception that had led to the Tridentine decree in the first

¹⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, “Visite”, p. 78r.

¹⁶ Council of Trent, Session XXV, “On regulars and nuns”, Chapters III & IX. Hanover Historical Texts Project, <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct25.html> (accessed March 7, 2015).

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place.¹⁷ In S. Elisabetta, the decision to limit admissions in 1731 failed to improve the community's finances. During a pastoral visit in 1744, the visitor noted that S. Elisabetta operated on a deficit and used the private income of the tertiaries to keep the community afloat.¹⁸ In 1760, the archbishop of Bologna again banned new admissions in S. Elisabetta, evident also on fig.s 2.5 and 2.7. This second ban had a detrimental effect on S. Elisabetta. In a vivid petition to the vicar general of Bologna in 1777, the women religious lamented about the community's aging population and the resulting inability to complete daily tasks, the disrepair of the community's properties, and about mounting debts for grain and other necessities. The tertiaries asked the vicar general to lift the ban on new admissions to allow younger, able-bodied women to enter S. Elisabetta and bring much-needed dowry funds.¹⁹ A ban on admissions had thus not improved the community's finances. Rather, such bans restricted a community and its daily operations, as the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta argued. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century, S. Elisabetta saw a limited population recovery (fig. 2.5). In the case of S. Elisabetta, the eighteenth-century population decline therefore resulted from a deliberate policy and does not evidence a waning interest in third order monastic life.

¹⁷ Nuns' financial incompetence was referred to frequently in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries to justify top down reforms of women's monastic institutions. The myth of bad financial management was also adopted by historians of late medieval and Renaissance female monasticism, but this myth has been contested and overturned by more recent studies of the economic management of medieval and Renaissance convents. Constance H. Berman, "Abbeys for Cistercian Nuns in the Ecclesiastical Province of Sens. Foundation, Endowment and Economic Activities of the Earlier Foundations," *Revue Mabillon* 73 (1997): 83–113; Penelope D. Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), chap. 6; Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), chap. 4; Nancy Bradley Warren, *Spiritual Economies: Female Monasticism in Later Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), chap. 3.

¹⁸ AAB, VP, 57, p. 43v.

¹⁹ ASB, Notai, Gotti Pio Procolo Felice, 1777, num. 89.

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Deliberate internal policies and external events influenced the population sizes of all third order communities in Bologna. Despite this, however, the communities strove to maintain stable population sizes.

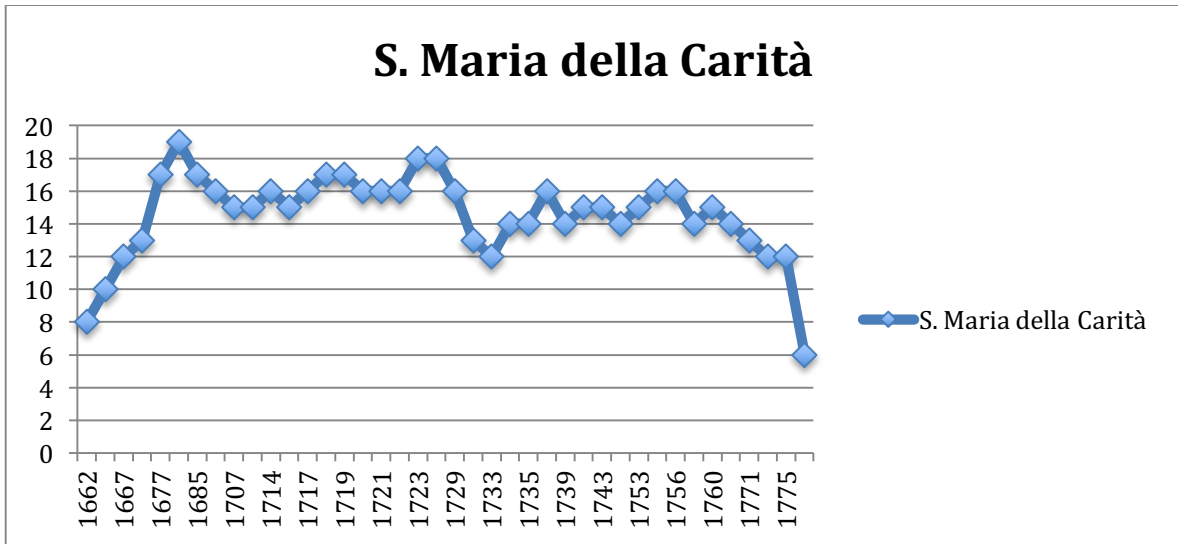


Figure 2.8: Vocal tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità (Source: ASB, Demaniale, 1/4847 – 5/4841).

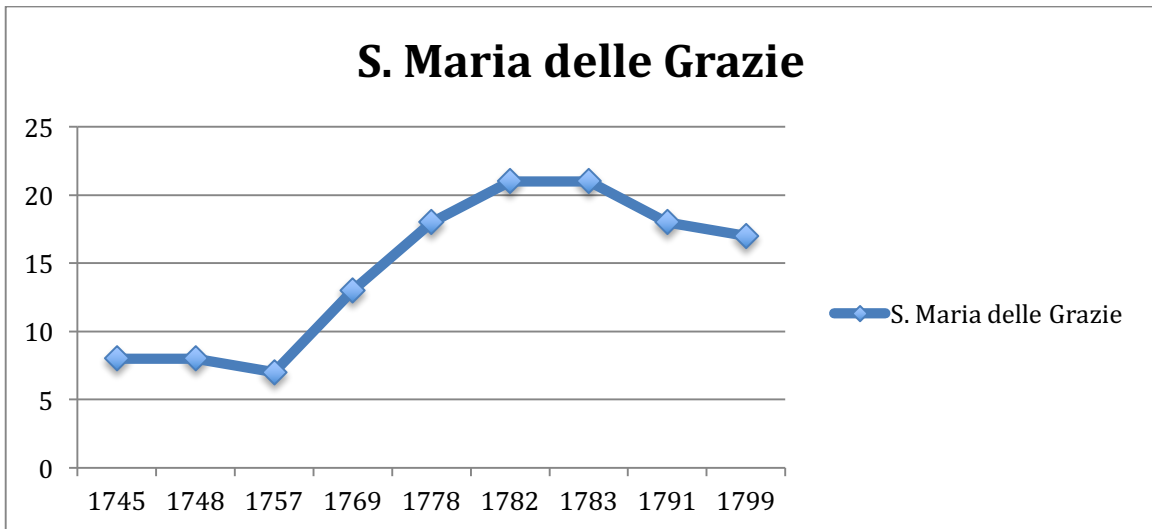


Figure 2.9: Vocal tertiaries in S. Maria delle Grazie (Source: ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768; ASB, Demaniale, 2/1769).

As S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and S. Elisabetta in Bologna, also the other communities in Bologna experienced regular population fluctuations. Following its foundation, the population of S. Maria della Carità was growing in the late-seventeenth century (fig. 2.8). This initial growth lasted until the late 1680s, when a decline set in.

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This decline coincided with a provisioning crisis in Bologna in the 1690s and the early 1700s.²⁰ A slow and fluctuating growth reassumed in the 1710s and the early-1720s, after which time a sharp decline decreased the population from eighteen vocal tertiaries to twelve vocal tertiaries between 1724 and 1733. The population of vocals tertiaries in S. Maria della Carità recovered partly by the late-1730s and remained steady until the 1770s, after which time a decline set in. Unfortunately, the in-house election records for S. Maria della Carità do not extend beyond the 1770s. Compared to S. Maria della Carità, the population graph of S. Maria delle Grazie (fig 2.9) shows a community that was still growing. Data is available from 1745 onwards and highlights the growth of the community after the death of Maria Maddalena Sangiorgi, the founder of S. Maria delle Grazie, in 1749; in 1753, the community also moved into a larger house on *via de' Mussolini* (present-day *via dei Tessitori*).²¹ The expansion of the community continued until the 1780s, after which time a slow decline is apparent in the 1790s. The causes for this decline remain unclear. Since other third order communities experienced a dip in their population after periods of initial growth following the foundation, the decline of the population of S. Maria delle Grazie in the 1790s may reflect a normal population curve of a still-developing community.

The eighteenth-century decline of the population of Ognisanti in Bologna was the result of a deliberate internal policy.

²⁰ Cesare Monari, *Storia di Bologna* (Bologna 1862), 654-655.

²¹ Alessandro Albertazzi, *In cammino: Madre Maria Maddalena Mazzoni e le Carmelitane delle Grazie dal 1724 ad oggi* (Pontecchio Marconi: Edizioni digigrafici, 2008), 163, 166.

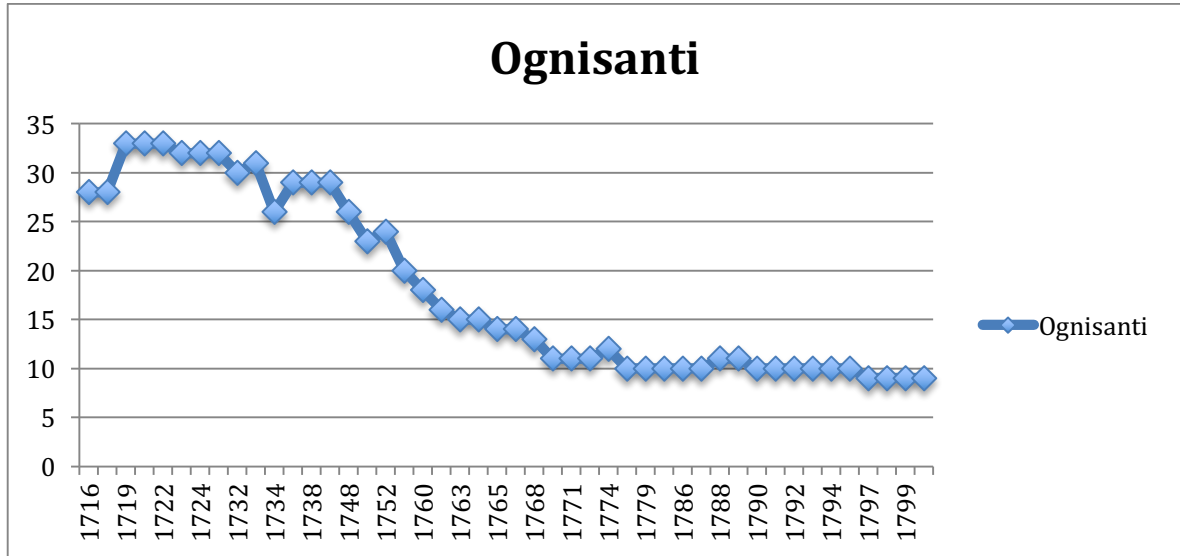


Figure 2.10: Vocal tertiaries in Ognisanti (Source: ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, “Registro degli Atti Capitolari. 1714 sino al 1768”; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, “Registro degli Atti Capitolari. 1768-...”).

In 1743, the Servite regional assembly in Modena learned about the mounting debts of Ognisanti and instructed two delegates to resolve the tertiaries’ financial problems. Communal life in Ognisanti was cancelled and, instead of a communion of property, every tertiary receive the investment income from her dowry and had to buy her own food and clothing.²² The measure aimed to reduce the number of tertiaries living in Ognisanti. In 1747, a Servite visitor restricted the population size of Ognisanti to twenty (vocal) tertiaries.²³ Between 1742 and 1764, the community admitted no new vocal tertiaries. The existing population of vocal tertiaries naturally declined to twenty women by 1758 and continued to decline until it reached eleven vocals by 1770. In 1768, communal life was restored partially, but the tertiaries still had to buy their own clothing and cover medical costs.²⁴ New tertiaries were accepted again regularly from 1771.²⁵ By

²² ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, “Registro degli Atti Capitolari”, p. 69.

²³ ASB, Demaniale, 164/6254, “Registro provinciale, 1733-1753”, p. 195r.

²⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Registro degli Atti Capitolari, pp. 150-151.

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then, however, the community was suffering from under population. The tertiaries petitioned the archbishop of Bologna in 1772 to shorten the novitiate and prepone the profession of three women who Ognisanti had accepted in 1771. The women religious claimed that they needed to “substitute” their deceased co-religious and increase their numbers, which currently included only women of advanced age who were incapable of fulfilling communal duties.²⁶ Similarly to S. Elisabetta, restrictions on admissions incapacitated the community rather than ensuring the sought-after financial recovery. Regular new entrances from the 1770s onwards ensured a stable population of about ten women until the end of the century. It must be noted that this period also saw the reduction of the dowry in Ognisanti from 2000 lire to 1500 lire.²⁷ I will return to this in the next chapter but the reduced dowry may have contributed to the late-eighteenth century population recovery in Ognisanti.

Conclusions

Current scholarship on monasticism in early modern Italy and Europe considers the eighteenth century as a century of decline; in fact, eighteenth-century monasticism tends to be overlooked in current historiography all together.²⁸ Derek Beales has provided a

²⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, July 7, 1742; ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290. “Registri degli Atti Capitolari”, p. 138; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, “Registri degli Atti Capitolari”, p. 13.

²⁶ AAB, MV, 286, 1772, 22 January; ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, 1772, 14 October. The three novices in question were three sisters, 31-year old Maria Anna Lamberti, 27-year old Maria Brigida Lamberti, and 24-year old Maria Catterina Lamberti, who had all passed a full probation year in an enclosed convent before transferring to Ognisanti in 1771. The dowry of the three sisters was negotiated by their maternal uncle, a priest named Giacomo Ferranti, who achieved a reduction of the sisters’ dowries and annual maintenance. Ognisanti received a 1500 lire dowry for each sister. ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Registro degli Atti Capitolari, p. 13.

²⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, “Registro degli Atti Capitolari”, p. 25.

²⁸ Histories of female monastic communities usually do not consider the period after the late-seventeenth century. In case eighteenth-century female monasticism is considered, it is usually in the context of Enlightened and revolutionary discourses on monasticism or the dissolution of convents. Mita Choudhury’s

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rare contradicting voice by rejecting the marginalization of eighteenth-century monasticism and arguing for the continued centrality of monasticism in Catholic Europe until the last decades of the eighteenth century, when monastic institutions came under attack by absolute monarchs and revolutionary authorities.²⁹ Supporting Beales's argument is the study by Elizabeth Rapley and Robert Rapley cited above, which argues for an uptake in female monastic recruitments in France in the 1780s, despite decades of low recruitment and consequent aging of monastic populations in the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁰ The Rapleys show that the mid-century decline was a result of deliberate royal policies that sought to control monastic property. Vocal tertiary populations in Bergamo and Bologna also showed a new, if limited, growth in the last decades of the eighteenth century, as this chapter has revealed. Cyclical population fluctuations in all third order communities and the study of cohorts in S. Giuseppe and S. Elisabetta evidences that third order communities sought to manage their populations, which included the admission of new women religious throughout the eighteenth century. Periodical breaks to admissions were part of such population management, which involved admission by cohorts. External authorities interfered with the communities' independent management of their populations through bans on admissions that were intended to improve financial management but, instead, destabilized the communities. As

excellent history of female monasticism in eighteenth-century France provides one such example, Choudhury, *Convents and Nuns in Eighteenth-Century French Politics and Culture*. Gabriella Zarri considers the eighteenth century a century of decline for female monasticism in Italy, characterized by diminishing population numbers and lacking institutional vibrancy, Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente."

²⁹ Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

³⁰ Rapley and Rapley, "An Image of Religious Women in the Ancien Régime: The états Des Religieuses of 1790-1791."

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the examples of S. Elisabetta and Ognisanti reveal, women religious actively sought to overturn such bans and return to the cohort dynamics. These population trends, and also the foundation of new third order communities like S. Maria delle Grazie in the eighteenth century, evidence that monastic communities remained relevant in Italy until the end of the eighteenth century, even if enclosed convents declined, as Gabriella Zarri has argued. Yet the internal and external decisions that influenced third order populations were not limited to bans on new admissions, but also included changes to dowry policies and in the demographics of women who entered these communities. To this, I now turn.

Chapter 3: The Third Order Women Religious

This chapter studies the women religious of third order communities through an analysis of monastic dowry contracts. In the words of the seventeenth-century jurist Giovanni Battista de Luca, monastic dowry was paid,

not to gain access to the habit or profession but to compensate for the temporal, or indeed profane, expenses that the monastery assumes in order to provide food, clothing, medicine, and other necessary things to the nun during her lifetime, in the manner of the dowry that is given to the husband to cover the expenses of a carnal marriage.¹

De Luca thus underscored the parallels between a monastic dowry and a marriage dowry. Yet, current scholarship has focused almost exclusively on marriage dowries. Dowry was a cornerstone of marriage in Renaissance and early modern Italy; legal marriage depended on the bride having a dowry proportional to her socioeconomic rank.² In early modern Tuscany, the dowry had to be commensurate to the expense of provisioning the newlywed couple in their first marriage year in a manner appropriate to the rank of the husband.³ In Bologna, local statutes referred to Roman law and defined dowry as serving

¹ Cited in Stefania T. Salvi, *Tra privato e pubblico: notai e professione notarile a Milano (secolo XVIII)* (Milan: Università degli Studi di Milano, Facoltà di Giurisprudenza, 2012), 305.

² Giulia Calvi and Isabelle Chabot, eds., *Le ricchezze delle donne: Diritti patrimoniali e poteri familiari in Italia (XIII-XIX secc.)* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1998); Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Samuel K. Cohn, *The Laboring Classes in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe, eds., *Marriage in Italy, 1300-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Elena De Marchi, “‘Dormì anno sulla cassinna’. Nubili e celibi di fronte al matrimonio nel milanese.,” *Storicamente* 6, no. 3 (2010), doi:10.1473/stor74; Thomas Kuehn, *Law, Family, and Women: Toward a Legal Anthropology of Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Chiara La Rocca, *Tra moglie e marito: Matrimoni e separazioni a Livorno nel Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009).

³ Maria Fubini Leuzzi, “*Condurre a onore*” *Famiglia, matrimonio e assistenza dotale a Firenze in Età Moderna* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1999), 97.

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“ad sustinenda onera matrimonii.”⁴ Monastic dowries resulted from Tridentine decrees on enclosure, which limited the ability of the women religious to gather alms and necessitated dowries to support the daily expenses of convent life.⁵ Current scholarship discusses monastic dowries as an economical alternative to marriage dowries that underwent a marked inflation between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁶ Scholars argue that placing one or more daughters in convent allowed families to dower their other daughter(s) and conserve family patrimonies.⁷ Such strategies caused forced monacizations and evidence the limited choices available to early modern women, who were locked in the framework of *aut maritus aut murus*, according to this scholarship.⁸

However, monastic dowries also inflated in the early modern period.⁹ Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, convents across Italy requested ever-higher

⁴ Lucia Ciammitti, “Quanto costa essere normali. La dote nel conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baraccano (1630-1680),” *Quaderni Storici* 53 (1983): 481.

⁵ Alessia Liroso, “Le doti monastiche. Il caso delle monache romane nel Seicento,” *Geschichte und Region/ Storia e regione* 19, no. 1 (2010): 51–71.

⁶ On dowry inflation in early modern Italy, Mauro Carboni, *Le doti della “povertà”. Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), 56–57; Irene Fosi and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, “Marriage and Politics at the Papal Court in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Marriage in Italy, 1300-1650*, ed. Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁷ Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society*, chaps. 7–8; Elisa Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII* (Milan: F. Angeli, 2001); Anne Jacobson Schutte, *By Force and Fear: Taking and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), chap. 1.

⁸ Romano Canosa, *Il velo e il cappuccio: Monacazioni forzate e sessualità nei conventi femminili in Italia tra Quattrocento e Settecento*, 2nd edition (Rome: sapere, 2000). Supporting the perception of early modern convents as warehouses of daughters who could not marry are works like Archangela Tarabotti’s *Inferno monacale*, Francesca Medioli, *L’inferno monacale di Arcangela Tarabotti* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990).

⁹ Fubini Leuzzi, “Condurre a onore” *Famiglia, matrimonio e assistenza dotale a Firenze in Età Moderna*, 170–171; Liroso, “Le doti monastiche. Il caso delle monache romane nel Seicento,” 60–61; Novi Chavarria,

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dowries and their population underwent gradual aristocratization.¹⁰ Monastic dowries differed greatly from convent to convent, as did the daily expenses that a dowry covered. In some convents, women religious received food, clothing, medicines, and all other essentials from their community; in others, women religious had to pay their own medical expenses for example.¹¹ To afford such additional, but vital, expenses, women religious either received additional allowances from family or worked to earn an income.¹² A woman seeking entrance in a monastic community also needed a trousseau and gifts to the clergy that officiated clothing and profession ceremonies as well as to the other women religious who attended these ceremonies. Such additional costs were similar to the costs borne by secular brides and their families.¹³ Yet these additional expenses

Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII, 113–118; Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*. Lucia Aiello, on the other hand, has argued for the stability of monastic dowries in seventeenth-century Milan, Lucia Aiello, “Monache e denaro a Milano nel XVII secolo,” in *L’uso del denaro: Patrimoni e amministrazione nei luoghi pii e negli enti ecclesiastici in Italia (secoli XV-XVIII)*, ed. Alessandro Pastore and Marina Garbellotti (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001), 337.

¹⁰ P. Renee Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Marina Caffiero, “Dall’esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all’apostolato sociale (1650-1850),” in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994); Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, 133–134.

¹¹ Salvi, *Tra privato e pubblico: notai e professione notarile a Milano (secolo XVIII)*, 305–306.

¹² An eighteenth-century manuscript depicts the works undertaken by nuns in second and third order convents in Bologna, Mario Fanti, *Abiti e lavori delle monache di Bologna in una serie di disegni del secolo XVIII* (Bologna: Tamari Editori, 1972).

¹³ Carboni considers the trousseau and other costs a significant addition to the dowry for middling rank families, Mauro Carboni, “The Economics of Marriage: Dotal Strategies in Bologna in the Age of Catholic Reform,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 39, no. 2 (2008): 386. On the parallels between marriage and monacization rites, K. J. P. Lowe, “Secular Brides and Convent Brides: Wedding Ceremonies in Italy during the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation,” in *Marriage in Italy, 1300-1650*, ed. Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). On expenses beyond the dowry that were increasingly common in early modern Italy and that Stanley Chojnacki has defined as ‘groomgift’, see also Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society*, chap. 3.

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beyond the dowry raised the cost of entering a monastic community. Even if placing a daughter in a monastic community might have been a strategic and an economical choice for the social elites, entry into a monastic community, like marriage, required long-term planning among the social strata below the elites.¹⁴ For large sections of the early modern society, the monastic dowry was rarely an economical alternative to the marriage dowry. The study of third order dowries thus also problematizes the perception of monasticism as a forced choice for early women, a choice born out of financial calculations, and reveals spaces for true vocation that may have even contravened familial strategies among some the lower social ranks.¹⁵

In this chapter, I study third order women religious through their dowries. I examine both prescriptive sources detailing standard dowry rates and communal expectations for new women religious as well as dowry contracts between third order communities and women religious that reveal biographical details about the women who entered third orders in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bergamo and Bologna. I have constructed a database of 107 dowry contracts and summaries of dowry contracts from Bologna and 218 dowry contracts and summaries of dowry contracts from Bergamo. This database allows comparisons between dowries in different third order communities and permits me to study how third order dowries were paid. Third order communities were institutions of the middling and professional ranks throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. In third orders, daughters of lawyers, doctors, and merchants, but

¹⁴ Sandra Cavallo has criticized current scholarship for taking the family model of the higher social orders as paradigmatic and extending it to the whole cross-section of early modern Italian society; she argues, instead, that class must be considered in the analysis of family strategies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. Sandra Cavallo, "Fatherhood and the Non-Propertied Classes in Renaissance and Early Modern Italian Towns," *The History of the Family* 17, no. 3 (2012): 309–25.

¹⁵ I would like to thank Raffaella Sarti for her question at the European Social Science History Conference in Valencia, March 30-April 2, 2016, which led me to consider this point.

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also of clerks, cobblers, and street vendors found a socially recognized status outside the early modern binary of wife or enclosed nun. The cost of entering a third order community was often comparable to the cost of marriage or monacization in an enclosed convent, especially for the middling ranks. Consequently, third order communities should be considered a third option alongside marriage and monacization for women in early modern Italy.

i. Dowry in third order communities

The first constitutions of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo established a 600 *scudi* dowry and a 200 *scudi* trousseau in the community in the 1640s. After a tertiary's profession, S. Giuseppe invested her dowry, which then provided an annual income to finance the daily expenses of the community. This income was not enough to finance the community, however. According to the constitutions, S. Giuseppe only accepted women who were able to pursue 'womanly crafts'. Craftwork generated additional income both for the community and the individual women religious, who were allowed to keep half of their earnings for personal use.¹⁶ From the mid-seventeenth century onwards, the dowry contracts of S. Giuseppe specified that women religious could expect food, clothing, and education from the community.¹⁷ The dowry contracts referred to no other expenses, for example medical expenses, which the women religious probably had to cover from personal funds. Many dowry contracts of vocal tertiaries included annual allowances, which would have allowed these women to pay for personal expenses without having to depend on income from craftwork. Seventy-eight of the hundred and fifty-one surviving

¹⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Statuti, "Per lo governo", "Delle doti per le sorelle".

¹⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994; ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Giuseppe.

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dowry records (52 per cent) included an annual allowance. The allowances ranged mostly between 6 *scudi* and 10 *scudi* a year, with some women religious receiving as little as 3 *scudi* a year while others received 30 *scudi* a year. Only the dowry contracts of vocal tertiaries included allowances; none of the surviving dowry contracts of *converse* includes allowances.¹⁸ After a pastoral visit in 1713, the bishop of Bergamo asked S. Giuseppe to establish norms regarding what a woman religious could expect from the community; the visit record stated that the women religious were fighting with one another the community treated every woman differently.¹⁹ The dowry and the trousseau did not cover the full expense of life in S. Giuseppe and it created inequalities between the women religious. No constitutions survive for S. Antonio in Bergamo; yet the sixty-seven surviving dowry contracts from S. Antonio are similar to the ones from S. Giuseppe. A woman had to possess a dowry and a trousseau, receive an annual allowance, and present gifts to clergy and the community during clothing and profession ceremonies to enter S. Antonio.²⁰ The expense of becoming a third order woman religious in Bergamo included more than just the dowry itself.

Similar terms of admission were set by third order communities in Bologna. The thirty-four surviving dowry contracts from S. Maria della Carità reveal that the community requested only a modest dowry and a trousseau until the 1710s, but provided its women religious neither daily food nor clothing in the seventeenth century.

¹⁸ ASDBg, *Monasteri femminili*, I, S. Giuseppe; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Gioseppe”; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “Libro dell’acettare vestire, profess.re & morte delle R.de Tertiare di San.to Gioseppe di Bergo.mo”; ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994.

¹⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2970, *Visite, Decreti fatti dall’E.mo, e R.mo Sig.re Cardinale Pietro Priuli Vescovo di Bergamo della Visita del Collegio delle Terziarie di S. Gioseppe nel Borgo S. Leonardo fatta li 6. Febraro 1713.*

²⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2945, *Doti spirituali.*

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Consequently, almost all (79 per cent) surviving pre-1710s dowry contracts included an annual allowance. The women religious probably used their allowances to purchase food, clothing, and other necessities. Around the year 1718, the dowry requested by S. Maria della Carità increased six-fold and the community began to provide its tertiaries with food and clothing; women religious were also expected to give gifts during the clothing and profession ceremonies. Dowry contracts from this period no longer include annual allowances.²¹ In the 1750s, the dowry contracts in S. Maria della Carità started to include again annual allowances in addition to the dowry, the trousseau, and the gifts.²² The example of S. Maria della Carità shows that a monastic dowry was not fixed but changed over time to reflect changes in the institutional organization of a monastic community.

Such changes in the dowry contracts can also be observed in other third order communities in Bologna in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Sixty-eight dowry records from Ognisanti survive for the period 1657 to 1796. Before the 1760s, women religious rarely brought anything in addition to their dowry to Ognisanti; their dowry contracts included neither trousseaus, annual allowances, nor gifts. In the 1760s, when Ognisanti began to accept women again after an admissions ban imposed by its Servite superiors, dowry contracts started to include annual allowances: ten of the fourteen (71 per cent) dowry contracts of vocal tertiaries included allowance after 1764.²³ Communal life, which had been revoked in 1743, was partially restored in Ognisanti in

²¹ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 43.

²² ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837 – 5/4841.

²³ ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283-8/6285; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Registro degli Atti Capitolari, pp. 13, 25, 41, 45-47, 49, 56-57, 88.

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1768; women religious had to still cover some living cost from personal funds.²⁴ The institutional organization of a monastic community impacted its dowry policies. The constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie stated in the 1720s that any woman who entered this community had to “give a dowry established before the profession, and linen so that these can be sewn and made use of by our holy community.”²⁵ However, eight of the ten surviving dowry contracts (80 per cent) also included gifts in addition to the dowry and the trousseau. These dowry contracts did not include annual allowances, however.²⁶ The constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie stated, “nobody will fatigue themselves to acquire food and clothing for themselves but [rather] everybody will work together with more care and happiness than they would [working] for their own benefit alone.”²⁷ As a community, S. Maria delle Grazie adopted a model of communal life that sought to eliminate private income. Comparing the dowry contracts of third order communities in Bologna and Bergamo, there are clear similarities between the various cost items of entering a community. Nevertheless, each community still had its own particular dowry policies that reflected its institutional organization and evolved over time.²⁸

²⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Registro degli Atti Capitolari, pp. 69, 150-151.

²⁵ BA, B4342, *Regole delle Terziarie Carmelitane di Bologna e vita della loro fondatrice Suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi*, Capitolo 2.

²⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768-2/1769.

²⁷ BA, B4342, *Regole delle Terziarie Carmelitane di Bologna e vita della loro fondatrice Suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi*, Capitolo 3.

²⁸ Neither constitutions nor a consistent body of dowry contracts survive for S. Elisabetta in Bologna. Studying dowries in S. Elisabetta over time is thus difficult. The twenty-three surviving dowry arrangements indicate that some women did bring a trousseau (nine out of twenty-three) and/or an annual allowance (five out of twenty-three). Yet, the available body of dowry contracts and summaries does not reveal any routine practices in S. Elisabetta, even when the dowry contract for Rosa Maria Luccarini from 1724 refers to the “usual expenses” requested by S. Elisabetta. ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 6; for dowry contracts, see ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451-13/4461.

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To understand better the change over time in third order dowries, I have plotted the standard dowries of vocal tertiaries in third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna. I have excluded the dowries of the *converse*, which were smaller compared to the dowries of vocal tertiaries. I have also excluded the dowries of those tertiaries, who entered with a reduced dowry or who deliberately paid a higher dowry. Numerous women received a dowry reduction for particular skills or abilities. Craig Monson and Robert Kendrick have shown that the ability to sing permitted some women to enter enclosed convents with discounted dowries.²⁹ The same happened in third order communities. Both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio in Bergamo accepted women with a reduced dowry if they possessed musical skills desired by the communities.³⁰ In the later-eighteenth century, S. Giuseppe accepted some women even without a dowry or a trousseau because they could sing or play the organ.³¹ I have not yet found any women in

²⁹ Robert L. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Craig A. Monson, *Disembodied Voices: Music and Culture in an Early Modern Italian Convent* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

³⁰ S. Giuseppe: Ottavia Rossi was accepted in 1667 with a reduced dowry because of her “virtues in music and in playing the organ” (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Rossi Ottavia). Margarita Cotta was accepted in 1686 with a reduced dowry because of her “musical virtues and other virtues”. The other virtues are not explained but Margarita’s father was Giacomo Cotta, a know artist from Bergamo, who also painted the chapel of S. Giuseppe (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Cotta Margarita; Nives Gritti, “Cotta Giacomo,” in *Dizionario biografico dei pittori bergamaschi*, ed. Noris Fernando (Azzano San Paolo (Bg): Bolis, 2006), 175–78.). Anna Maria Farina was accepted in 1711 with a reduced dowry because of her virtue in playing the organ (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Farina Anna Maria). S. Antonio: Emilia Ganazza was accepted in 1725 with a reduced dowry and was obliged to pay the dowry during all solemn occasions and during Masses celebrated in S. Antonio by the Father Confessor and the vicar of the nuns (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose). Giovanna Locatelli was accepted in 1728 with a reduced dowry due to her “virtues in the choir” (ASBg, Notarile, 8096, 24 December 1729).

³¹ Anna Maria Liurago entered S. Giuseppe without a dowry or a trousseau because she was accepted as a singer in 1751 (ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro over si describe l’accettatione, vestire, professare di ciascheduna sorella...*, p. 53). Marianna Altino entered S. Giuseppe without a dowry or a trousseau in return for singing, playing the organ, and teaching singing in 1767 (ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro over si describe l’accettatione, vestire, professare di ciascheduna sorella...*, p. 60). Finally, Orsola Botta entered S. Giuseppe without a dowry and with half a trousseau because she was accepted to play the organ in 1792 (ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro over si describe l’accettatione, vestire, professare di ciascheduna sorella...*,

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Bologna who received a dowry reduction in a third order community because of their musical ability. Some women, on the other hand, deliberately paid higher dowries, both in Bergamo and Bologna. There were two main reasons for this. First, women had to pay a higher dowry when they entered as *sopranumerarie*. As I discussed in Chapter 2, third order communities sought to maintain stable population sizes. Consequently, they only accepted new tertiaries when a place opened. Some women nevertheless entered third order communities when there were no free places as *sopranumerarie* in return of a higher dowry.³² The Church also prescribed a higher dowry when two or more biological sisters entered the same monastic community.³³ Second, women paid higher dowries when they were unable to, or unwilling to, labor for their community.³⁴ Higher and lower dowries were thus used to compose functioning communities, where also the tasks that required special skills were completed by the tertiaries themselves. Consequently, a path into third order communities opened also for women who otherwise might have been shut out due to the cost of the monastic dowry. Other women able to pay a higher dowry

unnumbered page). Similar discounted dowries were offered to organ players at S. Antonio (ASM, AGFR, 2942, Libro ove sono suntati gli Instrumento per livelli, Doti, ecc 1654 al 1798).

³² ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache.

³³ ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994. The Sacred Council of Bishops decided in 1616 that if two or more sisters entered the same convent, their dowries were doubled or tripled, Giancarlo Rocca, *Donne religiose. Contribuito a una storia della condizione femminile in Italia nei secoli XIX-XX* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1992), 17. ASM, AGFR, 2942, Libro ove sono suntati gli Instrumento per livelli, Doti, ecc 1654 al 1798.

³⁴ Giovanna Fiessi, Renata Santi, and Maria Giuseppa Sanfelice all paid a premium to be released of in-house offices and tasks when they professed in Ognisanti in the 1730s and 1750s (ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, October 13, 1736; *ibid*, October 13, 1746 secondo; ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, February 23, 1759). *Suor* Maria Gioseffa Carminati paid an extra 200 *scudi* to S. Antonio “for the defect of her eyes” in 1750; *suor* Lodovica Mazzoleni paid a higher dowry to S. Antonio “due to defects of nature that leave her excused from all in-house offices” in 1780 (ASM, AGFR, 2942). Elissa Weaver considers such practices as a means to create distinction and enforce privilege in a convent community, Elissa B. Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24–25. See also Lirosi, “Le doti monastiche. Il caso delle monache romane nel Seicento,” 64–65.

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decided to do so to relieve themselves of arduous tasks, securing a comfortable living and a place of honor in a third order community at a fraction of the cost a similar position would have cost in an enclosed community. For comparative purposes, I have excluded these lower and higher dowries from the graphs. The currency used in Bolognese was the *lira*; dowry contracts in Bergamo tended to be in *scudo* (1 *scudo* = 7 *lire*).

The dowries of third order communities fluctuated in the decades immediately after a community's foundation, after which time a standard dowry emerged (fig.s. 3.1 and 3.2). This standard dowry either remained constant over a long time period (1000 *scudi* or 7000 *lire* S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, 2000 *lire* in S. Elisabetta in Bologna) or increased in the course of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries (from 1000 *lire* to 1500 *lire* and to 2000 *lire* in Ognisanti, from 300 *lire* to 2000 *lire* in S. Maria della Carità, and from 1000 *lire* to 2000 *lire* in S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna; from 200 *scudi* to 400 *scudi* and to 800 *scudi* in S. Antonio in Bergamo).³⁵ The last decades of the eighteenth century witnessed either new dowry fluctuations (between 800 *scudi* and 1300 *scudi* in S. Antonio and between 800 *scudi* and 1000 *scudi* in S. Giuseppe in Bergamo) or a decrease of the standard dowry (from 2000 *lire* to 1500 *lire* in Ognisanti in Bologna). These new fluctuations of the previously established standard dowry in the late-eighteenth century may evidence either difficulties with recruitment or attempts to appeal to a wider demographic. As I discussed in Chapter 2, almost all third order communities saw a slight uptake in new professions in the late-eighteenth century. More relaxed dowry policies may have contributed to this population uptake, in which case the dowries had been too high before. I propose below that third order dowries reached a ceiling in the

³⁵ The dowry in Elisabetta also seems stable over the *longue durée*. However, as footnote 28 explains, data from S. Elisabetta is limited.

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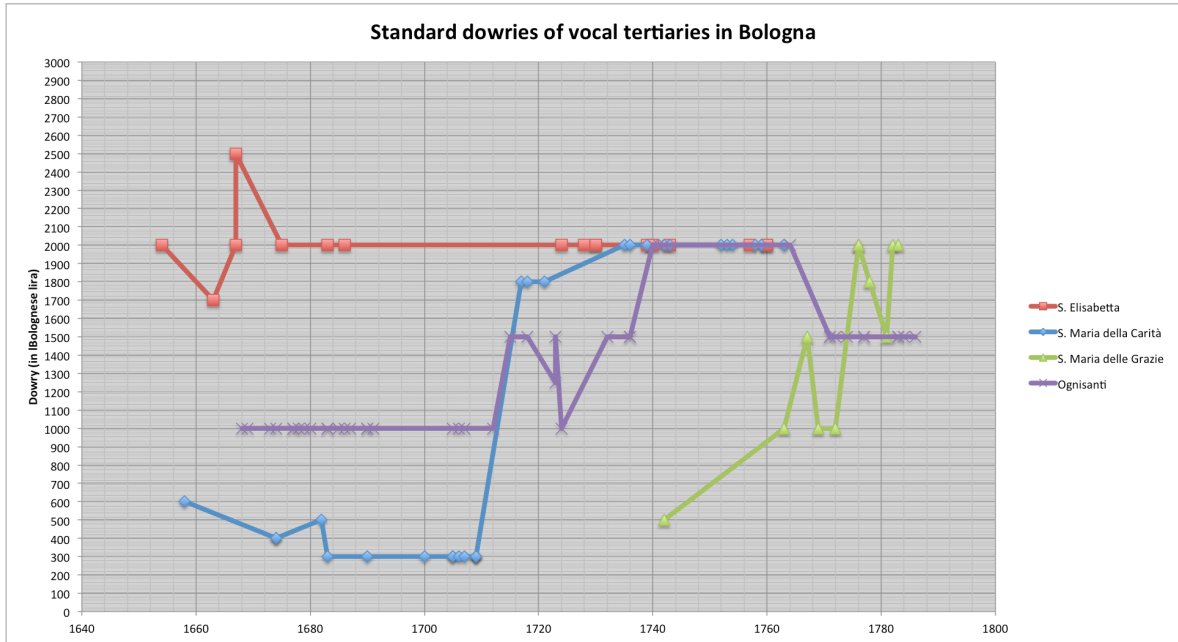


Figure 3.1: Standard third order dowries in Bologna (Source: ASB, Demaniale 2/4450-13/4461; ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, “Libro Maestro”; ASB, Demaniale, 31/4479, “Libro Maestro”; ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, “Visite”; ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768- 2/1769; ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, “Registro degli Atti Capitolari. 1714 sino al 1768”; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, “Registro degli Atti Capitolari. 1768-...”; ASB, Demaniale, 1/4847 – 5/4841.)

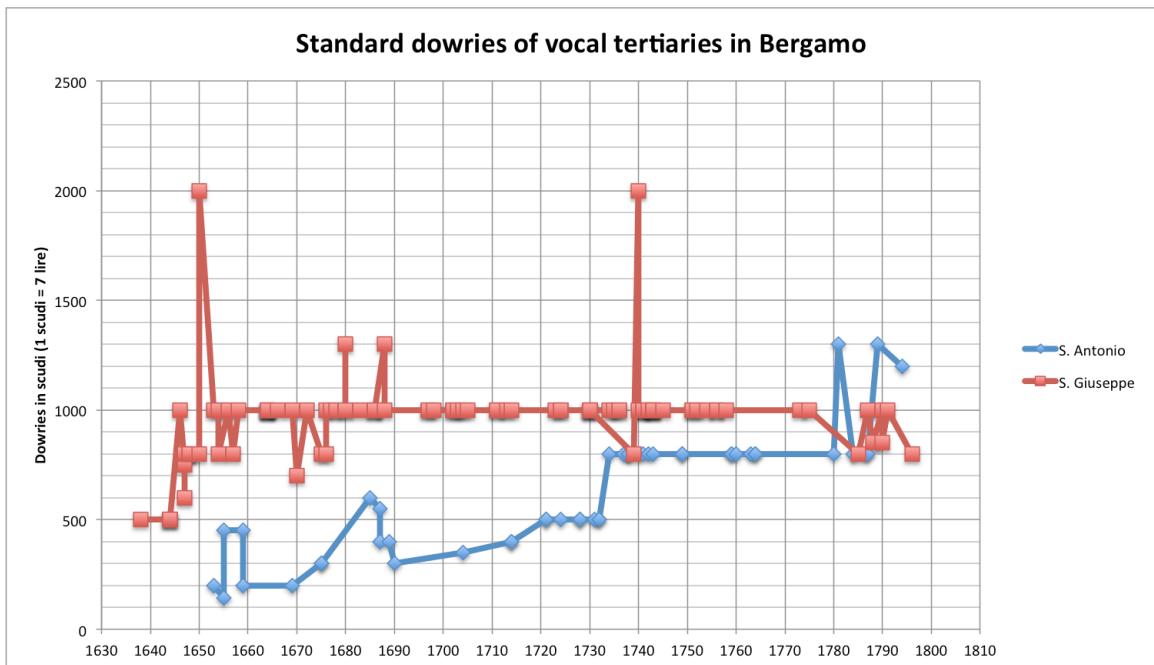


Figure 3.2: Standard third order dowries in Bergamo (Source: ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C”; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “Libro dell’acettare vestire professa e morte delle R.de Tertiare di San.to Giuseppe di Bergamo.”; ASM, AGFR, 2945; ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 8091, 8098, 8103, 8588, 8589, 11415; ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Antonio di Padova).

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eighteenth century and became too costly for the middling and professional ranks who sustained these communities; in order to attract new professions, more relaxed dowry policies became necessary.

To understand the full cost of entering a third order community, the trousseau and the other expenses beyond the dowry must also be considered. These additional expenses could equal the cost of the dowry. As referenced above, the constitutions of S. Giuseppe asked for a 200 *scudi* trousseau. Some dowry contracts of S. Giuseppe also refer to a trousseau ‘policy’, indicating that the community expected women to bring particular items with them. Three itemized trousseau lists survive from S. Giuseppe. In 1689, Giacomo Gottardi from Vertova, a community ca. 20 km north-east of Bergamo, had to deliver the trousseau of his sister, Giovanna Gottardi, who had entered S. Giuseppe in 1680.³⁶ The list of items expected from Gottardi included a shirt and napkins for the father confessor, a napkin for the local vicar, napkins for the chaplain and his servants, as well as 40 ells of black veils, a chasuble, two pewter plates, a painting of a saint, another 66 ells of various types of cloth, a blanket, and *para quattro pani di zuccaco con riserva*.³⁷ An undated “Poliza della Dote, e Mobili per il Collegio di S. Gio” advises that in addition to a 1000 *scudi* dowry, women who wished to enter S. Giuseppe had to have a trousseau and an allowance. The trousseau – a much longer list of items than expected from Gottardi – included various clothing items, stockings and shoes, various types of cloth, furniture for personal use, a painting, a crucifix, bed linen and bed warmers, two dining sets, a chasuble, and four spiritual meditation books. In addition, this policy also

³⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, p. 16r.

³⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2974, Crediti Gottardi. I have not identified what “pani di zuccaco con riserva” were.

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listed a gift of cloth to the prelate, a shirt and two napkins to the father confessor, napkins to chaplains, napkins to servants, monetary gifts to the sacristan, and gifts of cloth to the community's administrators – all items to be presented during the clothing and profession ceremonies. Feasts of veal, liver, mortadella, bread, butter, white and red wine, cheese, and sweets also had to be prepared after both the clothing and the profession ceremony.³⁸ A comparison of this undated “Poliza della Dote, e Mobili per il Collegio di S. Gio” and the 1680 Gottardi list highlights how short the later was. Since Gottardi was nine years late with the delivery of his sister's trousseau, S. Giuseppe seem to have expected only the gifts that the women religious had probably already presented to the clergy who had officiated at Giovanna Gottardi's profession ceremony in 1683.³⁹ The undated *poliza*, on the other hand, seems to itemize the full trousseau of S. Giuseppe. A third itemized list confirms this. A policy from 1726 lists a 1000 *scudi* dowry, a 50 *scudi* fee for the novitiate year, and a trousseau as necessary for entering S. Giuseppe. For the trousseau, the third policy lists various clothing items, stockings and shoes, various types of cloth, furniture for personal use, bed linen and bed warmers, a foot warmer, and two dining sets. The third policy does not include gifts for the clergy; moreover, the policy limits the cost of the feasts after the clothing and profession ceremonies.⁴⁰ The similarities between the gift items in the Gottardi trousseau and the undated policy, and the disappearance of these gifts from the third dowry policy in 1726 seem to date the undated “Poliza della

³⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2991, Religiose P. G., “Poliza della Dote, e Mobili per il Collegio di S. Gio”.

³⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2974, Crediti Gottardi.

⁴⁰ ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Giuseppe, “Poliza della dote, mobili, e altre spese tutte da osservarsi nell'ingresso, e professione delle citelle corali del Collegio di S. Giuseppe di Bergamo in esecuzione de' Decreti Sinodali.”

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Dote, e Mobili per il Collegio di S. Gio” to the late-seventeenth or the early-eighteenth century. Together, the three lists underscore the considerable expense beyond the dowry that entering a third order community brought with it. And these three lists did not include annual allowances. Neither the undated *poliza* nor the 1726 list include prices; however, the items expected of Gottardi in 1689 cost 412 *lire* (ca. 58 *scudi*), which did not include the painting, the two pewter plates, the blanket, and the *para quattro pani di zuccaco con riserva*.⁴¹ The constitutions of S. Giuseppe set the cost of the trousseau at 200 *scudi*. Considering the three trousseau lists, families certainly paid 200 *scudi* and even more to help their female relatives become women religious in S. Giuseppe. The discontinuation of gifts and the limits on the cost of the feasts in 1726 raises the possibility that S. Giuseppe sought to minimize the financial burden on families in the eighteenth century.

Trousseau in other third order communities were similar to that of S. Giuseppe. In 1689, Catterina Gambirasi entered S. Antonio in Bergamo. Her brother, dom Antonio Gambirasi listed the items that Catterina brought to S. Antonio in her trousseau. The list included furniture for Catterina’s room in S. Antonio, various types of cloth, a crucifix, a Franciscan breviary as well as a breviary for Bergamo, a spiritual book, bed warmers, two sets of tableware, a bed with blankets and bed linen, a painting of the Virgin Mary, napkins and tablecloths, shoes and stockings, shirts, coats, two religious habits, and buttons. The total cost of Catterina Gambirasi’s trousseau was 1627 *lire* and 17 *soldi*. In addition, dom Gambirasi paid 18 *scudi* (126 *lire*) and two loads of grain and six vats of wine (worth 90 *lire*) for his sister’s first novitiate year and 14 *scudi* (98 *lire*) and another

⁴¹ ASM, AGFR, 2974, Crediti Gottardi.

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two loads of grain and six vats of wine (worth 82 *lire*) her second novitiate year; dom Gambirasi also paid 105 *lire* for the feast on the day of Catterina's acceptance, 206 *lire* and 18 *soldi* for the feast and gifts of her clothing ceremony, and 274 *lire* and 8 *soldi* for the feast and gifts of her profession ceremony. In total, the cost of Catterina Gambirasi's trousseau, novitiate fees, gifts, and feasts reached 2653 *lire* (or 379 *scudi*) – a sum almost equal to Catterina's 400 *scudi* dowry.⁴² In Bologna in the 1680s, a woman entering Ognisanti had to pay a 1000 *lire* dowry, furnish her room in the community, bring utensils and pots for the communal kitchen and cellars as well as linen for personal use, twenty-three ells of woolen cloth, twenty ells of spun cloth, a belt, a painting of the Virgin, a brass crucifix, two pairs of slippers, and a *fiorno*. She also had to provide monetary gifts to the women religious and the confessor of Ognisanti and make a donation to the community's chapel.⁴³ The cost of Ognisanti's expansive trousseau is not included with this list but it was certainly an expensive addition to the dowry. Annamaria Taruffi, who entered S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna in 1769, had a trousseau that cost half of her 1000 *lire* dowry;⁴⁴ a decade later, Giuseppe Cortellini paid "the usual" dowry of 2000 *lire* and another 1200 *lire* to cover the expenses of his sister Angiola's entrance

⁴² ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 31 October 1689. In 1690, Angelica Vecchi entered S. Antonio with a dowry of 300 *scudi*, to which her brother dom Defendo Vecchi promised to add another 100 *scudi* after his death. Dom Defendo also delivered Angelica's trousseau, which was comparable to that of Catterina Gambirasi (ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 12 August 1690).

⁴³ ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279 "Lista delle spese per farsi una Suora Tertiaria del ordine de Servi di M. V. nella Casa Regolare e Conviventi in Bologna". I have been unable to identify what a "fiorno" was.

⁴⁴ Annamaria Taruffi – a twenty-six-year-old ex-charge of the conservatory of S. Croce – received a 1000 *lire* dowry from S. Croce and the conservatory also paid 500 *lire* for additional expenses, listed in "Lisa di tutte le spese che si ricerca per fare una Suora del Terz'Ordine della B.ma Vergine del Carmine di perfetta Vita Comune nel Monastero di S.a M.a Madalena de Pazzi di Bologna detto delle Grazie". The document includes an itemized list of furniture and clothing items, religious habits, gifts, lunches on the days of the clothing and the profession ceremonies, as well as fees for the novitiate period. ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 26, num. 168.

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in S. Maria delle Grazie.⁴⁵ To understand the full cost of entering a third order community, trousseaus and any additional fees must be considered.⁴⁶ These expenses further problematize the scholarship that considers monastic dowries as an economical alternative to marriage dowries. Convents may have been an economical alternative for the elites, but the entrance of a family member in a convent or a third order community represented a considerable expense for families below the socioeconomic elites.

A comparison of marriage and monastic dowries in sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Bergamo and Bologna underscores that monastic dowries were not an economical alternative for the non-elites. Bologna saw elite marriage dowries inflate

⁴⁵ Angiola was also a charge of S. Croce. Her 2000 lire dowry was comprised of various dowry subsidies that Angiola had received between 1778 and 1782, as well as a dowry subsidy that Angiola's aunt had received in 1739 and that was now transferred to Angiola (ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768, 1783, 21 February; ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 27, num. 45). A year earlier, in 1782, Maria Clementina Sarti entered S. Maria delle Grazie with a dowry of 2000 lire and a trousseau of 500 lire (ASB, Demaniale, 2/1769, 1782, 12 January).

⁴⁶ The costs of the trousseau and additional expenses were high also for the women who entered third order communities as *converse*. Anna Cevenini entered S. Maria della Carità in Bologna as a *conversa* in 1756; in addition to a 500 lire dowry and a 10 lire 10 soldi annual allowance paid by Anna's brothers, her maternal uncle paid 200 for her trousseau and additional expenses (ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 45). In the same year, Anna Stanzani also entered S. Maria della Carità as a *conversa* with a dowry of 500 lire, to which were added a 5 lire annual allowance and a 200 lire trousseau (ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 49). Rosa Buttazzoni entered S. Elisabetta in Bologna as a *conversa* in 1772; in addition to her 500 lire dowry, Rosa paid 302 lire and 6 soldi in further fees and expenses. Her dowry consisted of two Monte del Matrimonio accounts opened by her father, first in 1754 and the second in 1759. By 1772, the two credits were worth 802 lire and 6 soldi (base investment plus interest) (ASB, Demaniale, 13/4461, num. 16). Similar proportional relationship between the cost of a *conversa* dowry and the cost of her trousseau can also be traced in the third order communities in Bergamo. In S. Giuseppe, Elisabetta Paganoni brought 200 scudi in dowry and a 100 scudi trousseau in 1646 (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Paganoni Elisabetta); Maria Foini brought a dowry of 700 lire and a trousseau of 400 lire in 1708 (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Foglieni Maria); Lucrezia Fumagalli brought a dowry of 200 scudi and a trousseau of 100 scudi in 1740 (ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro over si descrive l'accettazione, vestire, professare di ciascheduna sorella...*, p. 38); Elisabetta Locatelli brought a dowry of 200 scudi and a trousseau of 100 scudi in 1745 (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Locatelli Elisabetta); Felice Nespole brought a dowry of 200 scudi and a trousseau of 100 scudi in 1753 (ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro over si descrive l'accettazione, vestire, professare di ciascheduna sorella...*, p. 52). In S. Antonio, Elisabetta Pedrali brought a dowry of 150 scudi and extras including furnishings, wine, and 50 scudi in 1681 (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose); Maria Mazzoleni brought a dowry of 1400 lire and extras worth of 400 lire and 11 soldi in 1727 (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose); Teresa Maffi brought a dowry of 200 scudi and extras worth of 100 scudi in 1738 (ASBg, Notarile, 8102, 4 January 1738). However, third order communities in Bergamo also accepted *converse* who brought only a small dowry and no trousseau (ASBg, Notarile, 8091, 13 April 1722; ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose).

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from 2,000 *lire* in the early 1500s to 12,000 *lire* in 1600 and to 50,000 *lire* by the 1650s.⁴⁷ The marriage dowries of artisans, shopkeepers, city clerks, and university lecturers were between 100 *lire* to 200 *lire* in the late-sixteenth century; these dowries roughly equaled the annual salary of the male heads of household among these middling ranks. The dowries of the poor remained below 50 *lire*.⁴⁸ In the seventeenth century, the marriage dowries of the middling ranks also inflated to between 200 *lire* and 1600 *lire*.⁴⁹ Annual wages, however, remained unchanged or declined in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Families relied increasingly on dowry charity, subsidies, and municipal dowry banks to afford a dowry and, consequently, marriage or monacization.⁵⁰ Dowry policies in various urban conservatories in Bologna highlight the dowry inflation between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. The conservatory of S. Maria Baraccano provided its charges a dowry of 100 *lire* in the 1550s-1560s, a dowry of 200 *lire* in the 1580s, and a dowry of 300 *lire* in the early-seventeenth century.⁵¹ By the mid-seventeenth century, S. Maria Baraccano provided a dowry of 700 to 900 *lire*; women left

⁴⁷ Carboni, “The Economics of Marriage: Dotal Strategies in Bologna in the Age of Catholic Reform,” 375.

⁴⁸ Carboni, *Le doti della “povertà”. Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 44–45; Nicholas Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 2013, 217–220.

⁴⁹ Carboni, *Le doti della “povertà”. Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 187.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 44–59, 134–136. The seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries were a period of economic decline in Italy. Various studies highlight wage stagnation during this period. Paolo Malanima, “An Age of Decline. Product and Income in Eighteenth-Nineteenth Century Italy,” *Rivista Di Storia Economica*, no. 1 (2006): 91–134; Paolo Malanima, “When Did England Overtake Italy? Medieval and Early Modern Divergence in Prices and Wages,” *European Review of Economic History* 17, no. 1 (2013): 45–70; Guido Alfani, “Economic Inequality in Northwestern Italy: A Long-Term View (Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries),” *The Journal of Economic History* 75, no. 4 (2015): 1086–1087.

⁵¹ Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 252–253.

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this conservatory to marry craftsmen and artisans.⁵² The conservatory of S. Croce gave its charges a 300 *lire* marriage dowry and a 500 *lire* monastic dowry in the early-seventeenth century.⁵³ By 1735, S. Croce paid a 1500 *lire* marriage dowry and a 2000 *lire* monastic dowry.⁵⁴ Scholars argue that monastic dowries constituted between a tenth and a third of elite marriage dowries in early modern Italy.⁵⁵ In Bologna, enclosed convents demanded a dowry of 2000 *lire* at the turn of the sixteenth century;⁵⁶ by the end of the seventeenth century, monastic dowries in enclosed convents had also inflated and reached 4000 *lire*.⁵⁷ Comparing third order dowries in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bologna (fig. 3.1) to marriage and monastic dowries in early modern Bologna, we see that most third order dowries cost less than the marriage dowries of the middling ranks or monastic dowries of enclosed convents in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, however, third order dowries inflated above middling rank marriage dowries and equaled low monastic dowries. In fact, the decision of the conservatory of S. Croce to pay a maximum 2000 *lire*

⁵² Ciammitti, “Quanto costa essere normali. La dote nel conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baraccano (1630-1680).”

⁵³ ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 1, *Capitoli della Congreg.ne delle Citelle di S. Croce 1609*.

⁵⁴ Ibid., *Statuti, ed ordini sopra il governo delle zittelle del Conservatorio di S. Croce. Nuovamente riveduti, e riformati, e dall’Eminentissimo, e Reverendissimo Sig. Cardinale Vincenzo Malvezzi Arcivescovo approvati, e confermati l’anno 1760*, pp. 25-26. Nicholas Terpstra discusses conservatory dowries in Nicholas Terpstra, *Abandoned Children of the Italian Renaissance: Orphan Care in Florence and Bologna* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 268–275.

⁵⁵ Zari, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, 55–56; Novi Chavarría, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII*, 114.

⁵⁶ Carboni, “The Economics of Marriage: Dotal Strategies in Bologna in the Age of Catholic Reform,” 376; Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 222.

⁵⁷ Carboni, *Le doti della “povertà”. Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 171; Fubini Leuzzi, “Condurre a onore” *Famiglia, matrimonio e assistenza dotale a Firenze in Età Moderna*, 170–171; Liroso, “Le doti monastiche. Il caso delle monache romane nel Seicento,” 60–61; Novi Chavarría, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII*, 113–118.

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monastic dowry to its charges in 1735 coincided with the convergence of third order dowries in Bologna at 2000 *lire* (fig. 3.1).⁵⁸ Around this time several third order communities in Bologna also started to experience a population decline, as I discussed in Chapter 2. Even though population decline in these communities resulted from admission bans, if we consider third order populations (fig.s. 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10) side-by-side with third order dowries (fig. 3.1), it seems that third order dowries reached a ceiling that affected recruitment in the mid-eighteenth century. Only after the dowries became more flexible in the late-eighteenth century, did recruitment pick up again. The convergence of dowries also reveals a homogenization of third order communities in Bologna in the eighteenth century, with all communities demanding similar dowries but also similar additional expenses, as discussed above.

In Bergamo, the dowries of S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio did not converge (fig. 3.2). Within two decades of its foundation, S. Giuseppe's dowry settled at 1000 *scudi* (7000 *lire*) and remained at this level until the end of the eighteenth century. In 1734, a local synod changed the dowry of S. Giuseppe from 1000 *scudi effettivi* to 1000 *scudi correnti* to facilitate payment; this change affected also other monastic institutions in Bergamo, all of which had been experiencing difficulties in receiving timely dowry payments.⁵⁹ Beneath a façade of stability, S. Giuseppe's dowry thus reflected inflation and changed in step with fluctuations of the *scudo* after 1734.⁶⁰ In the same year, the

⁵⁸ Several ex-charges of S. Croce entered third order communities in the eighteenth century, particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century. ASB, Conservatorio S. Croce, pp. 26-27.

⁵⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2991, "1734, 17 giugno. Notasi".

⁶⁰ The early modern period saw the value of the various currencies used on the Italian peninsula depreciate considerably; the value of the *scudo effettivo* (real currency) and the *scudo correnti* (nominal currency) increasingly differed. A monetary history of Italy can be found in, Carlo M. Cipolla, *La avventura della lira* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001 [1975]).

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tertiaries of S. Antonio petitioned the bishop of Bergamo to raise their dowry from 500 *scudi* to 800 *scudi*; the women religious claimed that increasing daily expenses necessitated a higher dowry.⁶¹ The dowries of S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio roughly equaled the dowries of enclosed convents in Bergamo. For example, the enclosed convent of S. Benedetto commanded a dowry of 700 *scudi* in the 1670s.⁶² However, these monastic dowries were cheaper than the marriage dowries of the professional ranks in Bergamo.⁶³ The mother of Maddalena Moroni, who entered S. Giuseppe in 1711, had married Maddalena's father Giacomo with a dowry of 1400 *scudi* in the late-seventeenth century.⁶⁴ The second wife of the medical doctor Cristoforo Girelli, whose daughter was a tertiary in S. Giuseppe, had a dowry of 1000 *scudi* in the late-seventeenth century.⁶⁵ One of Girelli's daughters, the only one who married, had a dowry of 2800 *scudi*.⁶⁶ Comparing the dowries of S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio to the marriage and monastic

⁶¹ ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Antonio di Padova, Varie, "Monsignore Ill.mo, e R.mo..." (January 14, 1734). Lucia Aiello has pointed out a substantial increase in the cost of living faced by monastic institutions in Milan in the seventeenth century. Based on her calculations, the cost of maintaining a choir nun in an enclosed monastery increased from 190 lire in 1576 to 230 lire in 1664 and to 240 lire in 1694. Aiello, "Monache e denaro a Milano nel XVII secolo," 363. Due to its vicinity to Milan, the economy of Bergamo was closely connected to the economy of Milan, despite the towns political ties to Venice.

⁶² Ermenegildo Camozzi, *Processi e cronache giudiziarie tra Bergamo e Venezia (sec. XVI-XVIII). Da documenti inediti dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano*. (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2011), 18.

⁶³ The early modern middling ranks were a diverse group with internal hierarchies of its own. Professionals such as notaries and medical doctors occupied the very highest reaches of this group and commanded a very different social and economic position than artisans or urban workers who also belonged to the middling ranks. James S. Amelang, "Social Hierarchies: The Lower Classes," in *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance*, ed. Guido Ruggiero (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

⁶⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2994, Moroni Maddalena. Giacomo Moroni owned real estate in Borgo S. Leonardo in Bergamo. Even though his profession is unknown, the fact that he owned a house would have secured him a place among the upper middling ranks of the early modern Italian society.

⁶⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2983, Testamento dell'Ecc.mo Sig.re Dottore Cristoforo Girelli.

⁶⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2983, Alberi della famiglia Girelli.

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dowries in contemporary Bergamo, S. Giuseppe demanded a dowry was in line with the marriage and monastic dowries of the town's professional ranks. S. Antonio asked a lower dowry and seems to have recruited from a lower socioeconomic rank than S. Giuseppe, which will be confirmed below. The dowries of S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio did not converge in the course of the eighteenth century. The two communities maintained differentiated institutional identities. Both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio were located in Borgo S. Leonardo, a short distance from each other. The physical proximity may have necessitated clearly defined institutional profiles and roles in the local neighborhood. In the 1780s and the 1790s, both communities relaxed their dowry policies (fig. 3.2). As in Bologna, this was necessary to encourage recruitment (fig.s. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2).

Comparing third order dowries in Bergamo and Bologna reveals, on the one hand, similarities between the expenses and fees necessary to enter a third order community and, on the other hand, institutional differences in the evolution of dowry and the additional fees. In Bologna, third order communities also homogenized in the eighteenth century. Such progressive homogenization of dowries and related fees evidences that a third order institutional identity emerged in Bologna in the eighteenth century. However, both in Bologna and Bergamo, third order communities increasingly became to resemble also the enclosed convents that requested various fees in addition to the dowry. The monastic dowry model that had developed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy was adopted in third order communities by the eighteenth century. Kate Lowe has underlined the parallels between the rites of marriage and the rites of profession in an

(enclosed) monastic institution.⁶⁷ Entering a third order community should also be considered in this comparison as yet a third way to ‘take a status’ (‘prendere lo stato’) in early modern Italy. Yet, as dowries inflated, it was increasingly difficult for women to join these communities. But who were the women who became third order women religious?

ii. Characteristics of the women joining third order communities

Women of middling and professional ranks entered third order communities. Prescriptive sources like rules and constitutions show that third order communities sought women of similar condition and character. Dowry contracts, however, reveal, marked differences between communities in Bergamo and Bologna as well as single communities in each town. In Bergamo, S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe recruited women from an extended geographic area that included both Bergamo as well as the mountain valleys to the north and the plains to the south of the town. In Bologna, third order communities recruited their inhabitants from the town of Bologna. The women who entered third order communities in Bologna were of a lower socioeconomic rank than the women who entered third order communities in Bergamo. Such differences point towards a different position of third order communities in the societies of Bergamo and Bologna and raise questions about the size and strength of the middling and professional ranks in each town in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

The constitutions of S. Giuseppe described the women who could become women religious in the community as follows in the 1640s,

⁶⁷ Lowe, “Secular Brides and Convent Brides: Wedding Ceremonies in Italy during the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation.”

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They must be at least sixteen years old and born of a legal marriage between an honorable father and an honorable mother. They must have a good reputation, they must be virgins and not married. Widows can be admitted to the congregation only with great caution and after the matter has been discussed with the administrators of the congregation, and after the candidate has received the approval of all the religious women already in the community. Virgins are admitted after the candidate has received the approval of the majority of the religious women already in the community. Before the religious women vote on the admission of a candidate, they must inquire and receive information about the candidate's life and habits, and in particular about her physical health.⁶⁸

The constitutions established an age limit and described the desired social and physical characteristics of a woman entering S. Giuseppe. She had to have an honorable family and a good reputation. The community preferred unmarried women to married women: the latter needed the approval of all current tertiaries, the former just the approval of the majority. S. Giuseppe preferred young women from well-established families, also confirmed by the relatively high dowry requirement discussed above. Yet, the constitutions also prescribed an inquiry into the physical health of the women seeking entrance. Since dowries did not cover the daily expenses of S. Giuseppe, women religious were expected to work. S. Giuseppe could not afford a tertiary who did not work and became a burden on the community. As shown in Chapter 2, S. Giuseppe had a limited number of *converse* throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Vocal tertiaries thus had to do most of the work themselves. To summarize, the early constitutions envisioned a self-sufficient community of honorable virgins who were accustomed to work. The constitutions of 1673 confirmed the expectations of the 1640s constitutions, adding only that a woman seeking entrance could not be suspected of heresy and that all candidates had to be examined on their faith and obedience to the

⁶⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Statuti, “Per lo governo”, “Del ricevere alla Congregazione le Novitie e della loro educatione”.

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Apostolic See.⁶⁹ S. Giuseppe was concerned about the reputation of its women religious and sought to avoid anyone becoming a blemish on the community's reputation.

Similar expectations were set on women who wished to enter third order communities in Bologna. The late-sixteenth century Servite rule stated that the order accepted only women of honest life (*vita honesta*) and good reputation (*buona fama*); moreover, the women seeking entrance could not be suspected of heresy and, if married, had to present a notarized permission to enter a third order community from their husband.⁷⁰ The Servite order, therefore, did not exclude married women from entering a third order community alongside virgins and widows. They only judged the character and the confessional belonging of the women seeking entrance. Comparing the Servite rule to the constitutions of Ognisanti from 1663, we see a heightened concern about the reputation of the women seeking entrance in the constitutions. The constitutions describe an aspiring woman religious as someone with “good, honest, and decent” (*buone, honeste, e dabene*) parents and relatives; she had to be “of honest life, good reputation, and excellent behavior,” physically and mentally healthy, plain in appearance, able to do “civil and useful works,” educated in Christian doctrine, and in possession of a dowry of at least 100 *lire*.⁷¹ One hundred years later, in 1770, the rules for the Servite tertiaries in the region of Romagna described an ideal novice as a woman of “good and pious behavior, adequately educated in Christian doctrine following the norms of the

⁶⁹ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, “REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiarie di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE dette del Retiramento (Milano, 1673), p. 12.

⁷⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, *Regola che diede papa Martino V e confirmo Innocentio VIII. A Fratelli, e le Sorelle della Compagnia de’ Servi di Santa Maria*. (Florence, 1591), pp. 31-36.

⁷¹ ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, “Ill.mo e Rev.mo Signore...”

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Congregation of Regular Discipline (*Santa Congregazione della Disciplina Regolare*), of civil and honest origins, of good complexion, of pious, docile, modest, and polite nature, and without noticeable physical defects.”⁷² Similarly to S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, the Servite order and Ognisanti in particular focused on the reputation and the origins of the aspiring women religious. Servite tertiaries were also expected to work.

The dowry policies in Ognisanti complemented the prescriptions laid down in the rules and constitutions. The constitutions of Ognisanti set a modest 100 *lire* dowry in 1663. By 1693, the dowry had increased to 1000 *lire*; many of the tertiaries, however, relied on “the help of charitable donations from pious people and noble ladies,” to put together the required sum.⁷³ In 1723, the provincial chapter of Servite decided that nobody could enter Ognisanti without a dowry and a trousseau, revealing that until then it had been theoretically possible.⁷⁴ Finally, a rule of Servite tertiaries in the dioceses of Bologna from 1788 unequivocally states that only women with a dowry and the character traits necessary for living a religious life could enter a Servite community; if a woman was found to lack any of these criteria, she was dismissed from her community.⁷⁵ Throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, Ognisanti consistently laid stress on the character of the woman seeking entrance in the community. The dowry was

⁷² Ibid., *Regola di Sant’Agostino e Costituzioni per le religiose terziarie Serve di M. V. della provincia di Romagna proposte alle medesime da un religioso dello stesso istituto*. (Bologna, 1770), p. 98.

⁷³ Ibid., “Ill.mo e Rev.mo Signore....”.

⁷⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 164/6254, Registro provinciale, 1702-1733, p. 260.

⁷⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 137/6227, *Regole autentiche per le Suore Terziarie de S. Maria de Servi di Bologna* (1788)

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becoming increasingly important as well; however, if a woman of good character did not have the required dowry, she was assisted by dowry charity, to which I return below.

The rules and constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna from the 1720s also stressed that any woman seeking entrance in the community had to have honest parents and good behavior, good health, a dowry, and other qualities desired by the community. These further qualities were not defined. The requirements S. Maria delle Grazie had for aspiring women religious – good behavior, honest parents, a dowry – were similar to what Ognisanti and S. Giuseppe expected. Unlike the other two communities, however, the rules of S. Maria delle Grazie underlined that any woman seeking entrance had to desire admission in this particular institution. The mother superior of S. Maria delle Grazie had to interview each postulant to discern,

first and foremost... with which intention, for which end do they choose this Institution... is it to be better and more comfortable, to perfect their life and to serve God more freely, or is it a fickle decision, or a decision motivated by some human relations or by the poverty of their relatives.⁷⁶

The rules of S. Maria delle Grazie thus recognized a multitude of reasons why a woman would enter a monastic community, highlighting a contemporary awareness of the multivalent function of monastic institutions in early modern society. As a community, S. Maria delle Grazie wished to unite women with a true religious vocation and exclude those women who sought to enter a monastic community for some other reason.

Considering the rules and constitutions of the third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna side-by-side, we see that communities set similar criteria for the aspiring women religious. The honor and behavior of both the woman and her family

⁷⁶ BA, B4342, *Regole delle Terziarie Carmelitane di Bologna e vita della loro fonatrice Suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi*, Capitolo 1.

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were paramount, and indeed closely related and intertwined.⁷⁷ The woman's ability with civil labors, as demanded by Ognisanti, or womanly works, as requested by S. Giuseppe, contributed to her honor: spinning and needle work were perceived as an emulation of St. Martha.⁷⁸ Textile and needle work could also be carried out at home, or in a religious community. As women of middling rank were increasingly occupied in the putting-out systems of the textile industry in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, many of the aspiring women religious would have been familiar with textile work from observing their mothers and other female relatives at home.⁷⁹ Third order communities expected that women brought these skills with them and contributed them to the community. The rules and constitutions also stressed loyalty to the Catholic church. Third order communities were integrated in the post-Tridentine confessional society.⁸⁰ Finally, all

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Cohen and Lucia Ferrante have shown that honor of women, especially of non-elite women, was a result of a complex set of acts and behaviors of both the woman herself but also of the people with who she interacted. Honor was tangible, it could be lost and re-gained through specific acts and behaviors. Elizabeth S. Cohen, "Honor and Gender in the Streets of Early Modern Rome," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 4 (1992): 597–625; Lucia Ferrante, "Honor Regained: Women in the Casa Del Soccorso Di San Paolo in Sixteenth-Century Bologna," in *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

⁷⁸ Embroidery, sewing, and other textile arts were considered pious activities, the practice of which contributed to the conservation of female virtue. Patricia Rocco has shown that post-Tridentine conservatories in Bologna were filled with iconography of such feminine handiworks, which was intended to reflect the work of the girls and young women in the conservatories and provide them with role models for proper Christian behavior. Patricia Rocco, "Maniera Devota, Mano Donnesca: Women's Work and Stitching for Virtue in the Visual Culture of the Conservatori in Early Modern Bologna," *Italian Studies* 70, no. 1 (2015): 76–91.

⁷⁹ Alberto Guenzi, "La tessitura femminile tra città e campagna. Bologna, secoli XVII-XVIII.," in *La donna nell'economia secc. XIII-XVIII. Atti della "Ventunesima Settimana di Studi" 10-15 aprile 1989*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini" - Prato, 1990); Maura Palazzi, *Donne sole: Storia dell'altra faccia dell'Italia tra antico regime e società contemporanea* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997); Rocco, "Maniera Devota, Mano Donnesca: Women's Work and Stitching for Virtue in the Visual Culture of the Conservatori in Early Modern Bologna"; Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), chap. 3.

⁸⁰ On confessionalization and social disciplining in Italy, Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Paolo Prodi, ed., *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994); Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in*

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communities expected a dowry. Even for the women with a true religious vocation, entrance to a third order community was contingent on financial means that had to be commensurate with her honor, ability, and vocation.

Moving away from prescriptive sources, dowry contracts help us understand the socioeconomic background of the women who entered third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna. The dowry contracts of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo record the place of inhabitation of the fathers or other dowry-paying relatives of fifty-nine vocal tertiaries and sixteen *converse* (fig. 3.3). S. Giuseppe recruited in almost equal numbers from Bergamo and the surrounding areas, reaching as far as Lodi in the south and the Swiss area of Graubünden in the north.⁸¹ The dowry paying relatives of all but one *conversa*

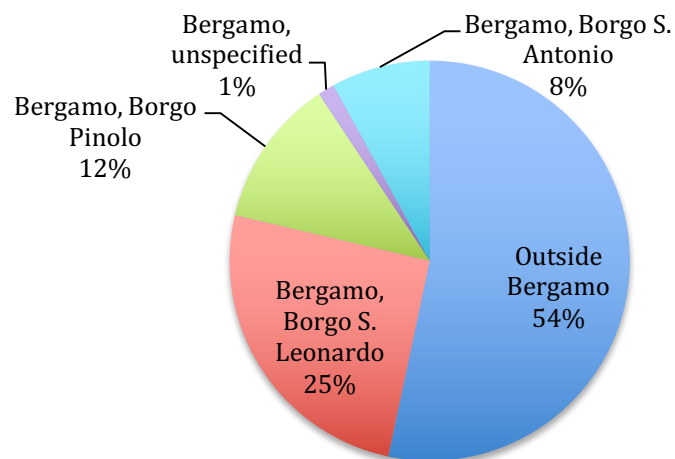


Figure 3.3: Origins of dowry paying relatives of the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe. Sources same as fig.s. 2.1, 2.3, 2.4.

Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Wolfgang Reinhard, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State a Reassessment," *The Catholic Historical Review* 75, no. 3 (1989): 383–404.

⁸¹ The dowry-paying relatives of forty tertiaries lived outside Bergamo and of thirty-five tertiaries lived in Bergamo at the time the dowry contract was signed. Nineteen of the dowry-paying relatives of Bergamo lived in Borgo S. Leonardo, the suburb of S. Giuseppe, nine lived in Borgo Pignolo, and one in Borgo S. Antonio. Six dowry contracts only state that the dowry paying relative lived in Bergamo, without any further specification.

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lived outside Bergamo.⁸² S. Giuseppe was both a local institution with strong links to its own neighborhood as well as an institution with an established presence beyond Bergamo.

S. Giuseppe reach belies, however, that the community recruited women of a homogeneous social background (fig. 3.4). The tertiaries with families in more distant locations were often part of groups of siblings or relatives who all entered S. Giuseppe; in other cases, several women from the same locality entered S. Giuseppe in the course of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Family and location brought women to S. Giuseppe. Unfortunately, we know very little about the families of the women who entered S. Giuseppe from outside Bergamo. The dowry contracts – the main corpus of which dates before 1730, only three dowry contracts survive for the period after 1730 – include the professions of the fathers of twenty-one women who entered S. Giuseppe between 1638 and 1697.⁸³ The majority of these men were merchants: seven in Borgo S. Leonardo and other six in other parts of Bergamo. On February 18, 1688, Giacomo Valle, a merchant in Borgo S. Leonardo, and Domenico Maini from Bergamo contracted the dowries for their daughters, Angelica Valle and Anna Maria Maini. The two men stood security for each other and both paid their daughters' dowries in full one year later, on

⁸² The father of Felice Nespoli, who entered S. Giuseppe as a *conversa* in 1752, lived in the parish of S. Alessandro in Colonna, the home parish of S. Giuseppe. ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro ove si descrivono l'accettazione...* p. 52r. Elizabeth Rapley's has shown that lay sisters in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French Ursuline convents were also predominately from the countryside, Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 189.

⁸³ ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro ove si descrivono l'accettazione...* includes information on women accepted in S. Giuseppe in later periods. While the names of fathers or other relatives are mentioned, at times also their place of origin, the book of acceptances does not include information of the professions of these relatives.

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Angelica's and Anna Maria's profession day.⁸⁴ The father of Alessandra and Angelica Besio who entered S. Giuseppe in 1648 and 1654 respectively was Gaspare Besio, a notary in Trescore to the east of Bergamo; Gaspare's wife Dorotea Suardi was, however, related to Semponio Suardi, a lawyer in Bergamo, who also became the legal guardian of the Besio children after Gaspare's death in 1649.⁸⁵ Semponio Suardi's own daughter Giulia entered S. Giuseppe in 1655.⁸⁶ Professional and familial networks tied the families of the women who entered S. Giuseppe.

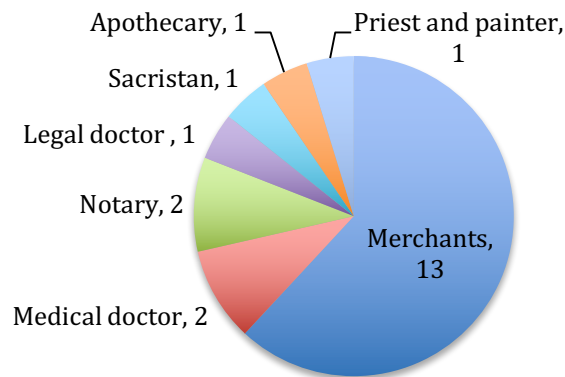


Figure 3.4: Professions of the fathers of the women who joined S. Giuseppe, 1638-1697. Sources same as fig.s. 2.1, 2.3, 2.4.

Many women who became tertiaries in S. Giuseppe in the mid-seventeenth century had already lived in the community as educational boarders before. Nineteen of the forty-eight women who became tertiaries in 1638 to 1672 had been *educande* in S. Giuseppe.⁸⁷ After 1672, I have found reference to only one woman entering S. Giuseppe after she had

⁸⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2994, Maini Anna Maria; *ibid.*, Valle Angelica; ASBg, Notarile, 6040, January 12, 1684.

⁸⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2992, Besio Alessandra and Besio Angelica.

⁸⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2994, Suardi Giulia.

⁸⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro ove si descrivono l'accettatione....* These were Marta Venosta, Barbara Ghirelli, Alessandra Besio, Lodovica Belani, Aurelia Asperti, Antonia Tadiolo, Alessandra Consoli, Paola Tasca, Giulia Suardi, Catterina Giovanelli, Ippolita Gazzani, Aurelia Rossi, Faustina Negri, Anna Martinoni, Ottavia Rossi, Laura Asperti, Claudia Arighetti, Maria Arighetti, and Camilla Negri.

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been an *educanda* in the community.⁸⁸ The women who clothed the habit after a period of educational boarding in S. Giuseppe often had siblings in the community.⁸⁹ S. Giuseppe was inserted deeply in family networks. Founded by a group of sisters and cousins, a number of other families included multiple female kin in S. Giuseppe throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁹⁰ Consequently, S. Giuseppe also recruited

⁸⁸ Orsola Carissimi clothed the religious habit in 1711. ASM, AGFR, 2992, Carissimi Orsola. Turn to chapter 4 for an extended discussion of educational boarders in third order communities. In the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, women rarely clothed the religious habit after a period of convent education, Francesca Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2012), 70–80, 120. Sharon Strocchia has also pointed out that convent education was not necessarily a prequel to becoming a nun in late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century Florence, Sharon T. Strocchia, “Taken into Custody: Girls and Convent Guardianship in Renaissance Florence,” *Renaissance Studies* 17, no. 2 (2003): 181.

⁸⁹ In 1638 to 1672, eleven of the nineteen women had a sister or another relative who was a tertiary in S. Giuseppe.

⁹⁰ S. Giuseppe was founded by two Lafranchi sisters and their maternal cousin Laura Meris; a third Lafranchi sister also entered the community a few years after the foundation in 1638. Laura Meris’s father, Antonio Meris was the Lafranchi sisters’ legal guardian. The granddaughter of Antonio Meris, Aurelia Rossi entered S. Giuseppe in 1663, as did his second wife Bartolomea Plodi in 1670. The second maternal cousin of the Lafranchi sisters, Margaritta Cotta entered S. Giuseppe in 1685 (ASM, AGFR, 2981, Testamento di Antonio Meris, 1665, February 22; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, 9v. and 12r; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Rossi Aurelia; ASM, AGFR, 2992, Religiose Cotta Margarita). In 1644, the sisters Grandilla and Giovanna Olmo from Osio di Sotto entered (ASM, AGFR, 2994). The sisters Marta and Maddalena Venosta from Valtellina entered in 1647 and 1650 respectively (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Venosta sorelle). The sisters Anna Maria and Chiara Catterina Saracco from Pagnano in the Milanese territory entered in 1654 (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Saracco Anna Maria e Chiara Catterina sorelle). The sisters Alessandra and Angelica Besio from Trescore entered in 1648 and 1654 respectively; their maternal relative Giulia Suardi from Bergamo entered in 1655 (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Besio Alessandra and Besio Angelica; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Suardi Giulia). Camilla Negri from Valtellina entered S. Giuseppe in 1648, her two half sisters Faustina and Camilla Negri entered in 1664 and 1672 respectively. The Negri sisters were related to the Venosta sisters; I have not been able to determine the exact degree of relation. (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Negri Camilla and Negri Fausina). The sisters Aurelia and Laura Asperti from Bergamo entered in 1653 and 1666. Laura entered S. Giuseppe after Aurelia’s death and took the same name in religion that Aurelia had had (ASM, AGFR, 2992 Asperti Aurelia and Asperti Laura; ASM, AGFR, 2991). The sisters Maddalena and Domenica Bortolotti from Bagnatica entered as converse in 1664 and 1666 respectively (ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro ove si descrivono l'accettazione...* 9r, 10v). The sisters Claudia and Maria Arighetti from Borgo S. Leonardo were accepted in 1669 and 1672 respectively (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Arighetti Claudia and Arighetti Maria). The sisters Ottavia and Francesca Rossi from Borgo S. Leonardo entered in 1667 and 1675 respectively (ASM, AGFR 2994, Rossi Francesca and Rossi Ottavia). Maria Pizzoni from Borgo S. Leonardo entered in 1664; her niece Laura Pizzoni from Borgo S. Leonardo entered in 1678 (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Pizzoni Laura and Pizzoni Maria). Sisters Maria and Giacomina Donati from Val Brembana entered in 1698 and 1703 respectively (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Donati Giacomina and Donati Maria). Vittoria Mazzoleni from Bergamo entered in 1697, her niece (?) Francesca Mazzoleni entered in 1724 (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Mazzoleni Vittoria; ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro ove si descrivono l'accettazione...* p. 27v). Sisters Giulia and Teresa Tiraboschi from Borgo S. Leonardo entered

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women of similar socio-economic background.⁹¹ In 1638 to 1730, fifty-one dowry contracts from S. Giuseppe specify how the dowry was paid. Twenty-nine dowries were paid in cash at the time of the profession, five dowries were paid by signing over an existing credit agreement, and seventeen dowries were paid with a delayed payment plan because the relatives of the women did not have the means to pay the dowry and deliver the trousseau at the time of profession.⁹² Two thirds of the families whose female kin entered S. Giuseppe could thus afford the fees of the community. The wide geographic reach of the community (fig. 3.3) raises the question, whether S. Giuseppe had to recruit new women religious from both the town and the hinterland of Bergamo to ensure a population composed of women of similar socio-economic rank. In the eighteenth century, S. Giuseppe also experienced limited aristocratization.⁹³ When in the seventeenth century, five women whose fathers bore a noble title entered S. Giuseppe; in

in 1726 and 1729 respectively; their niece Maddalena Tiraboschi from Borgo S. Leonardo entered in 1743(ASM, AGFR, *Libro ove si descrivono l'accettazione...* p. 28r, 30v, 46r; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Tiraboschi). The sisters Anna Catterina, Angela Maria and Maria Rosciati from Borgo Pignolo entered S. Giuseppe in 1730, 1735, and 1739 respectively (ASM, AGFR, 2994, Rosciati Anna Catterina, Rosciati Angela Maria, Rosciati Maria). The sisters Laura and Maria Casari from Borgo S. Leonardo entered S. Giuseppe in 1738 and 1740 respectively (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Casari Laura and Casari Maria). The (half?)sisters Catterina and Aurelia Camossi from Borgo Pignolo entered in 1741 and 1742 respectively (ASM, AGFR, Camossi Aurelia and Camossi Catterina).

⁹¹ Sherill Cohen and Angela Groppi have identified similar recruitment patterns in semi-religious communities in Tuscany and in Rome in the seventeenth century, Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women*; Angela Groppi, *I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma dei Papi* (Rome: Laterza, 1994).

⁹² ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994.

⁹³ According to current scholarship, the Tridentine decrees and a rapid marriage dowry inflation led to the aristocratization of convents in Italy between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Caffiero, "Dall'esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all'apostolato sociale (1650-1850)"; Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents*; Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*.

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the eighteenth century, ten tertiaries were daughters of noblemen.⁹⁴ The families of merchants and professionals who sustained S. Giuseppe in the seventeenth century seem to have been limited in number and with close links to the hinterland of Bergamo. In the eighteenth century, these families either struggled to place their daughters in S. Giuseppe or experienced aristocratization, which reflected also in the recruitment of the third order community.

S. Antonio in Bergamo also recruited both from Bergamo and its hinterlands, reaching both the Padania plane to the south and the Alpine valleys to the north (fig. 3.5). Surviving dowry contracts reveal information about the socio-economic background of fifty-four vocal tertiaries and eleven *converse* who entered the community in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Even though some women who entered S.

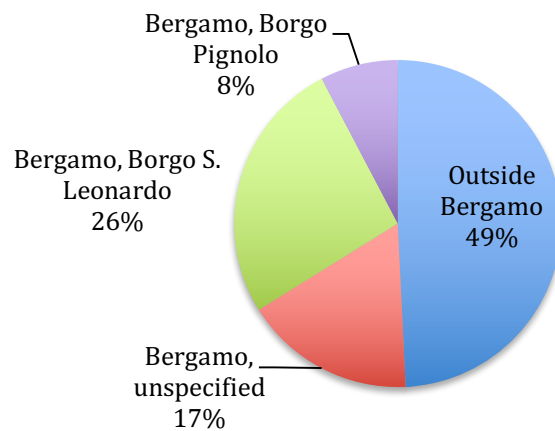


Figure 3.5: Origins of dowry-paying relatives of the tertiaries of S. Antonio. Source: ASM, AGFR, 2945; ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 8091, 8098, 8103, 8588, 8589, 11415; ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, S. Antonio di Padova.

Antonio seem to have had no established links to the community or Bergamo, many women belonged to familial and professional networks that centered on the community.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro ove si descrivono l'accettazione....*

⁹⁵ Two women arrived in S. Antonio from Graubünden in 1670 and deposited their dowries with the host of a tavern in Bergamo during their novitiate year; they seem to have lacked family or other contacts in

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Similarly to Giuseppe, groups of sisters and female kin became women religious in S. Antonio in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁹⁶ In 1689, Catterina Gambirasi professed as a tertiary in S. Antonio. Her deceased father was from Terno, a locality west of Bergamo; Catterina's brother, dom Antonio Gambirasi, was a curate of S. Michele dell'Arco in Bergamo, however. Catterina's dowry contract also mentions another brother, Bartholomeo Gambirasi.⁹⁷ Bartholomeo Gambirasi also stood security for the payment of the dowry of Lucia Carminati, who professed in S. Antonio in 1714. Lucia's father was also deceased by the time she entered S. Antonio, but her brother dom Marco Carminati was also a curate of S. Michele dell'Arco, like the brother of Catterina Gambirasi.⁹⁸ Lucia Carminati's dowry was paid only in 1725; Giulio Ganazza from Bergamo acted as the legal representative of dom Marco Carminati for this payment.⁹⁹

Bergamo. Suor Maria Giametti and Suor Eufrosia Biet entered S. Antonio in 1670 and professed on July 31, 1671. ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose.

⁹⁶ Lelia Vecchi professed in 1675 and her sister Angela entered S. Antonio in 1690, both were from Bergamo (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti; ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 12 August 1690). Barbara Beloli from Gorlago, the gandniece of S. Antonio's founder Margarita Beloli, entered S. Antonio in 1690 and professed in 1691 (ASBg, Notarile, 6039, 27 May 1690 and 10 June 1691). Antonia Ganazza entered in 1714, her sister Emilia entered in 1725; both were from Bergamo (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose). Giulia Mazzoleni professed in 1728, her sister Anna Maria professed in 1729, a third sister named Chiara entered in 1732, and a forth sister Elisabetta Redenta professed in 1740; all four sisters were from Borgo S. Leonardo (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose). Barbara Silvestri professed in 1740, her sister Laura entered S. Antonio in 1745, and a third sister named Lucia entered S. Antonio in 1749; all three were from Borgo Pignolo (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Religiose; ASBg, Notarile, 8105, 22 December 1741). Maria Tiraboschi entered S. Antonio in 1751, her sister Catterina in 1754, and a third sister named Elisabetta in 1759; all three were from Borgo S. Leonardo (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache; ASDBg, Monasteri Femminili, S. Antonio di Padova). Maddalena Viscardi entered S. Antonio in 1778, her sister Angela entered in 1787; the girls' father Pietro Viscardi was recordid as being from Fontana in some notarial documents, mostly those relating to Maddalena (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache; ASBg, Notarile, 11415, tomo 14, pp. 2248v-2250v). Sisters Maria Teresa and Maria Catterina Cattanio from Scano entered in 1783 as converse (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache and Doti). Giulia Maffioletti entered as a conversa in 1785 and her sister Margaritta followed suit as a conversa in 1788; both were from Albegno (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache).

⁹⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti.

⁹⁸ ASM. AGFR, 2945, Doti.

⁹⁹ ASBg, Notarile, 8093, 7 March 1725.

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The daughter of Giulio Ganazza, Emilia Maddalena Ganazza entered S. Antonio in March 1725.¹⁰⁰ The dowry records for Catterina Gambirasi, Lucia Carminati, and Emilia Ganazza reveal tight social networks that linked the women who entered S. Antonio.

In comparison to S. Giuseppe, S. Antonio recruited from a lower socio-economic stratum. Twelve dowry contracts from the seventeenth century and thirty-nine dowry contracts from the eighteenth century record the method of payment. In the seventeenth century, nine dowry contracts included a delayed payment plan, two dowries were paid in full at the time of profession, and one dowry was paid by a charitable institution. In the eighteenth century, one dowry was paid by a charitable institution, three dowries consisted of the signing over of a credit, ten dowries were paid with delayed payment plans, and twenty-five dowries were paid in cash; the latter included at least four dowries that resulted from recent inheritance settlements.¹⁰¹ The surviving sources evidence a significant uptake in the dowries paid in full at the time of profession in the eighteenth century. Sources limit further conclusions about the socio-economic background of the women entering S. Antonio, however. Only eight surviving dowry contracts mention the professions of the fathers, majority of them men from the town of Bergamo.¹⁰² The professions included a seller of milk products, a barber, a cobbler, a courier of the Venetian Republic, a notary, a medical doctor, and two doctors of law.¹⁰³ Further five dowry contracts record the professions of the brother of the woman religious; these

¹⁰⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.; ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 8091, 8098, 8103, 8588, 8589, 11415; ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, S. Antonio di Padova.

¹⁰² Seven fathers from the town of Bergamo and one from Grumello del Monte to the east of Bergamo.

¹⁰³ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti and Monache; ASBg, Notarile, 11413, 20 September 1781.

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included two curates, a doctor of law, and two minor clerics. In contrast to S. Giuseppe, the fathers of only four women religious in S. Antonio bore a noble title throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.¹⁰⁴ The predominance of artisans, shopkeepers, and clerics among the fathers and brothers of the women who entered S. Antonio suggests a community deeply rooted in the middling ranks of Bergamo, socially below S. Giuseppe that recruited daughters of merchants, notaries, and medical doctors.¹⁰⁵ The lower dowry commanded by S. Antonio compared to S. Giuseppe (fig. 3.2) supports this conclusion. Yet, S. Antonio like S. Giuseppe relied heavily on novices from outside Bergamo. As suggested above, this may have resulted from a desire to maintain a population of a similar socio-economic background. However, the reach of both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe also evidences the nodal role of Bergamo in its hinterland.¹⁰⁶ The dioceses of Bergamo counted only a limited number of third order communities in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries: in addition three third order communities in Bergamo, there were only five further third order communities in the dioceses.¹⁰⁷ If a

¹⁰⁴ These included the two Vecchi sisters who entered S. Antonio in 1675 and 1690 respectively, Catterina Pesenti who entered the community in 1787, and Chiara Azzoni who professed in the community in 1794. ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti; ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 12 August 1690.

¹⁰⁵ Sandra Cavallo suggests that artisans and traders occupied the lower rungs of the middling ranks. They lived experiences similar to laborers, but had little in common with merchants and professionals who often intermixed with the nobility. Cavallo, "Fatherhood and the Non-Propertied Classes in Renaissance and Early Modern Italian Towns." The early modern middling ranks in Italy were increasingly heterogeneous, Amelang, "Social Hierarchies: The Lower Classes"; Alfani, "Economic Inequality in Northwestern Italy: A Long-Term View (Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)."

¹⁰⁶ Scholarship on early modern European cities has highlighted the development of an urban system, which saw cities, towns, and countryside interact in a hierarchical but intergated system. Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe 1500-1700* (London: Arnold Publishers, 1998); Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1994* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Jan de Vries, *European Urbanization, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

¹⁰⁷ A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi, and L. Vaccaro, eds., *Diocesi Di Bergamo, Storia Religiosa Della Lombardia* (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1988), 156–159.

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woman sought to enter a third order community in or around Bergamo, S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe represented two of her limited eight choices.

In Bologna, on the other hand, there were thirteen third order communities in the city and a number additional communities dotted the city's hinterland and the nearby towns of Ferrara and Modena.¹⁰⁸ The third order communities considered in this study recruited predominately from the city of Bologna and attracted a homogeneous middling rank population. Surviving dowry contracts, visit records, and meeting minutes allow to glean information about sixty-eight women who entered Ognisanti in Bologna between the seventeenth and the sixteenth centuries. Compared to S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, Ognisanti admitted most of its tertiaries from the city of Bologna. The women's families lived in parishes that either hugged the second circle of the city walls (the *cerchia dei torresotti* from the twelfth century) or were located between the second and the third circle of the city walls (the *Circla* from the fourteenth century). These were parishes on the main arteries of the city. According to the early eighteenth-century descriptions of Bologna by Giovanni Battista Spinelli, shops of merchants and of the main professional groups were located in these parishes.¹⁰⁹ However, some of them were also the poorest parishes in eighteenth-century Bologna.¹¹⁰ The women religious of S.

¹⁰⁸ For an overview of third order communities in Bologna, Fanti, *Abiti e lavori delle monache di Bologna in una serie di disegni del secolo XVIII*; Gabriella Zarri, "I monasteri femminili a Bologna tra il XIII e il XVII secolo," *Atti e memorie: Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Province di Romagna* 24 (1973): 133–224. There were third order communities also in the *contado* of Bologna, in Loiano, Medicina, and Budrio. Both Modena and Ferrara also had several third order communities, ASB, Demaniale; Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, 194–195.

¹⁰⁹ Fabio Guisberti, "Elementi di topografia sociale in una grande città: il caso di Bologna in età moderna," in *La demografia storica delle città italiane*, ed. Società Italiana di Demografia Storica (Bologna: CLUEB, 1982), 326.

¹¹⁰ These were the parishes of S. Isaia, S. Tommaso del Mercato, ad S. Procolo. *Ibid.*, 324–325.

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Maria delle Grazie, Elisabetta, and S. Maria delle Carità all had similar origins. Nine of the ten surviving dowry contracts from S. Maria delle Grazie were for women who were either born in Bologna or lived in Bologna before entering the third order community.¹¹¹ Similarly to the women religious of Ognisanti, the women who entered S. Maria delle Grazie were born or lived in parishes located in the outskirts of early modern Bologna.¹¹² S. Maria della Carità recruited heavily from its local parish of S. Maria della Carità as well as the near-by parish of S. Lorenzo di Porta Stiera. Out of the third order communities considered in this study, S. Maria della Carità was the most neighborhood-rooted. However, a clear difference emerges between the vocal tertiaries and the *converse* of S. Maria della Carità: *converse* arrived in S. Maria della Carità from localities outside Bologna, in contrast to the vocal tertiaries who had often grown up next to the third order community.¹¹³ The surviving sources show that also the women religious of S. Elisabetta were almost all from Bologna.¹¹⁴ The dowry paying relatives of these women lived across Bologna, both in the central and in the peripheral parishes. Compared to the other third order communities in Bologna, S. Elisabetta seems to have recruited women of more

¹¹¹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768-2/1769. The tenth tertiary, Luigia Savoja was from Ravenna and entered in 1781; her dowry consisted in part of dowry subsidies she had won in Ravenna. ASB, Demaniale, 4 January 1781.

¹¹² Guisberti, "Elementi di topografia sociale in una grande città: il caso di Bologna in età moderna," 324. Samuel Cohn notes that the parishes of the outer rim of the city increasingly became the domain of the laboring classes and the artisans in Renaissance Florence, Cohn, *The Laboring Classes in Renaissance Florence*, 120–121.

¹¹³ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4847 – 5/4841.

¹¹⁴ The origins of fourteen women religious who entered S. Elisabetta in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries are known: thirteen of the fourteen women were of Bologna. ASB, Demaniale 2/4450-13/4461; ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, "Libro Maestro"; ASB, Demaniale, 31/4479, "Libro Maestro"; ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, "Visite". The one woman from outside Bologna was Anna Maria Venturoli, who entered in 1728. Both the father and the paternal uncle of Venturoli lived in the commune of Corticella, about 6 kilometers north of Bologna. ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 11.

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varied socio-economic backgrounds, to which I return below. In sum, third order communities in Bologna were closely integrated in the urban environment.

The third order women religious in Bologna were mostly of middling ranks. In the seventeenth century, two daughters of a notary, three daughters of bakers, a daughter of a public architect, and a daughter of an embellisher were among the women who became tertiaries in Ognisanti.¹¹⁵ A niece of a medical doctor as well as the niece of the father confessor of Ognisanti also entered the community during this time.¹¹⁶ The male kin of the women religious belonged both to the *arti maggiori* and the *arti minori*: among them were professionals like a notary and a medical doctor, but the majority were craftsmen and artisans.¹¹⁷ However, Girolamo Gherardi, whose daughter Francesca entered Ognisanti in 1663, was too poor to pay the dowry and Francesca could clothe the Servite habit only after one dom Martino Aquaderna stepped in and contracted a credit with Ognisanti for the payment of her dowry.¹¹⁸ In fact, twenty of the twenty-four (83 per

¹¹⁵ Simone Tonelli, the father of Orsola Tonelli, who entered in 1679, and of Magdalena Tonelli, who entered in 1683, was a notary (ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, 20 June 1679; idem, 22 Februar 1683). Vedriano Cavalli, the father of Giacomina Cavalli, who entered in 1680, and of Girolama Cavalli, who entered in 1683, was a baker (ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, 27 June 1680; ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, 30 Aprile 1683). Nichele Torsini, whose daughter Domenica entered in 1690, was a baker (ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, 12 September 1690). Ercole Chellini, whose daughter Ginevra Cattarina entered in the early 1680s, was a public architect (ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, 22 February 1683). Giuseppe Monteventi, whose daughter Laura entered in 1690, was an embellisher (ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, 21 January 1690).

¹¹⁶ The paternal uncle of Francesca Fabri, who entered in 1674, and of Elisabetta Fabri, who entered in 1686, was the medical doctor Alberto Fabri (ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, 22 December 1674; idem, 28 February 1686). The paternal uncle of Anna Marina Amadei, who entered in 1677, was the then-current father confessor of Ognisanti, dom Arcangelo de Amadei (ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, 22 December 1674; ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, 2 July 1677).

¹¹⁷ On the guild system in early modern Bologna and Italy, Christopher F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Alberto Guenzi, Paola Massa, and Fausto Piola Caselli, eds., *Guilds, Markets, and Work Regulations in Italy, 16th - 19th Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹¹⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 3/6280, 20 September, 1703.

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cent) dowry contracts from the seventeenth century indicated that the dowry was not paid in full at the time of profession but consisted rather of various subsidies, small legacies, and credit arrangements.¹¹⁹ In the seventeenth century, Ognisanti's 1000 *lire* dowry (fig. 3.1) was slightly higher than the marriage dowries among the Bolognese artisans. However, the Bolognese middling ranks were used to relying on dowry subsidies and credit arrangements.¹²⁰ And as the dowry contracts of Ognisanti reveal, families did rely on dowry subsidies and credit arrangements to finance the entrance of female kin in Ognisanti in the seventeenth century.

In the eighteenth century, forty-four women entered Ognisanti. Several of them were orphans.¹²¹ They were supported by surviving family and benefactors. One of them, Rosa Renazzi, who entered Ognisanti in 1741, was the orphaned daughter of a captain; her dowry was arranged by her brother, a Camaldolese monk.¹²² Another tertiary, Luigia Risack was the orphaned daughter of the former secretary of the Caprara family, one of

¹¹⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278-3/6280. Emlyn Eisenach has argued that the payments of marriage dowry among the common people of early modern Verona were often delayed because of difficulties in raising the necessary liquid cash, Emlyn Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives, and Concubines: Marriage, Family, and Social Order in Sixteenth-Century Verona* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2004), 69–70.

¹²⁰ Carboni points out that the credit ceiling for Monte del Matrimonio accounts was such that noble families were discouraged from using this mechanism for their ever-higher dowries, making the Monte del Matrimonio an institution of the middling ranks, Carboni, *Le doti della "povertà". Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 51–52, 196–197. See also, Isabelle Chabot and Massimo Fornasari, *L'economia della carità: Le doti del Monte di Pietà di Bologna (XVI-XX)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); Ciammitti, "Quanto costa essere normali. La dote nel conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baraccano (1630-1680)."

¹²¹ A number of orphans entered also third order communities in Bergamo. Four of the seventeen women (23 per cent) who entered S. Antonio in the seventeenth century were orphans of father; in the eighteenth century, fourteen of the forty-nine women (28 per cent) were orphans of father. The dowries of these women were usually paid by their brothers or other paternal relatives. In S. Giuseppe, twenty-five of the sixty-four women (38 per cent) who entered in the seventeenth century were orphans of father. In the eighteenth century, twenty of the seventy-three (27 per cent) women who entered S. Giuseppe were orphans of father. ASM, AGFR, 2992-2994; ASM, AGFR, 2945; ASBg, Notarile, 6040, 8091, 8098, 8103, 8588, 8589, 11415; ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, S. Antonio di Padova.

¹²² ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, 10 March 1740; ASB, Demaniale, 13/6190, Atti capitolari, p. 59.

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the major senatorial families in Bologna. Risack's dowry consisted of two accounts in the Monte del Matrimonio, both deposited by the Countess Maria Vittoria Caprara; Risack's trousseau and fees were paid by Count Francesco Caprara.¹²³ Ognisanti allowed the Caprara family to settle the life of the daughter of a former employee. In the course of the eighteenth century, five alumnae of the S. Croce conservatory,¹²⁴ two alumnae of the S. Marta conservatory,¹²⁵ and one alumna of the S. Gregorio shelter also entered Ognisanti.¹²⁶ In the system of Bolognese women's institutions, the conservatories of S. Croce and S. Marta were preventative institutions that enclosed girls for several years before providing them with a dowry for either marriage or monacization. S. Gregorio, on the other hand, was a shelter for poor women and children operated by the Opera dei Poveri Mendicanti; S. Gregorio did not enclose women, except for short periods of punishment, but rather facilitated work and provided a place to stay.¹²⁷ That a number of women from these conservatories, who usually married craftsmen and artisans, entered Ognisanti in the eighteenth century reveals a contemporary perception of this community

¹²³ ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, 27 October 1777; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 25. Noble patrons often opened Monte del Matrimonio accounts for their servants, or the servants' family members, Carboni, *Le doti della "povertà". Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 132–135.

¹²⁴ Catterina (Teresa) Bonaviti in 1702, Lodovica Maria Bacialliri in 1705, Giustina Calcina in 1710, Anna Maria Bonaghi in 1715 (ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 18, pp. 2, 8, 11). Maria Catterina Landi in 1723, after twelve years in the Servite tertiary community in Budrio, from where she needed to move due to her health (ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, 31 August 1723).

¹²⁵ Maria Prudenzia Calcina in 1774 and her niece Maria Prudenzia Levanti Calcina in 1786. ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, 16 October, 1787; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, pp. 56-7, 62.

¹²⁶ Maria Teresa Costantini entered as a *conversa* in 1786. ASB, Demaniale, 14/6191, Atti capitolari, p. 52.

¹²⁷ Giovanni Ricci, *Povertà, vergogna, superbia: I declassati fra Medioevo e Età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); Terpstra, *Abandoned Children of the Italian Renaissance: Orphan Care in Florence and Bologna*; Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*.

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as suitable for women of middling ranks. Moreover, the transfer of young women from urban conservatories to third order communities like Ognisanti underscores the integration of third orders in the institutional framework enveloping women's lives in early modern Bologna. Compared to the seventeenth century, nineteen of the thirty dowry contracts (63 per cent) which evidence the payment method indicate dowry subsidies or credit arrangements. Conservatories and shelters provided another eight dowries. Only three dowries were paid in full by the time of profession in the eighteenth century.¹²⁸ Families continued to rely on dowry charity, subsidies, and credit to afford a third order dowry.

S. Maria della Carità and S. Maria delle Grazie also recruited from the middling ranks of Bologna. As I discussed above, the women religious of S. Maria della Carità were predominately from the neighborhood of the community and included multiple groups of sisters.¹²⁹ It was thus a tightly-knit community. Unfortunately, the surviving sources reveal little about these women. In the seventeenth century, two daughters of a merchant entered S. Maria della Carità.¹³⁰ In the eighteenth century, four daughters of a

¹²⁸ Maria Catterina Luatti entered in 1718, her dowry was paid in coins by her father (ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, 24 January 1718). Maria Elisabetta Pizzocchi entered in 1723, her dowry was paid in coins by her father, who also provided her trousseau and paid all additional fees (ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, 30v). The *conversa* Maria Appolonia Mondini's dowry was paid by her paternal uncles, who draw on a property they held in common in the commune of Mezzolara. This points towards Maria Appolonia being from a landworking family (ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 127; ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, 3 November, 1762).

¹²⁹ The sisters Francesca and Anna Capra entered in 1674 (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 35; ASB, Demaniale, 3/4839, num. 12). The sisters Anna Maria, Santa, Elisabetta, and Catterina Collina entered in 1700, 1705, 1705, and 1708 respectively (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 12; ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 18 and num. 19). The sisters Teresa Maria and Angela parti entered in 1709 and 1717 respectively (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 21, num. 43). The sisters Petronilla and Brigida Gaudenzi entered in 1757 and 1758 respectively (ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 12 and num. 18).

¹³⁰ The sisters Francesca and Anna Capra, both daughters of the merchant Giacomo Capra who was from the same parish as S. Maria della Carità, entered in 1674, shortly after the foundation of the community (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 35; ASB, Demaniale, 3/4839, num. 12)

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cobbler and a daughter of a hemp merchant entered S. Maria della Carità.¹³¹ Twenty-five dowry contracts from the eighteenth century record the method of payment, majority of which included Monte del Matrimonio accounts, dowry subsidies, donations, and credit agreements. Only three dowries were paid in full to S. Maria della Carità by the time the woman religious professed in the eighteenth century. The women who entered S. Maria delle Grazie also relied heavily on dowry subsidies. Dowry contracts survive for twelve of the thirty-eight women who entered S. Maria delle Grazie in the eighteenth century.¹³² Four women religious were alumnae of the S. Croce conservatory.¹³³ Five women religious had dowries that combined charitable dowry subsidies offered by institutions, parishes, and private benefactors; the dowries of two women religious consisted of credit agreements. Only the dowry contract of Maria Clementina Sarti, signed in 1782, indicated that the dowry would be paid in full at the time of the profession; Sarti's paternal uncle dom Giuseppe Sarti and second cousin Giovanni Sarti were to pay the dowry.¹³⁴ We do not know, if the dowry was actually paid by the promised time. S. Maria

¹³¹ The father of the four sisters – Anna Maria, Santa, Elisabetta, and Catterina – who entered in 1700, 1705, 1705, and 1708 respectively, was Pietro Collina, a cobbler in the parish of S. Maria Maggiore (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 12; ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 18 and num. 19; ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 9, and *in passim*). The father of Maria Catterina Cattani who entered in 1739 was a hemp merchant (ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 28).

¹³² Alessandro Albertazzi and Maria Paolina del Vecchio, eds., *Una fondatrice bolognese. La serva di Dio Maria Maddalena Mazzoni* (Pontecchio Marconi: Edizioni digigrafici, 2008), 158–162.

¹³³ Anna Maria Taruffi who entered in 1769, after having had to leave S. Croce in 1767 due to ageing out of the conservatory (ASB, Conservatorio Santa Croce, 26, num. 168; ASB, Conservatorio Santa Croce, 18, p. 64). Anna Maria Bartolomasi entered S. Maria delle Grazie in 1776 (ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 18, p. 81); Rosa Maria Pilati entered also in 1776 (ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 18, p. 80; ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 27, num. 12). Angela Cortellini entered in 1783; her dowry included the usual S. Croce monastic dowry of L2000, plus six dowry subsidies used to provide her trousseau and pay various ceremonial expenses (ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768, 21 February 1783; ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 27, num. 45).

¹³⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 2/1769, 10 April 1782.

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delle Grazie was founded by a widow of a master bricklayer who had supported her children and herself with spinning before she clothed the tertiary habit in 1723.¹³⁵ As evidenced by the surviving sources, S. Maria delle Grazie, much like S. Maria della Carità, recruited middling rank women whose families relied heavily on subsidies and credit to afford a third order dowry throughout the period considered here.

Compared to the other communities in Bologna, S. Elisabetta included a slightly different demographic. In the late-seventeenth century, S. Elisabetta presented itself as a community that accepted virgins of good birth and behavior. To enter, a woman had to possess both a 2000 *lire* dowry as well as a trousseau.¹³⁶ Compared to other third order dowries and middling rank marriage dowries in Bologna in the seventeenth century, a 2000 *lire* dowry was high (fig. 3.1). A financial barrier to admission in S. Elisabetta thus existed. The community also erected further barriers. In the late-seventeenth century, the confessor of S. Elisabetta forbade married women from boarding in the community,

As women religious, the tertiaries are to have no other thought than to enjoy their groom, Jesus Christ; they must focus on achieving the holy virtues and not think about nothing else but continuous orations and the raising of their minds to God, so that it could be said that [these women religious] are taken to Heaven already before their death. The latter cannot be achieved in the company of married women, widows, or spinsters from whom nothing but the snares of this world can be learned. The tertiaries must understand that they are women religious – the virgin brides of Christ – and they must not aspire to any other solace than that appropriate for virgins.¹³⁷

The confessor thus imagined S. Elisabetta as a community of virgins, different from other third order communities that accepted women of various status. In 1713, the tertiaries

¹³⁵ Albertazzi and del Vecchio, *Una fondatrice bolognese. La serva di Dio Maria Maddalena Mazzoni*, 9–10.

¹³⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 8/4456, num. 7.

¹³⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 7r-v.

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supplicated the Franciscan Minor Conventuals to ban both women experiencing marital breakdown (*malmaritate*) as well as women in need from the community. According to the tertiaries, such women “disturbed the peace and quiet of the tertiaries and their service to God.”¹³⁸ The question of secular women in the community remained current throughout the eighteenth century. In 1784, a Franciscan visitor declared that secular women could enter S. Elisabetta only with the prior consent of the Franciscan order.¹³⁹ The tertiaries, their confessors, and Franciscan visitors thus all imagined S. Elisabetta as a community of women religious who led lives separate from the laity.

The perception of S. Elisabetta as an enclosed space may have reflected the higher social standing of the women who entered this community.¹⁴⁰ In the seventeenth century, the fathers of the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta included several notaries, merchants, and lawyers. One father bore a noble title.¹⁴¹ The lawyer Giacomo Palmieri and the notary

¹³⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 34r.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153r.

¹⁴⁰ The scholarship on enclosure has focused on elite institutions and stressed the role of enclosure in family strategies of the early modern Italian elites, especially with the rise of primogeniture in the late-sixteenth and the early-seventeenth centuries. Since S. Elisabetta appears to have recruited more from the professional ranks, who stood closer to the elites and sought to enter the nobility in the late-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, views on enclosure would have been familiar to and adopted by the families of some of the women entering S. Elisabetta. For scholarship linking enclosure to family strategies, Alessandro Albertazzi and Maria Paolina del Vecchio, eds., *Una fondatrice bolognese. La serva di Dio Maria Maddalena Mazzoni* (Pontecchio Marconi: Edizioni digigrafici, 2008), 158–162. On primogeniture, Maura Piccialuti Caprioli, *L’immortalità dei beni: fedecommissi e primogeniture a Roma nei secoli XVII-XVIII* (Rome: Viella, 1999); Richard B. Litchfield, “Demographic Characteristics of Florentine Patrician Families, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries,” *The Journal of Economic History* 29 (1969): 191–205. On social mobility, Giancarlo Angelozzi and Cesarina Casanova, *Diventare cittadini: La cittadinanza ex privilegio a Bologna (secoli XVI-XVIII)* (Bologna: Comune di Bologna, 2000).

¹⁴¹ The father of *suor* Giamoma Palmieri, who professed in 1641, was the nobleman and lawyer Giacomo Palmieri (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4449, Libro 2, 5 October 1641; ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451, num. 19). The father of Orsina Maccia who entered in 1644 was a merchant (ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451, num. 24). The father of Maria Catterina Salani, who entered in 1682, was a notary (ASB, Demaniale, 8/4456, num. 7). The father of *suor* Rosa Maria Arrighi, who professed in 1686, was the notary Francesco Arrighi (ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 4).

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Francesco Arrighi, both of whose daughters became women religious in S. Elisabetta, were also active in the administration of the community. Giacomo Palmieri was appointed the administrator of S. Elisabetta in 1640, and held the post in 1641, when his daughter *suor* Giacomina professed in the community.¹⁴² Francesco Arrighi notarized documents for S. Elisabetta from the 1670s to the 1720s; his daughter professed in the community in 1686.¹⁴³ The examples of Palmieri and Arrighi reveal a close relationship between S. Elisabetta and the families of its women religious; the surviving sources unfortunately do not permit a further analysis of these relationships. In the eighteenth century, sisters of two medical doctors entered S. Elisabetta; no information about the professions of the fathers of women religious survives.¹⁴⁴ However, the lawyers, notaries, and medical doctors among the male relatives of the women religious of S. Elisabetta evidences a higher socio-economic status of the women who entered S. Elisabetta compared to the other third order communities in Bologna in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

The payment methods of the dowries of S. Elisabetta support this conclusion. In the seventeenth century, four of the seven dowry contracts that record payment information included the donation of real estate or land to S. Elisabetta; one dowry was paid in full at the time of profession and one dowry was paid by signing over an existing credit contract. Only one dowry contract included the establishment of a new credit

¹⁴² ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451, num. 15, num. 24.

¹⁴³ ASB, Demaniale, 6/4454, num. 13; ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 8 secondo.

¹⁴⁴ Giulia Pozzi, whose brother was a medical doctor, professed in 1740 (ASB, Demaniale, 11/4459, num. 10). Anna Paccini, who had been in the conservatory of S. Croce, professed in 1760; her brother was a medical doctor (ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, num. 29; ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, p. 74r).

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contract between S. Elisabetta and the family in the seventeenth century; this dowry was paid in full five years after the woman religious had professed. In the eighteenth century, the dowries were more differentiated. Twelve surviving dowry contracts record the method of payment: one was paid with real estate, three included the signing over of an existing credit contract, two saw new credit agreements contracted with S. Elisabetta, and the remaining seven consisted of dowry charity and subsidies. Three alumnae of the S. Croce conservatory became tertiaries in S. Elisabetta; others combined funds matured in Monte del Matrimonio to compile their third order dowries. Across the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the proportion of women using dowry subsidies, credit contracts, and Monte del Matrimonio accounts to enter S. Elisabetta with smaller than in other third order communities in Bologna. However, in the eighteenth century, also S. Elisabetta saw an increased number of dowries being paid with dowry subsidies and credit. Carboni and Chabot have shown that the middling ranks of Bologna relied increasingly on dowry charity in the eighteenth century. Like marriage dowries, monastic dowries were increasingly difficult to reach for the middling ranks. In Bergamo, S. Giuseppe experienced aristocratization and both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio relied on women from the town as well as the extended hinterland to fill their ranks. In Bologna, where third order communities were closely integrated in the urban landscape, middling rank families relied on various charitable and women's institutions, of which the third order communities were also part, to afford third order dowries for their female kin.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the women religious of third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Third order communities

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were institutions of the middling ranks. As nodes in familial, professional, and local networks, third order communities permitted the daughters of merchants, craftsmen, and artisans to find an alternative to marriage or convent. Mauro Carboni's analysis of the accounts opened in the Monte del Matrimonio dowry bank in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bologna highlights that women in their 30s and 40s entered third order communities with dowries they had accumulated in the Monte; for these women, marriage was increasingly not an option due to their advancing age and third order communities presented a socially respectable alternative.¹⁴⁵ Yet, as third order dowries increased in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the middling ranks struggled to compile a third order dowry. Rather than an economical alternative, entering a third order community presented a considerable financial hurdle for middling rank families, who often relied on dowry charity and subsidies. Third order communities must be considered within the framework of early modern women's institutions in Italy and, alongside marriage and convent, as a third way to organize an early modern female life course. I will explore the role of third order communities in the framework of early modern women's institutions further in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁵ Carboni, *Le doti della "povertà". Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 166–175. Both Carboni and Isabel Chabot argue that numerous charitable dowry fund in Bologna limited, even forbade, the use of charitable dowries for entrance in third order communities until the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, the data presented by both Carboni and Chabot shows that charitable dowries were used throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries to enter third order communities and, as Chabot states, mid-eighteenth century saw a social legitimization of third order communities, reflected in even more charitable dowries being used to enter a third order community, in particular by older women. Chabot and Fornasari, *L'economia della carità: Le doti del Monte di Pietà di Bologna (XVI-XX)*, 128–130.

Chapter 4: Third Order Communities as Life Cycle Institutions

The hagiographic biography of *suor* Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi, the founder of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna, highlights the many functions of third order women religious in early modern urban society. Widow of a master bricklayer, Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi refused a second marriage and worked as a veil-maker to support herself and her young children. In 1723, Mazzoni Sangiorgi clothed the habit of a Carmelite tertiary and professed the vows of chastity and obedience. As a tertiary, *suor* Mazzoni Sangiorgi taught the basics of Christian doctrine to girls and women in her neighborhood. She visited the poor and the sick in their homes and in hospitals; she made their beds, cleaned their houses, and helped with personal care. She prepared the dead for funeral, touching the corpses with her bare hands. Finally, *suor* Maria Maddalena visited incarcerated women in the prisons of Bologna. A group of women religious soon congregated around *suor* Maria Maddalena and together they formed a Carmelite third order community in 1724. This community, named S. Maria delle Grazie, operated a school and provided shelter, care, and education to women of Bologna.¹

The example of *suor* Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi highlights the integration of a third order woman religious in urban society. Current scholarship offers only glimpses of the spiritual, social, and charitable roles assumed by uncloistered women religious in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Such women religious were active in teaching, nursing, and orphan care; they supervised other, unruly women and

¹ BA, B4342, “Racconto informativo della Vita, e Virtù della Serva di Dio Madre S.r Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi....”

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acted as healers and prophesiers. Except for a few studies, scholars focus on the social history of the activities in which these women religious were involved; the participation of the uncloistered women in these activities finds but a passing mention and the role of the women religious is not examined in a focused manner.² This chapter focuses on the role of third order women religious and their communities in the framework of early modern women's institutions. Third order communities accepted girls and women as educational boarders, operated day schools, housed widows, and sheltered a range of female visitors for shorter and longer time periods. Moreover, some women religious stayed in their communities for limited time, leaving also after profession to move to another religious institution or to return to family or benefactors. Third order communities thus formed a discrete stage in the life cycle of many women. Some of these women were accepted in third order communities with open arms; others were forced

² On teaching, Danielle Culpepper, "'Our Particular Cloister': Ursulines and Female Education in Seventeenth-Century Parma and Piacenza," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 4 (2005): 1017–37; Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Elizabeth Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), chap. 3; Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Christine Schneider, *Kloster als Lebensform: Der Wiener Ursulinenkonvent in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts (1740-90)* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2005); Ute Ströbele, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: die Aufhebung südwestdeutscher Frauenklöster unter Kaiser Joseph II* (Köln und Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2005). On nursing and poor relief, Susan Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work in Early Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), chap. 3; Susan E. Dinan, *Women and Poor Relief in Seventeenth-Century France: The Early History of the Daughters of Charity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). On orphan care, Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*, chap. 5; Nicholas Terpstra, *Abandoned Children of the Italian Renaissance: Orphan Care in Florence and Bologna* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). On the role of tertiaries in women's asylums, Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Angela Groppi, *I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma dei Papi* (Rome: Laterza, 1994). On tertiaries as prophesiers and miracle healers, David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 167–172. Current historiography considers prophetic women predominately a Renaissance phenomenon that was stamped out by the Counter-Reformation church, at least on the Italian peninsula, Gabriella Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990). Only Rapley, Lux-Sterritt, Dinan, Schneider, and Ströbele discuss uncloistered women religious in depth.

upon third order communities by local authorities, ecclesiastical and secular. On the pages that follow, I explore the place third order communities occupied in the life of early modern women and, consequently, in early modern society. Third order women religious and their communities were not by-standers to the gendered dynamics of early modern Italy, but rather they participated in the evolution and perpetuation of these dynamics.

i. Girls and women in education

Education and guardianship of girls and young women was one of the main activities of third order communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. Educational boarders were central to the finances of third order communities and allowed the tertiaries to establish and sustain relationships with people and institutions in their localities. For the educational boarders and their families, third order communities permitted an alternative to an education in an enclosed convent, which were limited in the number of boarders they could admit and required a special apostolic permission.³ All third order communities considered in this study accepted educational boarders in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The archives of S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio in Bergamo, as well as those of Ognisanti, S. Elisabetta and S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna reveal a considerable number of girls being trusted to the tertiaries, some as boarders living in the communities, others as day students.

Educational boarders were central to the institutional identity of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo from the community's foundation in 1638. A foundation account of S.

³ To enter *educazione* in an enclosed convent, an application to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars was necessary; after a positive response from Rome, the application was forwarded to the local bishop for archiving, at which point the enclosed convent in question had to vote in chapter on the acceptance of the candidate. Francesca Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2012), 14–16.

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Giuseppe from the 1670s states that S. Giuseppe included an *accademia* soon after its foundation.⁴ In an account that the tertiaries presented to Napoleonic officials in the early nineteenth century, the women described S. Giuseppe as an institution with “the dual objective to attend to the conservation of the purity of their [the foundresses’] morals and to educate young girls in virtuous manner.”⁵ In the century that separated these two accounts, the tertiaries frequently appealed to the well-being of their educational boarders when communicating with first Venetian and then Napoleonic authorities.⁶ The tertiaries first referred to the educational boarders in 1641, when they petitioned Venetian authorities to build an oratory. The petition opened with the following description of S. Giuseppe:

In the city of Bergamo there are a few poor women of the Franciscan third order who live together and provide a good example and universal edification. They raise many young women with Christian virtues. They keep and observe these girls in their house, which is of no little use and relief to the city, since they charge for this charity much less than other places, where similar activities are undertaken, and this because these women have no other objective than to help others [...] Now, seeing that the bringing of many young women – many of whom are unmarried – to hear the mass and receive the sacraments causes great disturbance and is wholly against the discipline proper to that sex, and also at the insistence of the relatives of these young women, who wish to keep their young in this place so that they would not have the opportunity to meander freely, [the tertiaries] most respectfully supplicate your Serenity to grant the license for the building of a most simple oratory [...]

⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, “Relatione della Fondazione del Collegio delle Rev. Madri Tertiarie di S. Francesco Sotto l’invocazione di S. GIOSEPPE nel Borgo S. Leonardo di Bergamo”

⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti, “Promemoria”, *undated*.

⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti. The petitions concerned expansion of property, made necessary due to Venetian restrictions on ecclesiastical property following the 1605 law on ecclesiastical immunities; ASM, AGFR, 2971, Chiesa; ASM, AGFR, 2972; ASM, AGFR, 2991, Religiose P. G.; ASM, AGFR, 2984, num. 50; ASM, Culto, Parte moderna, 2577, S. Giuseppe.

⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, Supplica n.ra pro Constirne oratorij... 1641. 22. Jan.i.

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Testimonies gathered to support this petition stressed that S. Giuseppe charged less for *educazione* than other monastic institutions in Bergamo and accepted young women without the apostolic license required by enclosed convents.⁸ The friends and neighbors testifying in favor of S. Giuseppe thus recognized the community as one that contributed to the local society and was different from other religious communities in Bergamo. Indeed, most Renaissance and early modern Italian convents accepted educational boarders. Convents assumed a custodial function over girls in education, shielding them from threats to honor and introducing them to the values and habits of their social rank.⁹ Current scholarship proposes that the daughters of the social elites benefitted from convent education and that these girls entered convents already inhabited by their kinswomen.¹⁰ The witnesses testifying in favor of S. Giuseppe highlight that convent education attracted a wider demographic. Indeed, the women religious of S. Giuseppe wanted to be recognized as an educational institution that benefitted the whole society of Bergamo: they stressed the smaller fee for education in S. Giuseppe compared to other monastic communities in Bergamo and underscored the community's custodial function.

Educational boarders did not contribute only to the external identity of S. Giuseppe, however. *Educande* were also a central concern in the internal organization of

⁸ Ibid. Testimonies of Antonio Meris, Pietro Gigli, Giacomo Boscaino from February 7, 1642 and the testimony of don Pietro Torre from February 19, 1642.

⁹ Sharon T. Strocchia, "Taken into Custody: Girls and Convent Guardianship in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Studies* 17, no. 2 (2003): 177–200; Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna*; Elissa B. Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁰ K. J. P. Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 175–176; Strocchia, "Taken into Custody: Girls and Convent Guardianship in Renaissance Florence," 180; Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna*, chap. 3.

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the community. The first constitutions of S. Giuseppe from the 1640s did not refer explicitly to the *educande*; the re-elaborated constitutions of 1670s stated, however, that the community taught “virtues, as well as singing, music, needlework, reading, and writing” to young women.¹¹ This description of educational activities was included in the introduction to the 1670s constitutions, alongside the history of the community. By the 1670s, the presence of educational boarders had thus become fixed in the history and self-perception of the community.¹² Nevertheless, the 1670s constitutions did not include rules for organizing the life of the *educande* in S. Giuseppe. The daily life of the educational boarders appears to have been separate from the daily life of the women religious despite the central role that the *educande* occupied in the community’s institutional identity. A pocket-sized, handwritten booklet entitled “Consigli, et comandi della Madre Suora [Suggestions and commands by the mother superior]”, which regulated daily life in S. Giuseppe, instructed women religious neither to “go outside into the academy” nor to “stop to talk at the door close to the sacristy that leads to the academy.”¹³ An 1815 sales deed of the buildings that had housed S. Giuseppe in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries describes a separate house in the complex as the former academy of the *educande*.¹⁴ The *educande* were thus physically separated from

¹¹ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, *REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiare di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE dette del Retiramento* (Milano, 1673), p. 9.

¹² Scholarship on monastic history writing highlights this community-building and identity-creating functions of convent histories, Lowe, *Nuns’ Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy*; Christine Schneider, “‘Zu Nutzen, Trost und Unterricht aller nachfolgenden [...]’ - Die österreichischen Ursulinenchroniken im 18. Jahrhundert.” in *Frauenklöster im Alpenraum*, ed. Brigitte Mazohl and Ellinor Forster (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2012); Charlotte Woodford, *Nuns as Historians in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹³ ASM, AGFR, 2991, Religiose, P. G, Consigli, et comandi della Madre Superiora, num. 24, 33.

¹⁴ ASBg, Notarile, 13121, Tomo III, num. 237.

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the tertiaries just as canon law on monastic education foresaw and the local ecclesiastical authorities demanded.¹⁵ Education in S. Giuseppe straddled an ambiguous, flexible line between complying with canon law for monastic education on the one hand and, on the other, offering an alternative to enclosed convents and their high cost and apostolic permissions.

In fact, all third order communities sought to regulate the lives of educational boarders and limit contacts between the *educande* and the tertiaries as well as the *educande* and the secular world. During a visit to S. Elisabetta in Bologna in 1695, a Franciscan visitor decreed that educational boarders were neither allowed to leave the “school” nor receive visits from their female relatives without a permission of the mother superior.¹⁶ In 1720, another Franciscan visitor stressed the need to keep the educational boarders – as well as the tertiaries – away from lay people because, he argued, the boarders had entered a religious community to achieve distance from the secular world.¹⁷ A chapter meeting of the tertiaries of Ognisanti in Bologna proposed rules for the *educande* in 1746. Similarly to novice tertiaries in Ognisanti, the *educande* had to be of honest character and have a good reputation.¹⁸ Moreover, the parish priest of the

¹⁵ Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna*, 14. In Bergamo, episcopal authorities demanded a complete separation of *educande* from women religious in monastic institutions. In a pastoral letter in 1700, the bishop of Bergamo decreed that “nuns are not allowed to interact or communicate with the secular daughters who are received in education in the convents but the latter must be kept completely separate.” Bishop Giustiniani demanded that in the new Academy of S. Antonio in Bergamo the *educande* would occupy separate quarters from the tertiaries, ASM, AGFR, 2969, Provvidenze generali, dal 1603 al 1772; ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Antonio di Padova, varie.

¹⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 11v.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 45v-46r.

¹⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 83. On the character traits that Ognisanti expected from new women religious turn to Chapter 3.

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educanda had to testify to her character.¹⁹ Once accepted, each *educanda* was assigned to a tertiary nun, who supervised the *educanda* during her stay in the community. Like in S. Elisabetta, also the *educande* in Ognisanti were permitted to interact with men only in the parlatory and only in the presence of their tertiary supervisor and a dedicated “listener” tertiary. The *educande* were allowed to leave Ognisanti only when accompanied either by two tertiaries or by a close female relative.²⁰ A Servite visitor confirmed these rules in 1747, adding that those *educande* with no relatives in Bologna had to indicate a “honest and civil” person, who would house the *educanda* in case she was expelled from Ognisanti or wished to take a leave.²¹ These regulations reveal that, as in enclosed convents, avoiding threats to the honor of the *educande* was the goal of education also in third order communities. The tertiaries recognized that they contributed to the early modern system of honor. In a petition to the *podestà* of Bergamo in 1758, the tertiaries of S. Antonio argued that *educande* were sent to S. Antonio “by their families to be preserved in their innocence and taught all that what serves young women of civil origins.”²² Third order communities were part of the institutional framework that enveloped female lives in early modern Italy. Moreover, as institutions that served to guard the honor of some women, third order communities also contributed to the creation and maintenance of this early modern institutional framework.

¹⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, pp. 78, 81, 82.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 83.

²¹ ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, October 17, 1747.

²² ASM, AGFR, 2942, Copia di tutte le parti e scritture occorse nella consessione fatta dalla Ven.da Scola dell SS. Sacramento in S. Alessandro in Colonna all' Ven.de Collegio di S. Antonio di Padova per l'alzamento di un muro e per la chiusa di alcune finestre sop. l' Antana della Casa Amigoni a Sera parte.

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Third order communities participated in the system of honor on two distinct levels. Minutes of chapter meetings show that Ognisanti in Bologna accepted two types of educational boarders in the eighteenth century.²³ On the one hand, girls as young as four-years old – but mostly girls in their teens – entered Ognisanti for educational boarding. They were often the daughters of lawyers, medical doctors, and notaries; they remained in Ognisanti for a few years before leaving again, presumably to either marry or enter a convent. Only a limited number of these *educande* later became tertiaries in Ognisanti. In this regard, Ognisanti’s educational boarders followed a pattern common to monastic education in early modern Italy: only a limited number of the girls, who received a monastic education, later professed as women religious.²⁴ On the other hand, women in their twenties and thirties entered Ognisanti as educational boarders in numbers roughly equal to the young girls. According to canon law – that was elaborated following the Council of Trent and regarded only enclosed convents – the upper age limit for educational boarding was twenty-five years of age.²⁵ Many conservatories founded in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries set similar upper age limits for their charges and provided dowries to girls who reached marriageable age to encourage them to

²³ Minutes from chapter meetings are recorded in two handwritten books, covering the period from the late 1730s to 1799. The first book (ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari) includes minutes from the late 1730s to 1768, the second book (ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari) from 1768 to 1799.

²⁴ Terraccia’s study of Milan and the surrounding area reveals that only 7 to 26 per cent of the young women who received a monastic education became professed women religious later. The percentage was the highest among young women of noble background and women educated in convents outside Milan, it was the lowest among women educated in urban convents, Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna*, 16, 72–73, 112–113. Sharon Strocchia has also noted that only a fraction of the women who had been educational boarders in their youth became nuns in Renaissance Florence, Strocchia, “Taken into Custody: Girls and Convent Guardianship in Renaissance Florence,” 181.

²⁵ Only girls who were at least seven years old, and not older than twenty-five, could become educational boarders, Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna*, 21–37.

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leave.²⁶ In Bologna, the statutes of S. Croce expelled from the conservatory any woman who had reached her twenty-fourth birthday, whether or not she was ready to marry or enter a convent.²⁷ Yet, age at first marriage was increasing throughout the early modern period and was above twenty-five years of age for women in towns across north-central Italy by the end of the eighteenth century.²⁸ By accepting women in their late-twenties and thirties as educational boarders, third order communities like Ognisanti filled a growing gap between when a young woman could expect to marry and when she was no longer allowed to board in a convent or conservatory as an educational boarder.

Ognisanti classified these older women also as *educande* and differentiated them from other women of comparable age who entered Ognisanti as widows or *malmaritate*; the latter were classified as *dozzenanti*.²⁹ The minutes indicate that the older *educande* were often (orphaned) daughters of lawyers and medical doctors, high-ranking civil and military administrators. Many of these women had already seen a period of educational boarding in a monastic community, including in Ognisanti. In 1768, one Maria Elisabetta Olivieri re-entered Ognisanti as an educational boarder; Olivieri had first been an

²⁶ Nicholas Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 2013, 69.

²⁷ ASB, Conservatorio di Santa Croce, 1, *Statuti, ed ordini sopra il governo delle zittelle del Conservatorio di S. Croce. Nuovamente riveduti, e riformati, e dall'Eminentissimo, e Reverendissimo Sig. Cardinale Vincenzo Malvezzi Arcivescovo Approvati, e confermati l'anno 1760*, pp. 23-24.

²⁸ Marzio Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto: Mutamenti della famiglia in Italia dal XV al XX secolo*, 3rd edition (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013), chap. 7; Mauro Carboni, *Le doti della "povertà". Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), 166–169; Maria Fubini Leuzzi, "Condurre a onore" *Famiglia, matrimonio e assistenza dotale a Firenze in Età Moderna* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1999), 159.

²⁹ *Dozzenante* seems to be a derivative of the word *dozzena*, which means 'fee', a monthly fee paid by secular women staying in a religious community. *Dozzenanti* were thus secular women who boarded in religious communities. The chapter minutes of Ognisanti clearly differentiate between *educande* and *dozzenanti*. On *dozzenanti*, pp. 31-46 below.

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educanda in Ognisanti in the 1750s, after which time she had moved to board in the enclosed convent of S. Catterina di Strada Maggiore in Bologna in 1761. Seven years later, Olivieri was back in Ognisanti.³⁰ In 1771, the twenty-five year old Maria Maddalena Forni, an orphaned daughter of an adjutant at Fort Urbano near Bologna, entered Ognisanti as an *educanda* after having spent years as an educational boarder in the enclosed convent of S. Giuglielmo.³¹ In 1774, twenty-three year old Laura Mellini, an alumna of the conservatory of S. Maria del Baraccano, entered Ognisanti as an *educanda*.³² All these women left Ognisanti again without clothing the habit of the community. However, third order communities like Ognisanti not only extended the period spent in educational boarding but also allowed families to develop particular marriage strategies. In 1771, the twenty-three year old Barbara Domenica Medola entered Ognisanti as an *educanda* after the ‘fervent pleas’ of her parents; Medola had lived with her aunt in Brescia before transferring to Ognisanti and she left the community two months later to marry in Brescia.³³ The meeting minutes do not reveal the motivation behind Medola’s short stay, but her time in Ognisanti seems to have been necessary to finalize her marriage. The meeting minutes often indicate the benefactor who vouched for the older *educande* and asked for her acceptance in Ognisanti; among the benefactors

³⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 151.

³¹ ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 11.

³² Ibid., p. 21. For more on S. Maria Baraccano, see Lucia Ciammitti, “Quanto costa essere normali. La dote nel conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baraccano (1630-1680),” *Quaderni Storici* 53 (1983): 469–97; Lucia Ferrante, “Fare il bene per il proprio bene: attività assistenziali e vantaggi personali a Bologna tra Seicento e Settecento,” in *Dai cantieri della storia: Liber amicorum per Paolo Prodi*, ed. Gian Paolo Brizzi and Giuseppe Olmi (Bologna: CLUEB, 2007), 445–53; Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*.

³³ ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 13.

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were local parish clergy, senators of Bologna, but also the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi³⁴ Ognisanti was a point of reference for a number of people or institutions. Other third order communities in Bologna also fulfilled a similar role.³⁵ Third order communities offered a solution to the increasing gap between age at marriage and the age of majority in the eighteenth century.³⁶ Third order women religious were not only custodians of girls but also guarded single women waiting to ‘take status’ and enter adulthood in the eyes of eighteenth-century society. Third order communities were part of the early modern system of honor and brought institutional flexibility into this system by providing an additional female space that was necessitated by contemporary societal changes.

Beyond the daughters of professionals and middling ranks who entered third order communities as educational boarders, third order communities also educated girls who came to the tertiaries only for a few hours a day and did not live with the tertiaries. Current historiography on Italy considers such day schools as predominately a nineteenth-century development; however, third order communities in Bergamo and

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 32, 34, 40, 43, 44, 47, 59, 74. Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi was a confraternity of shame faced poor that assisted the shame faced poor and their families, Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 236.

³⁵ The eighteenth-century entrance and exit records of the conservatory of S. Croce reveal numerous women who aged out of S. Croce without having first found a ready marriage or monacization opportunity. Luigia Landuzzi left S. Croce in 1782 to enter the enclosed convent of SS. Vitale e Agricola for her novitiate period; three months later, Luigia left the convent and entered as a boarder in the third order convent of S. Francesco di Paola; a month after that she moved to become a nun in the enclosed convent of SS. Ludovico e Alessio (ASB, Conservatorio di S. Croce, 18, Campione per l'Entrata, et Uscita delle Putte di S. Croce, 1697 al 1801, p. 86). In 1785, Teodora Segenhausen left S. Croce after her twenty-fourth birthday and entered the Franciscan third order community of Pozzo Rosso, where she stayed until her marriage in 1786 (ibid, p. 87). Finally, Maria Lucia Cenni had to leave the S. Croce after her twenty-fourth birthday in 1787; she moved to stay in S. Maria della Carità until 1790, when she married (ibid, p. 95).

³⁶ Twenty-five years of age marked the age of majority in Roman law, Silvana Seidel Menchi, “The Girl and the Hourglass: Periodization of Women’s Lives in Western Preindustrial Societies,” in *Time, Space, and Women’s Lives in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anne Jacobson Schutte, Thomas Kuehn, and Silvana Seidel Menchi (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2001). Marriage and leaving the parental household for the marital household generally denoted the transition into adulthood, Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).

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Bologna were operating day schools already in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.³⁷ The hagiographical biography of Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi highlights the existence of a day school in S. Maria delle Grazie immediately after its foundation in the early 1720s. According to the biography, the tertiaries taught reading and writing, Christian doctrine, and manual labors to girls younger than fifteen or sixteen years of age.³⁸ These young girls constituted a group separate from the *educande*, who were under the care of a dedicated mistress of the *educande* and separated from the secular world, as I discuss above.³⁹ The young day scholars, on the other hand, remained outside the voluntary enclosure of the women religious. The inventories of S. Maria delle Grazie, compiled in the early nineteenth century by Napoleonic officials, record a school room (*camera della scuola*) and a connected room for warming (*scaldatoio della scuola*) close to the entrance lodge of the community; the officials recorded a separate *scuola delle educande* on the first floor of the community.⁴⁰ The surviving sources hint that also

³⁷ Giancarlo Rocca, *Donne religiose. Contribuito a una storia della condizione femminile in Italia nei secoli XIX-XX* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1992), 114–123.

³⁸ BA, B4342, Raconto informativo della Vita, e Virtù della Serva di Dio Madre S.r Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi...

³⁹ BA, B4342, Regole delle Terziarie Carmeliatne di Bologna e vita della loro fondatrice Suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi, Capitolo 20. The constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie expressly forbade teaching singing, dancing, and languages to educational boarders. In many monastic communities in early modern Europe, *educande* were permitted to have private dance, music, and language instructors and music, dance, and languages formed central part of convent education, Robert L. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Janet K. Page, *Convent Music and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna*, 235–249.

⁴⁰ A *scaldatoio* or a calefactory was a heated room in an otherwise sparsely heated building where the inhabitants could warm up. Calefactories were typical to medieval and early modern monastic complexes. ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Maria Maddalena de Pazzi, Inventario de mobile supelettili...

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S. Elisabetta in Bologna may have operated a similarly separate day school. A Franciscan visitor to S. Elisabetta called upon the mother superior in 1779:

In order to maintain internal peace [...] to guard with great care that the young secular women, who attend the monastery because of the school, do not enter the convent during those hours when they can cause disturbance and distraction to the *claustrali*.⁴¹

Division of space allowed day students to enter and exit the community without disturbing the daily rhythms of the tertiaries, or the *educande*. The constitutions of S. Giuseppe from 1673 established voluntary enclosure for the tertiaries but noted that “these rules [on voluntary enclosure] do not exclude the possibility to open a public school for poor girls, who would come to us to be taught to fear God, to read, and to work without any disturbance to our house.”⁴² French Ursulines and other teaching congregations had adopted similar solutions in the seventeenth century, in response to ecclesiastical and social pressures.⁴³ Italian third order communities did not face resistance to their day schools, it seems. In fact, the Franciscan visitor to S. Elisabetta in 1779 appeared to recognize that some mixing between day scholars and tertiaries was inevitable. Such recognition underscores that third order communities were part of the society, not removed from it. The tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie even presented their educational activities as benefitting the society. In a petition to the archbishop of Bologna in 1791, the tertiaries stressed that they “keep in education a good number of girls of

⁴¹ *Claustrali* here refers to the tertiaries who lived in voluntary enclosure. ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 147r.

⁴² Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiarie di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE dette del Retiramento (Milano, 1673), p. 28. The constitutions also stressed that such a school would be free of charge for the students.

⁴³ Laurence Lux-Sterritt, “Between the Cloister and the World: The Successful Compromise of the Ursulines of Toulouse, 1604-1616,” *French History* 16, no. 3 (2002): 247–68; Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*; Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime*.

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citizen and as well as of noble [background]... and also run a school for other young women for the communal benefit of the city.”⁴⁴

Educational boarding presented a source of income for the third order communities.⁴⁵ The women religious charged a monthly fee for boarding. In 1728, a Franciscan visitor to S. Elisabetta in Bologna forbade the tertiaries from accepting any boarders without a fee.⁴⁶ Third order communities were not free to set the fees as they pleased, however. Local episcopal authorities sought to limit the fees, ostensibly to permit women from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds to enter educational boarding. Nevertheless, communities sought to negotiate the limits placed upon them. In the 1760s, S. Elisabetta in Bologna rejected an episcopal decree, which set boarding fees in the community at 12 *lire* a month, considerable less than the 18 *lire* a month that the tertiaries already charged.⁴⁷ In 1789, a Franciscan visitor to S. Elisabetta raised the fee charged by the community to 18 *lire* a month (up from 15 *lire* a month); the visitor referred to the faltering financial situation of S. Elisabetta and higher food costs in Bologna.⁴⁸ Fees for educational boarding increased in all third order communities, not only in S. Elisabetta.⁴⁹ Studies about northern Italian urban economy in the eighteenth

⁴⁴ AAB, MV, 283, “Documenti e carte varie, secc. XVIII” and “Visite”.

⁴⁵ Sharon Strocchia has underscored the financial reasons for taking in educational boarders. She argues that fees from boarding provided a more stable income than annuities from credit leases; boarding also secured future patronage from ex-boarders. Strocchia, “Taken into Custody: Girls and Convent Guardianship in Renaissance Florence,” 193–196.

⁴⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 60v.

⁴⁷ AAB, MV, 265, Visita pastorale

⁴⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 164v-165r.

⁴⁹ In 1746, the chapter meeting of Ognisanti associated the fee for boarding to the cost of foodstuffs in Bologna and demanded that all boarders pay fees in advance for every two-month period (ASB, Demaniale,

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century reveal, however, that food prices remained largely unchanged from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ Third order communities sought to profit from their educational boarders. Fees from boarding constituted a substantial part of the annual income of all third order communities. The financial reports compiled by Napoleonic officials in the late-eighteenth and the early-nineteenth centuries show that fees from boarding constituted c. 30 per cent of the annual income of S. Elisabetta and c. 95 per cent of the annual income of S. Maria delle Grazie.⁵¹ Most third order communities in this study began to accept larger numbers of boarders when they experienced a decline in their religious populations in the second half of the eighteenth century, seemingly to substitute declining dowry income with boarding fees.⁵² Only a few educational boarders entered Ognisanti in Bologna before the 1740s. Then communal life was revoked in Ognisanti and the community's population entered a steady decline. During this decline, Ognisanti began to accept more educational boarders. The community continued to accept educational boarders also in the last decades of the eighteenth century, when communal life was partially restored and the community admitted new women

13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 83.). in 1747, a Servite visitor set the fee for educational boarding in Ognisanti at 15 lire a month (ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, October 17, 1747; ASB, Demaniale, 164/6254, Registro Provinciale, 1733-1753, pp. 195r-195v). In 1766, in an apparent attempt to save costs, the tertiaries decided to stop providing the *educande* with "light" in the evenings and giving them bread on days when the *educande* dined outside the community (ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 144.). In 1790, the fees for educational boarding at Ognisanti were increased to 18 lire a month, which the tertiaries justified with an increased cost of living (ASB, Demaniale, 14/6191, Atti Capitolari, p. 74).

⁵⁰ Carboni, *Le doti della "povertà". Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 44–45; Paolo Malanima, "When Did England Overtake Italy? Medieval and Early Modern Divergence in Prices and Wages," *European Review of Economic History* 17, no. 1 (2013): 45–70. It must be noted, however, that even though prices remained largely constant from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, real wages decreased, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century.

⁵¹ ASM, AFR, 2287.

⁵² Turn to chapter 2 for a discussion of population trends.

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religious.⁵³ The boarders helped to secure an income for third order communities and secure the communities' continuation during periods of institutional instability.

The importance of educational boarders to third order communities is illustrated by the reaction of the women religious of S. Antonio in Bergamo to a *malmaritata* in their community in the early-eighteenth century.⁵⁴ The tertiaries of S. Antonio protested that the *malmaritata* was a threat to their *educande* and thus to their finances,

Now, because they experience a great disadvantage due to the lacking number of the *educande* and since a good number of *educande* would [help to fight] their poverty, they have decided to appeal to the charity, justice, and protection of Your Excellence [...] so that this woman would be removed from their convent as soon as possible and those young *educande* could be placed in there, who at the moment are not placed in there by their relatives until the married woman is not removed.⁵⁵

⁵³ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari.

⁵⁴ A *malmaritata* or a 'badly married woman' was someone who faced problems in her marriage, which could include violence or abandonment. A testimony from the archives of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo exemplifies the type of women who arrived as *malmaritate* in third order communities. In 1708, the bishop of Bergamo asked the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe to accept Laura Alberici, a *malmaritata*. According to Alberici's own testimony, she had married her husband Diodato Clivati in 1707 and moved to live with her new husband, his father, and his four sisters. Some days after the move, Clivati allegedly started to act differently and Alberici heard from her new sisters-in-law that her husband was unhappy about her leaving the house occasionally and spending time at the windows. Alberici considered her own behavior decorous at all times. Nonetheless, Clivati removed Alberici to a rural *villa* in Solza, west of Bergamo. There the two lived in peace for some days. Yet, this peace was interrupted by the arrival of Alberici's cousin once removed, Quintiliano Cucchi, who was also Alberici's guardian. Cucchi brought news from Alberici's mother and the rest of her *casa* and stayed in Solza overnight in order to inquire about Alberici's happiness and well-being at the request of her mother. Alberici assured Cucchi that she was well and left the house to go to church. When she returned from church, Clivati was missing. He was later found on the fields and returned home, but refused dinner and immediately retired to the bedroom. When Alberici retired after dinner, Clivati confronted her with accusations of unfaithfulness and the two argued through the night. The next morning, Cucchi left to return to Bergamo but, according to Alberici's testimony, her husband's "madness increased." Clivati continued to accuse and threaten Alberici as he had done through the night and then began to plead for her to confess her infidelity, asking even for a false confession; Alberici refused for days but finally relented and gave a false confession. Following this, Clivati rode to Bergamo and shot Cucchi, leaving him for dead. He then returned to Solza with the intention to kill Alberici. However, a friend intercepted Clivati and, upon his return at the *villa* in Solza, he renounced Alberici as his wife and declared that the latter should live with his sisters, separate from him.⁵⁴ Laura Alberici's testimony in S. Giuseppe's archives is the only document about her stay in the community. Her name appears neither in the election protocols of S. Giuseppe's mothers superior nor in the community's book of professions, so she never became a tertiary in the community (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Alberici Laura).

⁵⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache, e Converse, Vestizioni ... al 1795.

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In a separate letter, the tertiaries added that the population of *educande* in S. Antonio had diminished by half since the *malmaritata* had entered the community because the relatives of the young women did not trust their daughters with the tertiaries until the *malmaritata* was in the community.⁵⁶ A fear for their daughters' honor led families to withdraw their kinswomen from S. Antonio; a fear for the community's income encouraged the women religious to petition to the local bishop. Educational boarding represented an important source of income for third order communities both in Bergamo and Bologna. Moreover, educational boarding and day schools integrated third order communities into the urban societies that surrounded them and inserted third order communities in the institutional framework of Counter-Reformation Italy. Third order communities permitted the movement of women between families and institutions, allowing access to educational boarding for a wider range of women and filling the gaps that existed between charitable and monastic institutions.⁵⁷

ii. Temporary boarders

Many other secular women also found their way into third order communities for shorter and longer time periods. The women religious welcomed some of these women with open arms; others were sent to third order communities by ecclesiastical or secular authorities against the expressed wishes of the tertiaries. Accounting for these various boarders

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Lucia Ferrante and Nicholas Terpstra have discussed the movement of women between the various conservatories in Bologna, outlining a network of charitable institutions for women in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. They consider this network one of punitive institutions that did not include monastic communities, with the exception of SS. Giacomo and Filippo, a convent for reformed prostitutes. Lucia Ferrante, "Honor Regained: Women in the Casa Del Soccorso Di San Paolo in Sixteenth-Century Bologna," in *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*.

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highlights the important function third order communities occupied in the institutional framework that shaped female lives in early modern Italy. The temporary boarders also exemplify a mutually dependent relationship between third order communities and the society that surrounded them.

In 1702, an unmarried woman (*zitella*) named Maria Maddalena Fabri from the parish of S. Catterina di Saragozza paid 1500 *lire* to enter S. Elisabetta in Bologna, also in the parish of S. Catterina di Saragozza; Fabri lived out her life among the tertiaries, who provided her with food, clothing, and care.⁵⁸ In 1731, the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta received permission from their religious order to accept a widow named Diamante Arropiedi.⁵⁹ In 1752, a widow named Teresa Raimondi Galletti lent 1500 *lire* to S. Elisabetta “to be spent immediately for the payment of their [the tertiaries’] various debts”; the money was lent on the condition that the tertiaries would pay back 120 *lire* a year to Galletti during her remaining lifetime. At the time of this transaction, Galletti already lived in S. Elisabetta as a secular boarder.⁶⁰ The terms of the transaction were amended four years later, in 1756, when, instead of paying the 120 *lire* annuity, the women religious agreed to “provide the said Sig.ra Teresa now and until she naturally lives with daily room and board in their house and according to the traditions of their house.”⁶¹ Galletti had been paying rent to S. Elisabetta until 1756, but these payments also stopped after the women religious agreed to provide Galletti with daily essentials. To

⁵⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 9/4457, num. 1.

⁵⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, “Visite”, p. 77v.

⁶⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, num. 9.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, num. 20.

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seal the 1756 agreement, Galletti paid 600 *lire* addition to the 1500 *lire* she had already lent to S. Elisabetta.⁶² For a total of 2100 *lire*, the widow Teresa Galletti could live out her life among the tertiaries, similarly to the singlewoman Maddalena Fabri. The financial ledgers of S. Elisabetta include many other secular boarders who lived in the community in the eighteenth century. The ledgers classify some of these women as either *vedova* (widow) or *convittrice* (boarder). From 1755 to 1786, several secular women lived in S. Elisabetta at any given time.⁶³ The late eighteenth-century foundation account of S. Elisabetta refers to seven secular boarders, who lived in the community from 1722 to 1776; among them were four widows, two house nuns (*virgo in capillis*), and a woman who lived in S. Elisabetta as a secular companion to *suor* Geltrude Negri.⁶⁴ The two house nuns entered S. Elisabetta when they were 65-years of age and 70-years of age respectively and died after a few years in S. Elisabetta. The widows included a young widow who stayed in S. Elisabetta for two years and then moved to the near-by Franciscan convent of Corpus Domini to become an enclosed nun; the other three widows, one of whom Teresa Galletti, were older women who entered S. Elisabetta for the last years of their life.⁶⁵ The women religious accepted all these women voluntarily

⁶² ASB, Demaniale, 13/4461, num. 4.

⁶³ ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, 'Libro Maestro, 1755-1773'; ASB, Demaniale, 31/4479, 'Libro Maestro, 1774 a tutto il 1786'.

⁶⁴ House nuns or *monache di casa* were single or married women who clothed a third order religious habit and followed a religious regimen, but continued to live in their own homes. In current literature, house nuns are mostly associated with the medieval penitent movement; in early modern Italy, house nuns are said to have been common in southern Italy. See, Elisa Novi Chavarría, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII* (Milan: F. Angeli, 2001), 161–201; Anna Benvenuti Papi, "*In castro poenitentiae*" *Santità e società femminile nell'Italia medievale* (Rome: Herder Editrice e Libreria, 1990); Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500*.

⁶⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 32/4480, Fondazione, Donne secolari.

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and immortalized some of them in the community's book of foundation.⁶⁶ These boarders were part of the community in S. Elisabetta.

For the boarders, third order women religious and their communities represented companionship and a comfortable place to live. In 1714, the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità in Bologna signed an accord with Diamante Cavari, who had already lived in the community for some years and had paid 50 *lire* a year for her board and 12 *lire* a year for her room. The accord foresaw the following:

Since it has always been and still is the intention of this signora Diamante to reciprocate with a repayment for the board and with great gratitude for the treatment she had received from the tertiaries until now, and how she expects to be treated until her death, she has reached an agreement with them, that the tertiaries will continue to provide her with room and board and the enjoyment of all the furnishings of the convent until she naturally lives, for which she will pay only 60 *lire* annually and will complete all the in-house offices assigned to her like all the tertiaries do; after her death, this house will receive a legacy of 1500 *lire* from her inheritance.⁶⁷

Cavari recognized the companionship that she received from the women religious of S. Maria della Carità, who had included this boarder in the daily routines of the community. In return, the tertiaries received a legacy from Cavari, who also paid an annual fee for her room and board. S. Giuseppe in Bergamo also provided such a community to secular boarders. *Madonna* Appolonia Bianchi, who was originally from Lodi but had lived in Borgo S. Leonardo in Bergamo for years, dictated her last will in 1675 and a codicil in “a room in the house of the tertiaries” of S. Giuseppe in 1680. The codicil specified that

⁶⁶ Retrospective convent histories served to build convent community and teach new members of the community about its past. It can be said that these histories became members of the convent communities symbolically and the inclusion of secular boarders in the book of foundation indicates that these women occupied a central place in the communal self-perception of S. Elisabetta. See Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy*; Schneider, “‘Zu Nuzen, Trost und Unterricht aller nachfolgenden [...]’ - Die österreichischen Ursulinenchroniken im 18. Jahrhundert.”; Woodford, *Nuns as Historians in Early Modern Germany*.

⁶⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 25.

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Bianchi was laying in her sickbed. Both the last will and the codicil instituted the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe as the universal heirs of Bianchi, who claimed that she had “much trust” in the women religious.⁶⁸ S. Giuseppe represented a safe resting place in a familiar neighborhood for Bianchi, who as a foreigner in Bergamo may have had a limited family network in the town. In addition to nominating the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe as her universal heirs, Bianchi left small legacies to two maternal uncles and one other maternal relative. With the codicil, Bianchi cancelled previous pious donations to a confraternity and the local hospital of S. Maria Maddalena, both in Borgo S. Leonardo. She made S. Giuseppe not only her universal heir but also the only religious institution to receive a legacy. The relationships between the women religious and their secular boarders benefitted both sides, bringing financial gain as well as new active community members to tertiary communities and companionship and a place to live for widows and singlewomen.

Third order communities presented an attractive option to widows, aging house nuns, and singlewomen. The contemporary ideology of widowhood prescribed virtuous retreat from the world, contemplation, and prayer to women who had lost their husband.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2981, Legati Bianchi Appolonia.

⁶⁹ Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner have identified three stereotypes of widows in medieval and early modern Europe: (1) the good widow, (2) the merry widow, and (3) the poor widow. The good widow “maintained the memory of her late husband and lived as a ‘perpetual widow’ ... in chastity and continued obedience.” This ideal was perpetuated by prescriptive texts, such as Juan Luis Vives’s *Instruction of a Christian Woman* and St. Francis de Sales’s *Advice to Widows*. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner, eds., *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), 6–9, 20–23, citation from 7. See also Erin J. Campbell, “Prophets, Saints, and Matriarchs: Portraits of Old Women in Early Modern Italy,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2010): 807–49; Janine M. Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris: Gender, Economy, and Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), chap. 2.

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Singlewomen were expected to live as dependents in patriarchal households.⁷⁰ A religious community offered a decorous retreat for both widows and singlewomen. The sums paid by Maria Fabri and Teresa Galletti to S. Elisabetta, discussed above, reveal that these women had some means, which they used to organize their singlehood and widowhood. S. Elisabetta, in turn, benefitted financially from these women's decision to retreat in the community. In addition to donating 2100 *lire* to S. Elisabetta, Teresa Galletti also disinherited her two brothers in favor of S. Elisabetta in her last will in 1762.⁷¹ Galletti's acceptance records also show that S. Elisabetta requested a one-time fee of 200 *lire* from secular boarders, in addition to the boarding fees.⁷² This fee was expected from *convittrici* alone; *educande* did not pay it. The widows who entered Ognisanti in Bologna throughout the eighteenth century also paid a 200 *lire* 'donation' in addition to a monthly boarding fee.⁷³ The donation functioned as a dowry of sorts. When the twenty-six year old widow Caterina Chiosi entered Ognisanti in 1769, her donation was reduced to 150 *lire* because "being young [...] she did not intend to stay here forever."⁷⁴ For this widow, Ognisanti represented a distinct period of her life course, which both she and the community recognized. For the widow Pantasilea Campari, who entered Ognisanti in 1733 and who left half of her inheritance to the tertiaries in return

⁷⁰ Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide, eds., *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Amy M. Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2005).

⁷¹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/4461, num. 4.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, pp. 81, 89, 106, 125, 128, 135, 140, 146; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, pp. 5, 6, 16, 18, 34, 47, 60, 72, 75, 77.

⁷⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atto Capitolari, p. 6.

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for room, board, and a proper funeral, Ognisanti represented the final stage of her life course.⁷⁵ The widows who entered Ognisanti were mostly widows of lawyers, notaries, and medical doctors and belonged to a similar socio-economic rank as the *educande* who entered the community.⁷⁶ Current historiography considers monastic institutions as the retreat of elite widows in early modern Italy.⁷⁷ Sandra Cavallo suggests that elite widows of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Turin often clothed the third order habit and lived as tertiaries either in their own homes or in convents, which were not necessary third order convents.⁷⁸ Middling rank widows in early modern Paris, Janine Lanza argues, rarely entered monastic communities, enclosed or third order, due to prohibitive fees.⁷⁹ Evidence from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bologna and Bergamo shows that middling rank widows did enter third order communities. Even though retirement in a third order community was not necessarily economical, the 200 *lire* fee was considerably less than the dowries of middling rank women the women in the seventeenth and the

⁷⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, March 21, 1733.

⁷⁶ The wives, sisters, and daughters of professional classes continued to enter Ognisanti as boarders and *educande* until the very end of the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the community's account books from 1793 to 1807. ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, "Giornale d'Entrata, 1792, tutto il 1807".

⁷⁷ Scholars discuss the wealthy widows who retired in elite, enclosed convents, which they had often founded or patronized before retiring there. P. Renee Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Silvia Evangelisti, "Wives, Widows, and Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in the Historiography of Early Modern Italy," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000): 246; Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26; Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women*, 17.

⁷⁸ Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 159–160.

⁷⁹ Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris: Gender, Economy, and Law*, 74.

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eighteenth centuries.⁸⁰ Third order communities thus allowed these women to organize their life course either in widowhood or as never-married singlewomen.

Third order communities also saw a range of visitors who stayed only for short periods of time. For these women, third order communities offered a temporary place to stay; they may have been third orders to enclosed convents because of the greater ease of access – third order communities did not require a special apostolic permission to accept secular women. A widowed Frenchwoman named Giovanna Calli placed her daughter Agnese in S. Maria della Carità in Bologna in 1745. Calli was travelling through Bologna in the entourage of the Spanish king and used the tertiary community for the safekeeping of her daughter. Since Calli was a foreigner, the tertiaries took caution and required a number of items as security for the payment of the monthly boarding fee of 15 *lire*.⁸¹ In 1749, one Laura Bambini, whose husband was travelling “in distant lands” entered as a boarder in Ognisanti in Bologna,⁸² some years later, in 1771, one Maria Piccinelli left her nine-year old daughter in Ognisanti for the months Piccinelli was travelling away from Bologna.⁸³ Third order communities, in return for a fee, functioned as shelters for women and children who needed a temporary place to stay.

⁸⁰ Dowries of middling ranks ranged from 200 to 1600 lire in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bologna. The women who graduated from the Bolognese conservatory of S. Maria del Baraccano in the late-seventeenth century and mostly married men of artisan backgrounds had dowries from 700 to 900 lire. Carboni, *Le doti della “povertà”. Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)*, 187; Ciammitti, “Quanto costa essere normali. La dote nel conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baraccano (1630-1680).” See also chapter 3.

⁸¹ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 15.

⁸² ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 95.

⁸³ ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 12.

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Third order communities did not accept all secular boarders voluntarily, however, as already revealed by the reluctance of the tertiaries of S. Antonio to accept a *malmaritata* in Bergamo. In 1705, the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità in Bologna tried to expel a *malmaritata* placed in the community by the archbishop of Bologna, Giacomo Boncompagni. The tertiaries claimed that they lacked room for the *malmaritata*, named Chiara Granti. Granti needed a place where to wait for the episcopal decision on her separation of bed and bread case. She had already been repelled by one third order community and one enclosed convent; after Granti also had to leave from S. Maria della Carità, she returned to her mother's house in Pieve di Cento, even though the mother declared that she accepted her daughter "against her wishes".⁸⁴ Granti's movement between religious institutions that turned her away one after another as well as her eventual return to her mother's house highlights the difficulties faced by women experiencing marital troubles in early modern Italy.⁸⁵ Episcopal authorities sought to send *malmaritate* to third order communities because they perceived the third orders as useful,

⁸⁴ AAB, MV, 273, cart. 267. Monica Chojnacka has shown that in sixteenth-century Venice it was rare for adult women to reside with their parents. Depending on their age, these women either lived alone as widows or with relatives or in service. Maura Palazzi stresses that social class influenced the living arrangements of single women in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. Palazzi argues that only older women of lower social class who could no longer expect to remarry lived on their own; single women tended to live either with servants or with relatives to protect their honor. A *malmaritata* like Chiara Granti could not live on her own, thus it was necessary to house her in a religious institution or with relatives. Monica Chojnacka, "Women, Men, and Residential Patterns in Early Modern Venice," *Journal of Family History* 25, no. 1 (2000): 6–25; Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Maura Palazzi, *Donne sole: Storia dell'altra faccia dell'Italia tra antico regime e società contemporanea* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997).

⁸⁵ On break-down of marriages in early modern Italy, Emlyn Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives, and Concubines: Marriage, Family, and Social Order in Sixteenth-Century Verona* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2004); Joanne M. Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Daniela Hacke, *Women, Sex and Marriage in Early Modern Venice* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

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easy to access shelters. However, third order communities refused to become warehouses of women in trouble.

Third order women religious both in Bergamo and in Bologna took concrete measures against having to accept certain women they considered undesirable. Throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, Franciscan visitors introduced decrees that forbade the entrance of secular women in S. Elisabetta in Bologna. In the early 1690s, one visitor reminded the tertiaries of their obligation to their “groom Jesus Christ” and argued that the company of “married women, who are unable to stay with their husbands, [as well as that of] widows and single women” would distract the tertiaries from their spiritual obligations and “could teach nothing but the dangers of the world” to the tertiaries.⁸⁶ About thirty years later, in 1720, another visitor asked the tertiaries to reflect on the reasons why they had entered the community and reminded them that this reason had been the desire to be “far away from secular world”; thus, the entrance of secular women in S. Elisabetta had to be carefully controlled and limited.⁸⁷ The tertiaries themselves appealed to the general of Franciscan Conventuals in Rome in 1713, asking to be relieved of the duty to accept secular women in their community:

[...] often times they are asked, and encouraged using various excuses, also by force of effective favors, to accept in their congregation secular, married women, who do not want to or are unable to live with their own husbands, as well as widows, singlewomen, and spinsters; whence the petitioners, wishing to rid themselves of such infestation that greatly disturbs the peace and the service to God, reverently appeal to Your Highness to order with your decree that under no circumstances is it permitted to accept such women or any other woman of whichever state and condition in this congregation, unless the petitioners desire it.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, “Visite”, pp. 7r-v.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 45v-46r.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 34r.

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The petition was successful and the general of the order forbade entrance of secular women in S. Elisabetta.⁸⁹ The tertiaries, however, did not wish to ban entrance to all secular women, as evidenced by the presence of widows in the community, as discussed above. The women religious wished to control who entered the community and accept only those secular women who benefitted the community, even if the visitors and the general had banned all secular women from S. Elisabetta.

Tertiary communities in Bergamo also tried to exclude certain married women from their midst. S. Giuseppe appealed to Venetian authorities both in 1730 and in 1737, asking to be relieved of the obligation to receive secular women in the house. The text of neither appeal survives but the corresponding ducal decrees indicate that the tertiaries sought to exclude “widows, married women, women who had left other congregations or convents, and all other similar women.” The tertiaries seem to have argued that they would lose their educational boarders, if such secular women continued to be sent to S. Giuseppe. The Council of Ten agreed that introducing secular women to S. Giuseppe against the tertiaries’ wishes prejudiced the “legitimate authority” of the women religious within their own community. Both the 1730 and the 1737 ducal decrees relieved S. Giuseppe of the obligation to accept secular women.⁹⁰ At local level, however, the women religious continued to see secular women being sent to their communities. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the tertiaries of S. Antonio appealed to the Venetian *podestà* in Bergamo to remove a *malmaritata* from their community. The *malmaritata* in question had been placed in S. Antonio by the previous *podestà* several

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 77v.

⁹⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, Immunità, Statuti

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months ago. In their petition, the women religious referred to a ducal decree that had freed S. Antonio from having to take in married women and claimed that they had accepted this particular *malmaritata* only because the previous *podestà* had personally requested it and promised that the woman would only stay for fifteen days; however, the *malmaritata*'s stay had extended and the tertiaries were now losing their educational boarders, and the related fees.⁹¹ Local authorities thus used third order communities to house women who needed a temporary place to stay, also against the will of the tertiaries and ducal decrees from Venice.

Local authorities also readily admitted that third order communities provided a useful shelter for women in need. A letter from the episcopal court, the *foro vescovile*, to the *podestà* of Bergamo in the late 1780s refers to a noblewoman named Marizia Cerri, who needed a place to stay for the duration of her separation of bed and bread case. The enclosed convent of S. Marta had refused to accept Cerri, which the *foro vescovile* respected, recognizing the potential disturbance that could be caused to the monastic community by the presence of a *malmaritata*. As the next step, the officials of the *foro vescovile* foresaw, “if you [the *podestà*] do not succeed in finding another convent that would voluntarily receive the said lady, or another refuge without *clausura*, you must place her with one of her relatives and under the care of a honest matron.”⁹² S. Giuseppe was a “refuge without *clausura*” that had sheltered *malmaritate* in the past and was thus considered again.⁹³ In the words of one early nineteenth-century Bolognese episcopal

⁹¹ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Monache.

⁹² ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi.

⁹³ ASM, AGFR, 2992, Alberici Laura.

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official, a third order community presented “the considerable benefit of having a provisional place where to place the unmarried girls facing some danger,” as well as being a place where to put married women who needed shelter from “inconveniences that can arise between a husband and a wife and that can be resolved using the means of such a retreat.”⁹⁴ The archbishop and other ecclesiastical officials in Bologna regularly placed women in third order communities throughout the eighteenth century.⁹⁵ In 1767, the vicar general of Bologna sent one Angela Ferrari Pignoni and her two small daughters to Ognisanti “based on just motives”; the tertiaries accepted the woman and her daughters without the usual procedure of a vote in the chapter.⁹⁶ In 1771, the countess Maria Caterina Ringhieri, the daughter of the governor of Pieve di Cento, was accepted in Ognisanti at the request of the archbishop; her husband was living in Parma. The women religious consented because, “even though [they] are reasonably against taking in married women, [due to] the veneration and esteem they have of His Excellence, the archbishop, they have conceded to accept her.”⁹⁷ The countess stayed for two years and then left Ognisanti. But in 1776, the archbishop asked the women religious to accept the countess

⁹⁴ AAB, MV, 265, S. Elisabetta, n. 38. Turn to chapter 7 for the suppression of S. Elisabetta. In Venice, the Council of Ten considered convents and other female shelters as the appropriate place for married women who were waiting for the decision of the ecclesiastical court on the dissolution of their marriage and demanded that the women religious regularly report on these women to their ecclesiastical superiors, ASM, AGFR, 2942, *Suppliche, Rescritti, e Ducali 1749 a 1790, riguardanti fondi, legati, ed oggetti diversi*, loose sheet from 1782. On dissolution of marriages and other marriage disputes in early modern Italy, particularly in Venice, see Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice*; Daniela Hacke, *Women, Sex and Marriage in Early Modern Venice*.

⁹⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 146; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, pp. 12, 17, 24, 26, 70, 77, 82.

⁹⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 146.

⁹⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 12.

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again, which they did out of duty to the archbishop.⁹⁸ Three days before the re-acceptance of countess Ringhieri in December 1776, Ognisanti had already accepted another married women at the request of the archbishop.⁹⁹ Despite the decrees by central religious and secular authorities, and often against the expressed wishes of the women religious, local officials in Bergamo and in Bologna consider third order communities a valuable addition to the local institutional framework.

Third order communities and other quasi-monastic communities sheltered women who were in danger of falling outside the marriage or convent binary system that structured women's lives in early modern Catholic Europe. Elizabeth Rapley has argued that the *pensionats* of religious congregations in France became great money raisers for these communities, "once almost entirely dedicated to schoolchildren [day schoolers], they now became retirement homes, hotels, and sometimes prisons for all variety of women."¹⁰⁰ According to Rapley, social and governmental pressures led to the transformation of religious congregations from teaching orders to multipurpose institutions; the congregations re not able to resist these pressures due to their weak financial standing.¹⁰¹ Italian third orders were also pressured by local authorities, both religious and secular, to assume new social functions in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. But third order communities also benefitted financially from the many boarders arriving at their doorstep; S. Elisabetta and Ognisanti in Bologna only

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime*, 196.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 246–256.

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started to accept large numbers of boarders in the mid-eighteenth century, when the number of women religious declined and the communities' finances deteriorated.¹⁰² However, third order communities had accepted secular boarders since their foundation. Moreover, widows, singlewomen, and *malmaritate* did not push the educational boarders out of the third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna. S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna accepted their first educational boarders almost immediately after the communities' foundation. S. Giuseppe was founded by the orphaned daughters of an oil merchant in the early-seventeenth century. S. Maria delle Grazie was founded by a widow of master bricklayer in the early-eighteenth century. By founding religious communities, these women joined the ranks of many wealthy, aristocratic widows who founded new religious communities in the early modern period, which they were encouraged to do by the prevailing Counter-Reformation perception of widows.¹⁰³ Third order communities were ever-present in the institutional landscape of early modern neighborhoods and towns, offering education, shelter, and companionship to women of middling ranks in all stages of the early modern female life course.

iii. Temporary tertiaries

Third order communities functioned as life cycle institutions also for some of the women religious. All third order communities considered in this study saw tertiaries leave either

¹⁰² ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, "Libro Maestro 1755-1773"; ASB, Demaniale, 31/4479, "Libro Maestro 1774 a tutto il 1786; ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, "Registro degli Atti Capitolari", p. 69. Turn to chapter 2 for a discussion of communal population sizes in Bologna and Bergamo.

¹⁰³ Turn to Chapter 1 for the foundation of S. Maria delle Grazie and other third order communities considered. Also, P. Renee Baernstein, "In Widow's Habit: Women between Convent and Family in Sixteenth-Century Milan," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994): 787-807; Olwen Hufton, "The Widow's Mite and Other Strategies: Funding the Catholic Reformation: 'The Prothero Lecture,'" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 8 (1998): 117-37; Carolyn Valone, "Women on the Quirinal Hill: Patronage in Rome, 1560-1630," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 1 (1994): 129-46.

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during the novitiate period or after the profession of vows. Leaving a convent, either by taking flight or appealing to *Sacra Congregazione del Consilio*, which could release a professed religious from their vows, has been discussed in current scholarship as a consequence of forced monacizations, most notably by Anne Jacobson Schutte.¹⁰⁴ Women religious also left one convent in order to found another, which was an established and celebrated practice.¹⁰⁵ Finally, Margaret Chowning has shed light on episcopal policies that moved an unhappy or a troublesome nun from one convent into another to preserve or restore peace in a monastic community.¹⁰⁶ On the whole, however, the scholarship on medieval and early modern women religious leaving their monastic communities remains limited.¹⁰⁷ Third order women religious left their communities for various reasons. Some tertiaries left to join an enclosed convent, which was a motive recognized in canon law.¹⁰⁸ Other tertiaries left their communities to re-join their families

¹⁰⁴ Anne Jacobson Schutte, *By Force and Fear: Taking and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). More or less titillating examples of nuns attempting to flee their convents also illustrate many a discussion of monastic enclosure; for example, Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi, eds., *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450-1700*, chap. 6. In the seventeenth century, Carmelite nuns from Theresa of Avila's community in Spain arrived in France to found Carmelite communities and the French Ursuline Maria de l'Incarbation travelled from France to New France (Quebec), where she founded a school as well as a Ursuline convent, Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap. 4; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), chap. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Margaret Chowning, *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752-1663* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Silvia Evangelisti has noted the scarcity of scholarship on leaving a convent, especially in comparison to the wealth of scholarship on entering a convent, Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450-1700*, Epilogue. Turn to chapter 7 for a brief discussion of monastic suppressions and the fate of women religious who were forced to leave their convents.

¹⁰⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, Regole che diede papa Martino V e confirmo Innocentio VIII a Fratelli, e le Sorelle della Compagnia de'Servi di Santa Maria (Florence, 1591), p. 55. The Council of Trent and the

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or to re-assume prior servile duties. To these women religious, third order communities represented a temporary abode and a distinct stage of their life course. Dowry contracts and dowry restitution claims permit to study the tertiaries who left their communities.

Five tertiaries left S. Elisabetta in Bologna to join enclosed convents from 1691 to 1722.¹⁰⁹ Some left shortly after entering S. Elisabetta, others several years after their profession in the community. Even though S. Elisabetta had started as a loosely organized community of women religious in the early-seventeenth century, by the later-seventeenth century the community had regularized and the women religious who wished to leave faced obstacles.¹¹⁰ When *suor* Lucretia Sacchetti left S. Elisabetta in 1715 to join the third order Franciscan community of S. Andrea in Assisi, the mother superior of S. Elisabetta informed the mother superior of S. Andrea that “there are some of us who do not take it well that she left after having lived among us for thirty-six years,” and expressed her hope that the move would be completed with promptness, so as to avoid, “those disturbances [...] that can occur in a community.” Sacchetti’s move was delayed by the dowry settlement between S. Elisabetta and S. Andrea. Sacchetti’s patroness in Assisi, who hosted her immediately after Sacchetti’s arrival there, found Sacchetti

subsequent papal bulls that regulated monastic enclosure foresaw all third order communities accept and profess solemn vows and all women religious, who had professed solemn vows, were subjected to enclosure. Francesca Medioli, “La clausura delle monache nell’amministrazione della Congregazione Romana Sopra i Regolari,” in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia dall’alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l’oggi*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997).

¹⁰⁹ In 1691, suor Maria Gabriella Boatti transferred to the enclosed convent of S. Giuliemo in Ferrara. In 1692, suor Anna Maria Roth transferred to an unnamed enclosed convent with the permission from Franciscan superiors of S. Elisabetta. In 1695, suor Maria Gesualda Salani transferred to the enclosed convent of Corpus Domini in Ferrara. In 1710, suor Alma Fortunata Vandi transferred to the enclosed convent of S. Chiara in Urbania. In 1715, suor Lucrezia Sacchetti transferred to the enclosed convent of S. Andrea in Assisi. ASB, Demaniale, 8/4456, num. 1, num. 4, num. 7; ASB, Demaniale, 9/4457, num.9, num. 14; ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 4; ASB, Demaniale, 18/4466, num. 3.

¹¹⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4450, num. 2, num. 13. Turn to chapter 1 for the foundation of S. Elisabetta.

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“mistreated” by the bureaucratic maneuverings around her dowry.¹¹¹ The motive for Sacchetti’s transfer from Bologna to Assisi after decades in S. Elisabetta remains unclear. The tertiaries of S. Elisabetta, however, had already attempted to prevent other women religious from leaving their community, making use of the community’s constitutions and dowry contracts, which, according to the tertiaries, forbade dowry restitutions. *Suor* Maria Gesualda Salani reached a settlement with S. Elisabetta in 1695, after she had appealed to the archbishop of Bologna, arguing that she desired the “greater retreat” provided by enclosure.¹¹² The reason why the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta were reluctant to reconstitute a dowry becomes clear, when we consider the financial burden a dowry restitution presented for the community. *Suor* Alma Vandi left S. Elisabetta to retire in an enclosed convent outside of Bologna in 1710. To reconstitute Vandi’s dowry, the tertiaries transferred a house, which Vandi had donated to S. Elisabetta as her dowry, back to Vandi. S. Elisabetta returned the house, rather than repaying the dowry in liquid funds, “because the house is situated in a remote corner [of the city] and can only be rented for 95 *lire* a year, [which after various obligations is reduced to 60 *lire* a year], while taking 2000 *lire* on credit [to repay the dowry in ready money], would necessitate the payment of 100 *lire* a year [in annuities].”¹¹³ In order to settle Lucrezia Sacchetti’s dowry after her transfer to Assisi, the father of *suor* Rosa Maria Arrighi, one of the tertiaries in S. Elisabetta, agreed to forgo two debts the tertiaries owed him.¹¹⁴ The restitution of dowries

¹¹¹ ASB, Demaniale, 18/4466, num. 3.4.; ASB, Demaniale, 9/4457, num. 9.

¹¹² ASB, Demaniale, 8/4456, num. 7.

¹¹³ ASB, Demaniale, 9/4457, num. 9; *ibid*, num. 14.

¹¹⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 4

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signified financial difficulties. Tertiary communities could not afford dowry restitutions. Consequently, even if a tertiary wanted to transfer to an enclosed convent, third order communities were reluctant to let go of her.

Not all women religious who left transferred to enclosed convents. In the early 1670s, *suor* Gioanna Donelli left S. Maria della Carità in Bologna to recommence service to her former mistress. Even though the tertiaries knew “neither for how long she [*suor* Donelli] will continue in this service, nor if she will ever return to this house”, they permitted *suor* Donelli to profess her religious vows and expected her to pay the remainder of her dowry at her eventual return to S. Maria della Carità.¹¹⁵ However, *suor* Donelli never did profess because of reasons related to her health.¹¹⁶ *Suor* Donelli appears to have suffered ill health that prohibited a continued stay in the third order community. Her short presence in S. Maria della Carità was probably a failed attempt to settle Donelli’s life beyond service.¹¹⁷ S. Maria della Carità did settle other women’s lives in the seventeenth and the earlier-eighteenth centuries. The community remained loosely organized into the early-eighteenth century.¹¹⁸ Another four tertiaries left S. Maria della Carità in the 1670s: first the biological sisters Palma Felice and Maria

¹¹⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 33.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, num. 36.

¹¹⁷ Masters and mistresses often settled the lives of their servants after the period of service ended. In fact, young girls often entered service in early modern Italy with the agreement that by the end of the service they will be provided a dowry to settle their adult life. Angiolina Arru, “The Distinguishing Features of Domestic Service in Italy,” *Journal of Family History* 15 (1990): 547–66; Giulia Calvi, “Kinship and Domestic Service in Early Modern Tuscany: Some Case Studies,” *L’Homme* 18, no. 1 (2007): 33–46; Beatrice Zucca Micheletto, “Reconsidering the Southern Europe Model: Dowry, Women’s Work and Marriage Patterns in Pre-Industrial Urban Italy (Turin, Second Half of the 18th Century),” *The History of the Family* 16, no. 4 (2011): 354–70.

¹¹⁸ Turn to chapter 1 for the foundation of S. Maria della Carità. Some tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità continued to live separate from the community in near-by houses also in the first half of the eighteenth century (ASB, Demaniale, 3/4839, num. 12).

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Florinda Bonesi, who left for “just causes”,¹¹⁹ and then the biological sisters *suor* Angela Maria Antonia and *suor* Maria Fortunata Boldrini, who returned to their paternal home.¹²⁰ The latter promised to “live in the house of their relatives with religious behavior, and in fashion of and with that decency as is practiced by other tertiaries who do not live in the house of the congregations.”¹²¹ The Boldrini sisters thus assumed the characteristics of house nuns (*monache di casa*): they remained connected to S. Maria della Carità and wore the tertiary habit but, for whatever reason, did not live in the community. At the turn of the seventeenth century, the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità became more reluctant about their co-religious leaving the community, however. In 1698, *suor* Maria Samaritana Rinaldi, who had lived in S. Maria della Carità for fifteen years, left the community to return to her paternal home. At a chapter meeting, the tertiaries decided to strip Rinaldi of her habit.¹²² Unlike the Boldrini sisters two decades earlier, Rinaldi could not maintain a loose association with S. Maria della Carità. This caused financial difficulties for the community.¹²³ In 1698, the women religious asked their legal representative to prepare a notarized statement that rejected the responsibility of S. Maria della Carità to restitute Rinaldi’s dowry.¹²⁴ The tertiaries also did not restitute the dowry of *suor* Maria Isabella Balzi, who left in 1704 “to fulfill her desire to serve God more

¹¹⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 33.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, num. 43.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, num. 40.

¹²² ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 11.

¹²³ The turn of the seventeenth century saw increasing disputes between the community, the leaving tertiaries, and their families about dowry restitution. ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 33, num. 40.

¹²⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 11.

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seriously in an enclosed convent”;¹²⁵ yet, they did restitute the dowry to *suor* Maria Catterina Barbieri, who left in 1720 for personal reasons.¹²⁶ The institutional stance of S. Maria della Carità towards women religious leaving the community underwent a slow shift towards a less permissive attitude in the early-eighteenth century.

Ognisanti and S. Maria delle Grazie, on the other hand, maintained institutional openness to women religious leaving the community throughout the eighteenth century. Ognisanti saw several young tertiaries leave to join enclosed convents.¹²⁷ The community also received women religious who had professed in other tertiary communities. In 1723, *suor* Leila Francesca Landi, who had been a tertiary in the Servite community in Budrio in the Bolognese hinterland, transferred to Ognisanti for health reasons. The Servite tertiaries of Budrio paid 1250 *lire* in dowry to Ognisanti, which was the full dowry that Landi had paid in Budrio.¹²⁸ Both Ognisanti and S. Maria delle Grazie regulated dowry restitutions clearly in their constitutions. In S. Maria delle Grazie, dowry became the property of the community only after a tertiary’s death; until then, the dowry was restituted in full, if a woman religious transferred to an enclosed convent, and in half, if she return to secular life.¹²⁹ The surviving archival documents do not reveal, if any tertiaries left S. Maria delle Grazie from its foundation in 1724 to its suppression in 1810. The constitutions reflect, however, that the founders of S. Maria delle Grazie recognized

¹²⁵ Ibid., num. 16.

¹²⁶ Ibid., num. 40.

¹²⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, February 28, 1686.

¹²⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, August 31, 1723.

¹²⁹ BA, B4342, Regole delle Terziarie Carmelitane di Bologna e vita della loro fonatrice Suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi, Capitolo 2.

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the possibility that a tertiary would leave. In Ognisanti, dowry policies focused on the tertiaries' right to will away their dowries. In the later-seventeenth and the early-eighteenth century, Servite visitors issued decrees that underscored the rights of Ognisanti to the dowries of its tertiaries.¹³⁰ A legal position was prepared on behalf of Ognisanti in 1745 that argued that the dowry "certainly, most certainly cannot be willed away" by the tertiaries, but belonged "irreversibly" to the community, "unless a tertiary left a convent in order to marry in the secular world."¹³¹ However, references both to canon and civil law as well as to the rules of the Servite order in the legal position indicate that the tertiaries' right to leave the community was recognized. In the late-eighteenth century, Ognisanti's dowry contracts began to include a clause about dowry restitution, which permitted the restitution of the full trousseau and part of the dowry.¹³² In 1785, *suor* Antonia Taruffi left the community and the tertiaries, lacking ready money to reconstitute the dowry, sought to pay annuities to Taruffi until she lived. Since they described Taruffi as somebody who "has already reached her fortieth year and suffers from considerable health problems," it is clear that the tertiaries hoped to save money by paying annuities.¹³³ From Ognisanti, Taruffi moved to a conservatory operated by

¹³⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279 "Lista delle spese per farsi una Suora Tertiaria del ordine de Servi di M. V. nella Casa Regolare e Conviventi in Bologna; ASB, Demaniale, 164/6254, Registro provinciale, 1702-1733, p. 260; ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, 1726, March 27; ASB, Demaniale, 164/6254, Registro provinciale, 1733-1753, p. 195r.

¹³¹ ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, 1745 "Irreperibilità delle elemosina dotale delle N.re Terziarie del Collegio Regolare di Ogni Santi".

¹³² ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, February 26, 1778; *ibid*, January 22, 1784. The dowry to be restituted depended on the time the tertiary had spent in Ognisanti; a deduction was made for every year the tertiary had spent in Ognisanti.

¹³³ ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, July 18, 1785.

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Camaldolese nuns in Faenza and lived there without taking a new habit.¹³⁴ The rules and regulations in Ognisanti and S. Maria delle Grazie recognized that some tertiaries would leave after professing their religious vows and that they were but a discrete stage of a longer life course for some women religious.

The number of women leaving third order communities in Bergamo after their profession was more limited compared to Bologna. In S. Giuseppe, the biological sisters Anna Maria and Giulia Caterina Saracco entered the community in 1654 and left six months later, before their profession, because they “did not feel suited to live according to the rule and in service and order of this college.”¹³⁵ Some dowry contracts between S. Giuseppe and the families of the women seeking entrance in the community explicitly recognized the possibility that a novice might leave S. Giuseppe before her profession.¹³⁶ The internal regulations of S. Giuseppe – valid since the mid-seventeenth century – permitted transfers to enclosed convents, in which case the dowry was restituted to the tertiary; in all other instances, the dowry remained with S. Giuseppe.¹³⁷ In the early-eighteenth century, some dowry contracts explicitly stated that the dowry could not be restituted no matter what the reason for leaving S. Giuseppe.¹³⁸ In addition to the Saracco sisters in the seventeenth century, surviving records refer to only four other women who

¹³⁴ AAB, MV, 286, Ognisanti, “Vestizioni”

¹³⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2994, Saracco Anna Maria e Caterina.

¹³⁶ Ibid., Rossi Adelaide; *ibid*, Tiraboschi Teresa.

¹³⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Statuti, Informazione 1737

¹³⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2992, Barca Chiara; *ibid*, Locatelli Elisabetta. ASM, AGFR, 2994, Sangalli Annunciata; *ibid*, Tiraboschi Maddalena; *ibid*, Zancchi Annunciata.

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left S. Giuseppe in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹³⁹ Two of them – Maria Rossoni and Chiara Magni – left because they “did not feel suited for religious life”: Maria Rossoni had first completed novitiate in an enclosed Clarissan convent in Rosate close to Milan, where she did not pass a chapter vote to that would have permitted her to profess her vows; Rossoni then entered S. Giuseppe, where she professed in 1788, but left in 1802, “without a reasonable cause,” as noted in S. Giuseppe’s book of professions.¹⁴⁰ The archives of S. Antonio do not reveal any woman religious who left the community in the seventeenth or the eighteenth century.

Most, if not all, third order communities saw religious women leave, some to join an enclosed convent, others to (re)join family, benefactors, or another community without enclosure. As with secular boarders, the leaving of tertiaries was a financial concern for the third order communities. However, when third order communities benefitted financially from accepting educational and secular boarders, they struggled when a tertiary left and requested a dowry restitution. Nonetheless, third order communities recognized the possibility and even the right of the women religious to leave.

Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted the central role of third order communities within the framework of early modern women’s institutions in Italy, particularly for women of

¹³⁹ Caterina Milesi professed in 1745 and left in 1754. Maria Rota professed in 1760 and left in 1774. Maria Rossoni professed in 1788 and left in 1802. Chiara Magni entered in 1787 but left before her profession. ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro dell’acettare, vestire, professa.re & morte delle R.de Tertiare di San.to Gioseppe di Bergo.mo*, pp. 47, 57, unnumbered page (January 17, 1787), unnumbered page (23 January 1787).

¹⁴⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2991, *Libro dell’acettare, vestire, professa.re & morte delle R.de Tertiare di San.to Gioseppe di Bergo.mo*, p. unnumbered page (January 17, 1787). In 1802, women religious were allowed to, and actively encouraged to, secularize by Napoleonic policies on religious orders. Turn to chapter 7 on this.

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middling and professional rank. Third order communities afforded women – young and old, secular and religious – a space to spend a discrete stage of their life course. Third order communities accepted some of these women willingly, others were forced upon them by ecclesiastical and secular authorities, patrons and benefactors. Third order communities were recognized as socially useful institutions by authorities, and the women religious readily presented their communities as beneficial to society. Many individuals and families depended on third order communities to settle women's lives. Third order communities depended on educational and secular boards to ensure communal continuity. The integration of third order communities in urban environments extended, however, beyond facilitating the movement of women between families and institutions. Third order communities were also closely integrated in the economy and daily life of their neighborhoods and towns.

Chapter 5: Third Order Communities and the City

On her procession from Monte della Guardia overlooking Bologna, down through the recently completed arcade into the city, the relic of Madonna of S. Luca visited the tertiaries of Ognisanti in three consecutive years between 1739 and 1741. On two occasions, the Madonna entered Ognisanti through the tertiaries' vegetable garden, once it arrived through the main gates. To commemorate the Madonna's visits, *suor* Vittoria Fiessi commissioned the bricklayer Giovanni Bettini, who had already completed other works in Ognisanti, to build a wall in the vegetable garden. She also commissioned the painter Pietro Scandellari to cover the new wall with images of the Madonna's visit; Scandellari was also commissioned to depict the Madonna of S. Luca on the walls surrounding the main gates of Ognisanti.¹ The first procession of the Madonna of S. Luca from Monte della Guardia down to Bologna had taken place in 1433; since then, the Madonna of S. Luca descended in an annual procession that toured churches, sanctuaries, and civic centers.² The arrival of the Madonna of S. Luca in Ognisanti designated the tertiary community as a central node of the city and the local neighborhood. Subsequently, the tertiaries sought to solidify such a role by depicting the visit of the Madonna on the community's gates and walls, creating a visible reminder for posterity.

¹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 61. Pietro Scandellari (d. 1789) was a Bolognese painter and member of the Scandellari artists family; he worked mostly on various churches around Bologna, "Scandellari", Treccani, <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scandellari/> (Accessed July 15, 2015).

² The historiography about the Madonna of S. Luca is extensive, for an introduction, Mario Fanti, "La leggenda della Madonna di San Luca di Bologna. Origine, fortuna, sviluppo e valore storico," in *La Madonna di San Luca in Bologna: otto secoli di storia, di arte, e di fede*, ed. Mario Fanti and Giancarlo Roversi (Bologna: Silvana Editrice, 1993); Elena Gottarelli, *I viaggi della Madonna di San Luca* (Bologna: Tamari, 1976); Nicholas Terpstra, "Confraternities and Local Cults: Civic Religion Between Class and Politics in Renaissance Bologna," in *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. Alexandra F. Johnston and Wim Hüsken, Rodopi (Amsterdam, 1997).

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Third order communities did not occupy only a passive place in their neighborhoods and cities, however. Previous chapters have highlighted the close integration of third order institutions in the early modern framework of women's institutions in Italy. Women of all ages regularly entered and exited third order communities to spend longer or shorter periods of their life with the tertiaries. The tertiaries themselves were often of local urban origins; their familial networks created long-lasting links between the third order communities and its local neighborhood or city. Moreover, third order women religious in Bergamo and Bologna also actively engaged with the cities and the surrounding countryside independently of their familial networks, or of those of their secular boarders. Francesca Medioli has proposed that third order communities survived the Counter-Reformation decrees on monastic enclosure due to a societal demand for their existence.³ In previous chapters, I have highlighted how third order communities served the middling and the professional ranks, fulfilling existing institutional gaps and becoming part of female life cycles. This chapter explores the role of third order communities in early modern Italian towns, into which they were closely integrated. The buildings of third order communities were part of the early modern urban fabric; third order women religious actively participated in the everyday life of their neighborhoods and towns. The women religious offered credit to townspeople, litigated over arrears, fought with one neighbor over the height of a separating wall, and helped another neighbor in need; third order communities were involved in every aspect of urban economy and life and constituted a casual, normal part of their neighborhoods and towns.

³ Francesca Medioli, "Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33 (1997): 683.

i. The missing obligations of intercessory prayer

Praying for their cities and communities has been considered one of the main social functions of pre-modern religious, male and female:

A crucial function of monasteries throughout the Middle Ages was the production of intercessory prayer, that is, prayer for the remission of sins and the eternal salvation of rulers and their dynasties. Medieval monasteries did not sustain themselves by producing beer and honey, but by prolifically manufacturing prayer.⁴

Intercessory prayer was also expected of early modern nuns, whose convents often surrounded cities in protective circles or stood in the center of a town to highlight the nuns' presence.⁵ Third order communities, however, rarely benefitted from legacies to celebrate Masses or otherwise intercede on behalf of a benefactor. Among the many roles assumed by third order communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century urban society, intercessory prayer was the least dominant.

S. Elisabetta in Bologna had to celebrate 782 commemorative Masses a year in 1760. Most of these Masses were instituted by three legacies.⁶ The earliest obligation dated to 1630, before the foundation of S. Elisabetta, when Giovanni Giusti left a conditional legacy to the tertiaries in his last will, “when they accept enclosure, or indeed when they receive permission to celebrate Mass in their houses, in that case my heirs will

⁴ Albrecht Diem, “The Gender of the Religious: Wo/Men and the Invention of Monasticism,” in *The Oxford Companion on Women and Gender in the Middle Ages*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Mazo-Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 441.

⁵ For example, Kathryn Burns, *Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 146–7; Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Penguin, 2003); Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 15, 33–8; Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2004); Gabriella Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990).

⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, num. 29 primo.

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make these tertiaries celebrate a weekly Mass in their church for the suffrage of my soul.”⁷ S. Elisabetta achieved the episcopal permission to celebrate Mass and all other religious functions in its church in 1653, after which time the tertiaries could meet obligations of intercessory prayer.⁸ Shortly after this, in 1656, a textile merchant named Andrea Toselli designated S. Elisabetta as one of his heirs, leaving the tertiaries 10,000 lire to celebrate a daily, perpetual Mass in suffrage of his soul as well as another legacy to celebrate a further 300 annual Masses. Toselli underscored that the legacy fell only upon those tertiaries “who profess in this convent, or house, live in communion; anyone who does not fulfill this criteria is prohibited from benefitting from this legacy.”⁹ In the eighteenth century, S. Elisabetta received one more obligation of intercessory prayer when Giacomo Menzani asked for the celebration of 200 annual Masses in his last will.¹⁰ In all these three cases, S. Elisabetta shared the legacies with other convents or religious institutions in Bologna: the Giusti inheritance was shared with the convent of S. Pietro Martiro, the Toselli inheritance with the convent of SS. Bernardino e Marta, and the Menzani inheritance with several confraternities as well as with the parish church of S. Catterina di Saragozza. Giusti and Toselli also set clear conditions upon which the tertiaries could receive the legacies, asking for the community to regularize. The benefactors sought to shape S. Elisabetta to be more like an enclosed convent; however,

⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4450, num. 13; ASB, Demaniale, 1/4449, Libro 6; ASB, Demaniale, 9/4457, num. 12.

⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 4/4452, num. 3.

⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4449, Libro 3; ASB, Demaniale, 4/4452, num. 12.

¹⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4449, Libro 7.

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by indicating alternative heirs, these benefactors also sought to secure the care for their souls in case the third order community failed to take up the legacy.

Other third order communities received similar conditional legacies. For example, S. Maria della Carità in Bologna received its first legacy for the celebration of Mass in 1647, shortly after the community's foundation: Domenica Trombelli left the tertiaries her universal heirs and asked for the celebration of a daily Mass for her soul. Trombelli specified that in case S. Maria della Carità could not take on the responsibility, the right passed to the tertiaries of S. Maria Annunciata.¹¹ The eighteenth century witnessed continued attempts to shape third order communities through legacies. The archives of S. Maria della Carità reveal two Mass legacies from the earlier-eighteenth century. The first stemmed from a credit contract that the tertiaries had had with one Francesco Natali since 1724; in 1737, the heirs of Natali partially repaid the credit they owed to the tertiaries but left 1800 lire of the credit as a legacy for the celebration of Masses in the church of the tertiaries.¹² The second was instituted by the brother of a tertiary in S. Maria della Carità, don Antonio Vandini. Vandini left 3500 lire to the community for the celebration of a perpetual Mass in the community's exterior church, "so that [the tertiaries could] enjoy the spiritual comfort of *in situ* celebrations."¹³ Both legacies thus sought to limit the need for the women religious to leave their community, even to attend Mass. The legacies received by S. Maria delle Grazie sought to achieve a similar result. The newly-founded

¹¹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 18.

¹² ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 8.

¹³ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 22. S. Maria della Carità received two further legacies for Mass celebrations in the second half of the eighteenth century. ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Maria della Carità, Stato Attivo, e Passivo; ASB, Demaniale, 7/5140, Casalgrandi.

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S. Maria delle Grazie had received two legacies by the late-eighteenth century, which included the celebration of a daily Mass as well as the celebration of festive Masses in the community's chapel.¹⁴ Two benefactresses stood behind these legacies: Maddalena Gandolfi and her aunt and heir Vittoria Gandolfi. Maddalena Gandolfi provided the legacy for the celebration of a daily Mass in the chapel of the tertiaries. Vittoria Gandolfi bought four shares in the Bolognese Monte Benedettino to benefit the tertiaries and support the celebration of festive Masses in the same chapel, "to impede the need the tertiaries have to break their voluntary enclosure in order to hear the Holy Mass on festive days [in the parish church]."¹⁵ The Gandolfi family was closely tied to S. Maria delle Grazie in the mid-eighteenth century. Vittoria Gandolfi also donated part of a house in the parish of S. Maria delle Muratelle to the tertiaries in the early 1750s, to which I return below. These eighteenth-century legacies – both in S. Maria delle Grazie and in S. Maria della Carità – therefore strove to regularize the communal life of the tertiaries, much like the seventeenth-century legacies in S. Elisabetta and S. Maria della Carità did.

The communities also received a number of smaller legacies for intercessory prayer from the women religious living in these communities. A number of tertiaries in S. Maria della Carità,¹⁶ S. Elisabetta,¹⁷ and Ognisanti¹⁸ in Bologna as well as S. Giuseppe¹⁹

¹⁴ AAB, MV, 283, Documenti e carte varie, secc. XVII; ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Maria delle Grazie, Stato attivo delle Suore di S. M.a Maddalena de Pazzi [1805].

¹⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768, December 19, 1769; *ibid.*, April 24, 1770.

¹⁶ *Suor* Maria Carla Prudenza Marazzi's last will from 1684 instituted a legacy for perpetual Masses in the church of the Franciscan friars of S. Maria della Carità; the will stated that the Masses should be transferred to the church of the tertiaries, once they had one. These Masses were to benefit both the tertiary community as well as the benefactress (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, October 17, 1684; *ibid.*, num. 13; *ibid.*, num. 14; *ibid.*, num. 26; ASB, Demaniale, 3/4838, num. 17; ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 19). In her last will from 1704, *suor* Angela Catterina Ghirardini left a legacy for seventy Requiem Masses for her soul (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 17). In her last will from 1749, *suor* Maria Geltrude Gnudi left a legacy for Requiem Masses for her soul (ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 30).

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in Bergamo left small sums for commemorative Masses for their souls. These commemorative Masses were few in numbers, however, and lapsed shortly after the death of the benefactress.

The numerically few legacies made by major benefactors who sought to regularize third order communities through their legacies constituted a significant financial burden for the women religious. These limited legacies were intended to be celebrated over long time periods. The merchant Antonio Meris, the legal guardian of the Lafranchi sisters and the father of Laura Meris, one of the first tertiaries in S. Giuseppe, left a legacy for the celebration of daily and festive Masses in the community in his last will in 1665. The Meris Masses were still celebrated in the early-nineteenth century.²⁰ Three further Mass obligations befell S. Giuseppe in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century and all these obligations were still celebrated in the early-nineteenth century.²¹ Yet, the celebration of Masses over long time periods represented a

¹⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 6/4454, num. 17; ASB, Demaniale, 7/4455, num. 12; ASB, Demaniale, 9/4457, num. 15.

¹⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, July 28, 1687; *ibid.*, December 22, 1674; *ibid.*, December 30, 1641. ASB, Demaniale, 3/6280, August 8, 1701. ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, February 27, 1719; *ibid.*, June 17, 1726. ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, pp. 77, 137, 148.

¹⁹ The last will of *suor* Maria Bonaventura Carissimi from 1716 instituted S. Giuseppe as her heir and requested the celebration of as many Requiem Masses as possible in return; the Masses were to be said for the suffrage of all tertiaries of S. Giuseppe, ASM, AGFR, 2992, Carissimi Orsola. ASM; AGFR, 2981, “Legati e messe, P. G.”

²⁰ The legacy consisted of two houses and a number of monetary gifts, ASM, AGFR, 2981, “Testamento di Antonio Meris”; ASM, AGFR, 2981, “Legati e messe, P. G.”

²¹ In his last will from 1673, the medical doctor Cristoforo Girelli, whose daughter was a tertiary in S. Giuseppe, left a legacy that obligated the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe to celebrate 150 Requiem Masses annually for Girelli (ASM, AGFR, 2983, “Testamento dell’Ecc.mo Sig.re Dottor Cristoforo Girelli”). S. Giuseppe repudiated Girelli’s inheritance in 1688; the tertiaries seem to have retained the Mass obligations, however (ASM, AGFR, 2981, “Legati e messe, P. G.”). In 1686, count Orazio Caleppio, the father of *suor* Maddalena Felice, donated 2000 scudi to S. Giuseppe for the celebration of a daily Mass in the church of the tertiaries (ASM, AGFR, 2981, “Libro nel quale vi è l’instro Caleppio”). The Caleppio Masses were celebrated through November 1810; the celebration of these Masses had occasionally lapsed, however, in

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considerable financial burden for the third order communities. In the later eighteenth century, S. Elisabetta paid the Franciscan friars about 450 lire a year to celebrate Mass in the tertiaries' church.²² In 1805, Mass obligations cost S. Elisabetta 627.9.8 lire, which constituted about 8 per cent of the community's total expenses for that year.²³ Since benefactors usually left their legacies as investments, the annuities of which were supposed to pay for the celebration of Masses, the seventeenth-century legacies became increasingly difficult to service in the eighteenth century, when the value of the original investments had depreciated. And, as discussed above, most Mass legacies of the third order communities dated to the seventeenth century. In 1744, Ognisanti received an apostolic permission to not celebrate 100 Masses, which the tertiaries had failed to celebrate since 1718 for the souls of Paolo and Gioseffa Bortolotti; the Bortolotti had left a legacy for the celebration of four annual commemorative Masses in 1686.²⁴ Five years later, in 1749, S. Elisabetta received apostolic permission to reduce the number of commemorative Masses the tertiaries celebrated, including a reduction of the Masses celebrated for Andrea Toselli, since the value of Toselli's inheritance had depreciated and no longer covered the celebration of a daily Mass, as foreseen in Toselli's last will.²⁵ S.

the eighteenth century since the original legacy no longer covered the costs of the Masses (ASM, AGFR, 2981, "Legati Caleppio con obbligo di messe"). Nicolò Cotta, the brother of *suor* Anna Margharita Cotta and the son of the painter Giacomo Cotta, who decorated the church of S. Giuseppe, instituted S. Giuseppe as his universal heir and asked for the celebration of Requiem Masses for his family members (ASM, AGFR, 2982, February 14, 1702; *ibid.*, October 29, 1689). The Cotta masses were still celebrated in the early nineteenth century (ASM, AGFR, 2981, "Legati e messe, P. G.").

²² ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, num. 18; Biblioteca Comunale Archiginnasio, Gozzadini 371, p. 620.

²³ ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Elisabetta, Stato attivo, e passivo.

²⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 6/6289, 1744, December 30.

²⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, num. 1; *ibid.*, num. 3. By 1771, S. Elisabetta celebrated only 20 of the 300 Masses they were supposed to celebrate for Toselli. In 1784, the Toselli Mass obligation was reduced

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Elisabetta had already struggled in the seventeenth century, however, when in 1662, the vicar general of Bologna had liberated the tertiaries of an obligation to recite daily prayers for a benefactor, who had left the tertiaries 1500 lire in 1648; the vicar general called this a “heavy burden” and substituted the daily prayers with ten annual Masses.²⁶ The concerns the seventeenth-century benefactors expressed when leaving legacies to third order communities were justified by the real struggle of third order communities to meet Mass obligations. This might explain the limited number of legacies for intercessory prayer that the tertiaries received. In his study of testamentary bequests in Siena, Samuel K. Cohn has argued for the collapse of Counter-Reformation piety in the turn of the seventeenth century, when the previously high volumes of bequests to religious and charitable institutions declined considerably.²⁷ The institutions that continued to benefit from pious bequests were established monastic institutions or charitable institutions for the poor and the repentant, institutions of late-sixteenth and seventeenth-century origins that were at the center of reformed Catholic piety.²⁸ Third order communities fit into neither of these two institutional categories. Intercessory prayer by nuns was considered effective because of the virginal state and purity of the women religious, protected by

further by the archbishop of Bologna to reflect the actual investment income available for the celebration of these Requiem Masses (ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, num. 29 primo).

²⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4453, num. 1 secondo.

²⁷ Samuel K. Cohn Jr., *Death and Property in Siena, 1205-1800: Strategies for the Afterlife* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

²⁸ In addition to Cohn, see also Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Brian Pullan, “The Old Catholicism, the New Catholicism, and the Poor,” in *Timore e carità: I poveri nell’Italia moderna*, ed. Giorgio Politi, Mario Rosa, and Franco della Peruta (Cremona: Libreria del Convegno, 1982).

monastic enclosure. Third order women professed only simple vows and were not necessary virgins in case they had taken their religious vows later in life; moreover, tertiaries did not follow strict enclosure. The value of intercessory prayer by third order women was thus not on par with that of enclosed nuns. On the other hand, third order communities were also different from the charitable institutions for the poor, the orphaned, and the fallen women that emerged in the late-sixteenth and the early-seventeenth centuries and had a clear disciplining function.²⁹ Consequently, third order communities were not prime recipients of pious legacies within the framework of Counter-Reformation piety and they became even less so in the eighteenth century, when pious legacies decreased in general. Yet, in contrast to the limited participation of third order communities in the pious economy of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy, these communities were active in all other aspects of urban economy.

ii. Third order communities in urban economy

Like most monastic communities, third order communities participated at local credit markets through the popular *censo* or *livello* schemes. In a *censo* or a *livello* scheme, the lender bought the right to collect annuity payments from the borrower, who received the right to use the principal sum over a fixed period of time. The borrower usually secured the *censo* with real property that the lender had the right to seize, if the principal sum was not repaid at the end of the fixed *censo* period. Monastic communities across early modern Europe and the colonial world participated in this financial mechanism and became intricately involved in their local economies as a consequence, extending credit

²⁹ Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Angela Groppi, *I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma dei Papi* (Rome: Laterza, 1994).

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to both private individuals and corporate bodies.³⁰ Female monastic communities in early modern Italy were also active participants in *censo* mechanisms but the topic has received only limited scholarly attention. Sharon Strocchia has studied the participation of Florentine convents in state-directed credit mechanisms, but the role of female monastic communities as lenders to private individuals remains unstudied.³¹ Indeed, historians have only recently begun to examine the role of women and gendered practices in medieval and early modern credit mechanisms.³² Moreover, as Elizabeth Leffeldt has recently pointed out, the scholarship on the role of female monastic communities in early modern economy and the impact of such economic participation on the lives of women religious remains limited.³³ In this section, I examine the participation of women

³⁰ The credit mechanism was called *censo* in Bologna and *livello* in Bergamo. Both were lease contracts that functioned as credit transactions, Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 376. The participation of monastic communities in *censo* mechanisms has been studied in most detail for Spain and its colonies, Burns, *Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru*; Asuncion Lavrin, “The Role of the Nunneries in the Economy of New Spain in the Eighteenth Century,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 46, no. 4 (1966): 371–93; Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*, 50–53, 73–74. A financial mechanism similar to the *censo* frequently used by religious communities in France was the *rentes constituées*, Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 43–44.

³¹ Sharon T. Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

³² Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 28–30; Elise M. Dermineur, “Single Women and the Rural Credit Market in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Journal of Social History* 48, no. 1 (2014): 175–99; Linda Guzzetti, “Gli investimenti delle donne veneziane nel medioevo,” *Archivio Veneto* 6, no. 3 (2012): 41–66; William Chester Jordan, *Women and Credit in Pre-Industrial and Developing Societies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Craig Muldrew, “‘A Mutual Assent of Her Mind’? Women, Debt, Litigation and Contract in Early Modern England,” *History Workshop Journal* 55, no. 1 (2003): 47–71; Judith M. Spicksley, “Women, ‘Usury’ and Credit in Early Modern England: The Case of the Maiden Investor,” *Gender & History* 27, no. 2 (2015): 263–92.

³³ Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, “Baby Jesus in a Box: Commerce and Enclosure in an Early Modern Convent,” in *Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World*, ed. Merry Wiesner-Hanks (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

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religious in early modern credit and labor markets, which integrated the women and their communities in local societies.

Monastic dowries provided the financial resource for extending credit. All third order communities sought to invest the dowries they received, either by buying real property or by contracting *censi* or *livelli*. In the course of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the investment of dowries in *censi* or *livelli* became ever more frequent and emerged as the prevalent way to invest a dowry. Dowry policies of Ognisanti in Bologna foresaw that the tertiaries preserved the usufruct of their dowries but the community had the ownership of the dowries. Frequently, the dowries were invested together with “private money” of the tertiaries, as defined in notarial records.³⁴ The tertiaries thus had some private income in addition to the annuities they or their communities received from dowries. This private income often resulted from paid labor, as I discuss below. It permitted third order communities to participate in local credit markets on two levels: both as communities but also through individual women religious. In fact, Ognisanti began to contract *censi* that included the lending of the “accumulated interest of their [the collective community’s] investments” only in the later-eighteenth century.³⁵ Until then, the *censi* involved the dowries and private funds of individual

³⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, June 21, 1695; *ibid.*, June 24, 1691; *ibid.*, April 7, 1691; *ibid.*, June 20, 1687; *ibid.*, December 24, 1677; *ibid.*, January 4, 1676. ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, June 26, 1670; *ibid.*, June 9, 1671; *ibid.*, January 18, 1673; *ibid.*, November 7, 1680; *ibid.*, December 9, 1680; *ibid.*, May 5, 1681; *ibid.*, June 20, 1682; *ibid.*, March 24, 1687; *ibid.*, July 9, 1689; April 12, 1690; *ibid.*, July 28, 1691; *ibid.*, 10. November 1692; *ibid.*, August 28, 1693; *ibid.*, September 19, 1715; *ibid.*, May 29, 1716. ASB, Demaniale, 3/6280, December 8, 1706; *ibid.*, February 8, 1707; *ibid.*, May 17, 1707; *ibid.*, June 1, 1709; *ibid.*, September 24, 1712; *ibid.*, October 11, 1713. ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, December 17, 1718; ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, February 3, 1740; ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, December 3, 1746; *ibid.*, October 17, 1747; *ibid.*, November 2, 1764; *ibid.*, July 4, 1767; *ibid.*, December 3, 1772. ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, March 24, 1773.

³⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, September 2, 1748. ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, March 10, 1786.

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women religious. When a third order community lacked an opportunity to invest a dowry, the tertiaries asked the dowry payment to be delayed and contracted a credit on the value of the dowry with the payer of the dowry until a new investment opportunity emerged.³⁶ Third order communities both in Bergamo and Bologna used such agreements and credit became a central financial mechanism for these communities.

Third order communities were therefore part of the economy of trust in early modern Italy. S. Giuseppe in Bergamo had over a hundred active *livelli* in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century.³⁷ The tertiaries extended credit at all levels of the society in Bergamo and the surrounding areas, to both corporate bodies and private individuals; among the latter were noblemen, apothecaries, shopkeepers, ironworkers, and weavers from the town of Bergamo as well as clerics, local officials, and small-scale landowners from the valleys and plains surrounding the town.³⁸ Both men and women borrowed from S. Giuseppe. Most credit contracts were renewed several times and passed from one generation to another as inheritance; credit contracts thus extended over long time periods, some even over a century. The first credit contracts of the tertiaries dated to the 1640s, but S. Giuseppe became omnipresent in the local credit market in the 1670s, after the community had regularized. The principal sums of the credit contracts ranged from 200 lire to 5000 scudi (35,000 lire).³⁹ Some of the borrowers had family members

³⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2945; ASM, AGFR, 2992 and 2994.

³⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2973, “Crediti in genere”.

³⁸ The area around Bergamo supported both active agricultural production – mostly on the plains to the south of Bergamo – and small-scale artisanal and professional activities – mostly in hills to the north. The plains tended to be more depressed financially than the hills. Xenio Toscani, *Scuole e alfabetismo nello Stato di Milano da Carlo Borromeo alla Rivoluzione* (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1993), 34–37, 62–63.

³⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2973-2976.

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who were tertiaries or boarders in S. Giuseppe.⁴⁰ The majority of the borrowers, however, seem to have been external to the religious community of S. Giuseppe and only pursued financial dealings with the women religious. Some credit contracts included the reasons why a borrower sought credit. Most frequently, credit was needed to pay a daughter's dowry, settle an outstanding debt, or pay annuities on another *censo* contract.⁴¹ Craig Muldrew has shown that the early modern English economy was an economy of obligation, where one loan was used to service another; in this regard, also early modern Bergamo had an economy of obligation and third order communities like S. Giuseppe had a central role in this economy.⁴² Elizabeth Rapley and Elizabeth Leffeldt argue that credit contracts secured a stable, long-term income for monastic congregations in France and Spain, despite the risk of borrowers not paying annuities on time or failing to pay all together.⁴³ The tertiaries of S. Giuseppe frequently appeared in front of the *podestà* of Bergamo to demand payment of arrears or initiate confiscation of real property upon

⁴⁰ A number of dowries were also paid by means of a *livello* that saw S. Giuseppe receiving annuity payments on a principal sum that equaled the dowry amount, which remained with the dowry payer (ASM, AGFR, 2973, Crediti Bonomi; ASM, AGFR, 2974, Crediti Carissimi; ASM, AGFR, 2976, Crediti Rivola; *ibid.*, Crediti Roncalli; *ibid.*, Crediti Vitali; ASM, AGFR, 2977, Livelli Camignone; ASM, AGFR, 2992, Belotti Aurelia; *ibid.*, Besio Alessandra, Besio Angelica; *ibid.*, Bonometti Paola; *ibid.*, Foieni Maria; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Moretti Antonia; *ibid.*, Pasta Sibilla; *ibid.*, Piazzoni Maria; *ibid.*, Piazzoni Lucia; *ibid.*, Tasca Paola; *ibid.*, Valetti Eugenia; *ibid.*, Valle Lucia). Also S. Antonio in Bergamo received a number of dowries in the form of a *livello* in the eighteenth century (ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Sunti degli instramenti, 1654 al 1723"; *ibid.*, "Libro ove sono suntati gli instramenti per livelli, doti, ecc, 1654 al 1798").

⁴¹ ASM, AGFR, 2978, Livelli Cologno; *ibid.*, Livelli Osio di Sopra; *ibid.*, Livelli Pontita. ASM, AGFR, 2980, Livelli Bergamo.

⁴² Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); Elena Maria Garcia Guerra and Giuseppe De Luca, eds., *Il mercato del credito in età moderna. Reti e operatori finanziari nello spazio europeo* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2008).

⁴³ Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*, 50–53; Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime*, 43–44.

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which a credit was based.⁴⁴ S. Giuseppe thus also faced economic risks from its active participation in the credit market. In 1694, *suor* Anna Maria Cascia sent letters to many of S. Giuseppe's debtors, asking for the payment of arrears. *Suor* Cascia claimed that the tertiaries lacked liquid resources for buying foodstuffs and paying other routine costs of their community due to the delayed receipt of annuities.⁴⁵ In addition to rental income from various rooms, houses, and workshops in Borgo S. Leonardo, extending credit was a major financial strategy available to S. Giuseppe but also S. Antonio, since the 1605 law on ecclesiastical property limited ecclesiastical estates in the Republic of Venice.⁴⁶ As seventeenth-century foundations, neither S. Giuseppe nor S. Antonio had estates that pre-dated the 1605 law and both communities jealously held on to their status as lay congregations to be able to expand their complexes in Borgo S. Leonardo.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2977-2980. Women religious, usually through representatives, were active litigants in front of both lay and ecclesiastical magistrates not only in Italy but also in Spain. Elizabeth Leffeldt argues that such litigation blurred the boundaries between religious seclusion and secular world, making the women religious active participants in the latter also when they were enclosed, Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, "Convents as Litigants: Dowry and Inheritance Disputes in Early-Modern Spain," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 3 (2000): 645-64; Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*.

⁴⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2993, "Scritti di Madre S.r Anna Maria Cascia".

⁴⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2980, "Fondi Bergamo, Case ed affitti diversi dal 1630 al 1805"; ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Giuseppe, Stato attivo e passivo. S. Antonio in Bergamo also received its income from the annuities on the credit it extended and rents from the limited property the tertiaries owned in Borgo S. Leonardo (ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Suppliche, rescritti, e ducali 1749 al 1790", p. 21r; ASM, AGFR, 2944).

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Leffeldt has identified four main financial strategies pursued by convents in early modern Spain. These included (1) expansion of existing estate and its efficient use, (2) cultivation of cereal and vinyard crops for the marketplace, (3) use of non-agricultural property for generating rental income, and (4) extension of credit. All but one of the strategies depended on convents owning property, either agricultural or residential, Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*, 69. For a further discussion of the 1605 law on ecclesiastical property in the Venetian Republic, William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defence of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), chap. 7. Both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio defined themselves as lay congregations and repeatedly appealed to Venice to be defined as such during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Yet, both communities had to auction off property they had acquired outside Borgo S. Leonardo on several occasions in the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century, both communities also appealed repeatedly to Venice to receive financial support in the form of tax relief (ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Suppliche, rescritti, e ducali 1749 al 1790", pp. 19r-20r, 21r, 36r; *ibid.*, "Carte riguardanti la Casa di Campagnola", pp. 2r, 14v; *ibid.*, "Istromenti, Testamenti, e Donazioni. 1578 a

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The third order communities in Bologna were also active in the local credit market but they were able to pursue a more diversified financial strategy than the communities in Bergamo. Annuities from credit contracts competed with monetary and in kind income from both rural and urban properties and fees received from boarders. Nevertheless, *censi* still constituted roughly 84 per cent of the annual income of S. Maria della Carità, roughly 63 per cent in Ognisanti, roughly 55 per cent in S. Elisabetta, and roughly 5 per cent in S. Maria delle Grazie according to the accounts compiled by the Napoleonic officials in the early-nineteenth century.⁴⁸ S. Maria delle Grazie – the youngest third order community in Bologna – received the least of its annual income from *censi*; in the early nineteenth century, roughly 95 per cent of S. Maria delle Grazie's annual income came from their education activities.⁴⁹ In contrast to Bergamo, where S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe extended credit to private individuals and corporate bodies, the third order communities in Bologna also participated in public finance instruments like Monte Clemente, Monte Benedettino, Monte Sussidio Acque. The tertiaries' participation in the latter resulted from the Monte shares the communities received as part of dowry payments and legacies. Third order communities were integrated into both private and public credit economy of early modern Italy.

The credit contracts with private individuals put the tertiaries in contact with diverse sections of society and established the third order communities as points of

1741”, pp. 70r-74r, 90r-91r; ASM, AGFR, 2970, “Privilegi, immunità, statuti”; *ibid.*, “Tasse”; ASM, AGFR, 2972).

⁴⁸ ASM, AFR, 2287. In S. Elisabetta, the income from *censi* constituted roughly 53 per cent of the annual income of the community in the three year period from 1757 to 1759, ASB, Demaniale, 30/4478, “Stato attivo, che in proprietà possiede la Religiosa Casa delle Suore Terziarie di S. Francesco a tutto l'anno 1759”.

⁴⁹ ASM, AFR, 2287, Terziarie di S. Maria Maddalena delle Pazzi, Stato attivo.

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reference and assistance at local level, as revealed by some credit contracts of S. Antonio in Bergamo. In 1670, a Maddalena Marta Minori had married Andrea Gaitino, a carpenter in Borgo S. Leonardo, with a dowry that amounted to 1000 lire. By 1689, Gaitino had squandered the dowry and joined the Venetian navy, leaving Minori to care for her children and herself only with the money Gaitino had received from the navy recruiter. Minori approached the tertiaries of S. Antonio, asking them to accept 550 lire from her as a principal sum and pay regular annuities to her.⁵⁰ The *livello* that S. Antonio contracted with Minori was not the only one that saw the women religious come in contact with a *malmaritata* or a widow in need. In 1744, when the house of one Lodovica Fachetti Amagni, a widow, caught fire, Amagni turned to the tertiaries of S. Antonio for a *livello* of 200 scudi to restore her house.⁵¹ S. Antonio was thus recognized in Borgo S. Leonardo as an institution that provided help in times of need, especially to widowed women and women in precarious situations.

The *malmaritata* Minori and the widow Amagni contracted *livelli* with S. Antonio, but third order communities also provided charitable assistance to people of their local neighborhoods. At times, such assistance was directed at family members, highlighting the continued involvement of the women religious with their families. *Suor* Palma Vittoria Lani from S. Elisabetta in Bologna gave 300 lire to her nephew in order to provide for “his necessary expenses” in 1667.⁵² *Suor* Maria Geltrude Mazzoni from S. Maria delle Grazie used annuities from a private credit contract she had to support her

⁵⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2942, “Instrumenti, Testamenti, e Donazioni, 1578 a 1741”, pp. 52r-55v.

⁵¹ ASM, AGFR, 2944, “Per le RR. MM. di Sant’Antonio di Bergamo c. li SS.ri Angelo Codazzi, et Angela Amagni iugali, et Lodovica Facchetti Amagni”, pp. 1r-6r.

⁵² ASB, Demaniale, 5/4453, num. 12.

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mother and father.⁵³ But monastic institutions had always given alms also to local poor. The Counter-Reformation witnessed the emergence of new female congregations like the Daughters of Charity in France that were dedicated to helping the poor and the sick.⁵⁴ The spread of these congregations remained limited on the Italian peninsula until the nineteenth century,⁵⁵ instead, the late-sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries saw increased institutionalization of poor relief in Italy, where new institutions for the poor, orphans, and fallen women extended to most major centers.⁵⁶ Independently of these new hospitals and charitable institutions, third order communities administered poor relief at local, neighborhood level. For third order communities, charity intertwined with communal financial interest in these poor relief activities.

Third order communities participated in dowry charity like many other institutions and individuals in early modern Italy.⁵⁷ The preamble to the 1673 constitutions of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo states that the community provided marriage

⁵³ Suor Mazzoni entered S. Maria delle Grazie after having left the Carmelite tertiary community of S. Martino and receiving a dowry restitution from S. Martino. She used the money from the dowry restitution to support her parents, ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768, June 11, 1745.

⁵⁴ Susan E. Dinan, *Women and Poor Relief in Seventeenth-Century France: The Early History of the Daughters of Charity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

⁵⁵ Marina Caffiero, "Dall'esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all'apostolato sociale (1650-1850)," in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994); Giancarlo Rocca, *Donne religiose. Contribuito a una storia della condizione femminile in Italia nei secoli XIX-XX* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1992).

⁵⁶ Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789*; Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Nicholas Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 2013.

⁵⁷ On dowry charity, Mauro Carboni, *Le doti della "povertà". Famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna (1583-1796)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999); Isabelle Chabot and Massimo Fornasari, *L'economia della carità: Le doti del Monte di Pietà di Bologna (XVI-XX)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); Maria Fubini Leuzzi, "Condurre a onore" *Famiglia, matrimonio e assistenza dotale a Firenze in Età Moderna* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1999).

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dowries to poor and orphaned girls and educated some poor and orphaned girls free of charge in its academy.⁵⁸ In 1675, S. Giuseppe accepted an orphan named Sabina Spina from its local neighborhood of Borgo S. Leonardo; Spina professed without a dowry a year later, in 1676. S. Giuseppe's book of professions states that Spina was raised by the tertiaries "out of charity, and since she is poor, she brings neither a dowry nor her own furnishings."⁵⁹ In Bologna, S. Maria della Carità also provided dowry charity to orphans. In 1794, the community accepted an orphan named Maria Lauretana Baldi as a *conversa*. Baldi had won some dowry subsidies and had an account on the Bolognese Monte del Matrimonio, but most of her dowry to the tertiaries was paid by "the generosity of pious people." On their part, the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità provided Baldi with all the items of her trousseau.⁶⁰ The tertiary communities also reduced dowries as an act of charity. In 1724, Ognisanti accepted Giovanna Marchi, who already worked as a servant for the tertiaries, as the community's first *conversa*. Giovanna could pay a dowry of 400 lire to the community, less than the tertiaries expected; however, "moved by the repeated prayers of suor Maria Pellegrina [Giovanna Marchi], and also in gratitude of the long and faithful service that she had provided free of charge to this community already before taking the habit, they [the tertiaries] have decided to accept her". The notarial document outlining Marchi's acceptance underscored that the tertiaries were wary of Marchi's case becoming a precedent.⁶¹ The tertiaries of Ognisanti thus considered their largesse towards

⁵⁸ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, "REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiarie di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE dette del Retiramento" (Milano, 1673), p. 9.

⁵⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2991, "C. Per le SS.re Tertiarie di S.to Giuseppe", p. 13r.

⁶⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 58.

⁶¹ ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, December 14, 1725.

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Marchi to be an act of charity towards an individual woman, and not an act establishing the dowry of lay sisters in the community. Nevertheless, when *suor* Anna Maria Calzoni professed as *conversa* in 1739, she also brought a dowry of 400 lire, which the notarized dowry contract named as the “usual sum to be paid by *converse*“.⁶²

The charitable poor relief of third order communities in their neighborhoods went beyond participating in the common practice of dowry charity. Third order communities also provided in kind help to people in their neighborhood. In 1723, the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe closed a rental agreement with one Laura Pelis and her daughter Orsola. The mother and daughter had to pay 16 lire annually and keep the street in front of S. Giuseppe’s church clean to rent a room from the tertiaries.⁶³ This rent was considerably lower than the 28 lire a year that one Domenico Rossi paid for a room in 1727 and the 28 lire a year that one Anna Maria Formentini paid for a room in 1796. S. Giuseppe’s other properties were larger than one room and commanded annual rents between 5 scudi (35 lire) and 57 scudi (399 lire) in the later-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁶⁴ Laura Pelis did provide a service in addition to the monetary rent by cleaning the street in front of the church. However, the rental agreement between Pelis and the tertiaries was not like the contracts for work that the tertiaries had with gardeners and servants of the community, which clearly detailed duties and obligations as well as remuneration.⁶⁵ Instead, the rental agreement with Pelis resembled the agreements S. Giuseppe had with

⁶² ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, September 17, 1739.

⁶³ ASM, AGFR, 2980, Case ed affitti diversi dal 1630 al 1805.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2942, Instrumenti, pp. 92r-92v; ASM, AGFR, 2971, “Circondario. Chiesa. Locale del Monastero”; ASM, AGFR, 2972.

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various members of the Asperti family, who rented a baker's workshop with an oven from S. Giuseppe and had to bake bread for the tertiaries free of charge as part of the rental agreement.⁶⁶ Taking bread out to a baker or buying bread was an expense that the tertiaries spared through their agreement with the Asperti, however, and this expense was not comparable to the cost of cleaning the street in front of the church.⁶⁷ The below-cost rental agreement between the Pelis and S. Giuseppe thus appears like an act of charity extended by the tertiaries to women in need.

At times, the financial and charitable roles of third order communities intertwined. As the interactions between one Giovanna Tiraboschi and S. Giuseppe in Bergamo in the early-seventeenth century show, the role of a third order community in the local neighborhood was multifaceted and third order women could assume several different roles in their relationship with one neighbor over a longer time period. In 1717, witnesses were called in a case between Giovanna Tiraboschi and S. Giuseppe but the relationship between Tiraboschi, her mother Lucia Tiraboschi née Tagliaferri, and the tertiaries extended back several decades. In 1709, the mother and daughter had completed a donation *inter vivos*, with which they left 19 *pertica* of arable land and a house in the area of SS. Grata Inter Vites in Bergamo to S. Giuseppe. The land and the house constituted the real property for two *capitali livelli* of a total value of ca. 510 scudi that

⁶⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2980, Case ed affitti diversi dal 1630 al 1805.

⁶⁷ In the towns of early modern Europe, the cost of bread and licensed bakers were highly regulated by communal ordinances. Most people bought bread because few households had ovens for baking their own. In Italian towns, there were two main types of bakers: bakers who prepared the dough and sold loaves of bread and bakers who took in dough for the baking. Households of higher socioeconomic rank either baked their own bread or took prepared dough out for baking. Households of lower socioeconomic rank depended on dough prepared and baked by bakers. Claudio Bargelli, *Dal necessario al superfluo: Le arti alimentari parmensi tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2013); Alberto Guenzi, *Pane e fornai a Bologna in età moderna* (Venice: Marsilio, 1982).

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the mother and daughter Tiraboschi had inherited from the Tagliaferri and the Tiraboschi families and on which they had subsequently failed to pay annuities to S. Giuseppe. The donation *inter vivos* was intended to relieve the mother and daughter duo of their debts to S. Giuseppe, as the community took possession of the real property pledged for the *livelli*; in turn, the two Tiraboschi retained the usufruct of the property during their lifetime and were to receive food and clothing from the tertiaries, when the two women became older and were no longer able to work the landholding. According to witnesses for both sides, the donation *inter vivos* was completed shortly after Giovanna Tiraboschi had escaped from her estranged husband to S. Giuseppe for a period of several weeks. In 1717, Giovanna Tiraboschi contested the donation *inter vivos*, claiming that her mother was deaf at the time and that the price of the arable land had been estimated wrongly in the donation. The witnesses for both sides claimed that the tertiaries had sent meats and baked goods to the Tiraboschi over the years; the witnesses for the Tiraboschi claimed that the mother and daughter had also sent wine and fruits from the landholding to the tertiaries. The witnesses for S. Giuseppe added that the Tiraboschi had also received other assistance from the tertiaries, including maintenance works on the landholding. On both sides, the witnesses included servants as well as people from the neighborhoods of SS. Grata Inter Vites and Borgo S. Leonardo – people who knew the quarrelling parties either through work contracts or neighborly ties.⁶⁸ The Tiraboschi case highlights how the tertiaries had close relationships with people from their neighborhood and how financial and charitable relationships often intertwined and included also the tertiaries' role of providing shelter to women in need. Such relationships also lasted for long time

⁶⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2980, Casa ed ortaglia dette alla Pigrizio.

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periods and involved more than one generation of local families and tertiaries. The passage of time also integrated the third order communities in their local neighborhoods.

The paid labor that third order communities and individual third order sisters did in their neighborhoods and towns also encouraged long-term interpersonal relationships. Sharon Strocchia has argued that, “lacking sufficient income from their endowments, most Renaissance nuns performed market work in order to survive.”⁶⁹ Mario Fanti’s reproduction of watercolors from an eighteenth-century manuscript, which depicts nuns and tertiaries from forty-one different monastic communities in the city of Bologna in their habits, shows these women religious performing various labors and highlights that the contemporaries were aware of the work that the women religious pursued. The watercolors depict women religious in Bologna making jewelry, sewing, embroidering, ironing, and teaching, but also preparing medicines and sweets, and drying flowers.⁷⁰ Women religious were thus like most other women in early modern Italy and Europe,

⁶⁹ Sharon T. Strocchia, “The Nun Apothecaries of Renaissance Florence: Marketing Medicines in the Convent,” *Renaissance Studies* 25, no. 5 (2011): 628. Merry Wiesner-Hanks and Jo Ann McNamara have discussed women religious working for pay in medieval Europe and coming in conflict with local guilds who decried unfair competition, Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 282–283; Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 191–192.

⁷⁰ Mario Fanti, *Abiti e lavori delle monache di Bologna in una serie di disegni del secolo XVIII* (Bologna: Tamari Editori, 1972). Paid work by nuns has received only limited attention in current scholarship, with monastic medicine making being the notable exception, Janine Christina Maegraith, “Nun Apothecaries and the Impact of the Secularization in Southwest Germany,” *Continuity and Change* 25 (2010): 313–44; Gianna Pomata, “Practicing between Heaven and Earth: Women Healers in Seventeenth-Century Bologna,” *Dynamis* 19 (1999): 119–43; Gianna Pomata, “Medicina delle monache. Pratiche terapeutiche nei monasteri femminili di Bologna in età moderna,” in *I monasteri femminili come centri di cultura fra Rinascimento e Barocco*, ed. Gianna Pomata and Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2005); Strocchia, “The Nun Apothecaries of Renaissance Florence: Marketing Medicines in the Convent.” Isabella Campagnol has discussed textile work – embroidery and Venetian needlepoint lace-making, but also spinning and weaving – in sixteenth-century Venetian convents, where nuns undertook textile work to supplement communal and personal incomes, but also for creative and charitable expression. Campagnol underscores the early modern perception of needle-work as virtuous female work. Isabella Campagnol, “Penelope in clausura. Lavori femminili nei monasteri Veneziani della prima età moderna.,” *Archivio Veneto* 6, no. 3 (2012): 117–26.

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who participated in the economy and supplemented household (married, widowed, or monastic) finances either by completing occasional, often seasonal, paid labor or by carrying out independent trade activities.⁷¹

Paid work was essential for the economic survival of third order communities and helped the women religious to maintain relationships with benefactors. In 1662, the administrators of S. Elisabetta in Bologna reported that the tertiaries lived in great poverty and were able to put food on their table only by working daily for pay.⁷² It is unclear what sort of paid work the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta pursued; even the watercolors reproduced by Fanti show no particular activity for these tertiaries.⁷³ The 1673 constitutions of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo declared that “all works are honest and allowed”; the tertiaries had to accept, however, the tasks assigned to them by the community’s mistress of works (*maestra de’ lavori*) who handled with secular clients and managed payments.⁷⁴ The late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century letters of *suor* Alma Maria Cascia, the mother superior of S. Giuseppe, refer to the tertiaries working on embroidery, mostly for the patrons of the community. *Suor* Cascia also refers to some

⁷¹ Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *La donna nell’economia secc. XIII-XVIII. Atti della “Ventunesima Settimana di Studi” 10-15 aprile 1989* (Florence: Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica “F. Datini” - Prato, 1990); Elena De Marchi, *Dai campi alle filande: Famiglia, matrimonio e lavoro nella “pianura dell’Olona” 1750-1850* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2009); Angela Groppi, ed., *Il lavoro delle donne* (Laterza, 1996); Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands C. 1580-1815* (Amsterdam: aksant, 2007); Sheilagh Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living: Women, Markets, and Social Capital in Early Modern Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Allyson M. Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Maura Palazzi, *Donne sole: Storia dell’altra faccia dell’Italia tra antico regime e società contemporanea* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997).

⁷² ASB, Demaniale, 5/4453, num. 1 primo

⁷³ Fanti, *Abiti e lavori delle monache di Bologna in una serie di disegni del secolo XVIII*, 118.

⁷⁴ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, “REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiarie di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE dette del Retiramento” (Milano, 1673), p. 40.

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tertiaries undertaking teaching, which from Cascia's letters appear to have been separate from the activities of S. Giuseppe's academy.⁷⁵ Half a century later, the mother superior of S. Antonio in Bergamo also referred to the tertiaryes of her community pursuing paid work in a letter to the Venetian *Provveditori sopra Monasteri*, without mentioning the exact nature of this work.⁷⁶

Sources from S. Maria delle Grazie and S. Maria della Carità in Bologna provide a more detailed overview of the types of paid work the tertiaryes undertook. In 1752, S. Maria delle Grazie moved to the parish of S. Maria delle Muratelle. Part of the community's new house was donated by Vittoria Gandolfi and the other part sold to the tertiaryes by the merchant Bonaventura Gandolfi, Vittoria's brother. The tertiaryes paid to Bonaventura Gandolfi for his part of the house in several installments. In 1757, S. Maria delle Grazie made a 1500 lire payment, of which 300 lire were earnings from the "industries" of the tertiaryes.⁷⁷ The watercolors reproduced by Fanti depict the tertiaryes of S. Maria delle Grazie taking in ironing for the clergy.⁷⁸ The founder of S. Maria delle Grazie – Maria Maddalena Sangiorgi – was a widow of a master bricklayer who had, however, supported herself in her widowhood by weaving veils of raw silk.⁷⁹ The

⁷⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2993, "Scritti della Madre S.r Alma Cascia".

⁷⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Suppliche, rescritti, e ducali 1749 al 1790", p. 30r-31r.

⁷⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768, December 9, 1757. The merchant Bonaventura Gandolfi, her sister Vittoria Gandolfi, and other members of the Gandolfi family were closely involved with S. Maria delle Grazie, leaving frequent legacies and donations to the community. ASB, Demaniale, 1/1769, December 15, 1752; *ibid.*, December 19, 1769; *ibid.*, April 24, 1770.

⁷⁸ Fanti, *Abiti e lavori delle monache di Bologna in una serie di disegni del secolo XVIII*, 116.

⁷⁹ BA, B4342, Raconto informativo della Vita, e Virtù della Serva di Dio Madre S.r Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi Bolognese dell'Ordine Carmelitano Fondatrice delle Terziarie Carmelitane del Ven: Conservatorio di S. Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi di Bologna di perfetta vita comune...Scritta da S.r Marianna Gandolfi Terziaria Carmerlitana; Alessandro Albertazzi and Maria Paolina del Vecchio, eds.,

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seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries saw an increasing feminization of textile work in north-central Italy as women entered the labor market as spinners and weavers, working mostly in their own homes on commission.⁸⁰ Tertiary women, and entire third order communities, seem to have been active in this female labor market, which many of the tertiaries may have been familiar with due to their mercantile and artisanal backgrounds. Indeed, among the pedagogical activities that the tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie undertook, the women religious taught girls to work with their hands, which would have included spinning and weaving.⁸¹ The tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie were therefore occupied in both teaching as well as artisanal work.

The tertiaries S. Maria della Carità in Bologna undertook paid work individually. Therefore, not only did third order communities participate in the credit market both as communities and as individual tertiaries, but a similar two-level participation also occurred in the labor market. In 1743, the biological sisters *suor* Metilde and *suor* Girolama Collina, both tertiaries in S. Maria della Carità, bought a *censo* worth 4000 lire from the Carthusians in Bologna; the sisters paid for the *censo* with “their own and private money, so they said, that they had accumulated through their own industry of embroidery and other such things.”⁸² The Collina sisters claimed, furthermore, that their

Una fondatrice bolognese. La serva di Dio Maria Maddalena Mazzoni (Pontecchio Marconi: Edizioni digigrafici, 2008), 9.

⁸⁰ De Marchi, *Dai campi alle filande: Famiglia, matrimonio e lavoro nella “pianura dell’Olona” 1750-1850*, 259–268; Alberto Guenzi, “La tessitura femminile tra città e campagna. Bologna, secoli XVII-XVIII,” in *La donna nell’economia secc. XIII-XVIII. Atti della “Ventunesima Settimana di Studi” 10-15 aprile 1989*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica “F. Datini” - Prato, 1990).

⁸¹ BA, B4342, Raconto informativo della Vita, e Virtù della Serva di Dio Madre...

⁸² ASB, Demaniale, 5/4453, num. 14.

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dowries to S. Maria della Carità had never been paid fully and that they had supported themselves with paid work for years. Records from the archives of S. Maria della Carità reveal that the Collina sisters had also held private property throughout their time in the community. In 1735, *suor* Girolama Collina had contracted a *censo* worth 500 lire with the Franciscan monastery of SS. Cosimo and Demanio in Bologna. The contract indicates that *suor* Girolama had invested “her own and personal money.”⁸³ Also in 1735, *suor* Metilde Collina loaned 200 lire to a widow named Lucia Sgarzi, who had urgent need of that money according to the credit contract.⁸⁴ The last will of a widow named Paola Lenzi from 1745 reveals that *suor* Girolama had also housed secular boarders in her cell in S. Maria della Carità.⁸⁵ In 1746, the Collina sisters reached an agreement with the heirs of their brother, a barber-surgeon. The agreement stipulated that the sisters would each receive an annual allowance, since the two women were now too old to continue supporting themselves with paid work.⁸⁶ In 1750, *suor* Girolama bought a house neighboring S. Maria della Carità by taking over a *censo* placed on that house and then, together with her sister *suor* Metilde, donated the house to the tertiary community two years later.⁸⁷ The Collina sisters thus combined income arising from their participation in the local labor market as well as their eventual annual allowance to participate in the

⁸³ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, num. 26.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, num. 3.

⁸⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 23.

⁸⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 6, num. 7, num. 9.

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local credit market and to purchase real estate. Despite being women religious, they were integrated into the economy of their neighborhood in Bologna, and perhaps beyond.

Human relationships facilitated and emerged from the economic integration of third order communities in their neighborhoods. As I discussed in chapter 3, third order communities recruited a significant number of women religious from the neighborhood in which they were situated; if tertiaries arrived in a community from a more distant locality, that locality usually sent more than one woman to that particular community. Sharon Strocchia has argued that female monastic communities in medieval Florence were neighborhood institutions that recruited their habitants from their local neighborhoods; in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Strocchia argues, convents lost their neighborhood-focus and became pan-Florentine institutions that also exercised influence over the Tuscan countryside.⁸⁸ Third order communities in Bologna and Bergamo remained neighborhood-focused throughout their institutional histories, even though all third order communities also fostered links beyond their neighborhoods. Recruitment of new tertiaries and secular boarders, but also the social and financial networks and the day-to-day activities of third order communities integrated these communities in their local neighborhoods. Chapters 3 and 4 highlighted how third order communities stood at the intersection of professional and familial networks, which provided these communities with tertiaries and boarders. In this regard, third order communities were similar to most monastic institutions in early modern Europe and beyond.⁸⁹ Thus far, this chapter has revealed how the economic activities of third order

⁸⁸ Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence*, chap. 2.

⁸⁹ Current scholarship on women's monastic communities agrees that communities drew on delimited social circles both in recruitment but for patrons and benefactors. Female monastic communities became

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communities integrated the third order women religious in their local neighborhoods. Third order communities relied on neighborhood ties and networks also in day-to-day operations. In Bergamo, the notaries of S. Antonio describe witnesses to the signing of the community's notarial acts as "a gardener in the neighborhood", "a baker on this street", or simply as "living on this street"; most of these people witnessed the signing of more than one notarial act of S. Antonio.⁹⁰ Some of these witnesses also completed their own contracts with the women religious, usually for credit or dowry.⁹¹ Other witnesses for S. Antonio had close links to the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe, situated in the same neighborhood of Borgo S. Leonardo, either through a daughter who was a tertiary in S. Giuseppe or through renting property from S. Giuseppe.⁹² Most people who stood

centers of social and political networking and familial strategies, Burns, *Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru*; Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women*; Groppi, *I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma dei Papi*; Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*; Elisa Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII* (Milan: F. Angeli, 2001); Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence*.

⁹⁰ ASBg, Notarile, 6039-6041 (1681-1697); ASBg, Notarile, 8089-8106 (1720-1742); ASBg, Notarile, 11413-11415 (1780-1789); ASBg, Notarile, 10436-10437 (1783-1785); ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Istromenti, testamenti, e donazioni, 1578 a 1741"; ASM, AGFR, 2944.

⁹¹ Domenico Minori and his son Antonio acted as a witness for a dowry payment on May 18, 1688. A year later, Domenico and Antonio stood security to Domenico's daughter and Antonio's sister Marta, who contracted a credit with S. Antonio on May 2, 1689. Domenico Minori himself also contracted two livelli with S. Antonio, the first on November 2, 1689 and the second on November 18, 1697 (ASBg, Notarile, 6040; *ibid.*, 6041). Giovanni Antonio Mazzoleni witnessed a notarial document for S. Antonio on January 31, 1731 (ASBg, Notarile, 8097, Tomo 23); in 1727 and 1728, Giovanni Antonio Mazzoleni's two daughters had entered S. Antonio, a third daughter entered in 1731 and a fourth in 1738 (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti spirituali; ASBg, Notarile, 8102, Tomo 1738; *ibid.*, 8104, Tomo 1740). Don Francesco Mutio, who first served as an administrator of S. Antonio in the mid-1720s, witnessed a notarial document for the tertiaries on January 22, 1733; on April 21, 1741, don Francesco contracted a credit with S. Antonio, the terms of which were amended to decrease the credit extended by the tertiaries on February 3, 1742 (ASBg, Notarile, 8093, Tomo 17; *ibid.*, 8099, Tomo 25; *ibid.*, 8105, Tomo 1741; *ibid.*, 8106, Tomo 1742). The tertiaries of S. Antonio also extended credit to don Francesco Mutio's brother Giuseppe in 1739 and don Francesco stood security for his brother in that contract (ASBg, Notarile, 8588, September 30, 1739).

⁹² Francesco Barca witnessed a notary document for S. Antonio on April 20, 1731 (ASBg, Notarile, 8097, Tomo 23); Francesco's daughter Chiara was a tertiary in S. Giuseppe, where she professed in 1731 (ASM, AGFR, 2992, Barca Chiara). The baker Bernardo Asperti witnessed a credit contract for S. Antonio in 1686; Asperti and his family rented an oven and a shop from S. Giuseppe for several decades between the

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witnesses to the notarial acts of S. Giuseppe were also inhabitants of Borgo S. Leonardo and testified to the signing of more than one notarial act.⁹³ The notarial documents from third order communities in Bologna show neighborhood ties connecting witnesses to the communities; many witnesses appear to have been simply brought in from the street by the notary or a party to the notarial contract to testify the signing. Craig Muldrew has proposed that “acting as a witness was a duty of neighbourliness” and constituted “a casual and normal part of daily activities” in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.⁹⁴ Similar neighborly duties characterized northern Italian towns. And third order communities were a casual, normal part of these neighborhoods, places where people of the neighborhood entered to witness a notarial act or to negotiate a credit contract, finalize a paid work assignment, or ask for shelter and assistance.

iii. Third order communities in the early modern urban space

Early modern urban space facilitated the integration of third order communities in their neighborhoods. Vanessa Harding has shown that the physical space of early modern London shaped human relationships and activities, which in turn endowed the space itself with meaning and shaped its appearances and uses.⁹⁵ Jeremy Boulton’s work on seventeenth-century London and David Garrioch’s work on eighteenth-century Paris and Milan have highlighted the importance of neighborhood and family ties, as well as of

1670s and the early 1720s (ASBg, Notarile, 6040, September 9, 1686; ASM, AGFR, 2980, “Fondi Bergamo, Case ed affitti diversi dal 1630 al 1805”).

⁹³ ASM, AGFR, 2973-2980.

⁹⁴ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England*, 64.

⁹⁵ Vanessa Harding, “Cheapside: Commerce and Commemoration,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2008): 77–96.

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occupational bonds, in the everyday life in early modern European cities.⁹⁶ Especially for the middling ranks, neighborhood formed a central node in the web of social networks, alongside family and occupational ties.⁹⁷ Both in Bergamo and Bologna, people from the neighborhoods of the third order communities, but also from farther afield, regularly found their way to the tertiary communities as witnesses to notarial contracts, as I discussed above. However, the tertiaries also hired local craftsmen to maintain their buildings and construct additions; many of these carpenters and bricklayers remained on the tertiaries' retainer for years, some even rented their own dwellings from the women religious.⁹⁸ These workers became familiar with the third order communities and with individual tertiaries.⁹⁹ In receipts for work, the craftsmen often described their construction activities by referring to a particular room in a third order community, sometimes also mentioning the name of the woman religious, who occupied the room, or by situating a room in relation to other rooms in a community and describing the functions of them all. The rules of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo prescribed that all outside

⁹⁶ Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); David Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); David Garrioch, *The Making of Revolutionary Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); David Garrioch, "Lay-Religious Associations, Urban Identities, and Urban Space in Eighteenth-Century Milan," *The Journal of Religious History* 28, no. 1 (2004): 35–49. On the symbolic meaning of neighborhoods in early modern Italian cities, Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Elizabeth S. Cohen, "Honor and Gender in the Streets of Early Modern Rome," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 4 (1992): 597–625; Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists: Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁹⁷ Samuel K. Cohn, *The Laboring Classes in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 17.

⁹⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 22/4470-29-4477; ASM, AGFR, 2972; ASM, AGFR, 2980, "Fondi Bergamo, Case ed affitti diversi dal 1630 al 1805"

⁹⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 21/4469; ASB, Demaniale, 23/4471; ASB, Demaniale, 27/4475, num. 1; ASB, Demaniale, 29/4477, 1789.

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visitors had to be accompanied by a tertiary for the duration of their stay in the community and any children entering the community had to remain in the area of the academy, so that they would “not see or know what happens in the areas of the *suore*”.¹⁰⁰ The rules of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna instructed the tertiaries to limit their interactions with visitors and workers who entered the community and to maintain silence when faced with “questions from those who are curious.”¹⁰¹ Yet, despite these prescriptions, many people from the local neighborhoods of the tertiaries were familiar with the organization of life inside third order communities.

Such familiarity was facilitated by early modern urban environment that necessitated contact between neighbors. Third order communities emerged from piecemeal purchases of urban houses and were quite unlike the large, often custom-built monastic complexes of enclosed convents, which included high walls, gardens, and many courtyards.¹⁰² In a petition to Venetian authorities, the tertiaries of S. Antonio in Bergamo described their narrow quarters as follows:

To tell the truth, before the incorporation of some enclosed spaces and buildings into this college, the building of the college was not only restricted but too restricted, leaving the reverend tertiaries in tight quarters and forcing the healthy and the sick to stay in a single dormitory or one common space. They did not have a pantry but for a small ground-floor room that functioned both as an external sacristy and as a confessional. They did not have a granary but for the space above the church. They did not have a kitchen but for a narrow room above

¹⁰⁰ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, “REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiarie di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE dette del Retiramento.” (Milano, 1673), p. 46.

¹⁰¹ BA, B4342, Regole, Capitolo 9.

¹⁰² ASM, AGFR, 2942, “Registro de Capitali del V. Collegio di S. Ant.o di Padova”. ASM, AGFR, 2945, “Supplliche, Rescritti, e Ducali 1749 a 1790, riguardanti fondi, legati, ed oggetti diversi”, p. 15r-v. ASM, AGFR, 2972. For more on monastic complexes after the council of Trent, Marilyn Dunn, “Piety and Patronage in Seicento Rome: Two Noblewomen and Their Convents,” *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 4 (1994): 644–63; Helen Hills, “‘Enamelled with the Blood of a Noble Lineage’: Tracing Noble Blood and Female Holiness in Early Modern Neapolitan Convents and Their Architecture,” *Church History* 73, no. 1 (2004): 1–40; Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents*.

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the external sacristy. As refectory, they only had a small room above a simple parlatory. As interior sacristy, they used a closet under some stairs. They did not even have gates through which wagons with wood could pass; instead, the mothers had to bring the wagon to another gate that faced the street, indecently unload the wood there, and then carry the wood into the college. They did not have a place to whiten their linen but instead they used the room dedicated for common labors, where the tertiaries occupied themselves with earning their board by doing the hard labor of textile working.¹⁰³

The goal of the petition was to avoid the alienation of some buildings incorporated into S. Antonio in the seventeenth century; the tertiaries thus certainly presented the acquisition of these buildings as essential for the community. Nevertheless, the petition reveals how the daily life of the tertiaries often extended onto neighborhood streets due to a lack of space. Interestingly, in the same petition, the women religious also highlighted the problems that the new, incorporated buildings had generated:

To tell the truth, the places and houses bought and incorporated as described above cause great discomfort to this college, by inconveniencing not only the women religious but also the young women who are educated in this college [...]. In regard to the houses of the school of S. Rocco and the garden of Vigilio, that are separated from the college only by a low wall, the young scholars from across the wall have flirted with the young women in education several times and there have been attempts by the young women to escape the college [...].¹⁰⁴

In the enlarged S. Antonio, the women religious and the boarders still lived their daily lives in view of the neighbors. Some years later, in 1751, the tertiaries of S. Antonio petitioned the Venetian authorities for the right to buy a neighboring property, the inhabitants of which had a clear view of the tertiaries' dwelling:

This monastery is not only narrow and without an infirmary but, Your Serene Highness, what is the most in heart of these women religious is that the inhabitants of a neighboring house, who are thirteen persons in total, overlook this monastery and the rooms of the *educande* from more than one window; not even a dime separates that neighboring house from the monastery, only about seven or eight steps; [the neighbors can even see] the beds in some cells and thus

¹⁰³ ASM, AGFR, 2945, "Suppliche, Rescritti, e Ducali 1749 a 1790, riguardanti fondi, legati, ed oggetti diversi", p. 15r-v.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 15v.

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[the women religious] have to keep the widows always closed, with great discomfort to them...¹⁰⁵

Enlarging their community through the incorporation of neighboring buildings did not stop other neighbors from overlooking the lives of the tertiaries. S. Antonio felt the vicinity of their neighbors intimately and despite continued enlargement. Alvise Cima's views of Bergamo show Borgo S. Leonardo as a compact neighborhood where houses lined the streets in tight rows, with green-spaces extending towards the city walls at the backs of the houses but not opening up any space between the houses.¹⁰⁶ By incorporating houses that already existed in this tightly packed neighborhood, tertiaries of S. Antonio were unable to escape the prying eyes of neighbors. But they did try. When S. Antonio sold part of its property in 1729, the conditions of the sale contract stipulated that neither the buyer don Francesco Musio nor his heirs could open any windows that overlooked the tertiaries.¹⁰⁷

Yet, not only did the lives of the tertiaries unfold in front of neighbors and overflow onto the neighborhood streets, neighbors also entered tertiary communities and used the space and property of the women religious. The administrators of S. Rocco, the church next to S. Antonio in Bergamo, appear to have stored some wooden boards belonging to the church in the courtyard of the tertiaries in the later-seventeenth century.¹⁰⁸ In a contract with a gardener in 1738, the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 37r.

¹⁰⁶ Tosca Rossi, *A volo d'uccello: Bergamo nelle vedute di Alvise Cima. Analisi della rappresentazione della città tra XVI e XVIII secolo*. (Bergamo: Litostampa Istituto Grafico, 2012).

¹⁰⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Libro ove sono suntati gli instrumenti per livelli, doti, ecc. 1654 al 1798", September 22, 1729.

¹⁰⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Atti corsi tra le RR MM di S. Ant.o e li Reggenti della Scuola di S. Rocco per confini dei risp.vi locali", p. 3v.

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considered the keeping of people who wished to use the garden of S. Giuseppe for hanging laundry away from this garden a duty of the new gardener.¹⁰⁹ In fact, the women religious had been troubled by strangers entering the house and gardens of S. Giuseppe to “gawk” already in 1717, when the tertiaries voted to permit only their own relatives access to the community.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, both in Bergamo and in Bologna, third order communities rented out parts of their property, thus regularly introducing tenants into close proximity of the women religious. Several rental contracts between S. Maria della Carità in Bologna and the community’s tenants specify which areas – courtyards, carriage gates, and landings on the river Reno – were shared by the tertiaries and their tenants.¹¹¹

Coexistence in the tight early modern urban environment often caused dispute between tertiaries and their neighbors. In the 1730s, the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta complained to the archbishop of Bologna, Prospero Lambertini about noisy neighbors and asked for their eviction.¹¹² A neighbor of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo erected a new building in 1775, which according to the tertiaries overlooked their property. The mediators selected by the tertiaries and the neighbor in questions confirmed that the new building overlooked the garden of S. Giuseppe and some of the building’s windows afforded direct views into the tertiaries’ dwelling. To remedy the situation, the tertiaries

¹⁰⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2971, “Circondario. Chiesa, locale del monastero”.

¹¹⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2991, “Libro ove descrivono li nomi de officiali del Collegio di Santo Gioseppe et delli capitoli che si fanno dalle sorelle”, June 25, 1717.

¹¹¹ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, “Scritture Moderni delle Case”. S. Maria della Carità was located on the Canale di Reno, on the corner of present-day Via S. Felice and Via della Grada, and had at least one landing on the waterway.

¹¹² ASB, Demaniale, 35/4483.

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had to raise the walls of their garden and the neighbor had to close one of his widows.¹¹³ Such disputes were not new to S. Giuseppe. As early as in 1663 the tertiaries had argued with a neighbor who was adding another story to her building, thus raising it above the dividing wall between the two properties – in fact, the new story rested on that very wall.¹¹⁴ Both in Bergamo and Bologna, a constant tug of war for space characterized the relationships between the tertiaries and their neighbors, with both sides being affected and having to adjust to the realities of the early modern urban space.

Yet, the characteristics of early modern urban space also necessitated collaboration and good neighborly contact. The everyday necessity of water brought tertiaries in constant contact – and frequent conflict – with neighbors. In Bergamo, both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe struggled to source water. S. Giuseppe depended on pipes that passed through several other properties before reaching the garden of the tertiaries. The maintenance costs of these pipes were shared by the owners of all these properties, not without frequent dispute between the parties.¹¹⁵ S. Antonio shared its water supply with the church of S. Rocco that neighbored the tertiaries, but also sourced water from wells at greater distances.¹¹⁶ A similar shared water supply and sewer system existed in

¹¹³ ASM, AGFR, 2971, “Circondario. Chiesa, locale del monastero”.

¹¹⁴ The neighbor claimed that the tertiaries also misused the dividing wall since several of their balconies were held up by the wall. The neighbor was named Aurelia Sabatina and the sources consistently indicate that she lived with female companions: “Sig.ra Aurelia Sabatina, et sue compagne”; one document refers to Sabatina and her companions as “orsoline”. It seems that the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe were in dispute with another group of women religious living next door. In 1666, the *podestà* in Bergamo forbade Sabatina from raising her building above the dividing wall and decided that S. Giuseppe had to stop using the dividing wall as a support for its building works. The dispute between Sabatina and S. Giuseppe went beyond the building works and also included an argument about access to water and sewage. ASM, AGFR, 2972.

¹¹⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2972.

¹¹⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2942, “Atti corsi tra le RR MM di S. Ant.o e li Reggenti della Scuola di S. Rocco per confini dei risp.vi locali”; ASM, AGFR, 2943.

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Bologna. In 1743, three neighbors of S. Elisabetta asked the tertiaries to build a sewer under the back lawn of the tertiary community; the sewer was intended to carry rainwater but also sewage away from the neighboring properties.¹¹⁷ When the tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie wanted to convert the stables in their garden into rented accommodation for servants in 1792, the sediment tank for the new building had to be situated in the courtyard of the neighboring property and the women religious had to build a new sewer to connect their own property to the neighboring one.¹¹⁸ With the passing of sewage between the tertiaries and their neighbors, a sense of smell impacted and solidified the neighborly relationships. Smells and stench in medieval and early modern cities are discussed in terms of hierarchies of space and olfactory landscapes; a binary of smells – the foul and the fragrant – characterizes the current literature on smells in medieval and early modern cities.¹¹⁹ According to this scholarship, stench and putrefaction were segregated to particular parts of early modern cities, to the neighborhoods of the poor and the unwanted. Yet, in Bergamo and Bologna sewage flowed between tertiary communities, churches, and the dwellings of local artisans, craftsmen and merchants; this inserted common smells into neighborly relations and necessitated common upkeep of

¹¹⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 11/4459, num. 12 secondo.

¹¹⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 2/1769, June 22, 1792.

¹¹⁹ Albrecht Classen, “Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: Historical, Mental, Cultural, and Socio-Economic Investigations,” in *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); Alexander Cowan and Jill Steward, eds., *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture Since 1500* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Mary J. Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11–17.

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sewers and waterways.¹²⁰ The tertiaries had to interact with their neighbors to manage a common urban environment.

Such everyday interactions with neighbors benefitted the tertiaries when neighbors testified for them, attesting to the good reputation of the women religious and their communities. In 1706, four witnesses from the parish of S. Maria della Carità came forth to testify to the *buona fama* of the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità. The witnesses all highlighted their close connections to the tertiaries and their familiarity with the community. One witness had a sister, a niece, and a young charge live in S. Maria della Carità and he claimed that his household turned to the tertiaries for prayers whenever struck by illnesses or other misfortunes. Another witness, who claimed to know the tertiaries well because of “the vicinity of my shop and my house [to their dwelling]”, stated that the whole neighborhood held the tertiaries in good esteem and nobody spoke ill of the women religious.¹²¹ In early modern societies where reputation was an asset and determined social and economic success of an individual or an institution, good-neighborly relationships benefitted third order communities and allowed them to solidify their place in local neighborhoods as well as farther afield. The Franciscan superiors of S. Elisabetta in Bologna understood the importance of guarding the community’s good reputation, forbidding the tertiaries to talk about in-house affairs with outsiders.¹²² However, the urban environment and the restricted size of third order complexes meant

¹²⁰ Emily Cockayne’s study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century urban environments in England highlights how smells, noise, and light caused conflict between neighbors but also necessitated shared action, Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise and Stench in England, 1600-1770* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

¹²¹ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 29.

¹²² ASB, Demaniale, 32/3382, p. 34v.

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that tertiaries lived their lives in front of their neighborhoods and the neighbors regularly interfered in the daily lives of the women religious. Third order communities were localized institutions not only because their social and economic activities integrated them in urban society and economy, but also because the early modern urban environment enveloped third order communities in the daily lives of the neighborhoods that surrounded them.

Conclusions

“Women, largely based in the neighborhood, ran what was often a largely local female economy,” writes Monica Chojnacka about early modern Venice, where “economic relationships were connected to social ones in a neighborhood setting” and where the boundaries between neighborhood and home were porous.¹²³ Chojnacka’s assessment about the lives of poor and middling rank women in Venice reflects also the position of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna, where the tertiaries were closely integrated in the society and economy of their local neighborhoods and towns. This chapter has highlighted third order communities as neighborhood institutions, as points of reference for local economy and finance. Moreover, third order institutions were physically integrated in their neighborhoods. Ognisanti and the other third order communities were just stops on the annual procession of the Madonna di S. Luca in Bologna or closed-off new homes for the daughters and nieces of the neighborhood’s craftsmen and merchants, but daily ports of call for many people who were familiar with the lives unfolding inside these communities. Some of these neighbors came to organize life of the third order communities.

¹²³ Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*, chap. 3, citations from p. 51 and p. 58.

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Girolamo Piò assumed the position of the legal representative of S. Elisabetta in Bologna in 1684, and, in the course of the 1680s and 1690s, stood witness to the signing of several notarial acts of the tertiaries.¹²⁴ Piò was the legitimized son of Filolauro Piò, who owed a house that abutted S. Elisabetta at the back.¹²⁵ In 1679, Girolamo's infant half-brother and the legal heir to Filolauro Piò, Giuseppe Antonio Piò and his mother Catterina sold two rooms, a stable, a barn, and a courtyard to S. Elisabetta, so that the tertiaries could open a back gate for wagons and carts. The tertiaries claimed that the Piò had no use for the above property; the word on the streets, or the *pubblica fama* as the women religious said, was that Catterina Piò needed money to pay off debts.¹²⁶ The tertiaries also asked the Piò to fall a mulberry and a pine tree to allow better air and more sun into the garden of S. Elisabetta.¹²⁷ In return, the Piò wanted to build against the wall that separated their property from the tertiaries' and open some windows in that wall to allow light enter the new building. However, when Catterina Piò's second husband started to erect another story to this new building and opened further windows in 1711, the tertiaries went to the episcopal court and received a verdict that ordered the more recent additions to be demolished and the newest windows closed.¹²⁸ The relationship between the Piò and S. Elisabetta included both mutual assistance and dispute. The tertiaries trusted Girolamo Piò with administrative matters and relied on his presence

¹²⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 7/4455, num. 5; ASB, Demaniale, 8/4456, num. 1; ASB, Demaniale, 21/4469

¹²⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 6/4454, num. 11.

¹²⁶ Ibid., num. 12; ASB, Demaniale, 17/4465, num. 3.

¹²⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 6/4454, num. 13.

¹²⁸ ASM, Demaniale, 17/4465, num. 3.

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when they needed a witness for a notarial contract. The women religious were acquainted with life in the Piò household and the Piò most probably were familiar with the daily affairs in S. Elisabetta. The wall that separated the tertiaries and the Piò did not keep the two households apart. Instead, the two households led lives that intertwined on multiple levels and on multiple occasions. The multi-level integration of third order communities in Bologna and Bergamo was also reflected in the administration of these communities, to which I now turn.

Chapter 6: Competing Authorities in Third Order Communities

At a chapter meeting on September 20, 1737, the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo decided to oppose the local bishop on the matter of dowry restitutions. Bishop Antonio Redetti had rejected a clause against dowry restitution in the dowry contracts of S. Giuseppe. S. Giuseppe had a defensive account prepared in response to Redetti that, in addition to presenting a case against dowry restitution, reveals a complex matrix of power that enveloped S. Giuseppe. The account explains that the tertiaries – who took neither solemn vows nor were subject to enclosure – lived in a community founded in 1638. The women had first received their religious habits from the Reformed Franciscans some times and from the Franciscan Conventuals at other times. From 1663 onwards, the tertiaries received their habits from the local bishop, who, together with the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, gave the permission to keep the Eucharist in the chapel of the tertiaries, thus allowing the women to celebrate religious services in house. However, a Venetian ducal decree also ratified the existence of this chapel in Bergamo in 1668. The authorities in Venice held that the chapel was secular property and the tertiaries were laywomen. Moreover, in 1673, the tertiaries declared themselves to be laywomen under the jurisdiction of secular tribunals but subject to local bishops in spiritual matters. The women religious claimed to enjoy also all the privileges granted by papacy to the Franciscan Third Order. The Venetian authorities agreed and confirmed such organization of S. Giuseppe first in 1677 and then in 1718, stressing on both occasions the lay status of the women religious.¹ This defensive account from 1737 thus

¹ ASM, AGFR, 2970, “Privilegi, immunità, statuti”, “Informazione. Le Terziarie dell’Ordine Serafico di Sant Francesco...”. Conventual Franciscans (Order of the Friars Minor Conventual) and Reformed

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reveals the administrative authority of both secular and ecclesiastical authorities over the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe. Moreover, the defensive account also underscores the active participation of the women religious in the administration of their community by highlighting the women's contestation of episcopal decisions and various appeals to secular and religious authorities. The author of this defensive account remains unknown, however. We must therefore question the extent to which the women religious acted independently of confessors and male administrators who also participated in the running of S. Giuseppe, and other third order communities. Nonetheless, this document reveals competing and complementary authorities who were involved in the administration of third order communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. This chapter explores this complex matrix of power that enveloped third order communities.

In current historiography, the study of the administration and governance of female monastic communities in the early modern world focuses largely on the centralizing effects of the Council of Trent and the related decrees. This scholarship highlights, on the one hand, increased top-down, male control of female monastic institutions and, on the other hand, the struggles of the women religious and their families to maintain authority over, and exercise social and political influence through, female monastic institutions.² The figure of the mother superior, her election to the position and

Franciscans were two branches of the Franciscan family differing in their adhesion to the Franciscan ideals of poverty and simplicity. The Conventuals emerged as a result of reforms in the fourteenth century when the Franciscan Order divided into Observant and Conventual branches, based on the friars conflicting take on poverty and property. The Reformati emerged in the sixteenth century from the Observant branch of the Franciscan Order, emphasizing strict observance of the original Franciscan rules, self-negation, and frequent prayer. Guerrino Pelliccia and Giancarlo Rocca, eds., "Francescani (1209-1517)," *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1977).

² P. Renee Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Silvia Evangelisti, "'We Do Not Have It, and We Do Not Want It': Women, Power, and Convent Reform in Florence," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, no. 3 (2003): 677–700; Elizabeth A. Leffeldt,

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the extent of her powers, has also received the attention of historians, although more so for the medieval than the early modern period.³ Nevertheless, studies of the extent of female rule and autonomy in Renaissance and early modern monastic communities have led some scholars to view convents as places of female self-realization and loci of female power and authority.⁴ Indeed, as Elisabeth Lehfeldt points out, nuns often assumed significant managerial responsibilities that included oversight of money, goods, and people.⁵ Yet, Lehfeldt is careful to stress that various internal and external male

Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Elisabeth A. Lehfeldt, "Gender, the State, and Episcopal Authority: Hernando de Talavera and Rischard Fox on Female Monastic Reform," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2012): 615–34; Elisa Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII* (Milan: F. Angeli, 2001); Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

³ Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan*; Jennifer C. Edwards, "My Sister for Abbess: Fifteenth-Century Disputes over the Abbey of Sainte-Croix, Poitiers," *Journal of Medieval History* 20, no. 1 (2014): 85–107; Kate Lowe, "Elections of Abbesses and Notions of Identity in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy, with Special Reference to Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 389–429; Valerie G. Spear, *Leadership in Medieval English Nunneries* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005).

⁴ Convents as "rooms of one's own" for early modern women and their cultural output on the Italian peninsula has been discussed in Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy 1400-1650* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). Elissa Weaver has posited early modern Italian convents as constituting a feminine subculture, Elissa B. Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Historians have also highlighted the central role of monastic women in familiar networks of power extending far beyond convents walls, Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan*; Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII*.

⁵ Lehfeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*, 57–61. Some monastic women, especially in the German-speaking territories, continued to hold seigniorial rights and participate in political ritual also in the early modern period, as highlighted by Ellinor Forster's work on Tyrolean convents, Ellinor Forster, "Zwischen Lantag und Huldigungsumritt. Politische Handlungsspielräume des Stifts Sonnenburg und des Klarissenklosters Meran in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Frauenklöster im Alpenraum*, ed. Brigitte Mazohl and Ellinor Forster (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2012). But even to manage life in a small, seventeenth-century third order community, women needed to have some specialist skills, as highlighted by the constitutions of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo. The treasurer of S. Giuseppe was elected for life to ensure continuity of office and she had to be able to write, do accounts, and keep records. The mistress of cellars had to know how to preserve wine, the overseer of grain had to be familiar with preservation of grains, and the mistresses of S. Giuseppe's academy had to be able to instruct the rudiments of Christian doctrine, reading, and writing to the educande. S. Giuseppe recruited women to hold the positions of the mistress of academy and others to play the organ or to sing in the choir,

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authorities, including financial administrators and local bishops, restricted female authority in monastic settings, particularly after the Council of Trent.⁶ This scholarship focuses on elite monastic institutions, however, where the administration of a convent was closely intertwined with familial as well as state interests. The study of the administration of third order communities challenges the narrative of centralization and homogenization that characterizes current scholarship of post-Tridentine female monastic institutions. Elizabeth Leffeldt and Francesca Medioli have argued that local circumstances shaped third order communities in post-Tridentine Spain and Italy.⁷ Evidence from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bergamo and Bologna lends further support to this argument and highlights that the administration of a third order community was shaped by various external and internal authorities, whose composition changed from institution to institution and differed between various localities. In response to these various authorities, third order women religious learned to negotiate authority and flexibly approach power.

I first turn to discuss the prescriptive rules and constitutions that sought to establish clear frameworks for the administration of third order communities. These prescriptive documents propose very similar views of community, regardless of the religious order to which a tertiary community belonged or the geographic location of that community. A clear socio-cultural perception of how a female monastic community

highlighting that not all women possessed such skills. ASM, AGFR, 2991, C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Gioseppe, p. 5r.; see chapter 3 on organists and singers.

⁶ Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*, 57–61.

⁷ Francesca Medioli, “Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33 (1997): 670–93; Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*, 185–206.

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should be organized and administered thus existed in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy. A more complex picture emerges when we move from the prescriptive documents to sources that shed light on the day-to-day practices inside third order communities. The daily administration of a community was divided between mothers superior, other in-house officials, confessors, and various administrators of temporal affairs; the relationships of power between these many individuals were in constant negotiation and re-negotiation. Various authorities external to third order communities also influenced daily life in these communities and added to the complexity of the power matrixes that evolved around third orders. These external authorities included episcopal authorities and religious orders, but also civic authorities and parish clergy. All these external authorities sought to regulate and oversee the operations of third order communities, which they considered under their own jurisdiction. Consequently, the communities were pulled in various directions by a number of internal and external authorities. Previous chapters have highlighted that third order communities were flexible institutions that responded to a multitude of social needs and were closely integrated in their local social and economic environments. This chapter reveals that such flexibility resulted in a number of authorities weighing in on the administration of third order communities and the women religious having to negotiate a complex matrix of power to ensure the continuity of their communities.

i. Top-down designs of the rules and constitutions

Rules and constitutions included guidelines for the organization of daily life in monastic communities. As “documents of theory”, to use a definition coined by Penelope Johnson, these prescriptive sources highlight how the authors of the rules and constitutions

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imagined a perfect monastic community.⁸ The rules and constitutions thus reveal the ideological framework upon which the organization and administration of a monastic community rested. Rules and constitutions have survived for three of the six third order communities I consider in this study: S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and Ognisanti and S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna. Comparing and contrasting these prescriptive sources reveals a high degree of similarity between the rules and constitutions from these three communities, despite the communities belonging to three different religious orders and being located in two different towns.

The first constitutions of S. Giuseppe were written by dom Alessandro Benaglio, the Jesuit priest who served as the community's first confessor, in 1644.⁹ According to a later foundation narrative, Benaglio's constitutions served as an appendix to a Franciscan third order rule.¹⁰ The constitutions established the mother superior as the overseer of both the temporal and the spiritual affairs of the community. Elected every three years at a chapter meeting by a majority vote, the mother superior fulfilled her duties with the help of two experienced tertiaries called the *discrete*, also elected by a majority vote. The constitutions stated that the mother superior could also appoint a vicaress to assist her as

⁸ Penelope D. Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 7.

⁹ For more on Benaglio, see chapter 1, fn. 15.

¹⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione, "Informazioni e racconto della Fondazione del Collegio di S. Gioseppe in Berg.mo delle M.ri del Terzo ordine di S. Francesco". There were two main Franciscan third order rules: *Supra montem* (1289) of pope Nicholas IV, which offered rules for communal life but did not explicitly touch upon profession of the three vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, and a Rule for Third Order Regulars (*Inter coetera nostro regimine*, 1521, of pope Leo X), which made the profession of three solemn vows obligatory but mandated enclosure only in such communities, where the tertiaries already observed enclosure. In communities which pursued socially-engaged lives, assisted the sick or educated the youth, the rule of Leo X instituted only voluntary enclosure. Pelliccia and Rocca, "Francescani (1209-1517)."

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she saw fit.¹¹ In addition to the in-house hierarchy determined and headed by the mother superior, the first constitutions of S. Giuseppe also foresaw one layman protector for the community (“a defender, who should be a doctor”) and four administrators, two laymen and two clergymen. The constitutions specified that the administrators “should attend mostly to the temporal affairs, at the request of the mother superior.”¹² The constitutions also outlined a clear role for the confessor in S. Giuseppe. The tertiaries were permitted to have one confessor, who confessed all women religious every eight days.¹³ The first constitutions of S. Giuseppe thus invested the mother superior with the oversight of both the spiritual and the temporal matters of the community. The confessor and various other administrators assisted the mother superior in her duties but did not contest her position as the leader of the tertiary community.

Three decades later, in 1673, the then-confessor of S. Giuseppe, dom Salvatore Giorgi updated the first constitutions of the community and submitted these updated constitutions to print. The updated constitutions guided S. Giuseppe until the community’s suppression in the early-nineteenth century. At first glance, the updated constitutions re-enforced the authority of the mother superior, who the tertiaries were to recognize as representative of Christ and obey accordingly.¹⁴ Yet, on closer reading, the updated constitutions questioned the formerly uncontested position of the mother superior

¹¹ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti, “Ordini per lo governo temporale, della superiora e discrete”.

¹² Ibid., “Ordini per lo governo temporale, de superiori di fuori”.

¹³ Ibid., “Ordini per lo governo spirituale, de sacramenti, prediche, e conferenze”.

¹⁴ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiarie di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE... (Milan, 1673), p. 24.

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in S. Giuseppe. Her duty was now to be in charge of the temporal (and only temporal!) affairs of the community and she was encouraged to involve other tertiaries in the management of the community.¹⁵ Every novice tertiary was to live under the supervision of an older peer, who acted as a teacher to the novice and guided her in the proper ways of communal life.¹⁶ Several tertiaries held the office of visitors; they controlled the rooms of their peers regularly and observed everyone's behavior to ensure correct daily regimens.¹⁷ The mother superior herself was expected to receive regular criticisms from her vicaress and advice from the *discrete*.¹⁸ The vicaress also had to control the work of all other in-house office holders, who all had to submit annual reports of their activities.¹⁹ The *discrete* were the most prudent and experienced tertiaries in the community and advised both the mother superior and the vicaress. According to the updated constitutions, the *discrete* were the guardians of the common good of the community.²⁰ The updated constitutions thus built hierarchies throughout S. Giuseppe; the mother superior was no longer the only authority figure in the community and the updated constitutions set checks and balances on her position in S. Giuseppe. Furthermore, in a decisive departure from the first constitutions, the updated constitutions subordinated the mother superior to the male administrators of S. Giuseppe.²¹ The mother superior lost her

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 30-33.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

²¹ Ibid., p. 17.

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role as the spiritual leader of the community: instead, the updated constitutions established the confessor as the spiritual guide of the tertiaries. The 1673 constitutions thus expanded the circle of people holding authority in S. Giuseppe. As such, these constitutions reflected the thirteenth-century rule of Franciscan Third Order by Pope Nicholas IV, reprinted in the foreword to the constitutions. In “Supra montem” (1289), Nicholas IV encouraged penitents living in their own houses to submit to visits and supervision by the Franciscan order.²² At first glance, the changes to the constitutions seem to signify a top-down reform of S. Giuseppe in 1673. However, dom Salvatore Giorgi dedicated his constitutions to *suor* Francesca and *suor* Elisabetta Lafranchi, the founders of S. Giuseppe who had held the positions of mother superior and vicaress respectively since the 1640s and continued to do so until their deaths in the 1690s.²³ This dedication openly contradicted the text of the constitutions that followed, which limited the mother superior’s tenure to six years.²⁴ As such, the dedication reveals the continued centrality of the mother superior in S. Giuseppe also after the 1673 constitutions and highlights the prescriptive nature of the document.

The late-sixteenth century rule of the Servite Third Order, which guided also the life in Ognisanti in Bologna, stressed the dominant role of Servite friars in the daily life

²² Mario Sensi, *Storie di bizzoche: tra Umbria e Marche* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1995), 83. See also Raffaele Pazzelli and Lino Temperini, eds., *La “supra montem” di Niccolò IV (1289): genesi e diffusione di una regola* (Rome: Edizioni Analecta Terz’Ordine Regolare, 1988).

²³ ASM, AGFR, 2981, “Legati Lafranchi suor Elisabetta”; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “C. Per le SS.re Tertiare di S.to Giuseppe”, 2v; ASM, AGFR, 2991, “Libro ove si descrivono li nomi delle officiali del Collegio di Santo Giuseppe e de Capitoli”, 1670, October 30.

²⁴ Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo, *REGOLE OVERO ORDINI DELLE VEN. SORELLE Tertiare di Bergamo del Collegio di S. GIOSEPPE...* (Milan, 1673), p. 31.

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of tertiary communities, male or female.²⁵ Servite friars had to attend clothing and profession ceremonies and resolve concerns related to pastoral care and movements in and out of female tertiary communities. For female communities, the Servite rule also foresaw a prioress whose position was substitutional and complementary to the role of the friars. The prioress was elected by senior tertiaries from among themselves – a practice that possibly limited the extent of the prioress’s authority within her community.²⁶ The highest authority in a Servite community lay with the rule, however, and every Servite was tasked with ensuring proper observance of the rule. The prioress had to advise her Order superiors of any transgressions in her community to ensure proper punishment of the culprit.²⁷ The sixteenth-century Servite Third Order rule thus emphasized the authority and the hierarchy of the Order. The prioress represented that hierarchy within her community, but she was always subordinate to the Order.

The Servite order continued to occupy a central position of authority also in the constitutions for Servite tertiary communities in the province of Romagna, which were approved by the archbishop of Bologna, cardinal Vincenzo Malvezzi in 1770.²⁸ These constitutions invested the Servite order and the archbishop as the highest authorities that all Servite communities had to obey; in single communities, respective confessors and mothers superior fulfilled substitutional roles. The constitutions foresaw regular pastoral

²⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, “Regola che diede papa Martino V e confermo Innocento VIII a Fratelli, e le Sorelle della Compagnia de’ Servi di Maria...” (Florence, 1591).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, “Regola di Sant’ Agostino e Costituzioni per le religiose terziarie Serve di M. V. della Provincia di Romagna...” (Bologna, 1770).

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visits by both Order and episcopal visitors and charged all office holders with obeying the decrees resulting from such visits.²⁹ Nevertheless, the constitutions also recognized the authority of mother superior in her community, “[These constitutions] do not impose any punishments, rather punishment is to be imposed arbitrarily by superiors, and mothers superior.”³⁰ The constitutions also made every in-house office holder responsible for her realm, creating thus limited jurisdictions within each community. Yet, the constitutions also stressed the need to foster communal life and required the tertiaries to congregate daily for prayer and communal meals and readings.³¹ In this, the constitutions reflected the foreword of the text – a reprint of the 109th epistle by St. Augustine and its exposition. The epistle focuses on communal life and encourages sincerity and transparency of feeling and behavior among women religious; it is considered to be the Rule of St. Augustine for women religious.³² The Rule of St. Augustine invests the mother superior with motherly authority in her community, giving her the right to punish as she sees fit. However, the mother superior and her community also have to obey their confessor.³³ The Rule of St. Augustine offers broad-based guidance rather than detailed prescripts for

²⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 79-81, 96-97. In-house offices included the positions of a sacristan, vicaress, gate-keepers, nurses, and mistress of novices.

³² In his discussion of the *Rule of St. Augustine* in a recent companion to Augustine’s writings, Conrad Leyser summarizes the centuries-long debate about the authenticity and origins of the *Rule of St. Augustine* that still continues today. The *Rule* is a composite text and the part of the *Rule* directed at women is considered to be the letter Augustine wrote to a community of nuns in Hippo. Conrad Layser, “Augustine in the Latin West, 430-ca. 900” in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 460-464.

³³ ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, “Regola di Sant’ Agostino e Costituzioni per le religiose terziarie Serve di M. V. della Provincia di Romagna...” (Bologna, 1770), pp. 11-20

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communal life.³⁴ According to Margaret Chowning, a “constitution... was each convent’s interpretation of how best to adhere to the Rule of St. Augustine.”³⁵ For the Servite tertiaries in the province of Romagna, including Ognisanti in Bologna, the eighteenth-century provincial constitutions and the sixteenth-century rule of the Servite Third Order offered only limited guidance on how to best follow the Rule of St. Augustine. It fell upon each community to negotiate the roles and duties of the tertiaries, the religious order, and the episcopal authorities in the daily administration of their community. Consequently, differences between various communities and a constant negotiation of the rules, the constitutions, and the realities of daily life emerged.

When the rules and constitutions of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and Ognisanti in Bologna created hierarchies and established various authority figures, at least on paper, the constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna emphasized obedience to the mother superior.³⁶ According to the constitutions, which probably date to the early 1730s, the mother superior assumed a central place in the everyday life of S. Maria delle Grazie.³⁷ The constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie describe the mother superior as a “loving mother” of all the women religious in the community. The mother superior had to ensure

³⁴ Elizabeth Makowski, *English Nuns and the Law in the Middle Ages: Cloistered Nuns and Their Lawyers, 1293-1540* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 23–25; Spear, *Leadership in Medieval English Nunneries*, 2–4.

³⁵ Margaret Chowning, *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752-1663* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 30. Makowski reaches the same conclusion, Makowski, *English Nuns and the Law in the Middle Ages: Cloistered Nuns and Their Lawyers, 1293-1540*, 24.

³⁶ BA, B4342, Regole delle Terziarie Carmeliatne di Bologna e vita della loro fondatrice Suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi.

³⁷ *Ibid.* The constitutions are not dated. At the appendix of the constitutions is a proclamation by the provincial prior of the Carmelites from 1735 that approves the constitutions. The biography of suor Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi indicates that the first officials of the community, whose roles are described in the constitutions, were elected in 1733.

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a perfect religious community in S. Maria delle Grazie and occupy every tertiary with appropriate tasks and duties. In addition, the mother superior interviewed all women who wished to enter S. Maria delle Grazie and guided the accepted novices as well as the already professed tertiaries in their spiritual exercises. The mother superior invigilated all interactions of the women religious with the secular world, ensured sustainable economic management of the community, and zealously corrected the behavior of every woman living under her care. The confessor acted together with the mother superior to supervise the spiritual life in S. Maria delle Grazie. The tertiaries had to confess once a week and undergo a weekly “chapter of blame” (*capitolo delle colpe*), during which the mother superior publicly reprimanded each tertiary for her mistakes.³⁸ The community’s daily life, as outlined in the constitutions, was in the firm grip of the mother superior. S. Maria delle Grazie was a Carmelite community, following the examples of St. Theresa of Avila and St. Maria Maddalena de’Pazzi, both of who had stressed the central authority of the mother superior in her community.³⁹ However, a clear parallel emerges also between the constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna and the first constitutions of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo: both constitutions were written shortly after foundation and underlined the central role of the mother superior in the communities’ daily life. As I discussed above, the updated constitutions of S. Giuseppe sought to limit the role of the mother superior. Unfortunately, no later eighteenth-century constitutions exist for S. Maria delle Grazie to study change over time in this community.

³⁸ Ibid., Cap. XV and XVI.

³⁹ Anna Scattigno, “Un commento alla regola carmelitana: Gli ‘Ammaestramenti’ di Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi,” in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia dall’alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l’oggi*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997); Alison Weber, “Spiritual Administration: Gender and Discernment in the Carmelite Reform,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1 (2000): 123–46.

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Comparing the rules and constitutions of these three third order communities reveals a great degree of similarity between the three communities. Regardless of geography, religious order, or time of writing, an ideal female religious community was imagined as a well-ordered religious house where the women religious lived under the authority of the confessor and the mother superior and obeyed episcopal authorities and their religious order. In the case of S. Giuseppe and Ognisanti, where the survival of more than one rule or constitution allows to analyze change over time, the later documents limited the extent of the mother superior's authority and created ever-more-complex hierarchies of community administration. Third order communities like most female monastic communities saw changes to their institutional organization and administration in the course of the early modern period.⁴⁰ If we consider only the prescriptive documents, such changes appear to result from top-down reforms that sought to centralize the administration of the religious communities and undermine female authority, as suggested in current scholarship. However, the rules and constitutions provided but a blueprint for the administration of a third order community. On day-to-day basis, interplays developed between mothers superior and in-house officials, confessors,

⁴⁰ See chapters 2, 3, and 4. Most studies of female monasticism touch upon this point. In studies of female monasticism in early modern Italy, the focus has been on either changes in the institutional form, like changes from conservatories to monastic institutions or from more open monastic institutions to enclosed monastic institutions, or changes brought about in the organization and administration of monastic institutions after the Council of Trent. Third order communities have been discussed as institutions that saw changes to their institutional organization and administration after the Council of Trent which led to an institutional transformation into enclosed communities. This dissertation shows that even though third order communities saw change in their institutional organization and administration between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, many never transformed into enclosed convents and functioned and were recognized as third order communities throughout this period. On early modern Italy, Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan*; Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Silvia Evangelisti, "Wives, Widows, and Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in the Historiography of Early Modern Italy," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000): 233–47; Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*.

male administrators, civic and episcopal authorities who all determined how a third order community was organized and administered.

ii. A multitude of internal authorities

Moving from prescriptive sources to “documents of practice”— to continue with Penelope Johnson’s classifications – the hierarchies proposed in the prescriptive sources dissolve into polyvalent relationships of power and authority. Various internal authorities were involved in the daily administration of a third order community, including mothers superior and other in-house office holders, confessors, financial and legal administrators, and various legal representatives and proxies. No two third order communities were administered the same way. Instead, a third order community existed in a complex matrix of power that evolved constantly. As I discuss above, the rules and constitutions of Ognisanti stressed the role of the Servite order in the administration of Ognisanti, with the mother superior and the confessor occupying substitutional roles. Records of the chapter meetings in Ognisanti reveal that the Servite order was indeed a constant presence in the life of the community. However, the chapter meetings also reveal that the mother superior and the confessor occupied a central position in the daily operations of Ognisanti; moreover, various in-house office holders occupied their own particular realm, as mandated by the constitutions of 1770. In this section, I first closely examine the daily administration of Ognisanti to highlight the complex internal power structures of the community. I also include examples from other third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna to underscore how each community was shaped by its own particular constellation of powers.

The internal structure of Ognisanti was flexible and changing in time. The community filled the following in-house offices in addition to the mother superior:

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vicaress, sacristan, choir mistress, treasurer, two nurses, four gate keepers, four overseers, a supervisor of the garden, an officer of ornamentation, a supervisor of the images of the Virgin Mary, mistresses of novices, and a mistress of the pantry. Six senior in-house officers acted as private council to the mother superior. Chapter meetings reveal that additional positions such as the custodian of bread, mistress of the cellars, mistress of refectory, custodian of linens, sweeper, and doorkeepers were also filled occasionally.⁴¹ Notarial documents also evidence the position of a cook, but do not clarify whether one of the tertiaries or an outsider filled this role.⁴² Not all in-house positions were always filled and the decision to appoint an officer depended on the needs of the community.⁴³ Moreover, not all women religious held an office or contributed their labor to the community. In the 1730s and the early-1740s, several tertiaries purchased exemption from in-house offices and “the manual labors [...] that the tertiaries of this community have provided to the greater comfort of this community in the old times.”⁴⁴ By 1742 Ognisanti no longer required vocal tertiaries to undertake manual labor.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, such exemptions were rare and most tertiaries did participate in the daily running of their community. Notarial documents regularly list all vocal tertiaries in the community as party to dowry and credit contracts concluded by Ognisanti; the meeting

⁴¹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari; ASM, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari.

⁴² The position of the assistant cook was filled by a *conversa*. ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, September 17, 1739.

⁴³ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, pp. 17.

⁴⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, July 7, 1742. Further such exemptions included ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, October 13, 1736 (Isabella Sanfelice); *ibid.*, October 13, 1736 (Victoria Fiessi).

⁴⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, December 22, 1742.

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minutes indicate the participation of all vocal tertiaries in chapter meetings and give reasons for absences, usually illness.⁴⁶

Such internal organization was called into question in mid-eighteenth century, when communal life in Ognisanti was revoked and every tertiary became responsible for procuring her own food and clothing.⁴⁷ Such a change no-doubt undermined communal unity. Yet, the revocation of communal life did not dismantle the system of in-house offices. A greater threat was posed by a ban on new professions in 1747.⁴⁸ By the 1760s, the population of Ognisanti had declined drastically and most women religious were re-elected regularly in their offices and held multiple offices simultaneously.⁴⁹ A Servite confessor advised the archbishop of Bologna in 1772,

The number of these religious has decreased to the scarce number of twelve, and except for one of them who is twenty-seven years old, all others are eighty,

⁴⁶ Direct involvement of tertiaries in the daily affairs of the communities is also evident in S. Elisabetta and in S. Maria della Carità in Bologna. The tertiaries of S. Elisabetta dealt directly with handymen, suppliers, apothecaries, as well as with the secular women living in their community (ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 10; ASB, Demaniale, 13/4461, num. 4; ASB, Demaniale, 21/4469-29/4477). Moreover, the tertiaries personally signed the deeds between S. Elisabetta and people buying property from the community or those settling ownership disputes with the tertiaries, even if these documents frequently mention the approval of S. Elisabetta's administrators (ASB, Demaniale, 6/4454, num. 13; ASB, Demaniale, 11/4459, num. 1). The tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità personally concluded rental agreements with tenants from the 1670s to the early 1800s. A male legal representative of the tertiaries contracted a rental agreement on only two occasions, in 1802 and in 1803. The tertiaries used contract templates with blanks for the name of the landlord, a description of the property, the name of the tenant, and the annual rent. The blank for the landlord was filled with the name and the office of the tertiary who contracted the agreement for S. Maria della Carità, usually either the mother superior or the vicarress. The tenants were men with families, probably artisans, as well as single widows or widows with families. Witnesses were usually present for the signing of these contracts, but not always. In the late seventeenth and the early-eighteenth century, the witnesses tended to include friars from S. Maria della Carità; but never the friar who served as the confessor of the tertiaries (ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, Scritture moderni delle case).

⁴⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 6/6283, November 2, 1764.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, October 17, 1747.

⁴⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 139, 142-143. ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, pp. 3-4, 10-11, 20, 36-37, 42-43, 54-55, 69-70, 78-79, 94-95. On population decline, see also chapter 2.

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seventy, and the youngest sixty years old; they are also weak of health, and only with much difficulty manage to fulfill the necessary offices of their community.⁵⁰

The confessor's concern reveals the central role of the tertiaries in the daily management and continuity of the community. Indeed, the women religious usually decided among themselves which in-house offices to fill and who to appoint; they sometimes expressly defied the wishes of the episcopal authorities and religious orders when making such decisions. At a chapter meeting on November 21, 1724, the tertiaries decided that Ognisanti needed a lay sister (*conversa*). According to the minutes, the women had considered this change to the organizational structure of their community over a period of several months and, in the meantime, had hired a secular servant. A decade later, the tertiaries decided to accept another *conversa*.⁵¹ In 1796, the women contested the decision of the vicar general of Bologna to fire a male servant of Ognisanti and rehired the man.⁵² On other occasions, the tertiaries had to submit to their superiors however. In 1753, Servite superiors forbade the tertiaries from hosting relatives and friends overnight in Ognisanti; the women heard of this decision from their confessor, who also sought to explain the reasons behind the decision.⁵³ The tertiaries, even though actively engaged in the daily affairs of their community, did not shape the life in Ognisanti, or any other third order community, alone.

⁵⁰ AAB, MV, 286, Vestizioni.

⁵¹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 32. See chapter 2 for the history of converse in third order communities, most of which started to accept *converse* only later in their institutional history.

⁵² ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 89.

⁵³ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 109.

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Episcopal authorities, religious orders, and confessors all tried to limit the extent of the power of women religious in their communities. In 1713, the bishop of Bergamo, Pietro Priuli forbade the mother superior and the vicaress of S. Giuseppe to hold any additional in-house offices, except for that of the gate keeper. Priuli argued that the prohibition allowed the women to better exercise the offices of the mother superior and the vicaress.⁵⁴ However, limiting the number of additional offices also limited the power these women could yield through their in-house roles.⁵⁵ Limits on in-house offices were also set in Bologna. In S. Elisabetta, a Franciscan visitor created the office of *discrete* in 1691; these were the two most mature tertiaries in the community, elected into office by a chapter vote and confirmed by the Franciscan guardian of S. Elisabetta. The role of the *discrete* was to advise the mother superior on matters related to discipline, contracts, and communal expenses.⁵⁶ The office seems to have fallen into disuse in the early-eighteenth century but was (re)introduced in 1758, when a confessor observed that, “the majority of the interests of the community are decided by the mother superior and the treasurer alone, which is against the rules of the community.” Two new *discrete* were to advise the mother superior together with the treasurer and “those [tertiaries] who have held the office of the mother superior and are thus naturally *discrete*.”⁵⁷ Opening the position to more than two senior tertiaries involved a greater number of tertiaries in the

⁵⁴ ASB, AGFR, 2970, Visite.

⁵⁵ In both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio, the power of individual tertiaries was also checked through election procedures. Tallies of votes reveal that biological sisters were excluded from voting when one of the sisters was a candidate for the office of the mother superior (ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Giuseppe, “Elezioni”; ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Antonio, “Elezioni”).

⁵⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 5r.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 116r.

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administration of S. Elisabetta and thus weakened the rule of the mother superior and the treasurer. A few years later, in 1761, the confessor also restricted the duties of the treasurer in S. Elisabetta.⁵⁸ The attempts by confessors, religious orders, and episcopal authorities to change the internal structures of third order communities underscores the influence of these authorities on daily life inside the communities. Elizabeth Leffeldt has argued that such attempts to reform the internal life of female communities served to enforce the position of power of the authorities themselves; female communities served as a means to consolidate power.⁵⁹ Penelope Johnson points out that external demands and impositions only strengthened the internal structures of female monastic communities in medieval France.⁶⁰ Records from third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna reveal that confessors, order hierarches, and ecclesiastical superiors did impact the internal structures of these female communities; however, the third order women also had a share in the administration of their communities.

The minutes of chapter meetings as well as notarial acts highlight a shared authority between the women religious and the confessor in the daily affairs of Ognisanti. The mothers superior appointed their vicaresses immediately after having been elected in office themselves and also scheduled the election of further in-house officials.⁶¹

Occasionally, the confessor instead of the mother superior scheduled the election of in-

⁵⁸ A division of roles between the treasurer and the cellar mistress was foreseen; the treasurer also had to report annually to the mother superior and the *discrete*. ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, pp. 125v-126r.

⁵⁹ Leffeldt, "Gender, the State, and Episcopal Authority: Hernando de Talavera and Richard Fox on Female Monastic Reform."

⁶⁰ Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France*, 191–194.

⁶¹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, pp. 15, 26, 36, 38, 40, 44, 52, 74-75, 90, 110, 115. ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, pp. 3, 10, 68

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house officials. The latter occurred mostly in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁶² Around the same time, in the mid-eighteenth century, the mothers superior began to convene more chapter meetings independently of the confessor, mostly when the meetings were called to consider the acceptance of new tertiaries and secular boarders in Ognisanti. Such practice underscores an increasingly shared governance of Ognisanti by the mother superior and the confessor towards the later-eighteenth century. The confessors represented the Servite order in Ognisanti but, rather than being a top-down authority figure, assumed a more complex position between the tertiaries and the order.

A similar interplay characterized the relationship between Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi, the founder of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna, and fra Ferdinando Savi, the first confessor of that community. As I discussed above, the constitutions of S. Maria delle Grazie invested the mother superior with authority in both the spiritual and the temporal affairs of the community. The hagiographical biography of Maria Maddalena Mazzoni Sangiorgi also reveals Sangiorgi as the undisputed leader of S. Maria delle Grazie from the foundation of the community in the 1720s until her death in 1749. The biography underscores, however, the central role of Sangiorgi's spiritual father, fra Ferdinando Salvi, in guiding both Sangiorgi and the new community.⁶³ The notarial documents from S. Maria delle Grazie further evidence the role of fra Salvi and

⁶² ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, Pp. 29, 37, 45, 68, 74-75. ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, 10-11, 19-20, 27, 36, 42, 54-55, 69

⁶³ Sangiorgi's biography also underscores the strong influence of St. Maria Maddalena de Pazzi, who in the seventeenth century emerged as a model for self-negating religiosity and an advocate for the restoration of monastic vows and communal life in female communities. Francesca Brezzi, *La passione di pensare: Angela da Foligno, Maddalena d'Pazzi, Jeanne Guyon* (Rome: Carocci editore, 1998), chap. 3; Anna Scattigno, "'I desiderij ardenti': Penitenza, estasi e martirio nei modelli di santità," in *Monaca, moglie, serva, cortigiana: Vita e immagini delle donne tra Rinascimento e Controriforma*, ed. Sara F. Matthews Grieco and Sabina Brevaglieri (Florence: Morgana Edizioni, 2001), 165–175.

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his successors in the affairs of the community.⁶⁴ The confessors gave their consent to contracts concluded by the tertiaries and, we can assume, were at least aware of the activities of the tertiaries. Moreover, three notarial acts, two from the 1780s and one from 1791, name the confessor of S. Maria delle Grazie as the administrator of the temporal affairs of the community.⁶⁵ In 1791, the confessor of the community submitted a petition to the secretary of the Monte di Pietà in Bologna on behalf of the tertiaries. In this petition, the confessor recalled the role of his predecessor, fra Salvi, in directing the foundation of S. Maria delle Grazie and the lives of the early tertiaries, underscoring fra Salvi's pivotal position in the administration of the community after its foundation.⁶⁶ These documents of daily life reveal a shared power between the mother superior and the confessor in the administration of S. Maria delle Grazie.

To better understand the role of a confessor in a third order community, I return to Ognisanti. In Ognisanti, a Servite friar held the position of confessor or corrector, as he was also called in this community. The confessor was assigned to the tertiaries by the Servite order. Meeting minutes and notarial acts show the confessor convening chapter meetings, presiding the elections of mothers superior, and representing the tertiaries and Ognisanti outside the community. Tallying the recorded votes at chapter meetings, it becomes clear that the confessors also voted at chapter meetings and in-house elections. At times, the confessors intervened in the electoral process. When a mother superior died

⁶⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768, July 27, 1748; *ibid*, June 11, 1745; *ibid*, December 19, 1769; *ibid*, May 2, 1776; *ibid*, February 21, 1783; *ibid*, November 19, 1791. ASB, Demaniale, 2/1769, April 22, 1799; *ibid*, April 10, 1782.

⁶⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 1/1769, February 21, 1783; *ibid*, November 19, 1791. ASB, Demaniale, 2/1769, April 10, 1782.

⁶⁶ AAB, MV, 283, Documenti e carte varie secc. XVII, April 9, 1791.

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in office in 1772, the confessor appointed an interim mother superior to serve until the next regular elections, held two years later.⁶⁷ These Servite friars thus participated closely in the daily affairs of Ognisanti. Moreover, the confessors represented Ognisanti and were recognized as the representatives of the tertiaries outside the community. In April 1772, the confessor convened a chapter meeting to announce that a pious donor had trusted 200 *lire* to him; this money was intended as a legacy to Ognisanti and the tertiaries could use half of the donation to meet the needs of their community and the other half to establish two perpetual Masses.⁶⁸ A month later, the confessor convened the tertiaries again to announce that he was going to the convent of S. Lorenzo that afternoon to settle a debt Ognisanti had with a nun of that convent.⁶⁹ Most credit contracts and other finance-related notarial acts of Ognisanti also announce the confessor's "presence, authority, and consent" to the financial activities of the tertiaries.⁷⁰ Finally, the Servite confessors were in charge of the spiritual affairs of the community. The confessors used chapter meeting to preach obedience to Servite rules and constitutions, as well as decrees issued by episcopal authorities and the Servite order.⁷¹ The confessors served as representatives of these external authorities in Ognisanti. However, the confessors also served as intermediaries between the tertiaries and the Servite order. In 1744, shortly after Servite superiors had revoked communal life in Ognisanti, the tertiaries decided to

⁶⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, pp. 16, 19.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278 – ASB, Demaniale, 8/6285.

⁷¹ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, pp. 9-10. ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 68.

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change the way in which they celebrated canonical hours, claiming that they could no longer spend time in the choir because they had to procure their own food and clothing. The confessor communicated the decision of the women to the Servite order, which approved the tertiaries' decision but issued a warning that no such changes could be introduced without an expressed *a priori* approval of the order in the future.⁷² The confessors thus stood between the women religious and the world outside Ognisanti, acting as liaisons between the women religious and their hierarchical superiors and permitting communication in both ways, top-down and bottom-up.

The confessors also involved Ognisanti in urban social networks. These friars had financial and administrative interests beyond Ognisanti, as examples of two seventeenth-century confessors of the tertiaries reveal. Fra Arcangelo Amadei served as the confessor of Ognisanti for several terms between the 1660s to the 1690s.⁷³ Fra Amadei's ties to Ognisanti were strengthened by his niece, Diana Maria Amadei, who professed in the tertiary community in 1677; fra Amadei paid her dowry.⁷⁴ Fra Amadei's relationship to Ognisanti was built upon his role as confessor as well as his family ties to the community. His role as the confessor was interrupted by other undertakings. One of these included the position of the administrator of the confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows in the church of S. Maria de' Servi. In 1670, the tertiaries of Ognisanti, represented by a Servite friar, bought a house on Via Borgo San Pietro from the

⁷² ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 76. Emphasis is mine.

⁷³ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278-2/6279.

⁷⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, February 19, 1678. ASB, Demaniale, 2/6278, July 3, 1677. Diana Maria Amadei seems to have lived in Ognisanti already for several years before her profession, or she was at least known in the community and acquainted with the tertiaries, since in 1674 she received a legacy in the last will of *suor* Ortensia Barabani, who left Diana Maria all her gold items and 25 *lire* to be spent on a dress (ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, December 22, 1674).

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confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows; fra Amadei acted on behalf of the confraternity.⁷⁵ A year later, in 1671, two tertiaries from Ognisanti, *suor* Angiola Maria Provenziali and *suor* Ortensia Maria Barabans also bought an apartment on Via Borgo S. Pietro from the confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, which was again represented by fra Amadei.⁷⁶ Finally, an apartment owned by two tertiaries of Ognisanti on Via Borgo San Pietro served as the real property for a *censo* agreement between the two women religious and the confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, which was still represented by fra Amadei.⁷⁷ As the administrator of the confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, fra Amadei's relationship to Ognisanti thus assumed a third dimension, which inserted the tertiaries and Ognisanti in urban credit and property markets and in contact with other urban institutions.⁷⁸ Simultaneously with fra Amadei, the Servite fra Vitali Costa also served as the confessor of Ognisanti between the 1670s and the 1690s and acted as the administrator of the confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows at least once in 1684.⁷⁹ As Amadei and Costa, most confessors served Ognisanti over long time

⁷⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, June 28, 1670.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, June 9, 1671.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, December 22, 1674.

⁷⁸ Nicholas Terpstra and others have studied early modern Italian confraternities, stressing their constitutive role in the creation of urban identities and sociability, group solidarities, and social hierarchies. Christopher F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Nicholas Terpstra, ed., *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁷⁹ Fra Costa appears to have served as the corrector of Ognisanti fairly consistently through the 1680s. However, a notarial document from 1684 indicates him also as the administrator of the confraternity. ASB, Demaniale, 2/6279, August 12, 1684.

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periods in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁸⁰ These confessors could develop close relationships with the tertiary community and, by pursuing alternative affairs simultaneously with their work as confessors, these friars involved Ognisanti in urban social networks that shaped the economic affairs of the community and its tertiaries.

This extended discussion of Ognisanti and other third order communities in Bologna has highlighted the central role of the tertiaries in the daily administration of their communities and brought attention to the continuous interplay between the tertiaries and their confessors in matters of daily administration. This discussion has also revealed further parties in third order administration. Both confessors and the tertiaries themselves were involved in social and economic networks that extended beyond the third order communities but came to bear upon these communities. The Tridentine decrees mandated financial administrators for all monastic communities, male or female; according to the Council, these administrators were appointed either by religious orders or local bishops.⁸¹ The administrators of monastic property have received only limited attention in current scholarship, despite their central role in the operations of early modern monastic institutions. Often laymen, the administrators' role frequently extended beyond financial management and impacted daily administration as well as institutional organization of the communities and congregations. For the administrators, the position provided opportunities for patronage and social advancement.⁸² In Ognisanti, the confessor

⁸⁰ In 1784, the Servite Gian Maria Lodi substituted the previous corrector, the Servite Pietro Maria Rossi, who had held the position since 1765 (ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, July 5, 1784). By 1786, Lodi had been replaced by fra Camillo Rimondi, who still held the position in 1796 (ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, July 8, 1786; ASB, Demaniale, 8/6285, September 17, 1796).

⁸¹ Session 25, chapters 2, 9, 21. <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct25.html> (Accessed October 8, 2015)

⁸² I am not aware of any study that would focus exclusively on monastic administrators. Studies that give more extended consideration to secular administrators of monastic and charitable institutions include

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fulfilled some of the role of a financial administrator and the community received its first external financial administrators only in 1790, after which time the confessor remained responsible for the spiritual affairs of Ognisanti alone.⁸³ Indeed, all third order communities considered in this study appointed external administrators later in their institutional history. Administrators were part of the progressive regularization that characterized the institutional development of third order communities between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. However, the extent to which administrators were involved in third order communities varied greatly between communities, underscoring institutional differences between third order communities and the uniqueness of the matrices of power that enveloped each community.

S. Elisabetta in Bologna and S. Giuseppe in Bergamo appointed external administrators within a decade from their foundation. The tertiaries of S. Elisabetta seem to have elected their first administrator in 1640, when they appointed the legal doctor named Giacomo Palmieri to ensure the economic interest of the community both in

Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Lucia Ferrante, "Fare il bene per il proprio bene: attività assistenziali e vantaggi personali a Bologna tra Seicento e Settecento," in *Dai cantieri della storia: Liber amicorum per Paolo Prodi*, ed. Gian Paolo Brizzi and Giuseppe Olmi (Bologna: CLUEB, 2007), 445–53; Angela Groppi, *I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma dei Papi* (Rome: Laterza, 1994); Liise Lehtsalu, "Changing Perceptions of Women's Religious Institutions in Eighteenth-Century Bologna," *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 939–59.

⁸³ The document detailing the election of the two administrators – both of who belonged to the highest rungs of the Bolognese society, one a member of the Bianchi clan and the other an Isolani – clearly divided the responsibilities between the Servite and the new administrators of Ognisanti. The latter were charged with the economic administration of Ognisanti, in which the two men had to always involve the Servite confessor and corrector of the tertiaries. The archbishop of Bologna acted as the overseer of the activities undertaken by the administrators. Indeed, the archbishops of Bologna had already received detailed overviews of the financial state of Ognisanti during pastoral visits in 1744, 1760, and 1772. After the appointment of the administrators, the Servite remained responsible solely for the religious and spiritual care of the tertiaries and could no longer ask for account books during their visits to Ognisanti. The women religious approved the new administrators at a chapter vote in January 1791, when they also confirmed the separation of Ognisanti's temporal affairs from its spiritual affairs. AAB, 286, Visite pastorali; ASB, Demaniale, 7/6284, "1790. Elezione degli assunti, e loro incombenza"; ASB, Demaniale, 14/6291, Atti capitolari, p. 75.

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Bologna and beyond.⁸⁴ Together with the confessor of the tertiaries, Palmieri was present at the signing of most notarial acts completed for S. Elisabetta.⁸⁵ By the 1660s, two further administrators had joined Palmieri and the notarial acts now also featured the names of the senator Geronimo Capacelli Albergati and the doctor Guido Montalbani.⁸⁶ In the years that followed, several new administrators appeared in the notarial acts of the community. In the seventeenth-century, S. Elisabetta thus either had administrators, who stayed in office for short time periods, or a larger pool of administrators, from which one or two men acted on behalf of the tertiaries at any given moment. By the eighteenth century, the community seems to have had two administrators, who acted either together or independently of each other.⁸⁷ S. Giuseppe in Bergamo had three administrators in office throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Among these administrators were both religious and laymen, as mandated by the first constitutions of the community in the 1640s.⁸⁸ The roles and duties of administrators were similar in both S. Elisabetta and S. Giuseppe. The administrators acted on behalf of the tertiaries in legal and financial matters that concerned either individual tertiaries or the whole community; they assisted the tertiaries with contracts, notarial acts, petitions and litigation, and

⁸⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451, num. 15.

⁸⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 3/4451-5/4453.

⁸⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 5/4453, num. 11, 14.

⁸⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 8 secondo. A notarial document from 1777 specified that when one administrator was unavailable another could replace him (ASB, Notai, Gotti, Pio Procolo Felice, 1777, num. 89). There was a clear expectation that the administrators would be available and present in S. Elisabetta, however, as evidenced by the dismissal of Francesco Albergati Capacelli because of his frequent absences from Bologna and consequent inability to care for the affairs of S. Elisabetta in 1777 (ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, 145v).

⁸⁸ The constitutions prescribed four administrators in S. Giuseppe, two laymen and two clergymen. ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti, "Ordini per lo governo temporale, de superiori di fuori".

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property management.⁸⁹ Many of these activities overlapped with the activities undertaken by the confessors in Ognisanti before the Servite community appointed external administrators, highlighting the flexibility and variability in third order institutional organization.

The administrators also engaged third order communities in local networks. Some administrators of S. Elisabetta had familiar ties to the community. The daughter of Giacomo Palmieri, the first known administrator of S. Elisabetta, entered the community as a tertiary in 1641.⁹⁰ Some administrators remained involved with S. Elisabetta beyond their turn in office. The nobleman Nicolò Bonavenura Melega was appointed administrator of the community in 1726, but also acted as a notary for S. Elisabetta several times between the late 1720s and the 1740s. Melega's role as a notary for S. Elisabetta extended beyond his turn as the community's administrator; moreover, members of Melega's agnatic kin also acted as notaries for S. Elisabetta both in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁹¹ Finally, there were men who never seem to have served S. Elisabetta as administrators but were nonetheless closely involved with the community. The notary Francesco Arrighi, whose daughter was a tertiary in S. Elisabetta, prepared a number of documents for the community and served as a witness for other notarial acts between the 1670s and the 1690s.⁹² Arrighi's involvement with S.

⁸⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 8 secondo; AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti, "Ordini per lo governo temporale, de superiori di fuori".

⁹⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4449, Libro 2.

⁹¹ ASB, Demaniale, 33/4481, Nota di diversi instrumenti si attivi che passivi spettanti alle RR. Suore Terz'Ordine di S. Francesco rogato dai notai Ser Marco Melega, Ser Niccolo Bonaventura Melega, e Ser Luigi Maria Iuniore Melega...

⁹² ASB, Demaniale, 1/4449, Libro 4 and Libro 5; ASB, Demaniale, 6/4454, num. 13; ASB, Demaniale, 8/4456, num. 1.

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Elisabetta continued, however, after his duties as a notary and a witness had terminated. An elderly Arrighi supported S. Elisabetta financially when the women religious were struggling to reconstitute a dowry in 1722.⁹³ A circle of family and friends thus assisted the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta in daily affairs. A similar circle also surrounded S. Giuseppe in Bergamo. The community's administrators included medical doctors, merchants, canons of the local cathedral, local clergy, as well as local noblemen.⁹⁴ Some of the administrators were related to one another. After the death of the administrator cavalier Pietro Giorgio Benaglio in 1709, his son, cavalier Giovanni Benaglio succeeded as the administrator of S. Giuseppe.⁹⁵ The Benaglio were one of the eminent families in Bergamo, which also counted dom Alessandro Benaglio, the first confessor of S. Giuseppe.⁹⁶ Like in S. Elisabetta, also in S. Giuseppe some administrators were related to the tertiaries in the community.⁹⁷ Both in S. Elisabetta in Bologna and in S. Giuseppe in Bergamo the administrators thus represented a range of socio-economic strata and included the family members of the tertiaries. Lucia Ferrante has shown that the

⁹³ ASB, Demaniale, 10/4458, num. 4. On this, see chapter 4.

⁹⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2969, Amministrazione e amministratori.

⁹⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2969, Amministrazione e amministratori, June 29, 1709. The eighteenth century saw also the extended involvement of the noble Albani family as administrators in S. Giuseppe. ASM, AGFR, 2992, Ilaris Giovanna Sibilla; ASB, AGFR, 2992, Locatelli Elisabetta; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Rosciati Anna Caterina; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Tiraboschi Maddalena; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Todeschini Aurelia; ASM, AGFR, Libro ove si descrivono li nomi de officiali del Collegio di Santo Giuseppe et delli capitoli che si fanno dalle sorelle, March 12, 1775; ASM, AGFR, 2994, Zanchi Annunciata.

⁹⁶ See chapter 1.

⁹⁷ The merchant Antonio Meris, who was the legal guardian of the Lafranchi sisters, the founders of S. Giuseppe, also served as the administrator of the community in the 1640s. Meris's daughter, second wife, and granddaughter also entered the community. Another early administrator, the medical doctor Cristoforo Chirelli had a daughter in S. Giuseppe. Administrator and a local priest Gabriele Consoli seems to have had a sister in S. Giuseppe. ASM, AGFR, 2983; ASB, 2991, Libro ove si descrive l'accettazione...; ASM, AGFR, 2992, Consoli Alessandra. On Antonio Meris's relationship to S. Giuseppe, see also chapter 1.

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administrative bodies of charitable and religious institutions in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bologna included men from a wide socio-economic spectrum, including merchants, professionals, and noblemen; Ferrante argues that such administrative bodies permitted social mobility.⁹⁸ Giancarlo Angelozzi and Cesarina Casanova have highlighted the progressive closing of the Bolognese elite between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century; they reveal, however, that social ranks in Bologna were dependent both on juridical definitions of citizenship and nobility as well as on socio-economic markers.⁹⁹ Administrative bodies provided opportunities for networking and the rubbing of shoulders across socio-economic ranks. Such dynamics closely tied administrative bodies into urban networks, which came to influence the daily operations and organization of the religious and charitable institutions and brought everyday urban affairs to bear on these institutions.¹⁰⁰ However, the administrators' involvement did not only advance the social ambitions of these men but also benefitted the third order communities.

⁹⁸ Ferrante, "Fare il bene per il proprio bene: attività assistenziali e vantaggi personali a Bologna tra Seicento e Settecento."

⁹⁹ Giancarlo Angelozzi and Cesarina Casanova, *Diventare cittadini: La cittadinanza ex privilegio a Bologna (secoli XVI-XVIII)* (Bologna: Comune di Bologna, 2000). See also Nicholas Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy*, 2013, 130–133.

¹⁰⁰ Such close intertwining of monastic institutions and the societies that surrounded them is well established in current scholarship, see Kathryn Burns, *Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*; Novi Chavarría, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII*; Gabriella Zarri, "Monasteri femminili e città (secoli XV-XVIII)," in *Storia d'Italia. Annali. La chiesa e il potere politico dal Medioevo all'età Contemporanea*, ed. Giorgio Chittolini and Giovanni Miccoli (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), 357–429.

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The constitutions of S. Giuseppe from 1644 foresaw that the tertiaries elected a gentleman “protector”, who defended the community.¹⁰¹ The position of the protector seems to have quickly fallen into disuse in the seventeenth century, however. In fact, a protector only reappears in the archival sources in 1799, when “the current circumstances make it necessary [...] to have in addition to the help of their current administrators also the protection of some respected subject who could in any possible event protect the interest of the college [...],”¹⁰² as the tertiaries described in their book of professions. The current circumstances were, of course, the arrival of the Napoleonic armies in Italy and the subsequent social and administrative changes, which included the suppression of most monastic institutions.¹⁰³ This appointment reveals the effect of local, regional, as well as European-wide developments on third order communities. Moreover, it evidences the reliance of S. Giuseppe on social connections and the awareness of the women religious of the fact. The tertiaries of S. Giuseppe had also appointed temporal proxies and executors to care for specific, well-defined affairs throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, as did other third order communities like, for example, Ognisanti in Bologna.¹⁰⁴ The tertiaries relied on the various administrators, executors, and protectors

¹⁰¹ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti, “Ordini per lo governo temporale, de superiori di fuori”.

¹⁰² ASM, AGFR, 2991, Libro ove si descrivono li nomi de officiali..., June 10, 1799.

¹⁰³ See chapter 7.

¹⁰⁴ In S. Giuseppe, the temporal proxies were appointed by the *discrete*, without a chapter vote, and fulfilled their duty either in a particular locality, Brescia for example, or with particular types of institutions, like pious intuitions for example. Each executor was appointed to a particular case. From a detailed description of duties of the executor Pio Andrea Bottini, appointed in 1738, it emerges that the tertiaries handed over all documents related to an annuity debt to Bottini. Bottini was forbidden from receiving any payments from the debtors; all payments had to be made directly to the treasurer of S. Giuseppe. Finally, in case the debtors decided to take judicial action against S. Giuseppe, the executor had to immediately hand back the case to the administrators of S. Giuseppe. The tertiaries paid Bottini a fee for his services, which constituted 3 per cent of any sum Bottini managed to bring to the treasurer, as well as

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and drew on the social connections of these men to manage the affairs of their communities.

Other third order communities were much slower to appoint administrators than S. Elisabetta and S. Giuseppe, or failed to appoint such administrators all together. As I have discussed above, Ognisanti in Bologna appointed its first administrators in 1790 and the records of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna do not evidence any administrators for the community. An administrator or *assonto* first appears in the records of S. Maria della Carità in Bologna in 1683, but such administrators remained a sporadic presence in the community.¹⁰⁵ In fact, surviving archival documents reveal only one other administrator for S. Maria della Carità, count Francesco Leoni, who was active between the 1720s and the 1760s.¹⁰⁶ The tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità relied heavily instead on the Franciscan friars from the monastery that was also called S. Maria della Carità; I will return to the relationship between the friars and the tertiaries below. It remains unclear, when S. Antonio in Bergamo acquired its first administrators. The earliest dowry contracts of S. Antonio do not mention administrators and show the mother superior and

all his expenses (ASM, AGFR, 2970, Procure). Ognisanti seems to have chosen its legal proxies based on convenience. In 1725, the curate of Camugnano southeast of Bologna acted on behalf of the tertiaries to take possession of real estate in Camugnano that was part of the inheritance of one Michele Torsini, the father of *suor* Claudia Torsini in Ognisanti. A year later, in 1726, the community turned to the same curate to rent out a holding in Vigo, close to Camugnano (ASB, Demaniale, 1/6278, September 12, 1690. ASB, Demaniale, 4/6281, November 9, 1725). The same curate also advised Ognisanti in 1739, when the tertiaries decided to sell the two properties in Vigo and Camugnano since these had been damaged by landslides and depreciated in value (ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, Atti capitolari, p. 56).

¹⁰⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 2.

¹⁰⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 3/4839, num. 5, 7, 12, 14, 16. ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 6, 8, 12, 16, 17, 21, 37, 39, 42, 43. ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841, num. 18, 20, 28, 35. During those decades, count Leoni acquired the titles of priest, doctor of ecclesiastical and civil law, public lecturer in the College of Lawyers and Judges, and prior of Santo Steffano in Bologna. Leoni also acted as a proxy for S. Maria della Carità in the contracting of some *censi* in 1731 and in 1747. ASB, Demaniale, 3/4839, num. 16. ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 24.

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the vicaress contracting directly with the parents of the women seeking to join the community.¹⁰⁷ An administrator appears for the first time in some dowry contracts in the later-seventeenth century and, by the end of the century, dowry contracts included a notarial formula “with the presence and consent of the named administrators”, but continued to also list all the tertiaries, who had “the faculty and the liberty to rule and govern this venerable college or oratory.”¹⁰⁸ In her report to the bishop of Bergamo in 1705, the mother superior of S. Antonio stated that the tertiaries elected their administrators at chapter meetings, the results of which were approved by the community’s “protector”.¹⁰⁹ It remains unclear, who this protector was.¹¹⁰ In their report to the Venetian Provveditori sopra Monasteri in 1749, the tertiaries wrote that their community had three administrators – two laymen and one clergyman – who were elected by a chapter vote and were responsible for furthering “our most important matters, both spiritual and temporal.”¹¹¹ Throughout the eighteenth century, administrators of S. Antonio witnessed the signing of notarial acts and represented the tertiaries in front of magistrates in Bergamo. Despite the slow beginning, by the eighteenth century S. Antonio thus had administrators who fulfilled the main duties

¹⁰⁷ Maddalena Bozzo’s parents and the mother superior Margarita Belloli and vicaress Elisabetta Foresti agreed upon her entrance in S. Antonio in 1655. ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti spirituali, August 16, 1655.

¹⁰⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti spirituali.

¹⁰⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2942, “Informazione del Collegio delle Terziarie di S. Antonio di Padova fata al Rd.mo Mosig. Ruzzini Vescovo di Bergamo in occasione della visita di esso Monastero, 1705.”

¹¹⁰ S. Antonio was under episcopal administration and episcopal authorities supervised the elections of the community’s mothers superior; it is possible that the same episcopal authorities also confirmed the elections of the administrators, even though no trace of it remains in S. Antonio’s or episcopal archives.

¹¹¹ ASM, AGFR, 2942, Suppliche, Rescritti, e Ducali 1749 a 1790, riguardanti fondi, legati, ed oggetti diversi, pp. 30r-31r.

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expected of post-Tridentine monastic administrators. Like the administrators of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and S. Elisabetta in Bologna, also the eighteenth-century administrators of S. Antonio belonged to a range of socio-economic strata and, even though they had few readily visible familial links to the community, these men emerged from the local neighborhood of S. Antonio and fulfilled their duties as administrators for decades.¹¹² The many similarities between the administrative bodies in S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and S. Elisabetta in Bologna reveals a similarity of function of these bodies in the two towns once a third order community acquired such administrators. And this function was very similar to the function of administrative bodies in other religious and charitable institutions across the peninsula, as it has been studied in current scholarship. However, the fact that out of the six third order communities considered in this study both communities in Bergamo acquired administrators who negotiated their financial and legal affairs, but three of the four communities in Bologna lacked a strong

¹¹² Judging by repetition in surnames, the post of the administrator of S. Antonio was often passed between agnatic kin. Many of the administrators in the late-seventeenth and the early-eighteenth century were doctors. Among them were medical doctors like Maffio Caccia in the 1680s and Giuseppe Caccia from the 1700s to the 1720s, but also legal doctors like Filippo Mazzoleni from the 1700s to the 1730s, and nobleman Cesare Pietrasanta from the 1750s to the 1760s. Indeed, several administrators from the later-eighteenth century were described as noblemen, among them Giovanni Battista Mazzoleni. The Mazzoleni family was closely involved in the administration of S. Antonio, with a Mazzoleni being an administrator throughout the eighteenth century (ASM, AGFR, 2942-2945). Even though there were tertiaries in S. Antonio carrying the Mazzoleni surname both in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, none of them seems to have been a direct relation of the Mazzoleni men among the administrators. In fact, unlike in the nearby S. Giuseppe, none of the tertiaries in S. Antonio seems to have been a direct relation of the administrators. Instead, the daughter of the administrator Maffio Caccia was a tertiary in S. Giuseppe, and not in S. Antonio (ASM, AGFR, 2945, Doti; ASM, AGFR, 2993, Caccia Alma). Only the temporary legal proxies of S. Antonio seem to have included relatives of the tertiaries. Giovanni Bartolomeo Ragazzoni was appointed to represent the tertiaries both in Bergamo and in Venice in 1728; his daughter Giovanna was a tertiary in S. Antonio (ASM, AGFR, 2944, “Atti praticati dalle RR. MM. di S.t Antonio contro Margarita Belotti, e fratelli Valle”). Pietro Francesco Rivola – a consul of justice in Bergamo in the 1730s – and Bartolomeo Rivola, who seem to have been father and son, acted as legal and financial proxies for S. Antonio on several occasions in the mid-eighteenth century. Bartolomeo Rivola represented the tertiaries at an auction in the hinterland of Bergamo in 1739, while serving as a Venetian representative in the region. Even though her relation to the two Rivola men cannot be verified, an Antonia Rivola entered S. Antonio as a tertiary in 1714 (ASM, AGFR, 2944, Livelli; ASM, AGFR, 2942, Istromenti, Testamenti, e Donazioni. 1578 a 1741, 90r-91r; ASM, AGFR, 2942, Archivio: Sunti degli Istromenti, 1654 al 1723).

administrative body underscores differences between the administration of third order communities in these two towns. To understand these differences, I finally turn to consider the various external authorities, including episcopal and lay authorities, religious orders, and parish clergy, who also intervened in the daily affairs of third order communities.

iii. A multitude of external authorities

Scholars have discussed extensively top-down, episcopal reform of female monastic communities in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy.¹¹³ Examples from third order communities in Bergamo reveal that local episcopal authorities sought to reform and control female monastic communities also in the eighteenth century. From the later-seventeenth century onwards, an episcopal representative attended and confirmed elections of new mothers superior both in S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe; the tertiaries also had to seek the approval of the bishop or his vicars when the women religious wished to accept new novices, change dowry rates, or make any changes to the internal organization of their communities.¹¹⁴ In a letter to all female monastic communities in Bergamo in 1700, the local bishop urged the women religious to observe local episcopal decrees. Moreover, he forbade the women religious to speak to regular and secular clergy without a prior episcopal license, to accept visitors in their parlatories alone and without the company of another woman religious, to permit unaccompanied visitors into

¹¹³ See fn. 2. For scholarship on bishops and a bishop's role in sixteenth-century Italy, see Massimo Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma: Studi sul cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509-1580) e il suo processo d'eresia* (Morcelliana, 2005); Paolo Prodi, *Il cardinale Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1959); Adriano Prosperi, *Tra evangelismo e controriforma: Gian Matteo Giberti (1495-1543)* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011).

¹¹⁴ ASDBg, Monasteri Femminili, I, Bergamo, Monastero di S. Antonio di Padova, Varie; *ibid*, Elezioni; ASDBg, Monasteri Femminili, I, Bergamo, Monastero di S. Giuseppe, Elezioni; *ibid*, varie.

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enclosure, to accept visitors after the evening Ave Marias, to engage with masked people, and to mix with novices and secular boarders in their communities.¹¹⁵ During a pastoral visit to S. Giuseppe in 1713, the bishop cardinal Pietro Priuli decreed that the tertiaries should live separately from the secular world and observe the rules of their community. In particular, Priuli decreed that the spirit of the founders be kept alive in S. Giuseppe and ordered daily readings from the constitutions.¹¹⁶ The episcopal authorities focused on proper monastic observance and lifestyle in S. Giuseppe and considered the tertiary community like all other female monastic communities in Bergamo, which received the same decrees. The episcopal decrees drew upon the decrees of the Council of Trent and the *Circa pastoralis* of Pius V, which established enclosure in all female monastic communities and mandated observance of monastic rules and vows. The still ongoing attempts to achieve these reforms in the eighteenth century highlights the slow maturation of the Tridentine reform program, but also its crystallization in the figure of the bishop, as Mario Rosa has argued.¹¹⁷ Eighteenth-century bishops were still attempting to achieve correct monastic observance across female communities, like their late-sixteenth and seventeenth century predecessors had done. Even though scholars have argued that reform of female monastic communities had matured by the late-seventeenth century, the activities of the bishops of Bergamo underline that we must also consider eighteenth-

¹¹⁵ ASB, AGFR, 2969, Provvidenze Generali, dal 1603 al 1772.

¹¹⁶ ASB, AGFR, 2970, Visite.

¹¹⁷ Mario Rosa, *Settecento religioso: Politica della Ragione e religione del cuore* (Venice: Marsilio, 1999).

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century developments to understand fully the reform of female monasticism in early modern Italy and beyond.¹¹⁸

The bishops of Bergamo actively sought to reform female monastic communities throughout the eighteenth century. The archives of S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe reveal pastoral letters, which were addressed to all women religious in Bergamo and sent annually throughout the eighteenth century, particularly during the bishopric of Antonio Redetti (1730-1773).¹¹⁹ These pastoral letters advised obedience to rules and superiors, communal peace, enclosure, humility, poverty, and chastity as the essential qualities of women religious. The letters functioned like serial lessons. Redetti in particular frequently referred back to his earlier letters to stress or expand on a concept or argument. Redetti's letters frequently cite St. Frances of Sales, St. Augustine, St. Paul, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and St. Carlo Borromeo. Frances of Sales taught that every person could attain holiness through devotional practices that were appropriate to their position in life.¹²⁰ The references to church fathers, as well as to monastic and Church reformers such as St. Bernard of Clairvaux and Carlo Borromeo, reveal hopes for stricter observance in the convents of Bergamo and an attempt to implement convent

¹¹⁸ Gabriella Zarri, "Il monachesimo femminile tra passato e presente," in *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia dall'alto medioevo al secolo XVII: A confronto con l'oggi*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Verona: Il Segno, 1997). Most scholarship of early modern female monasticism in Italy, and also in the larger European context, focuses on the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Studies of eighteenth-century female monasticism remain very limited, see Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mita Choudhury, *Convents and Nuns in Eighteenth-Century French Politics and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

¹¹⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2945, "Pastorali, 1699 al 1788"; ASM, AGFR, 2970, "Pastorali".

¹²⁰ Ruth Manning, "A Confessor and His Spiritual Child: Francois de Sales, Jeanne de Chantal, and the Foundation of the Order of the Visitation," *Past & Present* Supplement 1 (2006): 101-17; Elizabeth Rapley, *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), chap. 2.

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reform.¹²¹ In fact, the pastoral letter of 1737 reminded the women religious that they were all subject to the “inviolable command of the Sacred Council of Trent.”¹²² Redetti also used his pastoral letters to promote matters of the local dioceses. The pastoral letter of 1762 cited extensively a late bishop of Bergamo, Gregorio Barbarigo (1657-1664), who had been beatified in 1761.¹²³ Redetti promoted a new local saint but also used the opportunity to remind the women religious of Barbarigo’s stress on monastic discipline and obedience. The pastoral letters show that Tridentine reform ideas were still current in the eighteenth century and still expressed through top-down mechanisms that current scholarship considers characteristic to the seventeenth century.¹²⁴ Redetti’s letters reveal a desire for discipline and an impulse to homogenize female monastic communities through common precepts. Third order communities were subsumed under the general category of female monastic institutions, without regard to any differences between enclosed, second order convents and third order convents.

Nevertheless, in one of his last pastoral letters in 1768, Redetti stressed the need for every religious to follow their own particular state and rule,

There are different statuses within the holy Church, which all vary in the way they are practiced. Every Christian needs to bear a cross, but that is not enough, since he has to bear his own cross: *tollat crucem suam*. The cross borne by a secular person is different from that borne by an enclosed person; and within the

¹²¹ Carlo Borromeo was the quintessential Tridentine bishop, see Prodi, *Il cardinale Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597)*.

¹²² ASM, AGFR, 2945, “Pastorali, 1699 al 1788”, 1737.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1761.

¹²⁴ R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*, Second edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Paolo Prodi, ed., *Disciplina dell’anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994); Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996).

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holy cloisters, also the crosses of the people who profess one or the other order are different.¹²⁵

Unlike Redetti's other letters, which recognized no difference between various monastic communities, enclosed or not, the 1768 letter acknowledged some variety between the recipients of the letter. An earlier pastoral letter, sent by bishop Pietro Priuli in 1718, had also distinguished between "nuns and the sisters of the Franciscan third order, who live in communities and under voluntary enclosure."¹²⁶ In an undated pastoral letter from the 1780s, the bishop Giovanni Paolo Dolfin (1777-1819) also differentiated between "the cloisters of those, who because of their particular vocation have consecrated themselves to God with the most strict and inviolable vows" and "the retreat of those, who have separated themselves from the world, and without the obligation of vows have decided to live together united by ties of Christian charity and with their own particular rules." The bishop included tertiary women in the second category, commending the women religious for virtuous monastic life, including voluntary enclosure and poverty that they observed despite not having professed all the monastic vows. Dolfin concluded this letter by urging the tertiaries to exact observance of "your particular obligations."¹²⁷ Episcopal authorities in Bergamo therefore differentiated between third order communities and enclosed convents also in pastoral letters. However, such statements were overshadowed by the mass of pastoral letters that recognized no difference between various women religious and approached all the women with the message of observance and obedience.

¹²⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2945, "Pastorali, 1699 al 1788", 1768.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1718.

¹²⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2945, "Pastorali, 1699 al 1788".

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In practice, episcopal authorities were, however, quick to recognize the difference of third order communities and use them as temporary shelters for women in need. As I discuss in chapter 4, enclosed convents needed an apostolic permission to accept secular women into enclosure. Third order communities did not need such permission. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe were asked to accept women facing marital issues by local episcopal authorities, even though neither community wished to shoulder this burden. Also in Bologna, the episcopal authorities repeatedly asked the tertiaries of Ognisanti to accept women facing marital issues as well as children of various ages throughout the eighteenth century.¹²⁸ In the turn of the eighteenth century, the episcopal authorities in Bologna refused the request for auto-suppression by the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta, since, as the vicar general wrote in his response to the tertiaries, that would have robbed the city of a convenient shelter for women needing a temporary place to stay.¹²⁹ In both cities, episcopal authorities recognized the difference between third order communities and enclosed convents in practice and used that difference to resolve social issues, even when they sought to reform all female monastic communities through pastoral letters and pastoral visits.

Such divergence between the precepts and practice regarding third order communities emerged clearly also in eighteenth-century Bologna, where the episcopal hierarchy also actively promoted Tridentine reform program for third order communities. In 1744, Benedict XIV issued a decree regarding female tertiaries in Bologna. At the time, Benedict XIV still served as the archbishop of Bologna, a position he had held as

¹²⁸ See chapter 4.

¹²⁹ See chapter 7.

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cardinal Prospero Lambertini immediately before his election to the Holy See. The decree addressed both the tertiaries living with their families, the so called house nuns, as well as those tertiary women living in communities; Benedict XIV sought to resolve an apparent jurisdictional debates between religious orders and episcopal hierarchy. For tertiaries living in communities, the decree mandated regular pastoral visits, episcopal checks on the communities' finances, episcopal approval of confessors appointed by religious orders, passive enclosure, limits to egresses from communities, pontifical approval of sacraments held in the chapels and churches of tertiaries, and clear agreements between parish clergy and religious orders about the spiritual care of the tertiary women.¹³⁰

According to Benedict XIV's decree, regular third order communities should have lived under episcopal jurisdiction, even when they were subsidiaries of religious orders. Yet, in practice, the eighteenth century saw only four pastoral visits to third order communities in Bologna: in 1734 (archbishop Prospero Lambertini), 1744 (Benedict XIV), 1760 (archbishop Vincenzo Malvezzi), and 1772 (archbishop Vincenzo Malvezzi).¹³¹ The pastoral visits were thus sporadic. Moreover, they resulted in limited corrective decrees, contradicting the current scholarship that argues for the stifling of third orders by episcopal authorities in post-Tridentine Italy.¹³² Only in financial matters did the episcopal hierarchy show a sustained interest in, and authority over, third order communities in Bologna. In the seventeenth-century, the episcopal authorities ordered S.

¹³⁰ AAB, VP, 57, Regole, ed ordini della Santità di Nostro Signore Benedetto Papa XIV per le Terziarie che sono in Bologna, e nella Diocesi. April 15, 1744. For house nuns, the decree mandated that house nuns could only receive their habit after they were first examined and approved by the local ecclesiastical authority; religious orders could no longer clothe women religious without prior episcopal approval.

¹³¹ AAB, VP, 53, 57, 63, 80, 86.

¹³² Gabriella Zarri, "Dalla profezia alla disciplina (1450-1650)," in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994).

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Maria della Carità to restitute dowries to all tertiaries who decided to leave the community.¹³³ Throughout the eighteenth century, both S. Elisabetta and Ognisanti repeatedly sought the permission of the episcopal authorities to manage their credits and debts.¹³⁴ The records of the few pastoral visits also confirm the episcopal interest in third order finances.¹³⁵ On the whole, and despite Benedict XIV's decree in 1744, episcopal control of third order communities in Bologna was more sporadic than the episcopal control of third order communities in Bergamo. In both cities, attempts were made to reform and regulate third order communities and episcopal authorities used the communities to resolve social problems. However, clear differences emerge in the extent to which the episcopal authorities controlled third order communities in the two localities. The basis for this difference was the divergent role of religious orders in the administration of third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna.

In Bergamo, the role of religious orders in the administration of tertiary communities was limited. Both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe maintained relationships to religious orders only during and immediately after their foundation, when Reformed Franciscans clothed the tertiaries in both communities. S. Antonio moved under episcopal jurisdiction in 1671.¹³⁶ The tertiaries of S. Giuseppe had confessors who were independent of the Reformed Franciscans almost immediately after the community's

¹³³ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 34, 40.

¹³⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, S. Elisabetta, num 4 secondo; *ibid.*, num 5; *ibid.*, num 11; ASB, Demaniale, 12/6289, Miscellanea.

¹³⁵ AAB, VP, 53, 57, 86; ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, S. Elisabetta, num. 29 primo.

¹³⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Informazione del Collegio delle Terziarie di S. Antonio di Padova fata al Rd.mo Mosig. Ruzzini Vescovo di Bergamo in occasione della visita di esso Monastero, 1705." See chapter 1 on the founding of S. Antonio.

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foundation.¹³⁷ In 1660, the tertiaries petitioned to move under episcopal jurisdiction. According to the petition, the foundation of S. Giuseppe did not follow from a papal bull, which was necessary for any female religious community that existed under the supervision of regular clergy. Moreover, even though Reformed Franciscans oversaw some female tertiary communities, the petition argued that S. Giuseppe could not be under the supervision of Reformed Franciscan because the women religious in the community were younger than 40-years-of-age, wore the coif, and did not always have the license of the ordinary to clothe the tertiary habit. Finally, the petition claimed, a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars placed all tertiaries, who did not accept enclosure and profess solemn vows, under the jurisdiction of local bishops.¹³⁸ S. Giuseppe's move under episcopal jurisdiction was approved in 1663. Nonetheless, in 1708-1709, the representatives of S. Giuseppe in Rome sought recognition for the community "as if it was under the full governance of the Reformed Franciscans", even when it was under local episcopal jurisdiction. S. Giuseppe wished to have the indulgences and the privileges afforded to Reformed Franciscans.¹³⁹ S. Giuseppe was successful in this quest, even though it remained, like S. Antonio under episcopal jurisdiction. Archival sources reveal no active interest on the part of the Reformed Franciscans in Bergamo to administer these two female tertiary communities, which thus moved under uncontested episcopal authority in the later-seventeenth century.

¹³⁷ The secular priest dom Alessandro Benaglio became the confessor and the spiritual father of the tertiaries in 1644. After Benaglio's death, dom Clemente Suardi, the vicar general of nuns in Bergamo, became the confessor of S. Giuseppe in 1651. See chapter 1.

¹³⁸ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti.

¹³⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, Carteggio intorno al Breve poi ottenuto, dichiarante godere in Collegio di S. Giuseppe tutti i privilegi e le indulgenze del terzo ordine di S. Francesco.

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In Bologna, religious orders actively exercised oversight of third order communities, taking on functions similar to those fulfilled by episcopal authorities in Bergamo. To explore the relationship between religious orders and third order communities in Bologna, I focus on the relationship between the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità and the Franciscan friars of the homonymous monastery and the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta and the Franciscan Conventuals. Also the Servite and the Carmelites friars were ever-present in Ognisanti and S. Maria delle Grazie respectively.

The Franciscan third order friars of S. Maria della Carità supervised the female community of S. Maria della Carità throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁴⁰ A friar from the male community approved most notarial acts of the women religious. This friar also acted as the financial administrator of the female community.¹⁴¹ In 1666, the women religious also gave one of the friars their power of attorney; in 1716, another friar acted as a legal proxy for the women religious.¹⁴² The Franciscan friars of S. Maria della Carità therefore acted as the representatives of the female tertiaries in the

¹⁴⁰ A notarial act from 1622 states that the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità – who were yet to unite in one community at that time – lived under “the rule of the reverend fathers of della Carità” (ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 11). These were third order Franciscan friars, who lived in a community also called S. Maria della Carità, which dated to the fifteenth century. The women religious lived in close proximity to this community of friars. The friars served as witnesses to the last wills of individual tertiaries, but were also declared either beneficiaries or fiduciary heirs on several occasions (ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 14, 17. ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 9). In the seventeenth century, the women religious attended the church of the friars – which was also the local parish church – and the friars assigned a dedicated chapel and a burial arch to the female tertiaries in that church in 1683. The women religious were responsible for the decoration and maintenance of this chapel, dedicated to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and commissioned candelabras, vases, and textiles to adorn the chapel. Some friars from the male community also left donations to this chapel, thus lightening the financial burdens of the women religious (ASB, Demaniale, 46/4698, “Scritture spettanti afli Altari, cioè SS.mo Crocefisso, B.V. della Visitazione e Concezione, S. Elisabetta d’Ungaria delle nostre Suore, esistenti in nostra Chiesa”). The women religious received their own church only in 1704 and thus remained in close proximity to the friars and their spaces throughout the seventeenth century.

¹⁴¹ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837-5/4841.

¹⁴² ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 24. ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838, num. 26.

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secular world. Such position of the Franciscan friars increasingly departed from the early-seventeenth century relationship between the friars and the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità, when the women religious had lived in a loosely-organized group under the guidance of a mother superior, who also acted as a legal proxy for the group.¹⁴³ The close integration of the friars in the life of the female community developed after the women religious organized in a single community around the mid-seventeenth century. To settle a debt in 1685, one woman religious made a private donation to S. Maria della Carità; the donation act bears the signatures of all women religious but does not evidence the friars' presence.¹⁴⁴ Two decades later, the women religious sought to invest 300 *lire*; the credit contract again bears the signatures of the women religious, however, a friar named fra Candi also "affirmed" this contract in 1707.¹⁴⁵ Fra Candi served as the confessor of the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità until 1738 or 1739.¹⁴⁶ He was succeeded by fra Giulio Muratore, also from the monastery of S. Maria della Carità.¹⁴⁷ By 1743, fra Muratore had been replaced by fra Giovanni Battista Brescaglia, who held the position until the 1760s. A notarial act described Brescaglia as the "modern confessor and director of temporal matters" of the tertiaries of S. Maria della Carità.¹⁴⁸ The involvement of the friars from the male community of S. Maria della Carità in the

¹⁴³ ASB, Demaniale, 1/4837, num. 11.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., num. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., num. 31.

¹⁴⁶ ASB, Demaniale, 2/4838-4/4840.

¹⁴⁷ Fra Muratore was named a beneficiary in the last will of *suor* Sigismunde Giudetti in January 1738. He was thus known and trusted by some tertiaries already before he became the confessor and the superior of the female community. ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 9.

¹⁴⁸ Citation from ASB, Demaniale, 4/4840, num. 17, see also ASB, Demaniale, 5/4841.

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administration of the female community thus dated to the early-eighteenth century. Some functions of these friars were similar to the role of financial administrators in S. Elisabetta in Bologna and S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, as discussed above. As the example of the Servite friars fra Amadei and fra Costa in Ognisanti in the seventeenth century reveals above, much like secular administrators also confessors could involve women religious in urban social and economic networks. Yet, the friars of S. Maria della Carità tied the women religious also under the jurisdiction of a religious order, which assumed an active role in directing these women's lives.

The Franciscan Conventuals of Bologna were even more active in shaping the daily life of a female third order community – that of S. Elisabetta. As the friars of S. Maria della Carità, Franciscan Conventuals served as confessors of the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta. The first women religious elected a Franciscan Conventual as their “confessor, regulator, and leader” and Franciscan Conventual friars continued to confess the tertiaries throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Franciscan Conventuals also celebrated all the religious services in the church of S. Elisabetta.¹⁴⁹ Since the first elections of a mother superior in a chapel in the basilica of S. Francesco, Franciscan Conventual confessors were present for the elections of all mothers superiors of S. Elisabetta; moreover, the guardian of the Franciscan Conventuals often accompanied the confessors to these elections.¹⁵⁰ In 1696, superiors of the Franciscan Conventuals decided that confessors would supervise both the spiritual and the temporal affairs in S.

¹⁴⁹ BA, Gozzadini, 371, p. 620.

¹⁵⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 32/4480, Fondazione del Monastero di S. Francesco di nella Nosadella; ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, pp. 3r-v, in passim.

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Elisabetta.¹⁵¹ And a report from 1717 indicates that the confessor visited S. Elisabetta three times a week.¹⁵² The Franciscan Conventual confessor was thus part of the daily life of S. Elisabetta, much like the friars of S. Maria della Carità were part of life in that community. And as the involvement of the friars of S. Maria della Carità, that of Franciscan Conventuals also went beyond daily spiritual and temporal administration and brought the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta under the jurisdiction of the Conventuals.

Representatives of the Franciscan Conventual order completed annual or biannual visits to S. Elisabetta. Similar to pastoral visits by episcopal authorities, the Conventual visitors inspected the organization of the day-to-day life in S. Elisabetta, the community's finances, and spiritual practices.¹⁵³ In the early 1690s, the visitors sought to establish clear boundaries between S. Elisabetta and the outside world and to regularize the tertiaries' spiritual practices. Their visits produced decrees on custodianship of keys, regimens at the gates and in the parlatory, exclusion of secular people from the community (i.e. passive enclosure), the turnstile, time spent in choir, communal meals, and obedience to rules and constitutions.¹⁵⁴ In 1696, a visitor ordered monthly visits by a Franciscan Conventual friar to hasten the implementation of the above decrees.¹⁵⁵ Like the episcopal hierarchy both in Bergamo and in Bologna, the Franciscan Conventual order sought to implement the main tenets of the Tridentine reform. Current scholarship

¹⁵¹ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, p. 12v.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 40v.

¹⁵³ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 2v, 4r-5v, 9r, 11v, 12v, 16r, 20r, 21v-22v.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12v.

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has focused on the attempts by episcopal authorities to reform female monastic communities.¹⁵⁶ Here we see the active role of religious orders in seeking to regularize female monastic communities in seventeenth and eighteenth century Italy.

The Franciscan Conventuals did, however, also rely on local episcopal authority to regularize S. Elisabetta. In the early 1770s, the Conventuals sought to reform election procedures in S. Elisabetta. Rather than using black and white beans to approve or reject a candidate who had emerged from private consultations between the confessor and each tertiary – a method used to find suitable candidates for the position of mother superior since the late-seventeenth century – the visitors now introduced voting slips, on which the tertiaries had to write the name of the woman religious, who they wished to elect mother superior. The use of voting slips led to a tie during the elections in 1774 and necessitated an intervention by the archbishop of Bologna, who had to break the tie and ensure that S. Elisabetta had a new mother superior¹⁵⁷ The next elections in 1777 were organized using the old method of beans again, which, as the Conventuals claimed, was the “usual method used by other monasteries in this dioceses.”¹⁵⁸ The Conventuals themselves thus occasionally had to refer to the episcopal authority for assistance, highlighting a shared jurisdiction over S. Elisabetta between the religious order and the archbishop.

The Conventuals fulfilled their role in S. Elisabetta with varying intensity throughout the eighteenth century, leaving room for the women religious to shape their

¹⁵⁶ Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Penguin, 2003); Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine: Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani: secoli XVI-XVII*; Zarrì, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*.

¹⁵⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 34/4482, pp. 136v, 141v-142v.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144r.

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community independently of the order. From the early eighteenth-century onwards, the Franciscan Conventual visits to S. Elisabetta became increasingly *pro forma*, much like the pastoral visits in Bologna as discussed above. The visitors continued to encourage the tenets of obedience and peaceful communal life, but if they left any decrees or recommendations, these focused on financial management alone. Instead, most visitors simply commended the mothers superior and the confessors for proper order in S. Elisabetta.¹⁵⁹ As the confessor of S. Elisabetta, fra Vincenzo Panzacchi had repeatedly reformed the internal structure of the community in the 1750s and the 1760s, revealing a sense of discontent with the *status quo*. Yet, when fra Panzacchi became the general commissioner of the order in the late-1760s and began to visit S. Elisabetta as an order-appointed visitor, he found no shortcomings in the community. Instead, like most visitors in the eighteenth century, fra Panzacchi issued only positive assessments after his visits.¹⁶⁰ Only in the 1780s did a Conventual visitor mandate change again. First, in 1784, the tertiaries were instructed to not let secular women stay in S. Elisabetta without a prior license from Conventuals and forbade the tertiaries and secular boarders to stay outside the community overnight.¹⁶¹ Second, in 1786, the same visitor ordered that nobody was allowed to exit unaccompanied from S. Elisabetta and forbade the admission of poor women and beggars into S. Elisabetta; instead, the tertiaries had to distribute alms at the community's gates.¹⁶² This late-eighteenth century visitor sought to re-enforce rules of

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 26r, 26v, 28r, in passim.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 132v, 133v-134r, 135r.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 153r.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 159v.

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voluntary enclosure. The women religious and secular boarders, it seems, had been moving relatively freely in and out of the community, which broke not only the decrees issued by the first Conventual visitors but also the 1744 decree by Benedict XIV to Bolognese tertiaries, which I discussed above. Now, after a period of relaxed supervision by the Conventuals, this late eighteenth-century visitor sought to reform the organization of daily life in S. Elisabetta again. In the late-eighteenth century, he still relied on the tenets of the Council of Trent as well as later episcopal decrees. In Bologna, third order communities thus led a daily existence between episcopal authorities and religious orders.

In Bergamo, S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio also negotiated regularly with a second external authority in addition to the local bishop – the Venetian Republic and the local civic authorities. The Venetian Republic exercised close control over ecclesiastical institutions on its territory. To acquire a chapel for the newly founded S. Giuseppe, the community and its supporters applied to the praetorian chancellery in Bergamo in 1641, which then forwarded the request both to the local *podestà* as well as to Venice. In the petition, the tertiaries and the witnesses stressed the lay status of the women religious and their utility to the city of Bergamo.¹⁶³ This was the first of many encounters S. Giuseppe had with various magistrates in Venice, most frequently with the Council of Ten and the magistrate for taxation (*Dieci Savi sopra le Decime*).¹⁶⁴ Since the 1605 law of ecclesiastical property, the Venetian Republic exercised close control over ecclesiastical real-estate. Both S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio regularly applied to the *Dieci Savi sopra le*

¹⁶³ ASM, AGFR, 2969, Indice, p. 2r; ASM, AGFR, 2970, Fondazione.

¹⁶⁴ *Dieci Savi sopra le Decime* was the magistrate responsible for assessing lay residents of the Venetian Republic for the tenth (*decima*), which was assessed chiefly on landed property. David Chambers, Brian Pullan, Jennifer Fletcher, eds. *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), p. 462.

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Decime and provided the magistrate with information about the real estate they owned.¹⁶⁵ All property that was not incorporated into the tertiaries' dwellings and lacked a senatorial dispensation had to be sold.¹⁶⁶ In the later-eighteenth century, the tertiary communities in Bergamo also had to terminate all existing credit contracts and invest their capital in the *Cassa della Nobile Soprintendenza alle Cause Pie*, a state-owned debt mechanism instead.¹⁶⁷ These measures were part of the monastic reform movement in the Venetian Republic in the 1760s, which aimed to strengthen civic jurisdiction over ecclesiastical institutions in the Republic.¹⁶⁸ For third order communities, it meant limits on their financial transactions and highlights a strong central control over some of the activities of third order communities in Bergamo.

The local authorities in Bergamo often supported the tertiaries against the central authorities in Venice. A patch of letters from 1747 reveals an exchange between a long-time notary of S. Antonio, Pietro Secchi and a local administrator named Antonio Signeretti. As the legal representative of S. Antonio, Secchi inquired Signeretti about the ways to incorporate two recently purchased small houses and a garden among the real property of S. Antonio. The tertiaries had failed to acquire the necessary permissions before purchasing the real estate and were in danger of losing their properties. Signeretti

¹⁶⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2977, Fondi e livelli P. G.

¹⁶⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2972.

¹⁶⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2976, Crediti Rota; ASM, AGFR, 2978, Livelli Cenate di Sotto, Livelli Corna; ASM, AGFR, 2979, Livelli Seriate, Livelli Verdello Maggiore, Livello Zanica.

¹⁶⁸ Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815*, 189; Giovanni Spinelli, "L'estinzione rivoluzionaria dei monasteri Cassinesi nella Lombardia veneta," in *Il monachesimo italiano dalle riforme illuministiche all'unità nazionale (1768-1870). Atti del II Convegno di studi storici sull'Italia benedettina.*, ed. Francesco G. B. Trolese (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1992), 41.

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advised Secchi on the best way to proceed, after “listening around on this affair.” Part of the epistolary exchange is an anonymous missive – in which all names and other identifying characteristics are blacked out manually – which offers two concrete courses of action for the tertiaries. The missive also suggests phrases to include in a petition to the *Dieci Savi sopra le Decime*, among them “the limited quarters of the refuge”, “the need to expand it”, and “the scandal that could arise [from life in such tight quarters].”¹⁶⁹ The decision of the *Dieci Savi sopra le Decime* from 1749, which permitted S. Antonio to incorporate the buildings in question, stated that the tertiaries had informed the magistrate of “their necessity to expand the said college to avoid scandals and also revealed the exemplarity with which they live and the attention they bring to the education of girls.”¹⁷⁰ S. Antonio had thus followed the advice of the author of the anonymous missive, potentially Signeretti, and relied on the expertise of local officials to successfully negotiate with Venice. Due to a limited Venetian presence in its mainland territories, the local ruling classes tended to govern matters on the mainland, as Joanne Ferraro has argued for Brescia.¹⁷¹ Local administrators in Bergamo, who certainly had experience with Venetian authorities, supported local institutions against Venice. However, at times, S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe also turned to Venice for assistance against the local authorities. First in 1730 and then in 1737, the Council of Ten liberated S. Giuseppe from having to receive married women and widows in the community; such women were sent

¹⁶⁹ ASM, AGFR, 2942, Lettere riguardanti varii particolari del Collegio delle RR MM di S.t Antonio 1749.

¹⁷⁰ ASM, AGFR, 2942, Suppliche, Rescritti, e Ducali 1749 a 1790, riguardanti fondi, legati, ed oggetti diversi, unbound and unnumbered.

¹⁷¹ Joanne M. Ferraro, *Family and Public Life in Brescia, 1580-1650: The Foundations of Power in the Venetian State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Joanne Ferraro, “Oligarchs, Protesters, and the Republic of Venice: The ‘Revolution of the Discontents’ in Brescia, 1644-1645,” *The Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 4 (1988): 627–53.

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to S. Giuseppe by the local authorities in Bergamo.¹⁷² S. Antonio received a similar dispensation in 1750.¹⁷³ The tertiary communities in Bergamo thus used local and central authorities against each other, but also became places where struggles between the center and periphery played out.¹⁷⁴ Scholarship on centers and peripheries in Renaissance and early modern Italy by Angela De Benedictis, Giorgio Chittolini, Elena Fasano Guarini and others has highlighted continuous negotiations between local and central authorities and called attention to webs of alternative powers that came to bear on one another in a dynamic system of power that characterized early modern Italy.¹⁷⁵ Caroline Castiglione has shown how such negotiated relationships between the center and the periphery permitted peripheral dwellers and institutions to negotiate relationships of power and carve spaces for local interests.¹⁷⁶ Third order communities in Bergamo, which were subject to the laws and regulations of the Venetian Republic, used the administrative structures of the *Serenissima* to mitigate the effects of these external exigencies. Third order women religious and their communities were part of these early modern practices of power in Italy and actively negotiated this multilevel system of power for their own advantage.

¹⁷² ASM, AGFR, 2969, Indice, 2v-3r; ASM, AGFR, 2970, Privilegi, immunità, statuti.

¹⁷³ ASM, AGFR, 2942, Suppliche, Rescritti, e Ducali 1749 a 1790, riguardanti fondi, legati, ed oggetti diversi, p. 35v.

¹⁷⁴ Terpstra has discussed confraternities as foci for debates and struggles between center and periphery in early modern Italy, Nicholas Terpstra, "The politics of confraternal charity: centre, periphery, and the modes of confraternal involvement in early modern civic welfare," in *Povert  e innovazioni istituzionali in Italia: Dal Medioevo ad oggi*, ed. Vera Zamagni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

¹⁷⁵ Angela De Benedictis, *Repubblica per Contratto: Bologna: Una Citt  Europea Nello Stato Della Chiesa* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995); Julius Kirshner, ed., *The Origins of the State in Italy 1300-1600* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹⁷⁶ Caroline Castiglione, *Patrons and Adversaries: Nobles and Villagers in Italian Politics, 1640-1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

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Finally, also the parish clergy exercised jurisdiction over third order communities both in Bergamo and Bologna. Since third order women were not enclosed religious and most communities lacked their own chapels and churches initially, the women relied on either parish churches or the churches of their religious orders to attend religious services and receive the sacraments. The women religious thus inevitably came into contact with the parish clergy. Over time, however, most third order communities reached accords with their local parish clergy that stipulated their relationships with the parish. S. Maria della Carità in Bologna signed an accord in 1739 that allowed parish clergy access to the tertiaries' tabernacle but permitted the tertiaries to receive all their sacraments from the community's confessor and reduced the parochial dues expected when a woman religious died.¹⁷⁷ S. Elisabetta in Bologna also signed several accords with the local parish clergy. Already in 1653, the vicar general of Bologna permitted the celebration of Mass and "all other services usually celebrated by enclosed nuns in the city of Bologna" in the church of S. Elisabetta.¹⁷⁸ In 1690, the curate of the local parish permitted the tertiaries to receive Easter communion in their own church, calling it the "usage of enclosed nuns".¹⁷⁹ This permission was renewed in 1738, when it also came to include the secular boarders in S. Elisabetta.¹⁸⁰ Finally, in 1749, the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta could bury their dead in their own church; the secular boarders still had to be buried in the parish church.¹⁸¹ The rule of

¹⁷⁷ ASB, Demaniale, 44/4696, num. 62

¹⁷⁸ ASB, Demaniale, 4/4452, num. 3.

¹⁷⁹ ASB, Demaniale, 7/4455, num. 15.

¹⁸⁰ ASB, Demaniale, 11/4459, num. 6.

¹⁸¹ ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, num. 2. The *educande* who lived in S. Elisabetta also remained under the pastoral care of the local parish clergy. In 1744, a pastoral visitor to S. Elisabetta described the interactions between the tertiary community and the local parish, indicating that the parish priest regularly visited S.

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Servite tertiaries stressed that the religious had to attend their local parish church and submit to parish clergy and local bishops;¹⁸² the agreement between Ognisanti and the parish of S. Biagio in Bologna foresaw annual stipulations between the curate and the community's confessor regarding religious services in the chapel of Ognisanti.¹⁸³ Third order communities in Bologna thus continuously negotiated their relationships with local parishes, which added another external influence on the administration of these communities.

Constant negotiations also characterized the relationship between S. Antonio, S. Giuseppe and their local parish of S. Alessandro in Colonna in Bergamo. S. Antonio received the permission to erect its church and have sacraments in this church on the condition that this did not "prejudice parochial rights."¹⁸⁴ Local episcopal authorities permitted the father confessor of S. Giuseppe to confess the tertiaries and administer sacraments in the convent's oratory in 1676; yet, in 1696, the clergy of S. Alessandro in Colonna considered all tertiaries in the parish, including those of S. Giuseppe and S. Antonio, as "secular lay women" subject to parish clergy.¹⁸⁵ A year later, in 1697, the

Elisabetta to count both the tertiaries and the *educande* for the purpose of the annual *status animarum* and that the *educande* attended the local parish church to receive communion. ASB, Demaniale, 12/4460, n. 2; AAB, VP, 57, p. 44v.

¹⁸² ASB, Demaniale, 15/6292, "Regola che diede papa Martino V e confermo Innocento VIII a Fratelli, e le Sorelle della Compagnia de' Servi di Maria..." (Florence, 1591), p. 65.

¹⁸³ ASB, Demaniale, 5/6280, June 13, 1739. Ognisanti also had to provide annually a list of all the secular boarders living in the community to the parish clergy. In case of the death of a secular woman in Ognisanti, parish clergy organized the funeral and the tertiaries had to pay all the necessary parochial dues. ASB, Demaniale, 5/6282, June 13, 1739; ASB, Demaniale, 12/6289, Miscellanea.

¹⁸⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2942, "Informazione del Collegio delle Terziarie di S. Antonio di Padova fata al Rd.mo Mosig. Ruzzini Vescovo di Bergamo in occasione della visita di esso Monastero, 1705."

¹⁸⁵ ASM, AGFR, 2991, Religiose, P.G, num. 7, 14, 54.

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vicar general of Bergamo confirmed that the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe had their own confessor.¹⁸⁶ In 1713, a pastoral visitor permitted the confessor of S. Giuseppe to also confess educational boarders.¹⁸⁷ Like the relationships with other powers in the complex matrices of power that enveloped third order communities, also the relationship of the third order communities to parish clergy was constantly negotiated and re-negotiated to ensure institutional continuity and growth of third order communities.

In this section, I have discussed the many external authorities who held jurisdiction over third order communities, or aspects of the lived of third order communities, in Bologna and Bergamo. Episcopal authorities, religious orders, civic authorities, and parish clergy all had jurisdiction over aspects of tertiaries' lives and they all exercised this jurisdiction to varying degrees. Clear differences emerge between Bergamo and Bologna, with the Venetian Republic introducing a strong civic presence into the operations of third order communities that lacked in Bologna; yet, in Bologna, the religious orders were omnipresent in the daily lives of third order communities. These differences allow to contextualize variations in the functions of internal authorities, particularly of secular administrators, in Bergamo and Bologna. As I discussed above, third order communities in Bergamo saw close involvement of secular administrators; in contrast, in Bologna, such administrators were less present and confessors and religious orders played a more prominent role in the administration of third order communities.

¹⁸⁶ ASM, AGFR, 2991, Religiose, P.G.

¹⁸⁷ ASM, AGFR, 2970, Visite, Decreti fatti dall'E.mo, e R.mo Sig.re Cardinale Pietro Priuli Vescovo di Bergamo della Visita del Collegio delle Terziarie di S. Gioseppe nel Borgo S. Leonardo fatta li 6. Febraro 1713.

Third order communities were thus flexible in their institutional organization, responding to and negotiating local constellations of power.

Conclusions

Current historiography has focused on top-down reforms and the centralization of power to ecclesiastical authorities, away from women religious and their families in post-Tridentine female monastic communities. Such reforms were carried out in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth century. This chapter problematizes this historiography by highlighting the negotiated nature of power in the daily administration of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century third order communities. Top-down reforms were enacted on third order communities throughout this period, including in the eighteenth century, but the women religious and their confessors also challenged such reforms. Third order communities were enveloped by complex matrices of power, which included a range of external and internal authorities. Elizabeth Leffeldt and Francesca Medioli have argued that third order communities in post-Tridentine Spain and Italy were shaped by local circumstances.¹⁸⁸ This chapter lends support to this argument and highlights the localized nature of third order communities that had to contend with a range of authorities in addition to the ecclesiastical authorities. The multiplicity of authorities reflected both the practice of power in early modern Italy as well as the particular institutional histories of third order communities, which were founded locally and continued to change throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, highlighting both contemporary perceptions of female monastic communities as well as social demand for these particular female

¹⁸⁸ Medioli, “Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento”; Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister*, 185–206.

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spaces. Third order women religious and confessors learned to respond flexibly to local conditions and circumstances that impacted their communities and, indeed, negotiate complex matrices of power for the benefit of their communities. Flexibility and ability to negotiate ever-changing circumstances prepared third order communities for the monastic suppressions at the end of the eighteenth century.

Chapter 7: Third Order Communities During Monastic Suppressions¹

Societies across north-central Italy were disrupted when Napoleon's quick moving and victorious Army of Italy arrived on the peninsula and altered its established geo-political contours in spring 1796. The French occupied Bergamo in May 1796 and Bologna in June 1796. In summer 1797, the two cities became part of the revolutionary Cisalpine Republic, the administration of which was controlled from Paris. Napoleon, still in Italy, personally appointed members to both the legislative and the executive branches of the Cisalpine government. In 1799, the Cisalpine Republic collapsed under the attack of anti-revolutionary coalition armies and a short, Austrian-led interim period ensued. The second Cisalpine Republic was declared but thirteen months later, again under Napoleon's control. Finally, following intense military and diplomatic activities across the Italian peninsula, May 1802 saw the creation of the Republic of Italy in northern Italy with Napoleon as its president. In March 1805, after Napoleon's coronation as emperor, the Republic of Italy became the Kingdom of Italy, where Napoleon personally assumed the crown. Bergamo and Bologna were first part of the Republic of Italy and then the Kingdom of Italy. The Kingdom collapsed in 1814 under the attacks of the advancing coalition armies. The Congress of Vienna returned Bologna to the Papal States and Bergamo became part of the Austrian Empire.

The religious institutions of the Cisalpine Republic, the Republic of Italy, and the Kingdom of Italy experienced a series of reforms and suppressions that changed their

¹ Parts of this chapter have been published in Liise Lehtsalu, "Rethinking Monastic Suppressions in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy: How Women Religious Negotiated for Their Communities," *Women's History Review*, 2016, doi:10.1080/09612025.2015.1085263.

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institutional organization and established ways of life. A first wave of monastic suppressions swept across Europe already in the second half of the eighteenth century. The work of the *Commission des réguliers* in France in the 1760s, the papal suppression of the Jesuits in 1773, as well as the reforms and dissolutions of religious institutions in Austria and its Habsburg dominions during the reigns of Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and Joseph II (1765-1790) placed monastic orders and religious institutions at the center of a struggle between the Catholic Church and absolutist states for authority and control.² In seventeenth- and particularly eighteenth-century France, the tropes of involuntary nun, tyrannical mother superior, and prison-like convent increasingly entered and became vehicles for a critical political discourse about the Old Regime.³ The figure of a nun had also emerged as a stock figure in literary and political texts in seventeenth-century England, where it was used as “a limit case for constructions of women but also for constructions of Catholics.”⁴ The reforms and suppressions of the later-eighteenth

² Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Claudio Donati and Helmut Flachenecker, eds., *Le secolarizzazioni nel Sacro Romano Impero e negli antichi Stati italiani: premesse, confronti, conseguenze. - Säkularisationsprozesse im Alten Reich und in Italien: Voraussetzungen, Vergleiche, Folgen.* (Bologna and Berlin: il Mulino and Duncker&Humblot, 2005); Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Christine Schneider, *Der niedere Klerus im josephinischen Wien: Zwischen staatlicher Funktion und seelsorgerischer Aufgabe* (Vienna: Franz Deuticke, 1999); Christine Schneider, *Kloster als Lebensform: Der Wiener Ursulinenkonvent in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts (1740-90)* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2005); Ute Ströbele, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: die Aufhebung südwestdeutscher Frauenklöster unter Kaiser Joseph II* (Köln und Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2005).

³ Mita Choudhury, *Convents and Nuns in Eighteenth-Century French Politics and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Barbara R. Woshinsky, *Imagining Women's Conventual Spaces in France, 1600-1800: The Cloister Disclosed* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010). These topoi were also present in southwestern Germany in the lead-up to the Josephine suppressions in 1770s/1780s, according to Ströbele, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: die Aufhebung südwestdeutscher Frauenklöster unter Kaiser Joseph II*, chap. 3.

⁴ Frances E. Dolan, “Why Are Nuns Funny?,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (2007): 509–35, quoted from 525.

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century thus emerged from a long tradition that questioned the institution of monasticism and viewed religious orders and monastic communities as representing tyrannical power structures. However, at the turn of the nineteenth century, reforms and suppressions were more focused and widespread than ever before.⁵

The chronology and experiences of the late-eighteenth century dissolutions varied between countries and regions. On the Italian peninsula, the Republic of Venice established a commission to investigate the use of church property in 1766, followed by a wave of monastic suppressions in 1768.⁶ These reforms increased Venetian control of the finances of religious institutions, including third order communities in Bergamo, as I discuss in chapter 6 above. Religious institutions in Austrian Lombardy and Leopoldine Tuscany experienced disciplinary reforms as well as the dissolution of communities that were considered “not useful” in the 1770s and the 1780s; the reforms were mandated either directly from Vienna, in the case of Lombardy, or inspired by the Theresian and Josephine reforms, in the case of Tuscany.⁷ The most wide-spread monastic suppressions

⁵ Guerrino Pelliccia and Giancarlo Rocca, eds., “Soppressioni,” *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1988).

⁶ Giuseppe Del Torre, “Le diocesi venete nella seconda metà del Settecento tra secolarizzazioni e nuovi confini giurisdizionali,” in *Le secolarizzazioni nel Sacro Romano Impero e negli antichi Stati italiani: premesse, confronti, conseguenze*, ed. Claudio Donati and Helmut Flachenecker (Bologna and Berlin: il Mulino and Duncker&Humblot, 2005); Giovanni Spinelli, “L’estinzione rivoluzionaria dei monasteri Cassinesi nella Lombardia veneta,” in *Il monachesimo italiano dalle riforme illuministiche all’unità nazionale (1768-1870). Atti del II Convegno di studi storici sull’Italia benedettina.*, ed. Francesco G. B. Trolese (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1992).

⁷ Paola Vismara Chiappa, “Il monachesimo nella politica ecclesiastica teresiano-giuseppina,” in *Il monachesimo italiano dalle riforme illuministiche all’unità nazionale (1768-1870). Atti del II Convegno di studi storici sull’Italia benedettina.*, ed. Francesco G. B. Trolese (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1992); Carlo Fantappie, “Soppressione e ripristino dei monasteri benedettini in Toscana fra Sette e Ottocento,” in *Il monachesimo italiano dalle riforme illuministiche all’unità nazionale (1768-1870). Atti del II Convegno di studi storici sull’Italia benedettina.* (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1992); Osanna Fantozzi Micali and Piero Roselli, *Le soppressioni dei conventi a Firenze: Riuso e trasformazione dal sec. XVIII in poi* (Florence: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1980).

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occurred in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy. Yet, eighteenth-century monastic suppressions in Italy have attracted only limited critical work. Current scholarship either considers the political and economic aspects of the reforms that led to suppressions or studies the dissolution of specific religious orders or communities.⁸ Work on female communities is particularly limited. The state of preservation of archival collections that regard late-eighteenth century monasticism has certainly affected research efforts. The archives of the suppressed monastic institutions include little or nothing on their dissolution. Documents about monastic dissolutions are part of collections of state papers of the revolutionary republics and the Napoleonic states in Italy. These archival collections are catalogued only rudimentarily in places like Bologna; in the better-catalogued collections in Bergamo and Milan, the documents about suppressions focus on state policies and include very little on how the suppressions were experienced in the dissolved communities and by the women religious. This chapter examines the final stage in the institutional history of the third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna, from the late-1790s to 1811. Through a study of the changing political perception of monastic institutions at the turn of the eighteenth century, the chapter reveals the perceived differences between third order institutions and convents in late eighteenth-century Italy, and the impact such perceptions had on the institutional histories of third order communities. Moreover, I bring female voices into the history of monastic suppressions.

⁸ In addition to the works cited above, also Giacomo Martina, “Gli istituti religiosi nello Stato Pontificio negli anni 1789-1799,” in *La rivoluzione nello Stato della Chiesa, 1789-1799*, ed. Luigi Fiorani (Pisa and Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1997). Two volumes that discuss eighteenth-century Italian monasticism, including suppressions, focus on male orders, Giustino Farnedi and Giovanni Spinelli, eds., *Settecento monastico italiano. Atti del I Convegno di studi storici sull’Italia benedettina* (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1990); Francesco G. B. Trolese, ed., *Il monachesimo italiano dalle riforme illuministiche all’unità nazionale (1768-1870). Atti del II Convegno di studi storici sull’Italia benedettina*. (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1992).

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Current scholarship suggests that suppressions were the result of top-down reforms to which monastic communities were subjected. Yet, women religious and their communities did not accept dissolutions silently. As third order women religious and their communities had done throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, they also now negotiated with the authorities and, consequently, became active participants in the suppression process.

The study of monastic suppressions also contributes significantly to our understanding of Italian history at the turn of the nineteenth century. First, it sheds light on the end of early modern monasticism, which had shaped the social, economic, political, and cultural history of early modern Italy. Even though the dissolution of convents brought dramatic social change, the suppression acts also highlight that the eighteenth-century society had come to rely on some women religious and their active roles in society, as I have argued above. Suppressions thus raise questions about the continuities in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century monasticisms and problematize the common periodization that sees the revolutionary and Napoleonic years as a watershed moment between the early modern and the modern eras.⁹ Third order communities had negotiated complex matrices of power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and continued to do so in the early-nineteenth century. Current scholarship on this period in Italy focuses on political and institutional history, the nature of the revolutionary states and the Napoleonic empire on the peninsula, and the role – or the lack of one – of local

⁹ Marina Caffiero has argued against such periodization for Italian history. Marina Caffiero, *Religione e modernità in Italia (secoli XVII-XIX)* (Pisa and Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2007), Premessa.

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administrators in these new states.¹⁰ The Italian language scholarship considers the revolutionary period as laying the groundwork for Italian unification in the second half of the nineteenth century and takes a rather instrumental approach to this period, focusing on administrative centralization and state building, but also on the birth of a national ideology.¹¹ Yet, the fate of monastic communities highlights a far greater role of the local administrators in Napoleonic Italy than the current scholarship allows. Rather than victims of a programmatic war on religion, as Michael Broers argues, a close study of the suppression decrees reveals that the fate of the monastic institutions depended on the functions these institutions had assumed in their local societies and on the careful negotiations between the center and the periphery, the monastic institutions and the secular authorities.¹² Finally, the reactions of women religious and their communities to suppressions problematize top-down views of Napoleonic religious policies and reveal the active role of women religious in negotiating and resisting suppression decrees.¹³

¹⁰ An excellent historiographical review of this scholarship is Steven Englund, “Monstre Sacré: The Question of Cultural Imperialism and the Napoleonic Empire,” *The Historical Journal* 51 (2008): 215–50. See also Michael Broers, “The Myth and Reality of Italian Regionalism: A Historical Geography of Napoleonic Italy, 1801-1814,” *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003): 688–709; Michael Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796-1814: Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); Antonio De Francesco, *L'Italia di Bonaparte: Politica, statualità e nazione nella penisola tra due rivoluzioni, 1796-1821* (Turin: UTET, 2011); Stuart Woolf, *A History of Italy 1700-1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change* (London: Methuen & Co, 1979).

¹¹ Alberto Mario Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2004); Derek Beales and Eugenio F. Biagini, *Il Risorgimento e l'unificazione dell'Italia* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2005); Dino Carpanetto and Giuseppe Ricuperati, *L'Italia del Settecento* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2008); Alain Pillepich, *Napoleone e gli italiani* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005).

¹² Michael Broers, *The Politics of Religion in Napoleonic Italy: The War against God, 1801-1814* (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹³ The scholarship on monastic suppressions in France has underlined such an active role of women religious during the suppressions. Gemma Betros, “Liberty, Citizenship and the Suppression of Female Religious Communities in France, 1789-90,” *Women's History Review* 18, no. 2 (2009): 311–36; Carmen M. Mangion, “Avoiding ‘Rash and Imprudent Measures’: English Nuns in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1801,” in *Communities, Culture and Identity: The English Convents in Exile, 1600-1800*, ed. Caroline Bowden and James E. Kelly (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013).

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Third order communities and women religious relied on their earlier experiences to negotiate the changed social, political, and economic situation around them, further highlighting continuities between the Napoleonic period and the earlier centuries.

This chapter is divided into two parts. First, I discuss the three general suppression decrees and the dissolution of the six third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna. A close reading of the suppression decrees reveals the changing objectives of the three suppressions, as well as a lack of unanimity between the central and the local administrations regarding monastic dissolutions. Rather than approaching the monastic dissolutions as a single event that lasted a period of fifteen years, each of the three suppressions had its own particular aims and must be considered separately from the other two.¹⁴ The second part of the chapter focuses on third order reactions to dissolutions and amalgamations. In addition to showing how third order women actively negotiated the dissolution processes, I further argue for the need to move away from a generalizing view of monastic suppressions and focus on the specifics of each individual dissolution. Third order communities remained flexible institutions also in the time of monastic suppressions. I begin with a short overview of third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna on the eve of monastic suppressions.

i. Third order communities at the end of the eighteenth century

On May 23, 1798 the Agent of the National Estate in the Department of Reno, which included Bologna, sent a report to the Central Agency of the National Estate in Milan.

The report surveyed the finances of all monastic communities in Bologna and the

¹⁴ Giovanni Spinelli has underlined the need to study the Cisalpine and the Napoleonic suppressions as separate events. Spinelli, "L'estinzione rivoluzionaria dei monasteri Cassinesi nella Lombardia veneta." On the other hand, and in the same volume with Spinelli's essay, Carlo Fantappie collapses all suppressions in Napoleonic Tuscany under the generic term of "monastic suppressions" Fantappie, "Soppressione e ripristino dei monasteri benedettini in Toscana fra Sette e Ottocento."

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Department of Reno, male and female. It also included information on monastic populations and categorized the religious institutions into enclosed and tertiary communities. The Ministry of the Interior in Milan had already requested the same information earlier, as the Agent in Bologna was quick to point out, but the new report:

[...] supplies with more clarity the notices that the Superior Authorities wished to receive, since the report more comprehensively includes information on a wider range of institutions [*più Classi*] and, in particular, it explains in detail the necessary expenses for the maintenance of each and every religious family.¹⁵

The Agent's reference to an earlier report sent to the Ministry of the Interior calls attention to competing competences in Milan. Moreover, the Agent's comment about the greater accuracy of the new report underscores the varying quality of the information reaching Milan, which was inconsistent.

The report of May 23, 1798 listed ten third order communities in the city of Bologna, among which S. Elisabetta, S. Maria della Carità, S. Maria delle Grazie, and Ognisanti. Compared to the enclosed convents included in the same report, third order communities were small and poor in 1798. The mean population size of third order communities was fourteen religious women, a figure that included both choir and lay sisters (*converse*). The smallest third order house, S. Monica, only counted three tertiaries while the largest, S. Maria Egiziaca, had twenty-six women religious. The third order communities were, however, relatively uniform in size, with only two communities with a population smaller than ten tertiaries and two communities with a population larger than twenty tertiaries.¹⁶ Also the finances of the ten third order communities were

¹⁵ ASM, AFR, 2287, Agente dei Beni Nazionali nel Dipartimento del Reno to Agenzia Centrale de Beni Nazionali, Milano, 4. Pratile, Anno VI.

¹⁶ Ute Ströbele, in her study of Franciscan third order communities in southwestern Germany, has shown that the average community size was 16.2 religious women in 1782. The smallest community in her study

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comparable. Only two of the ten houses had an annual income that exceeded their annual expenditure. The rest accrued an increasing annual debt. In comparison, the report included information on twenty-eight enclosed communities. The mean monastic population of an enclosed convent in Bologna was thirty-five nuns, including both choir and lay nuns (*converse*). The smallest enclosed convent had a total of nineteen nuns, while the largest counted sixty-nine nuns.¹⁷ Regarding finances, eleven of the twenty-eight enclosed convents had an annual income that surpassed their annual spending. Thus, 40 per cent of the enclosed convents were solvent, compared to the 20 per cent of the third order houses. The estates of enclosed communities were also considerably larger than those of third order communities: the mean value of an enclosed convent's estate was ca. 24,833 Bolognese *lire* compared to the mean value of a third order estate of ca. 2,886 Bolognese *lire*.¹⁸ As I discuss in chapters 1 and 5 above, third order communities in Bologna were mostly seventeenth- and eighteenth-century foundations, they lacked large real estate holdings and attracted few testamentary legacies. Third order communities participated in urban economy in order to survive financially.

The central authorities in Milan were also advised of the economic activities of third order communities. The Central Agency of the National Estate sent a report to the Ministry of Interior in late May 1798, which reveals that three of the ten third order

had seven women religious, while the largest had twenty-three tertiaries. Ströbele, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: die Aufhebung südwestdeutscher Frauenklöster unter Kaiser Joseph II*, 136–139.

¹⁷ ASM, AFR, 2287, Agente dei Beni Nazionali nel Dipartimento del Reno to Agenzia Centrale de Beni Nazionali, Milano, 4. Pratile, Anno VI, "Dipartimento del Reno; Monache Claustrali e Terziarie".

¹⁸ The calculations are based on the reported annuities of the monastic communities. The values are in Bolognese *lira*. ASM, AFR, 2287, Agente dei Beni Nazionali nel Dipartimento del Reno to Agenzia Centrale de Beni Nazionali, Milano, 4. Pratile, Anno VI, "Dipartimento del Reno; Monache Claustrali e Terziarie".

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communities in Bologna supplemented their finances with paid work and fees charged to educational boarders. According to this report, another four third order communities supplemented their finances with with begging on the streets and donations from benefactors.¹⁹ S. Maria delle Carità and S. Maria delle Grazie were among the three third order communities who reportedly housed educational boarders. Neither S. Elisabetta nor Ognisanti were listed among the communities that earned extra income, yet, as chapters 4 and 5 above reveal, both communities accepted fee-paying boarders and participated in urban economy. Indeed, a report in mid-May 1798 had also included information about the ways in which third order communities supplemented their finances. Even though that report was less detailed, it recorded that all other third order communities in Bologna supplemented their income with donations, paid labor, and boarding fees.²⁰ Comparing the two reports from mid-May and late-May 1798 highlights inconsistencies in the information about religious communities available to central authorities in Milan in the immediate lead-up to the first suppressions.

I have not been able to locate any similar reports about religious communities in Bergamo, which was part of the Department of Serio. Some comparisons between third order houses in Bergamo and Bologna in the late-eighteenth century are possible nonetheless. The last pastoral visit to third order communities in Bergamo was completed in 1781. In S. Antonio, the visitors counted twenty-one choir sisters and six lay sisters (*converse*).²¹ The suppression act for S. Antonio listed twenty-two choir sisters and six

¹⁹ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 21, fasc. 3, num. 7014.

²⁰ Ibid., num. 16506.

²¹ ASDBg, VP, #99, p. 73r.

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lays sisters in 1798.²² The pastoral visit record does not include information on the tertiaries in S. Giuseppe in 1781. However, the episcopal confirmations of the elections of mothers superior in S. Giuseppe includes the names of all vocal tertiaries in the community. In May 1796, a confirmation act listed twenty-four vocal tertiaries; two years earlier, in 1794, twenty-six choir sisters had voted.²³ The confirmations excluded lay sisters (*converse*), who did not vote at elections. As I discuss in chapter 2 above, S. Giuseppe maintained a steady population of three to four *converse* throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Indeed, the suppression act of S. Giuseppe listed three *converse* in 1811.²⁴ Compared to Bologna, the third order communities in Bergamo were larger in the late-eighteenth century, as they had been throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The estate of S. Antonio was auctioned for 13,092 Milanese *lire* after the community's suppression in 1798, while the estate of S. Giuseppe was valued at 13,753 Italian *lire* in 1811.²⁵ Despite the restrictions set on ecclesiastical property by the Venetian Republic, third order communities in Bergamo were financially more robust than those in Bologna. The suppression act of S. Antonio included an inventory, which listed rooms described as the "Church of the Academy" and the "Dormitory of the *Educande*", both of which were furnished.²⁶ S. Antonio probably thus still accepted educational boarders in 1798 and S. Giuseppe continued to accept

²² ASM, AFR, 2644, S. Antonio di Padova.

²³ ASDBg, Monasteri femminili, I, S. Giuseppe, Elezione delle priore.

²⁴ ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Giuseppe.

²⁵ ASM, AFR, 2644, S. Antonio di Padova, Cittadino Giuseppe Salvagni to Cittadino Locatelli, Agente de' Beni Nazionali del Dipartimento del Serio, September 25, 1798; ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Giuseppe.

²⁶ ASM, AFR, 2644, S. Antonio di Padova, Inventario de Mobili.

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boarders into the early-nineteenth century, as I discuss below. As in Bologna, both communities in Bergamo continued to be involved in the urban society surrounding them also at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The above census of the population and finances of third order communities must be kept in mind as I turn to analyze suppression decrees and the dissolutions of individual communities. Small size, relative poverty, and active engagement in urban societies and economies permitted third order communities to survive. In Bergamo, S. Antonio was suppressed in 1798, while S. Giuseppe was dissolved only in 1811. In Bologna, S. Elisabetta and S. Maria della Carità were suppressed in 1805, while Ognisanti and S. Maria delle Grazie continued until 1810 and 1811 respectively. The dissolutions followed a set procedure after every central decree. Immediately following a central decree, officials in Milan, relying on information from local officials, drew up lists of the institutions to be dissolved or amalgamated with other religious communities. Based on these lists, suppression orders for individual religious institutions were issued. The institutions were then informed of their impending suppression, which happened within few days or couple of weeks.²⁷ On the day of the suppression, local officials arrived in the institution, gathered its inhabitants for a last chapter meeting to announce the community's dissolution or amalgamation, and confiscated the institution's estate. Finally, a local architect valued the institution's buildings. Suppression acts usually listed the current inhabitants of an institution and included inventories of the institution's movable property, as well as its account books. This regulated and uniform procedure has

²⁷ S. Elisabetta in Bologna was notified a month in advance in 1805 (ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Elisabetta, Pietro Belvederi Ragionato on February 1, 1806). S. Antonio in Bergamo was amalgamated two days after the executive decision on its dissolution, see below.

led historians to argue that the revolutionary and Napoleonic suppressions aimed to alter radically religious life on the Italian peninsula; the method of suppressions contrasted in particular with the earlier enlightened reforms, which had been less uniform and sought to reform, rather than to dismantle, monastic and religious structures on the peninsula.²⁸

A close reading of the suppression decrees together with a study of how the decrees were applied in localities reveals, however, many inconsistencies, contradictions, and a lack of uniformity between the 1798, 1805, and 1810 suppressions in the Cisalpine Republic and the Kingdom of Italy. The three suppressions should be considered three separate and unique events rather than collapsed under the generic term of ‘monastic suppressions’.

ii. The suppression decrees of 1798, 1805, and 1810

The 1798 Decree: Financial Practicalities and Anti-Clerical Ideology

In May 1798, the Cisalpine Republic declared a general suppression and amalgamation of religious corporations to meet “the urgent needs of the Republic.”²⁹ In the months preceding the suppression decree, the Cisalpine Great Council had been discussing the failing economy of the Republic and some members of the Council had called for the nationalization of ecclesiastical estates.³⁰ According to the Council members, suppression of religious communities and the payment of pensions to ex-religious, produced by the

²⁸ Fantappie, “Soppressione e ripristino dei monasteri benedettini in Toscana fra Sette e Ottocento”; Spinelli, “L’estinzione rivoluzionaria dei monasteri Cassinesi nella Lombardia veneta.”

²⁹ The central decree dated to May 8, 1798. The suppressions in Bologna were decreed on June 12, 1798. The suppressions in Bergamo were decreed three days later, on June 15, 1798. Details in ASM, AFR, 216. The Bergamo suppression decree is included in ASM, AFR, 2564, 27. Pratile, Anno VI. There had been sporadic suppressions of monastic institutions in the Cisalpine Republic already in 1796-1797, Mario Fanti, “La crisi delle confraternite e delle istituzioni assistenziali a Bologna alla fine del Settecento,” in *La rivoluzione nello Stato della Chiesa, 1789-1799*, ed. Luigi Fiorani (Pisa and Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1997), 362; Spinelli, “L’estinzione rivoluzionaria dei monasteri Cassinesi nella Lombardia veneta,” 45.

³⁰ ASM, Atti del governo, Culto, Parte antica, 2, fasc. 8, The Great Council, 3. Fiorile, Anno VI.

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nationalized estates of the dissolved communities, made the ex-religious equal and free citizens of the Cisalpine Republic; rather than staying outside the common good, the ex-religious would thus contribute to the Nation with their property and received appropriate remuneration from the state.³¹ Monastic communities were thus part of a wider debate on equality – its philosophical and practical meaning in the context of the Cisalpine Republic – that animated the Cisalpine legislative body at the time.³² Pensions to ex-religious became key to the Cisalpine suppression decree. On the one hand, such pensions were necessary to protect – and, I propose, avoid opposition from – the families of the secularized religious, since most professed religious had renounced rights to inheritance at the time of entering their monastic community; on the other hand, pensions burdened the Cisalpine state budget.³³ Consequently, the Great Council decided that those religious institutions with an annual income below 600 *lire* for every choir nun and 350 *lire* for every *conversa* “provisionally retain[ed] the administration and the enjoyment of their property, under municipal supervision, until the time when, due to the diminishing number of the religious, the institution’s income was sufficient [to provide the required pension].”³⁴ The Great Council made suppressions contingent on the

³¹ ASM, Atti del governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1562, 20. Frimale Anno VI, Carnevali to the Great Council; ASM, Atti del governo, Culto, Parte antica, 2, fascicolo 8, The Great Council, 3. Fiorile, Anno VI.

³² The debate revolved around questions of equal division of riches, wealth redistribution, provision of basic necessities to every citizen; the focus was on how to make it possible, and whether or not physical property confiscation and redistribution was necessary. Vittorio Criscuolo, “Ideali e progetti di riforma sociale nell’Italia giacobina e napoleonica,” in *Universalismo e nazionalità nell’esperienza del giacobinismo italiano*, ed. Luigi Lotti and Rosario Villari (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2003).

³³ ASM, Atti del governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1562, 12. Fiorile Anno VI, Orsi to the Great Council.

³⁴ ASM, Atti del governo, Culto, Parte antica, 2, fasc. 8, The Great Council, 3. Fiorile, Anno VI.

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financial means of religious institutions. It also sought to profit from monastic estates.

Discussing the aims of suppressions, one delegate of the Great Council summarized:

The third goal [of suppressions] is to nationalize such estates, the administration of which would least burden the state.

The fourth [goal is] to find a ready outlet for the [nationalized] properties so that they would not stagnate in the hands of the state but would pass on to the active and industrious buyers.³⁵

Daniel Klang and others have taken a revisionist approach to the Great Council and argued that the legislature relied on financial considerations and went beyond revolutionary ideology in its decisions.³⁶ Mario Fanti has also stressed the economic motivations for the dissolution of confraternities in 1798.³⁷ A close reading of the debate surrounding the suppression of monastic communities supports such revisionist interpretations. The suppression decree issued for Bergamo stressed that all decisions to dissolve a community were based on the “utility” and the financial means of a religious institution; in this context, “utility” was used to refer to the income the state could draw from a particular institution.³⁸ The suppression of wealthy monastic communities was expected to fill the coffers of the Cisalpine Republic. The preservation of less-wealthy institutions served the same function: by preserving the institutions, which lacked estates to support pensions and properties that could be sold beneficially, the Cisalpine Republic avoided such institutions and their ex-religious becoming a burden on the state budget.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Daniel Klang, “The problem of leasefarming in the Milanese Enlightenment and the Cisalpine Republic,” *Società e storia*, no. 104 (2004): 283–299. See also Luigi Lotti and Rosario Villari, eds., *Universalismo e nazionalità nell’esperienza del giacobinismo italiano* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2003).

³⁷ Fanti, “La crisi delle confraternite e delle istituzioni assistenziali a Bologna alla fine del Settecento,” 362–364.

³⁸ ASM, AFR, 2564, 27. Pratile Anno VI, §5.

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Ideological motivations for the suppression of religious institutions cannot be dismissed, however. Bossi, the same delegate who summarized the financial aims of the 1798 suppressions, concluded his list with the following:

The sixth goal, finally, is to match the economic prospects of this plan because these [economic] prospects are always subservient to political prospects and constitutional principles and are intended to throw off the disorders introduced by superstition, to promote the republican spirit, and to activate a system that is consistent with the principles of our regeneration.³⁹

The provisions made for the ex-nuns in the suppression decrees – which, in addition to the pensions, included one or two former monastic complexes in every Department to house those ex-nuns who had nowhere else to go – were conditional. The ex-nuns had to renounce their communal way of life, their churches, enclosure, parlatories and grates; in the retreats provided by the state, ex-nuns had to lead simple lives resembling family life.⁴⁰ The provisions thus limited the opportunities for religious expression, which according to Mario Fanti underlines the role of ideology in the suppression policies.⁴¹ These provisions applied both to ex-nuns whose convents were suppressed by the state as well as to nuns whose convents were preserved, but who wished to secularize on their own accord.⁴² The Cisalpine Republic seems too have not expected, however, many voluntary secularizations, since the provisions focused on monastic communities suppressed by the state.⁴³ The Cisalpine Republic and its officials thus defined a convent

³⁹ ASM, Atti del governo, Culto, Parte antica, 2, fasc. 8, Bossi to the Great Council, 3. Fiorile, Anno VI.

⁴⁰ ASM, AFR, 2564, 27. Pratile Anno VI, §13.

⁴¹ Fanti, “La crisi delle confraternite e delle istituzioni assistenziali a Bologna alla fine del Settecento,” 366–367.

⁴² ASM, AFR, 2564, 27. Pratile Anno VI, §10-14.

⁴³ In this, the Cisalpine administration, closely monitored and guided by the Directory in Paris, was perhaps aware of the French precedent, where the National Assembly had expected a wave of voluntary

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through communal life, enclosure, and the physical attributes of the latter. These were the characteristics of an ideal post-Tridentine enclosed female monastic community. As I have discussed above, third order communities followed only voluntary enclosure and not all of them led communal lives. Third order communities thus fit poorly with the Cisalpine definition of a monastic community and the Republic's attempts to prohibit the monastic way of life.

A particular discourse about the religious, and women religious in particular, developed in the Cisalpine Republic. Giovanni Battista Santini, a judge on the appeals court in Milan, published a pamphlet in 1798, which described a professed religious person as “a parasite, a being who is not only useless but even dangerous to the society.”⁴⁴ Competing voices pointed out that many professed religious had entered monastic life when still under-aged and stressed the need to provide for these religious after suppressions. Such care would make the Cisalpine Republic more likeable to the populace, since “fanaticism, oppression, and terror” could not persuade a nation as “sweet-natured and peaceful” as that of the Cisalpine Republic.⁴⁵ The belief that many religious had entered convents and monasteries when they were too young reflected the contemporary discourse on monastic tyranny that considered nuns as victims of their

secularizations in 1789-1793 but, instead, had to face the majority of the nuns staying in their convents and working actively against the revolutionary regime. On Cisalpine administration, see De Francesco, *L'Italia di Bonaparte: Politica, statualità e nazione nella penisola tra due rivoluzioni, 1796-1821*, 15–20; Pillepich, *Napoleone e gli italiani*, chap. 2. On nuns' reactions to suppressions in France, see Betros, “Liberty, Citizenship and the Suppression of Female Religious Communities in France, 1789-90”; Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 71–77.

⁴⁴ ASM, Atti di Governo, Culto, Parte antica, 2219, Giovanni Battista Santini, *Piano per l'abolizione di tutte le corporazioni religiose...* (Milano, Anno VI), p. 11.

⁴⁵ Ibid., “Memoria d'un buon cittadino ai cittadini legislatori della Repubblica Cisalpina”, Frimale, Anno VI.

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families and the despotic state.⁴⁶ The police commissioner in the Department of Serio prefaced a letter to Milan by saying that he acted “to advance the public cause and to benefit those weak spirits who are suffocated by the rules of tyranny still in effect.”⁴⁷ The same Commissioner wrote to the bishop of Bergamo that he had received many letters which testified that “the various convents, particularly those of women, include individuals who complain that they are victims of their own imbecility and the allusions of others; individuals who now represent a miserable spectacle because they did not know how to resist earlier.”⁴⁸ An ideological motive for suppressions therefore did exist and was expressed in official discourse in 1798. Third order communities also fit poorly with this discourse, however, since, they included few elite women, whose despotic families were decried in the anti-monastic discourse.⁴⁹

On the whole, a multiplicity of voices on monastic suppressions existed in the Cisalpine Republic. In the period leading up to the suppression decree, in March 1798, the police commissioner in the Department of Serio complained to the minister of the police in Milan that confessors prevented nuns from expressing republican ideas and leaving their convents; he demanded that all confessors be examined on “good

⁴⁶ For studies of the French discourse, see Choudhury, *Convents and Nuns in Eighteenth-Century French Politics and Culture*; Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*, chap. 2; Woshinsky, *Imagining Women's Conventual Spaces in France, 1600-1800: The Cloister Disclosed*. For Italy, see Giorgio Penco, “Aspetti e caratteri del monachesimo nel Settecento italiano,” in *Settecento monastico italiano*, ed. Giustino Farnedi and Giovanni Spinelli (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1990), 27.

⁴⁷ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1832, Monache Bergamo P. G., Formenti Commissario di Polizia al Cittadino Ministro della Polizia Generale, 2. Germinale, Anno VI.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Formenti al Vescovo di Bergamo, 8. Germinale Anno VI.

⁴⁹ See chapter 3 for a discussion of women who entered third order communities as women religious, and chapter 4 for a discussion of various secular boarders. Both tertiaries and boarders were mostly of middling and professional ranks.

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citizenship” before they were allowed to enter convents.⁵⁰ In April 1798, the same commissioner reported to Milan that a set of republican materials, which had been sent to convents, had encouraged republican sentiments and thoughts of secularization in convents.⁵¹ Despite this success, in May 1798, the commissioner lamented again about confessors who agitated the religious against legislative bodies and monastic suppressions.⁵² In the Department of Reno, the local police commissioner had passed news to Milan about confessors who preached counter-republican ideas and intimidated nuns already in autumn 1797.⁵³ The archbishop of Bologna, cardinal Andrea Gioannetti became a suspected agitator after he penned a letter, in which he instructed secularized nuns to not forget their vows:

Do not believe yourself to be released from the sacred obligation of the solemn vows that you have given in front of God. Maintain the promises you have given and when you are forced to return to secular life with your bodies to not return with your souls. Always recall that God is the Lord in front of whom one cannot break a vow without the threat of losing oneself for eternity. Both inside the cloister and outside you must belong to God. For this reason you must always wear some part of your religious habit under your secular clothes.⁵⁴

The archbishop claimed that the letter was written in response to the specific concerns of some nuns. Gioannetti stressed his support for the Cisalpine Republic, but also said that

⁵⁰ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1832, Monache Bergamo P. G., Formenti Commissario di Polizia al Cittadino Ministro della Polizia Generale, 2. Germinale, Anno VI. The harmful effect of confessors and clergy in general to the republican cause led to the clergy having to swear an oath of loyalty in 1790-1791; many convents rejected clergy who had sworn the oath and hid the nonjurors, Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*, 71–77.

⁵¹ Ibid., Formenti Commissario di Polizia al Cittadino Sopransi Ministro della Polizia Generale, 24. Germile, Anno VI.

⁵² Ibid., Formenti Commissario di Polizia al Cittadino Guicciardi Ministro della Polizia Generale, 13. Fiorile, Anno VI.

⁵³ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1834, Monache P. G., Il Comissario di Polizia al Cittadino Ministro di Polizia Generale, 9. Brimoso, Anno VI.; idem, 1. Nevoso, Anno VI.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Cardinale Gioannetti Archivescovo di Bologna alla diletta figlia, *undated*.

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he had instructed the religious in case the Republic were to fail and the nuns had to return to their cloisters.⁵⁵ Gioannetti underscored his role as a pastor who cared for his flock. The police commissioner, on the other hand, described Gioannetti's actions as "a snare for the simpleminded and the ignorant, a new false hope for the weak in conscience, a new way to feed illusions and dangerous hopes," in a letter the commissioner sent to Milan in late July 1798.⁵⁶ Archbishop Gioannetti had collaborated with the republican governments in Bologna since the arrival of the French troops in his city in June 1796. He considered religion to be the necessary foundation of a well-organized society, an idea which found support in the Cisalpine Republic.⁵⁷ The conflict between the archbishop and the police commissioner highlights the multiplicity of voices that existed within the Cisalpine Republic on the issue of monastic suppressions and the fate of women religious.⁵⁸ The Cisalpine suppressions emerged from a mix of anti-clerical ideology and financial practicalities and consequently affected, first and foremost, enclosed and propertied convents.

The fate of third order communities in Bergamo and Bologna supports this conclusion. In Bologna, all third order communities considered in this study survived the

⁵⁵ Ibid., Cardinale Gioannetti al Ispettore di Polizia Generale nel Dipartimento del Reno, 7. Termale Anno VI.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Ispettore di Polizia Generale nel Dipartimento del Reno al Ministro della Polizia Generale, 23. Messidoro Anno VI.

⁵⁷ On Cardinal Gioannetti's relations with first the Bolognese Republic and then the Cispadan and the Cisalpine Republics, see Umberto Mazzone, "Episcopato e governo nelle legazioni dello Stato della Chiesa alla venuta di Napoleone," in *Le secolarizzazioni nel Sacro Romano Impero e negli antichi Stati italiani: premesse, confronti, conseguenze*, ed. Claudio Donati and Helmut Flachenecker (Bologna and Berlin: il Mulino and Duncker&Humblot, 2005).

⁵⁸ There existed a wider multiplicity of ideas and voices among the Italian Jacobins and the administrative circles of the Cisalpine Republic. See De Francesco, *L'Italia di Bonaparte: Politica, statualità e nazione nella penisola tra due rivoluzioni, 1796-1821*; Lotti and Villari, *Universalismo e nationalità nell'esperienza del giacobinismo italiano*; Pillepich, *Napoleone e gli italiani*.

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Cisalpine suppressions. In Bergamo, S. Antonio was amalgamated to S. Giuseppe. The decree of the executive directorate from June 15, 1798 “recall[ed] to the Nation all the goods and properties” that belonged, among other monastic communities in the Cisalpine Republic, to “the nuns of S. Antonio” in Bergamo.⁵⁹ Two days later, on June 17, 1798, the suppression was carried out by local official in Bergamo; the suppression act stated that S. Antonio was dissolved to “comply with forced loans, as well as with public needs.”⁶⁰ The local officials thus defined this suppression as an economic act. The suppression act of S. Antonio read: “[...] and since the patrimony of this monastery remains vacant, the departmental agent [of the National Estate] must take [...] possession of all that remains vacated by this suppressed convent, as well as of all the related properties.”⁶¹ A public auction to sell furnishings and other movable property was held on September 21-24, 1798.⁶² The buildings were valued to establish their rental price on December 9, 1798.⁶³ There was thus a period of three months between the suppression and the auction and six months between the suppression and the evaluation of the community’s buildings.⁶⁴ In 1800, two years after the suppression, the ex-convent of S.

⁵⁹ ASM, AFR, 2644, S. Antonio di Padova, Estratto de Registri del Direttorio esecutivo, Seduta del giorno 27. Pratile Anno VI Repubblicano.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Soppressione.

⁶¹ ASM, AFR, 2644.

⁶² Ibid., Il Cittadino Giuseppe Salvagni al Cittadino Locatelli Agente de Beni Nazionali del Dipartimento del Serio, Bergamo, 25. Settembre 1798.

⁶³ Ibid., Carlo Capitanio Architetto al Cittadino Locatelli Agente de Beni Nazionali, Bergamo, 19. Frimale Anno VII.

⁶⁴ Such a delay characterized not only the post-dissolution use of monastic buildings in Bergamo but also the re-use of suppressed convents’ properties in Bologna. There, in fact, the supply of vacant properties surpassed the demand, according to both local and central administrations. The state actually lost money by needing to maintain the buildings not used or sold. ASB, ADBN, 1798, Istruzioni, 138, letters num. 136, 171, and 250.

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Antonio was only partially occupied by military officials, the rest still remained vacant and was now supposed to become a public school.⁶⁵ In 1805, military offices, a public school, and private renters occupied the buildings of S. Antonio, but some of the space still remained vacant.⁶⁶ The suppression of S. Antonio, pursued ostensibly for financial gain, did not lead necessarily to financial gain for the state. The state did earn from the sale of S. Antonio's movables at a public auction. The Cisalpine Republic also nationalized a building complex; however, part of this property remained vacant years after the suppression, which indicates that the state did not need and could not make use of the whole property. The tertiaries of S. Antonio were moved to S. Giuseppe in 1798. There they were expected to assimilate with the tertiaries of S. Giuseppe at no extra cost to the state. As I discuss below, however, the amalgamation of the two communities was not successful. Groups of ex-tertiaries from S. Antonio started to petition the state to secularize and receive pensions in 1799. By doing this, the women religious created an administrative burden both for the local and the central administration.

A close reading of the suppression decree and the surrounding debates reveals both ideological and economic grounds for the dissolutions in 1798. Yet, third order women did not fit the Cisalpine definition of a nun and the poor third order communities lacked estates to solve the Republic's financial needs. S. Antonio was the only third order community of the ones considered in this study to be suppressed in 1798.

⁶⁵ ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Antonio Terziarie Collegio, Congregazione Delegata al Governo Provisorio della Città, e Provincia di Bergamo, 25. Maggio 1800.

⁶⁶ ASM, AFR, 219, "Elenco de' Locali ritenuti di ragione del Demanio, e Diritti uniti pervenuti allo Stato in parte dal cessato Governo Veneto, ed in parte dalle soppressioni seguite, esistenti del Distretto primo, Cantone primo di Bergamo, Dipartimento del Serio, 1805".

The 1805 Decree: The Functional Turn

The next wave of suppressions was decreed by Napoleon on June 8, 1805. Again, the properties of the suppressed and amalgamated religious institutions were to be nationalized, some properties were also to be sold to ease public debt.⁶⁷ However, the decree specified that “educational conservatories and colleges will be preserved in their current number and with their current finances.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, all religious institutions that admitted some educational boarders were considered for preservation, even when such institutions were not singularly engaged in educational activities. These latter institutions were categorized either as “first” or “second” class. “First class” female institutions included twenty-five or more religious sisters and housed at least ten educational boarders; “first class” communities also had to have space to accommodate women religious of the same order from “second class” or suppressed communities. A total of forty institutions in the Kingdom of Italy were classified “first class” and received financial support from the state for the maintenance of the women religious and the communities. Another forty religious houses were classified “second class”. These communities received more limited support from the state and their women religious were expected to transfer to “first class” institutions when vacancies arose. All women religious, whether from “first” or “second” class institutions, could secularize upon receiving an appropriate canonical permission.⁶⁹ All mendicant Capuchin and third order communities were preserved, contingent on the “demonstrated convenience” of such a

⁶⁷ ASM, AFR, 216, June 8, 1805, Article 6, §33-35.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Article 4, §18.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Article 5, §19-24.

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preservation.⁷⁰ With the license of ecclesiastical and secular superiors, educational institutions, “first class” religious institutions, and mendicant communities were all allowed to accept novices.⁷¹ The suppression decree even set a standardized dowry, which, in the case of tertiaries “who lived off teaching externals [i.e. not educational boarders or *educande*] and had not taken solemn vows”, could be decreased if the novices were “women who were singularly able to sustain the works [of the community] and were too poor [to pay the dowry] otherwise.”⁷² The new suppression decree aimed to preserve such communities that engaged in education. The decree established a defined number of such institutions throughout the Kingdom of Italy.

This marked a shift from 1798. The 1805 decree considered some religious institutions – whether conservatories, convents, or third order communities – useful for the state because of the activities the women religious undertook. The preserved institutions became state institutions, funded and controlled by the state, while maintaining their particular character and established activities. The suppression decree detailed a surveillance mechanism of the preserved institutions: ecclesiastical authorities had to control regularly all preserved institutions and report the results to Milan.⁷³ The preserved institutions were thus slotted in a state-coordinated religious framework that emerged in the Republic of Italy and the Kingdom of Italy. The Italian Concordat of 1803 had established Catholicism as the official state religion and given bishops authority over

⁷⁰ Ibid., Article 5, §25.

⁷¹ Ibid., Article 6, §26-27.

⁷² Ibid., Article 6, §30.

⁷³ Ibid., Article 6, §32.

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parish clergy; in return, the state controlled the nomination of bishops and the sale of ecclesiastical lands. In the process of the Concordat's ratification, the supremacy of state law over ecclesiastical law in religious matters was reaffirmed.⁷⁴ Even before the signing of the Concordat, in 1802, a Ministry of Religion was established in Milan. The new minister, Giovanni Bovara, had already served and assisted Joseph II with his ecclesiastical reforms in Lombardy in the late-eighteenth century.⁷⁵ At the helm of the Ministry of Religion, Bovara continued a politico-juridical reorganization of religion by seeking to centrally administer ecclesiastical affairs, curtail abuses of ecclesiastical benefits, and suppress 'useless' religious institutions.⁷⁶ Rather than evidence for Napoleon's "war against God", as Michael Broers describes the Italian Concordat and the ensuing religious politics, the suppressions of 1805 were part of a wider effort to integrate religious institutions into a state-coordinated religious framework and emerge as a continuation of the late-eighteenth century Enlightened reforms that had swept Italy and Europe.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Pillepich, *Napoleone e gli italiani*, 115–119; Stuart Woolf, *A History of Italy 1700-1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change*, 203–204.

⁷⁵ In addition to Giovanni Bovara, 19 of the 44 employees in the new ministry had started their civil administration careers in Austrian Lombardy, while 15 employees had entered public service during the periods of the first and the second Cisalpine Republic. The rest of the employees were hired during the Republic of Italy. Filiberto Agostini, *La riforma napoleonica della chiesa nella Repubblica e nel Regno d'Italia, 1802-1814* (Vicenza: Istituto per le ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa, 1990), 28–33.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 3.

⁷⁷ Broers, *The Politics of Religion in Napoleonic Italy: The War against God, 1801-1814*. Broers does not consider the role of Bovara and Ministry of Religion in Milan. He works with archival material from Paris and local Italian archives that focus on Piedmont, Liguria, Tuscany, Rome and other areas of the Italian peninsula that were either not part of the Republic of Italy/the Kingdom of Italy, or aggregated in the later years of the Kingdom. For further critique of Broers's work, particularly his cultural imperialism approach, see Englund, "Monstre Sacré: The Question of Cultural Imperialism and the Napoleonic Empire."

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The minutes from the State Council meeting that took place on June 5, 1805, three days before the publication of the suppression decree, support this interpretation of the 1805 dissolutions. With the Vice Roy Eugène de Beauharnais and all the ministers of the Kingdom in attendance, the focus of the meeting was on ironing out the details of the suppression decree. The discussion centered on the “service that is expected from these religious and, on the other hand, the maintenance of them.” Rather than suppressing and amalgamating as many religious institutions as possible, the minister of religion favored preserving a greater number of communities, but limiting the number of the religious in each of them. According to Bovara, “the increased number of [preserved] houses would augment the available means of instruction, which would benefit the state.” The number of women’s teaching communities (conservatories and colleges) was fixed so that each Department of the Kingdom would have at least two, and some three. The “first class” institutions were to further bolster the educational services across the Kingdom. The archbishop of Bologna, also present at the meeting, demanded the preservations of third order communities in Bologna that, according to him, “occupy[ed] themselves with the education of girls.” In the end, the State Council decided that all the preserved female communities had to contribute to the “education and teaching [of girls]”. The minutes show that the State Council members were also aware of the many other functions of male and female religious communities, among which they mentioned spiritual care, attending to the poor and the needy, participation in local labor markets, and engaging the youth.⁷⁸ The State Council thus considered some religious institutions socially useful, even necessary. When the 1798 decree had defined “utility” in economic terms, the 1805

⁷⁸ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2543, Consiglio di Stato, Seduta del giorno 5. Giugno 1805.

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decree considered “utility” in terms of social function. Nevertheless, the economic definition of “utility” did not disappear completely. In a letter to Napoleon on July 9, 1805, Bovara emphasized the need to preserve all remaining religious institutions in those Departments where prior suppressions had greatly diminished the number of surviving institutions. The suppressions and preservations that Bovara proposed were the result of “mature and impartial” considerations, influenced by “the interests and the comfort of many people.” The preservation of third order communities was necessitated by their poverty: according to Bovara, the suppression of third orders would cause “great [financial] losses to the state.”⁷⁹ Third order communities could thus survive the second wave of suppressions both when they engaged in socially useful activities as well as when they were too poor to be dissolved.

The unanimity at the State Council did not lead to a linear application of the suppression decree in 1805. On the contrary, the implementation of the decree evidences a divide between the center and the peripheries in Napoleonic Italy that impeded the centralization of religious administration in the Republic of Italy and Kingdom of Italy, which Filiberto Agostini has considered the great achievement of Bovara’s ministry.⁸⁰ Rather than a divide between the central towns and the peripheral hinterlands, which is how Michael Broers frames his discussion of religion in Napoleonic Italy, the suppression decree reveals a deep divide between Milan and the Departments in 1805.⁸¹ This marks

⁷⁹ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2541, num. 7621.

⁸⁰ Agostini does point out the limited reach of the ministry in the countryside. Agostini, *La riforma napoleonica della chiesa nella Repubblica e nel Regno d’Italia, 1802-1814*, chap. 2.

⁸¹ Broers argues for a division between the central cities and the peripheral hinterlands, which became closer in their opposition to Napoleonic religious policies through an adoption of elements of popular piety that had previously characterized only the hinterlands also by the centers. Broers, *The Politics of Religion*

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another continuity with pre-revolutionary Italy, where for centuries the relationships between centers and peripheries had been characterized by negotiation, rather than by structured systems of authority and subordination.⁸² The central administration in Milan depended on reports from Departments to draw up suppression lists and decide on preservations. On June 19, 1805, Bovara sent a circular to the prefects of all Departments demanding information on “which convents in your Department are most able, which carry out established educational activities and have ten or more *educande*, and which among the latter have the greatest number of *educande* and could benefit from preferential treatment.”⁸³ A year later, in a letter sent to the Director General of the National Estate on June 10, 1806, Bovara complained about the quality of the information he had received and the delays this had caused in the suppression process.⁸⁴ Bovara was not alone in complaining about the lack of communication between Milan and the Departments, however. In July 1805, the prefect of the Department of Reno wrote to the Director General of the National Estate to decry lack of information about suppressions. He pointed out:

If the doubts that arise about the destiny of various convents and monasteries in this Department had not forced me to suspend further action on several of them, all or some of the ministerial instructions about suppressions would have

in Napoleonic Italy: The War against God, 1801-1814. See also Broers, “The Myth and Reality of Italian Regionalism: A Historical Geography of Napoleonic Italy, 1801-1814.”

⁸² Julius Kirshner, ed., *The Origins of the State in Italy 1300-1600* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Angela De Benedictis, *Repubblica per Contratto: Bologna: Una Città Europea Nello Stato Della Chiesa* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995).

⁸³ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2541, Circolare num. 6580, June 19, 1805.

⁸⁴ ASM, AFR, 216, Ministro per il Culto al Sig.re Direttore Generale del Demanio, e Diritti Uniti, June 10, 1806.

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already been effected and the operation would have already achieved its desired result.⁸⁵

The study of the suppressions of particular communities underscores such communication issues and reveals divergent perceptions of religious institutions in Milan and the Departments. Consequently, monastic suppressions became a negotiated process between the center and the peripheries in 1805.

The 1805 suppression decree did not affect S. Giuseppe in Bergamo directly but the community's preservation underscores the decisive role of local officials in the dissolutions. In 1803, the mother superior of S. Giuseppe had described her community to the local prefect as a third order community that followed the Franciscan rule and operated an enclosed "academy" for educational boarders; she stated that S. Giuseppe did not operate a public school.⁸⁶ Yet, in 1805, S. Giuseppe was preserved both as a third order house and as a teaching institution. First, in July 1805, S. Giuseppe received notice from the local prefect that the community was preserved as an institution that "has the true characteristics of a *collegio*, with the permission of the ministry of religion."⁸⁷ Then, in September 1805, the same prefect reported to the ministry of religion in Milan that S. Giuseppe had been preserved as a third order community, noting that S. Giuseppe was not necessarily a mendicant community, as the suppression decree prescribed for the preserved third orders.⁸⁸ After 1805, the annual reports that the prefect dispatched to the

⁸⁵ ASM, AFR, 220, num. 13644.

⁸⁶ ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 811, fasc. 2, Superiora delle Monache del Collegio di S. Giuseppe al Prefetto del Dipartimento del Serio, June 16, 1802.

⁸⁷ ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 819, fasc. 5, num. 11148, La Prefettura del Dipartimento del Serio alla Superiora del Collegio di S. Giuseppe, July 19, 1805.

⁸⁸ ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 816, fasc. 1, Quesiti fatti dal S. E. Sig.re Ministro per il Culto alla Prefettura del Serio, September 2, 1805.

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ministry about religious communities in the Department of Serio classified S. Giuseppe as a *collegio* or *conservatorio* and referred to the tertiaries as *madri secolari*, thus describing it as a laical institution for the education of girls.⁸⁹ At local level, S. Giuseppe continued to have multiple identities, as it had had throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁹⁰ The local prefect classified S. Giuseppe as both a third order community and an educational institution, even though the mother superior had expressly stated the the tertiaries did not operate a public school, a pre-requisite for classification as an educational institution. Nonetheless, S. Giuseppe had occupied an important position and fulfilled many central functions in its neighborhood for almost two centuries, as I discuss above. When classifying institutions and communicating with Milan, departmental officials could effect localized interpretations and applications of suppression decrees.

The role of local administrators was also decisive in Bologna. The 1805 suppression decree was applied with little controversy in S. Maria della Carità and S. Elisabetta, where a perceived lack of utility overrode any concerns that might have arisen over the poverty of these two communities.⁹¹ At the time of their suppressions, S. Maria della Carità and S. Elisabetta both generated an annual deficit, their expenses surpassed their income. Comparing the finances of these two communities in 1805 to the report of the agent of the National Estate in the Department of Reno from 1798, discussed above, S. Elisabetta's financial state had deteriorated in the intervening years and the small

⁸⁹ Ibid., fasc. 6.; ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 819, fasc. 4.

⁹⁰ See chapters 1 and 6 in particular.

⁹¹ ASM, AFR, 2287. S. Maria della Carità was suppressed on August 7, 1805 and S. Elisabetta on September 13, 1805.

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annual surplus that the community had reported in 1798 had become an annual deficit by 1805. The suppression act for S. Maria della Carità does not include an assessment of the community's finances in 1805, but the community was operating with an annual deficit in 1798.⁹² Both S. Elisabetta and S. Maria della Carità were stagnating also in terms of their population sizes. At the time of their suppressions, S. Elisabetta counted nine tertiaries and S. Maria della Carità five.⁹³ Compared to 1798, S. Elisabetta had maintained its size but the population of S. Maria della Carità had declined. Moreover, S. Maria della Carità had housed an unspecified number of educational boarders in 1798. No boarders were listed in the suppression act.⁹⁴ S. Elisabetta's suppression act listed one boarder; a later document clarified that the community had in fact been home to a greater, unspecified number of secular boarders until a month before its dissolution, but these women had left when the first news of the impending suppression had reached S. Elisabetta.⁹⁵ Considering the institutional history of S. Elisabetta, these boarders were not necessarily educational boarders, but rather widows and older women who had found shelter with the tertiaries in the later stages of their life. With news of suppression, these mature boarders had probably left to ensure for themselves an alternative place to stay; the community of S. Elisabetta was too weak to retain these fee-paying women during a period of uncertainty.⁹⁶ As I discuss below, S. Elisabetta had struggled since the early-

⁹² ASM, AFR, 2287.

⁹³ ASM, AFR, 220, Elenco delle MM ritrovate ne Monasteri in Bologna che con Decreto 8. Giugno 1805 sono stati Concentrati.

⁹⁴ ASM, AFR, 2287.

⁹⁵ ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Elisabetta, Pietro Belvederi Ragionato on February 1, 1806.

⁹⁶ For the role of third orders as providing a shelter or a place to stay for elderly women, see chapter 4.

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1800s and the tertiaries had even asked for the secularization of their community, but their request had been denied because local officials saw value in S. Elisabetta as a convenient refuge. By summer 1805, both S. Elisabetta and S. Maria della Carità were, however, failing. Neither fulfilled an immediately visible social function by undertaking educational activities and thus failed to meet the criteria for preservation. Despite the poverty of the two communities, which came to burden the state, local officials suppressed both S. Elisabetta and S. Maria della Carità and amalgamated their tertiaries to the Franciscan convent of Corpus Domini.

The suppression of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna, on the other hand, caused controversy that reveals both competing perceptions of monastic dissolutions in the center and the peripheries as well as a lack of communication between Milan and the Departments.⁹⁷ A local suppression act for S. Maria delle Grazie was issued in late July 1805.⁹⁸ Yet, the community survived until 1811/1812. As mentioned above, the minister of religion demanded information on religious institutions that carried out educational activities from all prefects on June 19, 1805.⁹⁹ The information available in Milan and any decisions based on this information depended on local officials. However, local prefects were confused about the new suppression decree of 1805, particularly about the categories of “first” and “second” class institutions.¹⁰⁰ This confusion led to

⁹⁷ The late spring and summer of 1805 saw an administrative re-organization that accompanied the birth of the Kingdom of Italy; the aim was a more centralized state with clear central and local levels of administration. The confusion surrounding S. Maria delle Grazie’s suppression and preservation in summer 1805 reveals delays and contradictions in this re-organization process. De Francesco, *L’Italia di Bonaparte: Politica, statualità e nazione nella penisola tra due rivoluzioni, 1796-1821*, 78–81.

⁹⁸ S. Maria delle Grazie was suppressed on July 26 according to the act in ASM, AFR, 2287.

⁹⁹ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2541, Circolare num. 6580, June 19, 1805.

¹⁰⁰ ASM, AFR, 216, June 8, 1805 & June 10, 1805; ASM, AFR, 220, num. 14342.

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misunderstandings. On July 8, 1805, the minister Bovara published a list of institutions to be suppressed or amalgamated: S. Maria delle Grazie was classed as a “first class” monastic institution and both S. Maria della Carità and S. Elisabetta were designated “second class”.¹⁰¹ In October 1805, the director general for the National Estate asked Bovara for information about the amalgamations of third order communities: in his request, the director general mentioned both S. Elisabetta and S. Maria della Carità in Bologna, which had been amalgamated, but also S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, which had been preserved, as discussed above.¹⁰² The classification of religious institutions was thus inconsistent at central level. These inconsistencies were compounded at Department level. As I pointed out, S. Giuseppe was preserved both as a third order community and as an educational institution. In Bologna, third order communities were seldom classified as such. S. Maria della Carità and S. Elisabetta were classified both as convents and as third order communities. S. Maria delle Grazie was classified as a ‘first class’ institution. The prefect of the Department of Reno expressed his approach to suppressions in late July 1805:

I must note that all the major convents and monasteries of this Department were suppressed during the Cisalpine Republic and the religious houses which remain today are rather poor, indeed almost all of them are mendicant houses, and the buildings and furnishings of these communities are of little use and can give only a limited profit to the state. A zealous, and almost hurried nationalization of such miserable estates would rather burden the Department with the daily, not insignificant expense of providing [pensions] for the people who have no other means of survival and who, until now, have been sustained by the [alms given by the] pious populace... All these considerations together

¹⁰¹ ASM, Atti del governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2541, “Il ministro per il culto in esecuzione del Sovrano Decreto 8. Giugno 1805 determina quanto segue...”, Titolo IV, Reno. ASM, AFR, 220, Elenco delle MM ritrovate ne Monasteri in Bologna che con Decreto 8. Giugno 1805 sono stati Concentrati.

¹⁰² ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2543, Direttore Generale del Demanio, e Diritti uniti al Ministro pel Culto, 25. October 1805.

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have evoked a deliberate slowness to allow time to the minutest economic considerations and the smallest savings.¹⁰³

In the opinion of the local prefect, new suppressions were too expensive. Yet, local officials dissolved S. Maria delle Grazie two days after this letter, on July 29, 1805, even though Bovara had decided to preserve the community. The suppression act referred to a decree from the minister of the finance, as well as the suppression decree, as the basis for “amalgamation”.¹⁰⁴ The act does not specify to which convent the tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie were supposed to be amalgamated. In early August 1805, a few days after the local suppression of S. Maria delle Grazie, the prefect of Reno sent another letter to the director general of the National Estate, announcing that “the local circumstances necessitate[d] that changes be made to the suppression plan issued by the ministry of religion.”¹⁰⁵ Despite its educational activities, which included both a public school and educational boarders and involved a total of forty-seven girls, local officials suppressed S. Maria delle Grazie.¹⁰⁶ This decision may have been informed by financial considerations. The report by the agent of the National Estate had recorded a substantial financial deficit for S. Maria delle Grazie in 1798 but the local suppression act evidences an annual surplus in 1805. The population of S. Maria delle Grazie had remained stable

¹⁰³ ASM, AFR, 220, num. 13644, Il Prefetto del Dipartimento del Reno al Sig.re Direttore Generale del Demanio, e Diritti Uniti, July 27, 1805.

¹⁰⁴ ASM, AFR, 2287, “Possesso preso dal Sig.re Dott.re Zecchini qual Delegato della Prefettura Dip.le del Reno Del Convento di S. M.a Maddalena de Pazzi d.o delle Grazie” July 26, 1805.

¹⁰⁵ ASM, AFR, 220, num. 14342, Il Prefetto del Dipartimento del Reno al Sig.re Direttore Generale del Demanio, ed Uniti, August 7, 1805.

¹⁰⁶ ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Maria delle Grazie, “Ruolo delle Suore Terziarie...”.

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between 1798 and 1805.¹⁰⁷ S. Maria delle Grazie was prospering in 1805. In the letter quoted above, the prefect focused on the financial aspects and objectives of suppression in a way that was reminiscent of 1798 suppressions. The shift in focus in the 1805 suppression was not recognized in Bologna, where the local prefect focused on different suppression criteria than the central administration in Milan.

The information about S. Maria delle Grazie's local suppression either did not reach Milan or was overturned by 1806. In June 1806, Bovara announced revisions to his earlier orders from July 1805 and blamed the "imperfect state of notices provided to me by the [local] prefects" for the changes and updates.¹⁰⁸ S. Maria delle Grazie was listed as a preserved, "first class" institution, which also had to receive the women religious from SS. Filippo and Giacomo, a convent of repentant prostitutes in Bologna, which had been suppressed locally in 1805.¹⁰⁹ The decision to amalgamate SS. Filippo and Giacomo to S. Maria delle Grazie a year after the local suppressions of both communities suggests that there still was a community in SS. Filippo and Giacomo that could be moved and that S. Maria delle Grazie still existed to accept these nuns. The local suppression and central preservation of S. Maria delle Grazie underlines the chaotic character of monastic dissolutions, which were negotiated between the center and the peripheries. Moreover, the case of S. Maria delle Grazie reveals that the shifting focus of the 1805 suppression

¹⁰⁷ ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Maria delle Grazie, "Ruolo delle Suore Terziarie..." and "Ristretto dello stato attivo, e passivo". Communications between S. Maria delle Grazie and the various local officials in the Department of Reno in 1801 and 1802 report a "family" of 36 to 40 people in the community, which would include both tertiaries and any boarders (ASB, Demaniale, 1/1768. Denunzie).

¹⁰⁸ ASM, AFR, 216, *Accompagnatorie diverse del 1806*, Il Ministro per il Culto al Sig.re Direttore Generale del Demanio, e Diritti Uniti, June 10, 1806.

¹⁰⁹ Gabriella Zarri, "I monasteri femminili a Bologna tra il XIII e il XVII secolo," *Atti e memorie: Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Province di Romagna* 24 (1973): 180–181.

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decree towards integrating religious institutions into a state-led framework of religion was not always received, or understood, at local level, where officials focused on financial utility, as defined in the the 1798 suppression decree, rather than on the new emphasis of social utility. Monastic suppressions were therefore not top-down, centralized events. Rather, local officials determined the application of the suppression decrees, which caused differences not only between the central plan and its local outcomes but also between the outcomes in different Departments.

The 1810 Suppressions: Re-Emergence of Ideology

The last Napoleonic suppression in Italy was decreed on April 25, 1810:

With the exception of bishoprics, archbishoprics, seminaries, cathedral chapters, other collegial chapters, the Sisters of Charity, and other houses for female education which we will decide to preserve with special decrees, all other ecclesiastical establishments, corporations, congregations, communities, and associations of whatever nature and denomination are suppressed.¹¹⁰

Yet again, the decree singled out religious institutions that undertook educational activities for preservation, which was made contingent upon further central and local decisions. Local officials decided about initial, provisional preservation.¹¹¹ Central regulations on which institutions to preserve were issued only in March 1811 and in August 1811, when the Vice Roy Eugene de Beauharnais saved certain “religious houses that have devoted themselves to the teaching of young girls” and placed them under the control of diocesan bishops in spiritual matters and the ministry of the interior in matters of education.¹¹² Similarly to 1805, the religious institutions that provided education were

¹¹⁰ ASM, AFR, 216, April 25, 1810, §1.

¹¹¹ ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 819, fasc. 4; ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 9158; ASB, ADBN, 1810, Religioni, 402, Tit. 3, Rub. 7, num. 2459.

¹¹² ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2542, fasc. 1, Estratto degli Originali della Segreteria di Stato.

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subordinated to the state. As in 1805, the 1810 decree also created administrative confusion. However, in contrast to 1805, the 1810 decree was accompanied by criticism of religious institutions and questions were raised about the quality of the education in these institutions. Their perceived social utility no longer shielded religious institutions from criticism over their monastic way of life, which was considered unsuitable.

A collection of letters between the ministers of religion, the interior, and finance and the directors general of the National Estate and Public Education from summer 1810 outlines the continued administrative confusion surrounding suppressions as well as a continued lack of communication between the center and the peripheries. The minister of religion notified the minister of the interior in May 1810 that “I do not give much trust to the information gathered outside of Milan and particularly in the Departments [about the importance and utility of those religious houses preserved until now]... It serves us to begin a new survey [of the remaining religious houses].”¹¹³ Furthermore, according to Bovara, the localities failed to properly understand the suppression decree, preserving all institutions that provided education despite the decree’s emphasis on the need for additional decisions on which institutions to preserve.¹¹⁴ The director general of the National Estate also expressed distrust of localities when he complained about the lacking oversight of institutions that had already been suppressed.¹¹⁵ The problems of 1805

¹¹³ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 5659, Ministro per il Culto al Ministro degli Affari Interni, May 12, 1810. Bovara complained again about the same matter two months later (ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 8002, Ministro per il Culto al Ministro degli Affari Interni, June 26, 1810).

¹¹⁴ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 8227, Ministro per il Culto al Ministro degli Affari Interni, June 29, 1810.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., num. 14320, Direttore Generale del Demanio al Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione, May 18, 1810.

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continued in 1810. However, there was a lack of communication not only between the center and the peripheries but also between the various officials of the central administration. The director general for Public Education was writing to several of his colleagues, asking for information about suppressed and preserved institutions, seemingly unsuccessfully.¹¹⁶ Faced with such administrative confusion, ministers and directors general met to adopt a common resolution on May 21, 1810. They decided to preserve the *status quo*. All *collegi* still in existence were allowed to continue their activities until the end of the year.¹¹⁷ All religious institutions that “applied themselves to the education of women” were preserved according to the 1805 decree.¹¹⁸ The ministers also decided that every Department needed shelters for ex-religious, one for women and one for men.¹¹⁹ Such shelters had already been legislated in 1798 and the new resolution did refer to some such shelters, which were to be used whenever possible. The letters that followed this resolution reveal the financial motives behind preserving the *status quo*. The state lacked the funds to pay pensions and maintain the preserved religious institutions. The minister of finance focused on rationalization: making sure that shelters were the right size for the number of inhabitants who occupied them and moving *educande* from convents to educational institutions in order to suppress convents.¹²⁰ The minister of the

¹¹⁶ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 14320, Direttore Generale del Demanio al Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione, May 18, 1810; ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 1816, Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione al Ministro pel Culto, May 18, 1810.

¹¹⁷ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, “Massime e discipline adottate nella Sessione dei Ministri...”, May 21, 1810, §5.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, §6.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, §1.

¹²⁰ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 7680/8067, Ministro delle Finance al Ministro dell’Interno, June 11, 1810.

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interior was direct about his goals: “The desired result of [my] considerations is motivated by the principle to increase, that is, it is to facilitate the rehabilitation of the property that is to be used [by the state] for the urgent payment of pensions.”¹²¹ Finances had, again, risen to the foreground of central decision making.

The debates that followed the 1810 suppression decree also reveal changing attitudes about the education provided in religious institutions. At local level, officials had expressed ambivalent attitudes about the education provided in religious communities already earlier. In 1807, in a report to the prefect of the Department of Serio on Cappuccin and tertiary communities, the *podestà* of Bergamo sent a list and wrote in the accompanying letter “As far as the proposed amalgamation of convents, I do not know, which houses to add, since the convents appear neither redundant nor too numerous to me, and I find useful and necessary those convents that provide education, thus I can only beg you for their continued conservation.”¹²² Another local official in the Department of Serio was more cautious, however. When sending a similar report to the local prefect in 1807, an official named Della Vite announced that no Cappuccin or tertiary communities remained in his district and added that “Even if, on the one hand, these communities existence would be desirable for the education of young girls, on the other hand, it is better that they don’t exist because, if I tell my honest opinion, I am not too convinced about an education that comes from the heated and fanatic heads that, for the most part, are against governmental decrees and the true morality.”¹²³

¹²¹ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 12006, Ministro dell’Interno al Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione, June 13, 1810.

¹²² ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 816, fasc. 6, num. 4734, Lochis to Cavalier Prefetto.

¹²³ Ibid., Dalla Vite to Cavalier Prefetto.

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A similarly mixed view characterized the ministerial perceptions of religious communities engaged in educational activities by 1810. On the one hand, the ministers – for the first time – expressed concern about the effects the dissolution of women’s religious institutions had on women’s education, calling attention to the decline or complete suppression of women’s education together with the dissolution of women’s religious institutions.¹²⁴ The ministers thus recognized the social function of women’s religious institutions that provided education to women, a major concern of officials in Milan since the Cisalpine Republic.¹²⁵ On the other hand, in 1810, questions were raised about the quality of the education provided in religious institutions. The minister of religion proposed to “gather those ex-religious, either from one or more [suppressed] institutions, into one nationalized locale, who voluntarily would like to continue their praiseworthy educational activities.”¹²⁶ In addition to rationalization, this proposal would have created a nationalized, centrally-controlled school network that would have been dislocated from monastic settings. In 1811, the director general of the Police asked the minister of religion to establish clear guidelines to regulate the educational and religious practices that were permitted within the preserved institutions. According to the director general, there were religious communities that misused their preservation to continue “ancient customs and not distance themselves from monastic practices.” The director

¹²⁴ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 12006, Ministro dell’Interno al Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione, June 13, 1810; ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 2367, Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione al Ministro dell’Interno, June 14, 1810.

¹²⁵ Already in 1798, the director for Public Institution called attention to the need to distribute schools across the republican territory. ASM, AFR, 2081, num. 7122, Direttore per Pubblica Istruzione al Ministero degli Affari Interni, 11. Partile Anno VI.

¹²⁶ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 5659, Ministro per il Culto al Ministro degli Affari Interni, May 12, 1810.

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general also questioned the quality of education in the preserved institutions, which all “had varying and particularistic constitutions that do not permit a unified style of life and system of education to exist [between these institutions].” Here the director general echoed Bovara’s concerns from the year before. The director general also stressed, however, that public schooling would dissolve completely, if all religious institutions were suppressed.¹²⁷ The director general of Public Instruction shared this concern when, in a 1811 letter to the Vice Roy, he argued that the preservation of some convents was necessary because, “while it is clear that the monastic societies must not exist any more, unfortunately it is certain that once such societies are dissolved, new colleges for the education of girls will not be established without extraordinary encouragements.” He concluded his letter:

If the women among us would be more educated, the population would assume the sweeter and softer habits that already characterize the populace in France. The Directorate General for Public Instruction seeks to multiply public schools for girls but, without a central point of reference in every Department, [...] we cannot expect that our efforts have an effect.¹²⁸

According to some high-ranking state officials, the preservation of (some) women’s religious institutions was therefore still part of the Kingdom’s social strategy. And in 1810, the minister of religion went as far as to ask for the re-foundation of some educational institutions in areas where none had been preserved.¹²⁹ Yet, the unanimity that

¹²⁷ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2542, fasc. 1, Direttore Generale della Polizia a Sig.re Conte Senatore Ministro per il Culto, June 25, 1811.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione a Sua Altezza il Principe Vicere, *undated*, 1811.

¹²⁹ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 8002, Ministro per il Culto al Ministro degli Affari Interni, June 26, 1810.

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had characterized the State Council of 1805 was dissolving by 1810-1811.¹³⁰ Ideological objections to religious institutions increasingly competed with concerns about the value of these communities. The director general for Public Instruction ended a letter to the Vice Roy in 1811 with the following words:

“It has never been my intention to preserve the claustral system of education, which can be easily seen as contrary to the interests of the state. I point out the example of the Imperial School of d’Ecovan and I judge that in such a location the education of a limited number of boarders can happen together with the education of “externals” or girls who can attend the elementary schools in that location only during the day. [...] I plead for the establishment of a house of education with a dedicated garden and enclosed area in every Department in order to remove the places of education from a dangerous servitude [to God]. The communes will be obligated to maintain these schools and provide education. Your Highness will be in charge of the regulations regarding the education provided in these now schools or colleges.”¹³¹

An ideological aversion to monastic institutions that had characterized the 1798 suppressions resurfaced strongly in 1810-1811.

Three third order communities considered in this study – S. Giuseppe in Bergamo and Ognisanti and S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna – were suppressed following the decree on April 25, 1810. The three suppressions followed different paths. Ognisanti was dissolved immediately after the proclamation of the decree on May 12, 1810. Ognisanti had shrunk from fourteen tertiaries to nine tertiaries since 1798.¹³² The community was

¹³⁰ Filiberto Agostini has also pointed out that by 1810 Bovara’s correspondence had lost the rhetoric of Enlightened Lombard reformism and the minister’s communications simply reported on the actions taken. Agostini, *La riforma napoleonica della chiesa nella Repubblica e nel Regno d’Italia, 1802-1814*, 90. The end of the Napoleonic period in the Kingdom of Italy has been considered a period of increasingly direct control from France and contracting space for local initiative. Stuart Woolf, *A History of Italy 1700-1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change*, 198–209.

¹³¹ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2542, Direttore Generale della Pubblica Istruzione a Sua Altezza il Principe Vicere, *undated*, 1811.

¹³² ASM, AFR, 2287, Tutti i santi, “Ruolo delle religiose...”; ASM, AFR, 2287, Agente dei Beni Nazionali nel Dipartimento del Reno to Agenzia Centrale de Beni Nazionali, Milano, 4. Pratile, Anno VI, “Dipartimento del Reno; Monache Claustrali e Terziarie”. The convent own account books report thirteen

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also aging with the mean age of the tertiaries at 56 years.¹³³ Financially, Ognisanti had operated without a debt in 1798 and maintained healthy finances at the time of its suppression. As I discuss in chapter 4 above, Ognisanti sheltered a range of educational and secular boarders throughout the eighteenth century and the community's healthy finances in 1810 indicate that the tertiaries probably still accepted boarders. Indeed, the account books of Ognisanti that survive until 1807 show a continued presence of boarders in the community throughout the early-1800s. The accounts record twenty-two "mouths to feed" in June 1798¹³⁴ and twenty-seven "mouths" in December 1807.¹³⁵ Between 1798 and 1807, the number of "mouths to feed" fluctuated between twenty-three and thirty. The annual *stati delle anime* of the parish of S. Biagio, in which Ognisanti was located, record widows, ex-nuns from suppressed convents, and older women living in the community as secular boarders in 1798-1805.¹³⁶ In the early 1800s, a few younger women, sometimes identified as *educande*, were also recorded in the *stati delle anime*.¹³⁷ Yet, neither the 1798 report by the agent of the National Estate nor Ognisanti's suppression act from 1810 include references to it being a teaching community or otherwise 'socially useful', even though a document penned by the director of the National Estate in Bologna in May 1810 did include Ognisanti among the

religious women in the community in May 1798, at the time of the Agent's report. ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, "Giornale d'uscita, 1793-1807", p. 80.

¹³³ ASM, AFR, 2287, Tutti i santi, "Ruolo delle religiose...".

¹³⁴ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, "Giornale d'uscita, 1793-1807", p. 80.

¹³⁵ ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, "Giornale d'uscita, 1793-1807".

¹³⁶ AAB, PS, S. Biagio, 5/32, Stati delle anime, num. 4-11.

¹³⁷ Ibid., num. 9-11.

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four third order communities in Bologna that operated schools for girls in their neighborhoods.¹³⁸ As I discuss above, based on the example of S. Elisabetta, the presence of older boarders was not enough to prove social utility and Ognisanti seems to have had too few *educande* to be considered an educational institute. A document penned by the director of the National Estate in Bologna in May 1810 argued that only those third order communities that operated more than one schoolroom should be preserved in Bologna.¹³⁹ Ognisanti was suppressed a short while later.¹⁴⁰ The community was too small and no longer met the local officials' demands for educational utility.

Santa Maria delle Grazie, after surviving the local suppression of 1805, continued until 1811/1812. It was an educational institution that was provisionally preserved after the 1810 decree. Like Ognisanti, S. Maria delle Grazie was also identified as a third order community that provided education for girls in their local neighborhood in May 1810.¹⁴¹ Unlike Ognisanti, Santa Maria delle Grazie was preserved as an educational institution with a special decree that summer.¹⁴² In September 1811, the prefect of the Department of Reno again provisionally preserved S. Maria delle Grazie with a local decree.¹⁴³ However, the institutional character of the community changed shortly thereafter. The

¹³⁸ The list also included S. Maria delle Grazie. ASB, ADBN, 1810, Religioni, 402, Tit. 3, Rub. 7, num. 1950.

¹³⁹ ASB, ADBN, 1810, Religioni, 402, Tit. 3, Rub. 7, num. 1950.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., num. 2459.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., num. 1950.

¹⁴² Ibid., num. 2459.

¹⁴³ Ibid., num. 3375.

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prefect of the Monte Napoleone¹⁴⁴ announced in late 1812 that S. Maria delle Grazie lost its privilege as a preserved institution and the tertiaries became equal to “other ex-nuns from suppressed corporations on August 29, 1811.”¹⁴⁵ The decree issued by the Vice Roy on August 29, 1811 preserved provisionally those religious houses that dedicated themselves to the education of girls; the Vice Roy singled out the tertiaries of Bologna for such preservation.¹⁴⁶ Yet it appears that it was following this royal decree, and despite the provisional preservation decree by the local prefect immediately thereafter, that S. Maria delle Grazie was dissolved as a third order institution. Again, we see a moment of administrative confusion. Nonetheless, the history of S. Maria delle Grazie did not end here. In late 1811, there was a plan “to reduce this house [S. Maria delle Grazie] into an educational college.”¹⁴⁷ In 1812, a “House of the College of Education [*Casa del Collegio di Educazione*]” by the name of S. Maria Maddalena de Pazzi or S. Maria delle Grazie, led by a Veronica Pilati and also including a Clementina Bertolazzi existed in Bologna.¹⁴⁸ Pilati and Bertolazzi had been tertiaries in S. Maria delle Grazie.¹⁴⁹ All communications from 1812 refer to both Pilati and Bertolazzi as ex-nuns. In late 1812, Pilati wrote to the director of the National Estate in Bologna; she referred to herself as an

¹⁴⁴ Similar to the *monti* in early modern Italy, Monte Napoleone was a financial institution of the Republic of Italy and then of the Kingdom of Italy that managed the public debt of the Republic/Kingdom.

¹⁴⁵ ASB, ADBN, 1813, Pensioni, 13, num. 3., Prefetto del Monte Napoleone al Direttore del Demanio in Bologna, November 14, 1812.

¹⁴⁶ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2542.

¹⁴⁷ ASB, ADBN, 1813, Pensioni, 13, num. 3., Prefetto del Dipartimento del Reno al Direttore Dipartimentale del Demanio, December 28, 1811.

¹⁴⁸ ASB, ADBN, 1813, Pensioni, 13, num. 3.

¹⁴⁹ ASB, ADBN, 1810, Religioni, 402, Tit. 3, Rub. 7, num. 1950.

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ex-nun but stated that the educational institute by the name of S. Maria delle Grazie included a homonymous “religious house [*casa religiosa*]”.¹⁵⁰ The fate of S. Maria delle Grazie thus reflects debates about educational institutions at central and local level around the time of the 1810 suppression decree. A religious institution became a public institution. But, despite losing its status as a religious house, the community continued in the same building and integrated a *casa religiosa*. The educational activities of S. Maria delle Grazie outlived the religious community in 1811/1812.¹⁵¹

The fate of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo followed yet a third pattern. The suppression act of S. Giuseppe dates to September 4, 1811.¹⁵² At that time, the community counted twenty-four tertiaries and five boarders. Among the religious sisters were both tertiaries who had professed in S. Giuseppe and those who had been amalgamated from S. Antonio in 1798. Among the boarders were three secularized ex-nuns from near-by suppressed communities and two servant women. S. Giuseppe also operated a school for girls. S. Giuseppe was ‘socially useful’ on two levels, both as an educational institution and as a retreat for ex-religious. In 1808, in a report to the Ministry of Religion, the prefect of Serio had described S. Giuseppe as a tertiary community that had a school and that was

¹⁵⁰ ASB, ADBN, 1813, Pensioni, 13, num. 3., Veronica Pilati Conduttrice della Casa del Collegio di Educazione in questa Comune denominate S. Maria Maddalena de Pazzi detta delle Grazie al Direttore del regno Demanio del Reno, *undated but in late-1812*.

¹⁵¹ S. Maria delle Grazie was re-established during the restoration and the third order community still exists today in Bologna, occupying some of the same property on present day Via Altasetta that it used to at the turn of the eighteenth century. Today, the tertiaries operate a kindergarten, a university residence, and a retirement community, and accommodate the family members of patients treated in hospitals in Bologna. I would like to thank the mother Maria Paolina del Vecchio for sending me all her publications on the history of her community.

¹⁵² ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Giuseppe.

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preserved as a *collegio*.¹⁵³ Unlike the central suppression decrees, which already differentiated between monastic communities and third order communities, local officials were applying these categories inconsistently. In May 1810, the local prefect preserved S. Giuseppe provisionally, because it was a monastic community that accepted girls in education and remained “convenient” in the contemporary institutional landscape of the Department of Serio.¹⁵⁴ However, unlike S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna, S. Giuseppe did not survive the autumn of 1811 and was not transformed into an educational institution. As a religious community it was suppressed in September 1811.

By 1811 all third order communities considered in this study were either dissolved or transformed into educational institutions without monastic character. A close study of third order communities between 1798 and 1811/12 problematizes the current historiography that considers monastic suppressions to have been top-down and centralized; instead, the fate of third orders at the turn of the nineteenth century reveals negotiation between the center and the peripheries over religious institutions and their place in revolutionary and Napoleonic Italian society. However, I have followed a well-trodden path until now by analyzing state papers and giving no space to the voices from within the religious institutions. I now turn to these voices, which further question the current historiography of monastic suppressions. The voices of the women religious have

¹⁵³ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2544, num. 6948/161.

¹⁵⁴ ASM, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, num. 9158, Il Prefetto del Dipartimento del Serio al Ministro per il Culto, May 11, 1810.

already been studied for France and southern-Germany.¹⁵⁵ In the scholarship on Italy, these voices are missing until now.

iii. The voices of the women religious

The treasurer of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, *suor* Elena Terzi, appealed to the Executive Directory in June 1798. She wished to increase the interest rates of her community's credit contracts. Terzi stressed that her community was facing "calamitous times." Yet, the tertiary concluded her appeal by assuring that "we never stop to extend our prayers to Our Lord for your [the Executive Directory] preservation and for the preservation of our happy, immortal Republic."¹⁵⁶ This appeal underlines two characteristics of the suppression period as it was experienced by third order communities. On the one hand, the post-1798 life was unrecognizable compared to the earlier times. Not only did third order communities face the possibility or the fact of their own dissolution, the women religious also witnessed other communities being suppressed. On the other hand, third order communities continued their social and economic interactions and communal lives also after 1798: like *suor* Terzi, the women religious still managed credit contracts and offered intercessory prayer to those with who they corresponded. Both drastic change and simple continuities characterized the lives of women religious during the period of monastic suppressions.

¹⁵⁵ Betros, "Liberty, Citizenship and the Suppression of Female Religious Communities in France, 1789-90"; Janine Christina Maegraith, "Nun Apothecaries and the Impact of the Secularization in Southwest Germany," *Continuity and Change* 25 (2010): 313-44; Mangion, "Avoiding 'Rash and Imprudent Measures': English Nuns in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1801." But see also Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*, chap. 2. Ute Ströbele's work on Josephine suppressions also discusses the nuns' appeals against suppression decisions and reveals the religious women's awareness of the political and social debates and discourses regarding the 1782 suppression, see Ströbele, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: die Aufhebung südwestdeutscher Frauenklöster unter Kaiser Joseph II*, 109-111.

¹⁵⁶ ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Giuseppe, Elena Terzi al Presidente del Direttorio Essecutivo, 4. Messidoro Anno VI

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Limited sources offer insights on the daily life of third order communities in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. These sources reveal continuation of the activities in which the women religious had engaged throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Financial records of third order communities show that women religious continued to contract new credit agreements until the suppression of their communities.¹⁵⁷ Most third order communities continued to accept *educande* and secular boarders.¹⁵⁸ Some communities also admitted new tertiaries. The tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna accepted several novices in 1805.¹⁵⁹ All third order communities accepted ex-nuns from the suppressed religious institutions. S. Giuseppe in Bergamo amalgamated tertiaries from the suppressed S. Antonio, but also women religious from third order communities in nearby Clusone, Gandino, and Ambivere.¹⁶⁰ In Bologna, *stati delle anime* reveal that Ognisanti accommodated numerous ex-nuns throughout the late 1790s and the early 1800s; S. Maria della Carità accepted at least one ex-nun as a boarder in 1800.¹⁶¹ Both S. Elisabetta and S. Maria delle Grazie were expected to amalgamate tertiaries from the suppressed third order communities of their own order in Loiano and

¹⁵⁷ ASM, AGFR, S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, 2973-2976.

¹⁵⁸ The account books of Ognisanti show a steady flow of boarders entering the community between 1793 and 1807 (ASB, Demaniale, 13/6290, "Giornale d'uscita, 1793-1807"). S. Elisabetta was negotiating with ecclesiastical authorities to accept Marquise Ghislieri, her servant and her daughter as boarders in 1799 (AAB, Miscellanea Vecchie, 246, Licenze agli operai, ministri, ed altri addetti ai monasteri di potervi avere accesso, December 9, 1799).

¹⁵⁹ ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Maria delle Grazie

¹⁶⁰ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1832, S. Antonio di Padova; ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Giuseppe.

¹⁶¹ AAB, Stati delle anime, S. Biagio, 5/32, stati delle anime, num. 4-11; AAB, MV, 246, Licenze agli operai, ministri, ed altri addetti ai monasteri di potervi avere accesso, February 8, 1800.

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Medicina respectively.¹⁶² The communities also continued other habitual struggles. The account books of Ognisanti show that the main expenses of the women religious remained consistent between 1793 and 1807; these included food stuffs, heating, building maintenance, religious fees, and public taxes. In 1809-1810, Ognisanti also undertook an extensive restoration of its main building and two adjacent houses.¹⁶³ S. Giuseppe in Bergamo struggled to find a priest to celebrate Mass in its church in the early-nineteenth century; nonetheless, the tertiaries recorded that they had the necessary funds to celebrate Masses for the “following thirty years.”¹⁶⁴ Between 1805-1810, S. Giuseppe also finalized several new rental agreements for periods up to fifteen years.¹⁶⁵ Third order communities thus continued their daily lives and also planned for the future in the early-nineteenth century, even though suppressions were a reality both outside as well as inside these communities due to the many ex-nuns who became boarders in third order communities. Compared to male orders, female communities were suppressed more slowly, which may have helped to maintain focus on daily concerns.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, as the study of suppression decrees above reveals, suppression was not inevitable, at least not until 1810.

Nevertheless, things did change after the arrival of French troops in Italy.

Frequent administrative changes, new laws and regulations, and the presence of foreign

¹⁶² ASB, ADBN, 1798, *Regolari*, 144, num. 525.

¹⁶³ ASB, *Demaniale*, 15/6292.

¹⁶⁴ ASM, AGFR, 2981, *Registro delle obbligazioni delle Messe e loro Adempimento*, 1; ASM, AGFR, 2981, *Registro delle obbligazioni delle Messe e loro Adempimento*, 2.

¹⁶⁵ ASM, AFR, 2281, S. Giuseppe.

¹⁶⁶ Martina, “Gli istituti religiosi nello Stato Pontificio negli anni 1789-1799,” 459.

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troops brought bans on accepting new religious women, restrictions on sale and rent of ecclesiastical property, and other policies that seemed to favor a long-term extinction of religious communities.¹⁶⁷ The late 1790s also saw harvest failure in the Cisalpine Republic.¹⁶⁸ The tertiaries of S. Elisabetta in Bologna were forced take out a loan to buy food for the community struck by the bad harvest in autumn 1800. The loan remained unpaid in 1806, a year after the suppression of the community, and limited the pensions of the tertiaries.¹⁶⁹ In a surprising move, the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta had petitioned for the dissolution of their community already in the early 1800s.¹⁷⁰ A response to the tertiaries' petition, the text of which does not survive, indicates that the women asked for suppression due the failing finances of the community. The vicar general denied the tertiaries' request because a suppression would have benefitted "neither the public good nor the private interests of the *suore*." According to the vicar general, the 'public good' would have been damaged because Bologna had lacked "the considerable benefit of having a provisional place where to place the unmarried girls facing some danger" as well as of a place where to send married women, who needed shelter from "inconveniences that can arise between a husband and a wife and that can be resolved

¹⁶⁷ Agostini, *La riforma napoleonica della chiesa nella Repubblica e nel Regno d'Italia, 1802-1814*; Luigi Fiorani, ed., *La rivoluzione nello Stato della Chiesa, 1789-1799* (Pisa and Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1997).

¹⁶⁸ Gian Lodovico Masetti Zannini, "Soppressioni e sopravvivenza di benedettine in Romagna," in *Il monachesimo italiano dalle riforme illuministiche all'unità nazionale (1768-1870). Atti del II Convegno di studi storici sull'Italia benedettina.*, ed. Francesco G. B. Trolese (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1992); Pillepich, *Napoleone e gli italiani*, 38–40.

¹⁶⁹ ASM, AFR, 2287, S. Elisabetta.

¹⁷⁰ Ute Ströbele also briefly refers to a third order convent that asked to be suppressed in southwestern Germany in the early 1790s. The community in question had become small to continue. Ströbele, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: die Aufhebung südwestdeutscher Frauenklöster unter Kaiser Joseph II*, 71.

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using the means of such a retreat.” The ‘private interest’ of the tertiaries would have suffered because “if the *suore* were incapable of supporting themselves when living together in a community, they would face even greater financial hardship living apart.”¹⁷¹ A local ecclesiastical authority thus saw continued social utility in S. Elisabetta, even if the community was financially failing. The prediction that the women religious would not solve their financial hardships by dissolving their community was, however, realistic. Following a dissolution, ex-religious could return to their families, which frequently caused tensions. The Cisalpine authorities received numerous complaints from families of ex-religious about the extra cost of food, servants, and care for the aging and ailing ex-women religious that the families suddenly faced.¹⁷² The ex-religious often petitioned the authorities to continue living in their suppressed communities.¹⁷³ As discussed above, the 1798 and the 1810 suppression decrees sought to set up shelters for ex-religious in all Departments. Even though the reasons for the suppressions evolved over time, the social consequences of the dissolutions remained constant throughout the early 1800s. The payment of pensions to ex-religious was often delayed due to budgetary issues and the ex-religious frequently also lacked the necessary Cisalpine citizenship to receive a pension.¹⁷⁴ Some families petitioned for the restitutions of the dowry together with a

¹⁷¹ AAB, MV, 265, S. Elisabetta, num. 38. This is an undated letter in draft format. The archivist has identified the letter as “Dopo l’anno 1800. Ritiro di S. Elisabetta in Città per le fanciulle pericolanti e per la correzione delle maritate”

¹⁷² ASB, ADBN, 1798, Regolari, 144-146.

¹⁷³ ASB, ADBN, 1798-1799, Regolari, 169, #126.

¹⁷⁴ Pensions were paid only to those ex-religious, who were from the territory that belonged to first the Cisalpine Republic and later the Republic of Italy/Kingdom of Italy. If a woman religious had entered a convent in Bologna from territories outside the Cisalpine borders, she did not qualify for a pension. ASB, ADBN, 1800-1801, Regolari, 207, num. 1257; ASM, AFR, 219, num. 9724.796.

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pension because, they argued, the ex-religious could not hope to succeed outside their religious institution without a dowry “due to the reason of their sex and the lack of personal property.”¹⁷⁵ Therefore, even though the tertiaries of S. Elisabetta saw the dissolution of their community as an opportunity to resolve a financial difficulty, the conditions of suppression were not in favor of women religious.

The situation was particularly difficult for third order communities. The state assigned pension to ex-religious on the basis of the wealth of their dissolved community. Since third order communities were smaller and poorer than enclosed convents, the pensions of the ex-tertiaries were rarely enough to support them. The Servite tertiaries of S. Lorenzo in Budrio, in the hinterland of Bologna, petitioned for an increase of their pensions in 1798:

It is true that the assigned [pension] corresponds to the past income [of the convent]; however, one must consider that the nuns supplemented their convent's income by preparing church-vestments for this commune, by running a public school in their convent, and by going out to beg regularly... since they lack this additional income today, the women cannot subsist on the money given to them.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ ASB, ADBN, 1798-1799, Regolari, 166, #740. The archives in Bologna include several cases where the families of ex-nuns demanded both local and central administration for pensions for their daughters or sisters who had returned to the family after the suppression of their monastic institution but who did not receive a pension for various reasons. In one case, a Sebastiano Errani from Ravenna, whose two sisters had been nuns in the Carmelite convent in Medicina suppressed in 1798, repeatedly complained about having to maintain his two sisters in his home without any subsidy from the state. The Errani sisters had professed in 1797 and their names were not included in the pension rolls. The case lasted until 1806, when the profession of the sisters in the community was recognized and the sisters added to pension rolls. The documents related to the Errani case and other similar ones are distributed sporadically throughout the archival boxes catalogued as “Regolari” and “Pensioni” within ASB, ADBN. For the Errani case, see Lehtsalu, “Rethinking Monastic Suppressions in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Italy: How Women Religious Negotiated for Their Communities.” Janine Maegraith has discussed the gendered nature of the fate of ex-religious in Maegraith, “Nun Apothecaries and the Impact of the Secularization in Southwest Germany,” while Ute Ströbele provides a detailed overview of the fate of ex-nuns in southwestern Germany after the Josephine suppressions in Ströbele, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: die Aufhebung südwestdeutscher Frauenklöster unter Kaiser Joseph II*, chap. 8.

¹⁷⁶ ASB, ADBN, 1798-1799, Regolari, 168, #1624.

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A year later, the tertiaries of S. Lorenzo asked again for a pension increase. This time they pointed out old age and lacking opportunities to earn an additional income as the causes of their misery.¹⁷⁷ A group of ex-tertiaries in Medicina, also in the Bolognese hinterland, asked the officials to disregard the fact that they had moved away from the Cisalpine Republic and thus did not qualify for pensions any more; they justified their move by saying, “with the small pension of 15 *lire* a month that was assigned [to us], it is impossible that [we are] able to sustain ourselves living in this region, away from our [respective family] homes.”¹⁷⁸ Another group of ex-tertiaries from the same community in Medicina had remained in the village and lived in the house of a benefactress; they petitioned the officials in Bologna for a pension increase because the benefactress who hosted the ex-tertiaries was experiencing financial difficulties and could no longer house the ex-tertiaries. Ex-tertiaries thus eked out a living for themselves by relying on benefactors and on their own ability to negotiate with state representatives. These women were not passive by-standers to the dissolution of their communities but sought to mitigate the situation to the best of their ability.

When communicating with authorities, tertiaries and ex-tertiaries displayed awareness of current political and social discourses and sought to use these discourses to their own advantage. The ex-tertiaries of Medicina included a notice of deteriorating public sentiment in Medicina in one of their many letters to Bologna.¹⁷⁹ At the time, officials were concerned about the threat to public order caused by delayed pension

¹⁷⁷ ASB, ADBN, 1799-1800, Regolari, 189, num. 236.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., num. 585.

¹⁷⁹ ASB, ADBN, 1799-1800, Regolari, 190, num. 504.

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payments. “The aim of the pension payments is to secure the integrity of the government, but they also serve to protect the government from the disgrace of public calamities,” wrote a Bolognese departmental administrator to the Administrative Commission of the National Estate in October 1800.¹⁸⁰ In August 1801, a group of ex-nuns petitioned the State Council on behalf of all ex-nuns in the commune of Bologna; the women protested a recent full-scale suspension of pension payments in the Department of Reno, called the measure cruel and against the intensions of the central administration in Milan, and issued the following threat: “They [the ex-nuns] ask for compassion and justice from this higher government, which orders are being disrespected with barbaric procedures and in a manner which may pose a threat to public peace.”¹⁸¹ The women religious sought to play the central authorities in Milan against local Bolognese officials, relying on the divide between the center and the peripheries, which I discuss above. Both the central and local officials had been concerned about the negative effects of suppressions on public opinion since the first dissolutions. In 1798, local officials were encouraged to conduct the dissolutions so as not to “alienate the confidence of the citizens in those, who due to necessity, dictate the laws.”¹⁸² In the Republic of Italy and the Kingdom of Italy, administrative centralization saw Milan take over pension payments from the localities. Yet, payments remained irregular. Ex-tertiaries of S. Elisabetta and S. Maria della Carità had not received any payments by spring 1806, half a year after the dissolution of their communities. Indeed, in 1805 the local director of the National Estate in Bologna wrote

¹⁸⁰ ASB, ADBN, 1800-1801, Regolari, 204, num. 59.

¹⁸¹ ASB, ADBN, 1800-1801, Regolari, 207, num. 1257.

¹⁸² ASB, ADBN, 1798, Regolari, 146, num. 685. L’Agenzia Centrale dei Beni Nazionali all’Agente de Beni Nazionali nel Dipartimento del Reno, 18. Messidoro Anno VI.

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to the General Directorate in Milan, describing the situation of the ex-religious as deplorable and saying that some ex-nuns had been reduced to begging, a reality which, according to him, “caused tensions among the populace.”¹⁸³ The references to public opinion and disorder that the ex-tertiaries of Medicina used in their appeal thus resonated with the concerns of the administration.

But even more than using the rhetoric of public unrest, third order communities resorted to language that emphasized the utility of their communities to the society. In the process, women religious displayed awareness of social and political developments. In 1804, the third order community of S. Maria delle Grazie petitioned for more funds from the state and presented the history of the community in the following manner:

The wise founder of the community saw that the limited funds of the community and contemplative life could not provide for the sustenance of this devote family alone. Thus, he proposed that the community, adapting to active life, could receive girls in education in order to make their institution also benefit the society, and to use the monthly fees received for the girls in education for the community’s sustenance. [...] Now, in fact, these good religious women apply themselves to the education of girls and since the suppression of many monasteries has taken away many means to protect and instruct daughters whose parents, either because of impotence or because of their love for freedom wish to liberate themselves from the burden of education, the competition to gain a place in the school [of S. Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi] is greater than ever. [In this school, the girls are,] due to the patience and the industriousness of the tertiaryes, very well instructed in domestic economy and in every other womanly work, and, if the girls have the talent and the inclination, even in singing and the playing of instruments.¹⁸⁴

The community put clear emphasis on its educational activities that, according to the petition, made the women religious useful for the society. Furthermore, the tertiaryes pointed out that the community had become even more useful since the suppressions started. The additional funds for the community were not found. However, the minister of

¹⁸³ ASB, ADBN, 1805, Regolari, 288, num. 537.

¹⁸⁴ AAB, MV, 283, Santa Maria de’ Pazzi, 1804-1805, unnumbered and undated.

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religion Bovara, in a letter to the archbishop of Bologna, stressed “how much I admire from the bottom of my heart those monasteries that apply themselves, for the good of the society, to the instruction of the unmarried women [*zitelle*].”¹⁸⁵ A year later, in spring 1805, the tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie came in contact with the Bolognese authorities again. The women religious successfully petitioned the local authorities, on two separate occasions, to admit a total of three religious sisters. One of the petitions stressed that “since the convent receives its income from the education of young girls, and since there are only a few nuns apt for the job of teaching, it benefits the convent to include these two young women among the nuns”.¹⁸⁶ The Bolognese authorities gave the permission because it was to “benefit the education of young girls”.¹⁸⁷

The longer a community survived, the more experience its members had in communicating with state officials, first Cisalpine and then Napoleonic. The communities’ leaders – mothers superior, vicaresses, and treasurers – frequently needed to respond to questionnaires about the finances and the population of their institutions.¹⁸⁸ The information they provided influenced the future of their communities, something of which the women were no doubt aware. The mother superior of S. Giuseppe in Bergamo, for example, appealed to the local prefect to receive an extension on one such report in

¹⁸⁵ AAB, MV, 283, Santa Maria de’ Pazzi, 1804-1805, Bovara to the Archbishop of Bologna, January 9, 1804.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., Assunti del Convento delle Terziarie di S. Maria Maddalena delle Grazie al Perfetto del Dipartimento del Reno, June 8, 1805.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., Prefect of the Department of Reno to the Delegate for the Cult in the District of Bologna, April 23, 1805.

¹⁸⁸ For example, ASB, ADBN, 1798, Istruzioni, 137, num. 60 (26. Piovoso, Anno VI); ASB, ADBN, 1801-1802, Regolari, 227, num. 840 (May 30, 1802); ASB, ADBN, 1806, Regolari, 310, num. 325 (April 4, 1806); ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 811, fasc. 2, num. 5477 (24. Termidoro Anno VIII); *ibid.*, num. 2525 (August 23, 1802).

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October 1804, claiming that the required report was complex and she needed more time to gather the information.¹⁸⁹ Yet the information requested in 1804 did not differ from earlier reports that had inquired after similar financial and population details. The tertiaries were cautious, deliberately stalling, or seeking to hinder the work of the local and central administrations.

The tertiaries were also aware of the laws and procedures that guided the suppressions. The 1798 amalgamation of S. Antonio with S. Giuseppe in Bergamo caused discontent on all sides. In late 1799, the administrators of Bergamo received several petitions from the ex-tertiaries of S. Antonio who asked for permission to secularize and leave S. Giuseppe. The women claimed that they were “badly received and scarcely fed, leading unhappy days.” The ex-tertiaries asked for “the permission to be able to exit from this place [S. Giuseppe] and to be made equal to those ex-tertiaries who have already left for [the purpose of] attaining the annual pension.” One of the tertiaries wishing to leave, *suor* Giacinta Viscardi, specified that she wished:

to exit in order to pass to the house of my brother, with the intention to profess in one of those shelters to which the Supreme Kindness has granted the right to accept novices; at the same time, I petition that a pension would be granted to me as it has been to others [...].¹⁹⁰

These petitions highlight the tertiaries’ familiarity with the laws and procedures governing religious institutions and ex-religious. The women referred to their right to have a pension, as well as the possibility to enter another religious community that still had the approval of the state. Another group of ex-tertiaries from S. Antonio cited laws, even specific paragraphs, in their petitions to the commissioner of the Executive Power in

¹⁸⁹ ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 819, fasc. 5.

¹⁹⁰ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1832, S. Antonio di Padova, unnumbered letters.

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Bergamo in February 1799. Repetitions in this second patch of letters raise questions about the authorship of these petitions; however, in a unique section of one of the petitions, *suor* Caterina Pesenti asked:

As I find myself to be one of those considered in the law mentioned above, I turn to your authority so that you would satisfy my petition and I beg you to relay it on to the Executive Director with an accompanying letter so that he could order S. Giuseppe, which I will abandon, to fix me the pension accorded to me by the law.¹⁹¹

Wishing to leave a community where they did not feel welcome, the ex-tertiaries of S. Antonio, as a group, showed both familiarity with laws and procedures as well as a desire to negotiate their own post-suppression experience.

The petitions also reveal that the women religious inhabited a rapidly changing world that, nonetheless, had changed little compared to the eighteenth century. In his response to the complaints by the ex-tertiaries of S. Antonio, the director of the Religious Estates first pointed out that the tertiaryes displayed “a certain air of discontent for the treatment they receive in S. Giuseppe or for other reasons that easily arise in a community, particularly a community of women.” To resolve the situation, the director suggested, the prefecture in Bergamo should have turned to the local ecclesiastical authorities to “re-establish harmony and that charitable and reciprocal tolerance and unity that is the fundamental maxim demanded of all religious, and particularly of those who have entered the state of perfection.”¹⁹² The director’s suggestions recall the decrees left by pastoral visitors throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries that called for peace and mutual understanding in female monastic communities. In Bergamo, bishop

¹⁹¹ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1832, S. Antonio di Padova, unnumbered letters, Catterina Pesenti on February 3, 1799 (15. Pluviose, VII).

¹⁹² Ibid., Direttore Fondo della Religione al Delegato di Governo in Bergamo, 6. Dicembre 1799.

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Antonio Redetti had sent both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe, among all other female religious communities, annual pastoral letters that contained this message in 1732-1771.¹⁹³ On the one hand, suppressions dismantled established social institutions. On the other hand, officials still expected a certain behavior from women religious, a behavior that had been expected from women religious for centuries. This interplay between continuities and discontinuities was also reflected in the petitions by the women religious, which often concluded with promises to pray for their correspondents or, as the tertiaries of S. Antonio promised, “these poor Mothers do not stop, and never will stop, in their orations to God to pray for the prosperity of your Highness.”¹⁹⁴

The tertiaries, indeed, draw upon a long tradition of petitioning. Both S. Antonio and S. Giuseppe had petitioned the Venetian podestà in Bergamo and the Council of Ten in Venice to incorporate new buildings and deny access certain women already in the later-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.¹⁹⁵ S. Giuseppe referred to these earlier petitions and their outcomes in the community’s petitions to the representatives of the Kingdom of Italy. In late June 1805, S. Giuseppe in Bergamo petitioned the minister of religion to be recognized as a lay institution. The petition, signed by the mother superior, the vicarress, and the treasurer, gave a short history of the institution. The tertiaries emphasized that their community had been founded in the seventeenth century by a group of secular women with a shared a concern for “exemplary behavior and the education of

¹⁹³ ASM, AGFR, 2945, Pastoral. For the role of local ecclesiastical hierarchy in the administration of third order communities, see chapter 6.

¹⁹⁴ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte antica, 1832, S. Giuseppe, “Le monache del soppresso convent di S. Antonio di questo Borgo...” 1799.

¹⁹⁵ See chapters 4, 5, and 6.

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girls” and stressed multiple times that S. Giuseppe was a “secular”, “lay” institution dedicated to education.¹⁹⁶ In responses to earlier petitions by S. Giuseppe in 1668, 1718, 1730, 1737, and 1759, the Venetian authorities had recognized S. Giuseppe as a “secular community” that educated the young ladies of Bergamo. The tertiaries appended these earlier petitions and the Venetian responses to their supplication in 1805. In the words of the tertiaries:

“[...] given the laical character of this asylum, and given its institutional education of girls, the secular women who find themselves retired in this institution should not, on any ground, fear to be subjected to the dispositions of Article V of the law regarding religious establishments [...]”¹⁹⁷

The *suore* convinced the minister of religion. In his to the local prefect, Bovara announced: “the religious women of S. Giuseppe... have produced unquestionable documents which attest to [its] true character as a *collegio*.”¹⁹⁸ The public utility of S. Giuseppe was thus recognized, with reference to and in continuity with earlier precedent.

The third order women religious who negotiated for their communities and for their own post-suppressions livelihoods exemplify that nuns and tertiaries did not remain passive victims of the monastic suppressions in Italy. Like the religious women in France and in southern-Germany, the women religious in the Cisalpine Republic and in the Republic of Italy and the Kingdom of Italy responded to the suppressions in various ways; they requested dissolutions, resisted suppressions, and negotiated suppressions on their own terms. They communicated with the authorities to keep their religious houses

¹⁹⁶ ASM, Atti di governo, Culto, Parte moderna, 2557, S. Giuseppe.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ ASBg, Dipartimento del Serio, 819, fasc. 5., num. 7139, Ministro per il Culto al Prefetto del Dipartimento del Serio, July 5, 1805.

functioning and, when that had failed, to provide for their futures. They were not afraid to include threats. Women religious were actively involved in the suppressions.

Conclusions

The suppressions in 1798, 1805 and 1810 were three distinct events that affected all religious institutions on the Italian peninsula, third order communities included. The study of third order dissolutions has revealed the different motivations of the three suppression decrees, but also the differentiated application of these decrees in the localities. Despite the centralizing policies in both the Republic of Italy and the Kingdom of Italy, the center and the peripheries remained divided in early-nineteenth century Italy. The petitions and appeals of the religious women during and after the suppression of their communities reveal the active role of these women in the dissolutions. Rather than being helpless victims, women religious negotiated their own fate and that of their communities, even when the possible results of such negotiations were framed by the suppression decrees. The tertiaries of S. Maria delle Grazie, appealing to the changes on the educational landscape in Bologna, demonstrate that the suppressions were also experienced as an opportunity by some women religious. Indeed, monastic dissolutions, even though they were disruptive, also paved the way for the emergence of new religious and social institutions of the nineteenth century.¹⁹⁹ The nineteenth century saw the rise of new, non-enclosed and socially active female religious communities in Italy,

¹⁹⁹ Mario Fanti, when discussing the suppressions of confraternities in Bologna during the Cisalpine Republic, concludes that, even though the dissolutions were an end point in the long history of Bolognese confraternities, these suppressions paved way for a new, centralized systems of charity in the nineteenth century. Fanti, "La crisi delle confraternite e delle istituzioni assistenziali a Bologna alla fine del Settecento." For the history of confraternities in medieval and early modern Bologna and Italy, see Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Nicholas Terpstra, ed., *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

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predominately in north-central Italy. Many of these new institutions were founded as educational institutions or saw the women religious active in sick care, women's prisons, or as missionaries.²⁰⁰ Such socially useful forms of religious institutions had been preferred by the suppression decrees and many third order communities survived the earlier decrees because the women religious actively contributed to their local society, as they had done throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. For third order communities, the monastic suppressions represented but a stage in a longer institutional history, which for some of these communities, like S. Maria delle Grazie in Bologna for example, also continued in the nineteenth century.

²⁰⁰ Marina Caffiero, "Dall'esplosione mistica tardo-barocca all'apostolato sociale (1650-1850)," in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994); Giancarlo Rocca, *Donne religiose. Contribuito a una storia della condizione femminile in Italia nei secoli XIX-XX* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1992).

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In the late-seventeenth century, a widowed Bolognese noblewoman, countess Clemenza Ercolani wished to found a non-enclosed institution for noble women in Bologna, dedicated to St. Catherine of Siena and St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

[...] I see that there are various pious institutions, both with and without enclosure, in this city of Bologna, my *Patria*, which accept and retire young girls (*putte*), unmarried women (*zitelle*), and women from poor families, both of the low and the ordinary rank; however, there is no place or similar institution which would accept noble *zitelle*, *putte*, and widows, who cannot marry according to their rank for the lack of sufficient fortune [i.e. dowry] or do not want to become nuns for the lack of vocation to lock themselves in the *clausura* of monasteries, but who still wish to serve God and live far from the pomp and obligations of the World in a humble, private, and devote retreat among other noblewomen of equal rank [...]¹

Her plans faced resistance from the archbishop Giacomo Boncompagni, who opposed both Ercolani's plan to trust the spiritual care of the new institution to the Jesuits as well as her desire to have a secular institution without the rules and regulations of monastic institutions (i.e. enclosure). In 1694, Ercolani accused Boncompagni of not considering the example of other similar institutions, also in the Papal States:

My conservatory is to be secular and without *clausura* – in full and forever – like the conservatory in Rimini; why do they wish to stop me from founding it? [...] If a foundation of a Franciscan convent was proposed, according to the rules of St. Clare, who would oppose it then?²

The college for noble women imagined by Ercolani finally opened in 1721, more than two decades after her death, but it only had a short existence before it was dissolved by pope Benedict XIV (Prospero Lambertini). Sara Cabibbo and Adriana Loffredo interpret

¹ Excerpt from the last will of Clemenza Ercolani, quoted in Sara Cabibbo and Adriana Loffredo, "Viver vita laica, devota e libera: La 'terza via' di Clemenza Ercolani Leoni, vedova bolognese," in *Archivio per la storia delle donne*, ed. Adriana Valerio, vol. I (Naples: Fondazione Pasquale Valerio, 2004), 202.

² Quoted in *Ibid.*, 199.

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the discontent of Ercolani and the opposition she faced through the prism of Trent and its attempts to control women's institutions: "It would appear that signora Clemenza had had enough of the zeal of post-Tridentine bishops who had alienated both cities and women of their right to take care of their own interests, pursue their own strategies, and fulfill their own wishes; it would appear that she expressed nostalgia for a pre-Tridentine past, when *regole antiche* supported the development of female lay congregations."³ Such an interpretation fits with current historiography on early modern women's institutions in Italy. This historiography proposes the Council of Trent as a turning point that profoundly altered the organization and composition of women's institutions in seventeenth-century Italy and stifled all non-enclosed religious institutions. Yet, in light of this study on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century third order communities, countess Ercolani's attempts to set up a laical institution for noblewomen in Bologna in the late-seventeenth century appears less as an act of resistance to Tridentine decrees and more as a desire to found an institution like the many third order communities, *collegi*, and *conservatori* that existed in Bologna and elsewhere during this time.

Third order communities were central to the institutional landscape of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bergamo and Bologna. As Ercolani recognized, these were predominately institutions for the social ranks below the elites. Women of middling and professional ranks joined third order communities as tertiaries and entered these communities as boarders. For the women religious, third order communities permitted access to monastic life at a lesser cost than enclosed convents and under circumstances that combined contemplative life and active engagement in society. For

³ Ibid., 202.

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boarders, third order communities represented a space where to spend a stage of their life course. Third order women religious were custodians of young girls in education, but also of single women waiting to marry and enter adulthood in the eyes of eighteenth-century society. Married women entered a third order community when their husbands were away, or when they sought separation from their husband. Widows and elderly singlewomen turned to third order communities to spend the last years of their lives in care and company of the tertiaries. Third order communities were part of the institutional system based on honor that came to characterize Counter-Reformation Italy. For many women, third order communities represented an alternative to marriage and monacization, offering a third way that permitted women to live unmarried lives that were closely integrated in local societies. Since both enclosed convents as well as custodial institutions such as conservatories excluded many women based on socio-economic rank, age, or ability, third order communities filled a gap and brought flexibility into the institutional system of early modern Italy. The study of third order communities broadens and deepens our understanding of monastic and semi-monastic institutions in early modern Italy and highlights the central role of monastic institutions in the lived experiences of women of all social ranks in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

The eighteenth century cannot be excluded from studies of early modern women religious and monasticism. Rather than considering the eighteenth century as one of decline or, more commonly in current scholarship, not including this period in the study of early modern monasticism, I have consciously included the eighteenth century in this study to show the continued relevance of monastic and semi-monastic institutions in

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eighteenth-century societies. Moving away from monastic enclosure as a category of analysis and focusing on the activities of third order women religious and their communities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century urban societies has permitted me to do so.⁴ This bottom-up approach reveals the multifaceted role of third order women religious and their communities in their local neighborhoods and towns. Not only institutions that housed local women as either women religious or boarders, third order women religious and communities actively engaged the societies and economies that surrounded them.⁵ Third order houses were physically integrated in the densely built and populated urban environments of early modern Bergamo and Bologna, where neighbors were close and interactions between the women religious and their neighbors inevitable. Third order communities emerged as central nodes in local credit and labor markets; these economic activities intertwined with the tertiaries' charitable and social activities. Third order women religious engaged in activities that benefitted both their neighborhoods and towns but, importantly, also the third order communities by bringing financial income from rents, interests, and fees as well as social capital from reputation and networks. Third order communities were an integral part of seventeenth- and

⁴ Amanda L. Scott in her recent study of Spanish *seroras* has also focused on the position and function of these women religious in their local societies to reveal an alternative life course option available to women beyond marriage and convent, Amanda L. Scott, "Seroras and Local Religious Life in the Basque Country and Navarre, 1550-1769," *Church History* 85, no. 1 (2016): 40–64.

⁵ Katherine Gill has argued that late medieval religious laywomen in Italy, the *bizoke*, were integrated in their local communities and their institutions reflected particular local contexts, Katherine Gill, "Open Monasteries for Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy: Two Roman Examples," in *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Craig A. Monson (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 24. Elizabeth Leffeldt and Francesca Medioli have argued that local circumstances shaped third order communities in post-Tridentine Spain and Italy, Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 185–206; Francesca Medioli, "Monache e monacazioni nel Seicento," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33 (1997): 670–93. These studies have not explored such local integration in depth, however. This dissertation highlights how integration in local context permitted third order women religious and their communities to remain socially relevant throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

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eighteenth-century society. As such, these communities had to negotiate a multitude of expectations set upon them by the contemporary society and various authorities. The study of third order women religious and their communities opens a new window on society and economy in early modern Italy. By examining third order communities, we understand better the mechanisms for, and places of, female participation in early modern Italian society; in particular, we understand better the lives of middling rank women who are still largely absent from current scholarship.

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