

## Consorella or Mantellata?

### Notes on Catherine of Siena's Confraternal Legacy

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*Summary: In addition to her identity as a saint, reformer, political activist and visionary, Catherine of Siena was uniquely affiliated with two groundbreaking institutions of the late middle ages: the lay confraternity and the third order. This paper focuses specifically on the figure of Catherine in order to address several important questions related to confraternity studies, including the role of gender in distinguishing lay devotional groups, the nature of women's participation in confraternities, and the problem of their practice of the discipline. The resulting study sheds new light on Catherine's corporate devotional identity by documenting her commemoration in text, image, and historical memory as both a consorella and a mantellata.*

Caterina Benincasa (St. Catherine) was born in 1347 in Siena, a time and place rich in the demands and desires of a pious laity. One year later, the Black Death would diminish the commune's population by approximately one-half (among the dead there was also Catherine's twin sister), thereby increasing the surviving populace's interest in actively participating in religious life as a means of better securing salvation for themselves and their family. Firmly a part of the context of late Medieval spirituality in Siena, Catherine, according to her biographers, began to have religious visions around the age of six, including one of the Virgin to which she vowed her virginity; because of this, she later opposed her family's wishes to marry her, preferring instead to become her family's servant.<sup>1</sup> Around the age of twenty, Catherine became a member of a group of lay penitent women, the *mantellate*, or wearers of the Dominican habit.<sup>2</sup> Catherine committed herself to long stretches of solitary prayer in her private room at home, engaging in spiritual exercises and deepening her devotion, but she also met with her sisters for devotions in their chapel. After this period of spiritual development, Catherine became a more public figure, and began to increasingly devote herself to charitable acts and

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- 1 The events of Catherine's early life are gleaned from the two primary biographies written about her: *I miracoli*, hereafter *The Miracles*, written by an anonymous Florentine in 1374 and published in English as *The Little Flowers*, and *Legenda maior*, hereafter *Life of Catherine*, written between 1385 and 1395 by Catherine's confessor Raymond of Capua as her official hagiography and published in English as Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine*. Because the function of Catherine's biographies was not simply factual but served instead to develop her cult and argue for her orthodoxy and sanctity, the exact dating of events is uncertain.
  - 2 The biographical sources of *The Miracles* (age twenty-three) and the *Life of Catherine* (age eighteen) conflict on this point, indicating, as Lehmijoki-Gardner has written, the Dominican Order's interest in promoting the taking of the habit by penitents at a younger age, "Writing Religious Rules," 672.

community service by joining with a confraternity in the hospital of Siena to care for the sick stricken with repeated bouts of the plague. She also began to attract her own following, consisting of people who were drawn to Catherine's charismatic spirituality, sought her guidance, and recognized her apparent saintly identity. By the time of her early death at the age of thirty-three, Catherine of Siena had traveled well beyond her native city to Florence, Pisa, Avignon and Rome, all the while exchanging letters with popes, queens, Sieneese officials, and devoted followers.

In addition to her identity as a saint, reformer, political activist, and visionary, the preceding biographical sketch highlights a unique aspect of Catherine's character: she was directly affiliated with two of the groundbreaking institutions of the late middle ages, the lay confraternity and the *mantellate*, today commonly referred to as a third order.<sup>3</sup> This article will focus on the figure of Catherine of Siena in light of several important questions related to confraternity studies. First, what is the difference between the two institutions of the confraternity and the third order? Second, what is the function of gender in constructing that difference? Finally, was it possible for women to embrace not only the identity of a member of a confraternity, but also that of a tertiary; in other words, was a lay religious woman in the late middle ages such as Catherine of Siena a *consorella* or a *mantellata*?

The membership of both confraternities and third orders derived from the laity, citizens who congregated for devotions but lived at home among their families. While seeming to differ only as variations between two essentially similar entities, the corporate, lay institutions of the confraternity and the third order developed along gender lines.<sup>4</sup> Freer than the third order, connected to a church (often mendicant) as a source of priests for their services and as a possible site for devotions, but without strict oversight, confraternities became an important site for laymen not only to express their piety, but also to form social bonds and a civic, communal identity. Third orders, on the other hand, developed primarily as an institution for women, especially those of the non-elite classes unable to afford the higher dowries necessary for entry into nunneries. Tertiaries, as members of the third order are called, are different from members of a confraternity because they are connected officially to one of the religious orders and live by a rule that normally follows those of monks and nuns, with exceptions made in accordance with their life in the world rather than in the convent.<sup>5</sup>

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3 The issue of the appropriation by the Dominicans of the quasi-independent *mantellate* and their transformation into a formal third order will be discussed below. A "third order" is defined as a lay religious group associated with a Mendicant Order, but Lehmijoki-Gardner notes that "tertiary," a term used today for a member of such a group, was rarely used in the fourteenth century. See Lehmijoki-Gardner, introduction to *Dominican Penitent Women*, 2.

4 In fact, the early history of the two institutions is closely entwined, and it is difficult to separate the two in their early development.

5 Bornstein, "Spiritual Kinship," 173–92; "Third Orders," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 14:93–96.

In Siena, the *mantellate* met in the Chapel of the Vaults in the church of San Domenico.<sup>6</sup> This chapel was the scene of many significant events recounted in Catherine's biography, including the gift of her cloak to Christ disguised as a beggar, and the miracle of the column, when a votive candle fell on her head while she was having a vision, but she was not burned by it.<sup>7</sup> The defining activity of this group was their presence in the chapel to pray. The Sienese *mantellate*, "worshipped together, shared their meals, and accompanied each other on visits to nearby towns" and generally "followed a structured life of devotion."<sup>8</sup> Other Sienese tertiaries probably did not regularly practice such extreme public devotion and service as Catherine did, but because she was a tertiary, rather than a married woman or a cloistered nun, she had this option.

The development of the third order was significant for creating an opportunity for laywomen's communal religious practice. Previously, women were expected either to marry and live privately and piously within the home or become nuns and live in a convent. The third order provided an alternative whereby a woman could become both a member of an organized religious group and live outside the convent maintaining family ties and an active life. This alternative model for religious women was contested, however, as a brief discussion of its history will indicate.

A major source for our knowledge of the early development of the Order of Penance of St. Dominic, as the Dominican Third Order is known, is found in Raymond of Capua's *Life of Catherine of Siena*. Raymond narrates that Catherine joined the Order of Penance at the age of eighteen in order to establish her clear connection to the Dominican Order.<sup>9</sup> According to Raymond's account, the Order originated from a lay militia organized by St. Dominic and his followers to fight heretics, and it was only after this threat diminished that it transformed itself into a penitential group focused on prayer rather than fighting.<sup>10</sup> Once the group had transformed, it most likely would have been the equivalent of the early *laudese* confraternities that trace their origin to Peter Martyr.<sup>11</sup>

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6 For a discussion of the chapel, see Bacci, "La Cappella delle Suore," 3–21. On the membership of the *mantellate*, see *I necrologi di San Domenico*.

7 Raymond of Capua, *Life of Catherine*, 129–32, 122–23.

8 Lehmijoki-Gardner, "Writing Religious Rules," 672.

9 Many later sources used this traditional history provided by Raymond to construct the history of lay penitential groups. However, as Kearns has pointed out, Raymond's biography was written with the intention of spreading reform in the Dominican Order, and as such, he strove to write a history of the third order that was orthodox (Kearns, introduction to *Life of Catherine*). Thus, Raymond's description of Catherine joining the Order of Penance when she was eighteen contradicts the statement from *The Miracles*, written during Catherine's life, that she took the habit of St. Dominic as a lay penitent when she was twenty-three.

10 Raymond states that this group wore black and white clothing and said a specific number of prayers daily, initially in order to distinguish themselves from the rest of the laity (*Life of Catherine*, 71–72).

11 These confraternities included the Compagnia di Santa Croce which met in the church of

As was the case with confraternities, the common historical assumption has been that the mendicants created the third order in order to inspire lay piety. However, as Giles Gerard Meersseman and André Vauchez argue, tertiaries were not the creation of the mendicant orders, as presented by Raymond in his *Life of Catherine*, but instead emanated from pre-existing confraternities or lay orders of penance losing their autonomy in the late thirteenth century under pressure from the Papacy and the established religious orders.<sup>12</sup> The appropriation of the Order of Penance into the Dominican Order, they argue, was the result of the increasing threat that these early lay societies posed to the Church because their lack of theological training could produce unorthodox or borderline heretical practices. For example, in 1207 Pope Innocent III ordered the Humiliati to preach only on moral themes rather than on questions of Church doctrine. By 1289, the problems the church hierarchy had with organized lay devotional initiative caused Pope Nicholas IV to issue the bull *Supra montem* that attempted to place these lay orders of penance under the control and direction of the mendicant orders, ultimately succeeding in bringing only Franciscan lay penitents into the fold by approving the Rule of the Franciscan Third Order.<sup>13</sup>

The imposition of authority on what members considered an autonomous lay organization was met with opposition, for the groups had been formed not only because of the alienation of the laity from active devotion and control of their spirituality, but also because of unwanted dependence on the mediation of the clergy for their salvation. Therefore, the increasing appropriation of the lay penitential groups into the standard religious hierarchy was unwelcome, and the male members resigned, most likely choosing to pursue their communal devotional needs in the more autonomous confraternities.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Raymond asserts in his chapter on the history of the Order that after a while no men were numbered among these penitential groups, but the “sisters of penance” lived by a rule that was written in 1286 by Munio of Zamora, the Master-general of the Dominicans at that time. Tommaso of Siena (“Caffarini”), the author of a 1405 treatise on the history of the Order of Penance and the translator of its rule, elaborated on Raymond’s mention of a rule for the Order by claiming that Munio of Zamora wrote the formal rule of the Order of Penance in the late thirteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

The recent discovery by Lehmijoki-Gardner of Munio of Zamora’s original text and her resulting revision of the early history of the lay penitential groups sheds

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Santa Croce and the Compagnia di San Pier Martire e Laude della Vergine Maria which met in Santa Maria Novella, both in Florence. See John Henderson, *Piety and Charity*.

12 Meersseman, *Dossier de l'Ordre*; Vauchez, *The Laity*.

13 Vauchez, *The Laity*, 108–115; Lehmijoki-Gardner, introduction to *Dominican Penitent Women*, 6.

14 Vauchez, *The Laity*, 115.

15 Lehmijoki-Gardner, “Writing Religious Rules,” 675. For the Treatise and the Rule of the Third Order see Caffarini, *Tractatus di ordine*; English translation available as “The Dominican Penitent Rule,” ed. Lehmijoki-Gardner in *Dominican Penitent Women*, 46–56.

new light on Catherine of Siena's identity as a tertiary.<sup>16</sup> Lehmijoki-Gardner shows that rather than having written the rule of the Order of Penance of St. Dominic in 1286, what Munio of Zamora wrote instead was a short text of directives by which a single group of penitent women in Orvieto would live, thus indicating that lay religious penitents were more autonomous and independent from the Dominican Order during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries than was previously thought. Catherine of Siena, therefore, was part of a group of relatively independent lay religious women who wore the Dominican habit, thus gaining the moniker *mantellate* or "wearers of the cloak," but Catherine was not yet a professed Sister of the Order of Penance of St. Dominic.<sup>17</sup> The rule of the Order of Penance of St. Dominic was written and subsequently approved by the pope only after Catherine's death, at which time the promoters of her cult within the Dominican reform movement, including Raymond of Capua and Tommaso of Siena, seized the opportunity to present Catherine as a Dominican tertiary saint and moved to institutionalize Dominican female penitents.

As its complex history indicates, the lay religious alternative for women was not without problems. Because tertiaries did not take formal vows and usually lived at home, these women were not enclosed like their second order counterparts, and therefore they had more flexibility in their religious activity. When this identity was adopted by the young, unmarried Catherine, she was at first denied membership for fear of corrupting the reputation of the *mantellate*, who had previously allowed only widows into their ranks.<sup>18</sup> In addition, although women had been taking the habit of the Dominican Order and living religious lives for centuries, a formal rule was not written or accepted officially by the papacy until 1405.<sup>19</sup> Instead, as was the case with Munio of Zamora's *Ordinationes*, individual communities had to request specific rulings and privileges to defend their lifestyle.<sup>20</sup> The delayed institutionalization of the Dominican Third Order suggests that the Church still had problems with this alternative identity for religious women. The presence of women actively working and praying in public, unrestricted by formal vows, remained troubling until the Council of Trent, at which time all of the female foundations of the third order were cloistered.<sup>21</sup>

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16 Lehmijoki-Gardner, "Writing Religious Rules"; and Lehmijoki-Gardner, introduction to *Dominican Penitent Women*, 1–8. For the translation of the text see "Munio of Zamora's the *Ordinationes*" in *idem*, 39–45.

17 The Rule was approved by Pope Innocent VII on 26 June 1405 in the bull *Sedis apostolicae*. It was first published in 1407 by Tommaso of Siena in his treatise on the Order of Penance. See Lehmijoki-Gardner, "Writing Religious Rules," 671.

18 Raymond, *Life of Catherine*, 65.

19 See n. 17 above.

20 Lehmijoki-Gardner, "Writing Religious Rules," 670.

21 All female religious were cloistered according to the decree *De regularibus et monialibus* passed by the Council of Trent in 1563. On the Dominican tertiaries that followed St. Catherine see Zarri, "Living Saints."

It appears, however, that from the fifteenth until the mid-sixteenth century the third order became an acceptable way for lay women to participate in organized, communal devotion because of the presence and control of male authority figures and because of their place within the institutional hierarchy. But did women also participate in confraternities? Sources on women in confraternities during this period are scarce, but there is evidence of women's involvement.<sup>22</sup> In Florence there is evidence of a women's consorority that met in San Lorenzo by 1303 (Compagnia di San Lorenzo delle Donne, also known as the *societas mulierum S. Laurentii*),<sup>23</sup> one that met in Santa Maria del Carmine (Compagnia di Santa Maria del Popolo),<sup>24</sup> and there is also mention of female participation after 1377 in the Compagnia di San Zanobi (or di S. Reparata dei Laudesi) that met in the Cathedral.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Linda Guzzetti and Antje Ziemann recently have shown that there was a strong female presence in Venetian confraternities in the fourteenth century,<sup>26</sup> and Catharine King has studied the artistic patronage of a sixteenth-century Perugian consorority.<sup>27</sup>

There is thus evidence for women's participation in confraternities, yet the nature of these groups or the degree of women's activity within them is not always clear.<sup>28</sup> At least one of the Florentine foundations is described as *laudese*, and some scholars have stated that one must assume that the remaining confraternities were based on this model. The devotional activity of the other main type of confraternity, the *disciplinati*, disqualified women's participation since their group identity was based on the communal flagellation of members' bare flesh, which women could not have performed out of modesty.<sup>29</sup> Meersseman suggests, however, that while

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22 A brief mention of *consorelle* in Sienese confraternities such as the Compagnia della Santissima Trinità, Compagnia di San Giovanni Battista della Morte, and the Confraternità di San Giovanni Battista sotto la Metropolitana, which had its own female branch, can be found in Ceppari Ridolfi/Turrini, "Il movimento," 265–66. Specific studies of women's participation in Italian confraternities include Terpstra, "Women in the Brotherhood," 193–212; Casagrande, "Confraternities and Lay Female Religiosity," 48–66; and Esposito, "Men and Women in Roman Confraternities," 93–97.

23 Henderson, *Piety and Charity*, 460.

24 Founded in 1460, this company "took its name from the icon of the Madonna which was already in the Brancacci Chapel: Santa Maria del Popolo" (Mohlo, "The Brancacci Chapel," 83).

25 Henderson, *Piety and Charity*, 94, 111; Richard Trexler mentions another consorority named Domine societas Annunziate in Sancta Croce, see *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, 15, n. 28.

26 Guzzetti/Ziemann, "Women in the Fourteenth-Century Venetian Scuole," 1151–95.

27 The Compagnia della Nostra Donna, which met at the church of San Antonio Abate (King, *Renaissance Women Patrons*, 200–11). According to Henderson, women's membership in confraternities became more common in the sixteenth century (*Piety and Charity*, 111).

28 Casagrande investigates the difference "between presence and real worth" in her study of women's participation in Umbrian confraternities, "Confraternities and Lay Female Religiosity," 65.

29 Ahl /Wisch, "Introduction," 1–2. On the issue of women's participation in flagellant



women could not have participated in the flagellation ritual, they could have taken part in other spiritual activities of *disciplinati* confraternities such as prayer and burial.<sup>30</sup> The evidence, both textual and visual, of Catherine of Siena's confraternal activities provides further insight into this complicated situation.

As a *mantellata*, the Chapel of the Vaults in San Domenico was Catherine's spiritual home, where she joined her sisters in prayer. Later in her life, when Catherine assumed a more active and public role in the city, other sites developed devotional importance for her. The main hospital of Siena, Santa Maria della Scala, originally served as a pilgrims' house to shelter those travelling on the Via Francigena heading to Rome.<sup>31</sup> By the fourteenth century, however, the hospital took care of the sick stricken by the plague and famine, and was the site of many of Catherine's charitable works.

There were many confraternities in Siena during Catherine's time, and she is documented as having had connections with at least two of the groups that met in the vaults under the Hospital: the Compagnia della Vergine and the Disciplinati di San Michele Arcangelo.<sup>32</sup> The most prestigious confraternity in Siena was the Compagnia della Vergine, which consisted both of a charitable society and a flagellant society, also known as the Disciplinati della Santa Maria Vergine.<sup>33</sup> Catherine wrote several letters to the flagellant company, which included several of her disciples, such as Andrea Vanni, who painted Catherine's earliest image (S. Domenico, ca. 1383), Cristofano di Gano Guidini, and Neri di Landoccio Pagliaresi.<sup>34</sup> However,

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confraternities also see Terpstra, "Women in the Brotherhood," and Casagrande, "Confraternities and Lay Female Religiosity," 48–54.

30 Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, I, 498–504.

31 On the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala see Gallavotti Cavallero, *Lo Spedale*.

32 At least 18 confraternities have been identified in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Siena. See Wainwright, "Andrea Vanni."

33 The Disciplinati della Santa Maria Vergine was formed from three groups that joined together in the mid fourteenth century: the Raccomandati di Gesù Crocifisso, the Confraternità della Madonna sotto il Duomo (also known as the Compagnia Beata Vergine Maria in Duomo), and the Confraternità dei Disciplinati di N. S. Gesù Cristo sotto le volte dello Spedale (Gallavotti Cavallero, *Lo Spedale*, 381). The Disciplinati della Santa Maria Vergine is also referred to in the scholarly literature as the Compagnia della Vergine Maria della disciplina and the Confraternità dei Disciplinati, and after the Compagnia della Vergine's suppression, the group became the modern-day charitable organization known as the Società dei Esecutori di Pie Disposizioni. The Raccomandati di Gesù Cristo, one of the flagellant groups out of which the Disciplinati della Santa Maria Vergine was formed, changed its name around 1350 to the Compagnia de la Vergine Maria della disciplina (Wainwright, "Andrea Vanni").

34 Wainwright, "Andrea Vanni," 111. The letters that Catherine wrote to this group are numbers T184 "To the prior and brothers of the Company of the Virgin Mary in Siena," translated and published in *Letters*, ed. Suzanne Noffke, 2: 308–315; T321 "Al Priore e fratelli della Compagnia della disciplina della Vergine Maria dell'ospedale di Siena," and T5 published in *Le lettere*, ed. Pietro Misciatelli.

exactly what level of direct devotional or charitable participation she had with the Compagnia della Vergine is unclear.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the Compagnia della Vergine, the other confraternity with which Catherine was active was the Disciplinati di San Michele Arcangelo. According to the confraternity's own description of their origins, Catherine engaged in works of piety in the hospital and conducted the discipline with this group.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Catherine spent such long hours praying and working with the sick in the hospital that she would stay there overnight, in a small room adjoining the confraternity's oratory, after falling asleep from exhaustion.<sup>37</sup> After her death, the members of the Disciplinati di San Michele Arcangelo began to support the cult of Catherine, and in 1477 they fused with another confraternity that met under the Duomo in order to create a new company dedicated to the saint.<sup>38</sup> They named their confraternity Santa Caterina della Notte in honour of Catherine's late nights at the hospital as well as their practice of night time prayer, and their oratory became a site for the celebration of her cult. Today transformed into a shrine, at the time the room was provided not only for Catherine to rest but perhaps also for her to participate in the discipline discreetly with male members of the confraternity.<sup>39</sup>

One of the issues confusing the study of women's participation in confraternities is the imprecise labelling of tertiaries and *consorelle* in the documents and scholarship, and the concomitant lack of distinction between the two types of institutions with regard to women's participation. Lay female religious could be called *terziare*, *vestite*, *pinzochiere*, or *penitente*.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes they are even confused with nuns because of the use of "sister" (*suora*). Likewise, the names referring to the two types of institutions, confraternities and third orders, get confused. For example, a chapel dedicated to St. Catherine of Siena in the Florentine Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella is referred to both as that of the "Compagnia di Santa Catarina

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35 Some have stated that Catherine was a member of this group, but Noffke follows others' statements about female participation in flagellant confraternities and says that "Catherine, of course, could be called a member of the confraternity only by association, since all true members were men," *Letters*, 2:308 n. 2.

36 "Questa Compagnia di S.ta Caterina della Notte sotto le volte dello Spedale di S.ta Maria della Scala secondo che si legge al Libro delle Chiese di Siena del S.to Spedale a fo. 21. Ebbe origine in detto Spedale avanti la detta Santa, e questi Fratelli militavano sotto la Protezione, e devozione di San Michel' Arcangiolo; e perche questa Santa nostra Concittadina in occasione che andava a fare opere di Pietà in S.to Spedale si ritirava in questa Compagnia a far disciplina appo la di Lei morte questi Fratelli cominciarono a militare sotto la pia devozione di detta Santa..." Archivio di Stato di Siena, hereafter ASS, Patrimonio dei Resti Ecclesiastici, 568, fol. 1, my transcription.

37 Noffke, *Vision through a Distant Eye*, 171.

38 ASS, Pat. Resti Ecc., 568, fols. 1<sup>v</sup>–3<sup>v</sup>.

39 The room in which Catherine prayed was later commemorated by a sculpture of Catherine reclining in sleep, exhausted from prayer, alluding to the Confraternity's name. This sculpture has been attributed incorrectly to Vecchietta, but it is instead a late seventeenth-century work. See Puglisi, catalogue entry in *Iconografia*, 459.

40 Lemijoki-Gardner, "Writing Religious Rules," 667–68.



da Siena” and as the “Capella di S. Caterina da Siena delle Terziarie.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, its identity as either a *compagnia* or a *terziere* is unclear.

As this Florentine example attests, St. Catherine’s identity as both a *consorella* and a *mantellata* led to the foundation of institutions of both types dedicated to her after her canonization in 1461. The renaming of the Disciplinati di San Michele Arcangelo to Santa Caterina della Notte points to the significant development of Catherine’s cult after her death, where her own devotional spaces were transformed into cult sites and institutions formed around them. Likewise, Catherine’s family home, where she grew up, underwent private spiritual exercises, and practiced her discipline, was transformed into a sanctuary in the fifteenth century.<sup>42</sup> The Sanctuary of St. Catherine, as the entire complex is named, is actually composed of many separate oratories and chapels built in piecemeal fashion beginning in the mid-fifteenth century.

In 1424, the parishes neighbouring Catherine’s house, San Pellegrino and San Antonio, applied to the city for permission to build a memorial to St. Catherine.<sup>43</sup> The earliest part of the house to be remodelled was the *tintoria*, the dye-shop of Catherine’s father Jacopo, located on the lower level of the house and now known as the Oratorio dell’Oca. The Commune of Siena purchased Catherine’s house in 1464. The Confraternity of St. Catherine of Siena, which first met in San Domenico after Catherine’s canonization and was composed of members of the parishes of San Pellegrino and San Antonio, moved there to use the space as its official oratory after applying for permission to found a Catherinian shrine in 1462.<sup>44</sup> Beginning in 1465, the dye-shop was remodelled, the ceiling was raised and vaulted, and a façade was added.<sup>45</sup> Originally intended both as an oratory and as a place to celebrate the feast of St. Catherine, the structure could not contain the many pilgrims that visited it. The sanctuary of St. Catherine was expanded beginning in 1534 when the room above the dye-shop, originally the family’s kitchen (and now known as the Oratorio della Cucina), was remodelled for the use of the brothers of the confraternity.<sup>46</sup>

The other two fifteenth-century Siennese institutions dedicated to St. Catherine continued her tertiary legacy rather than her confraternal one. The Monastery of St. Catherine of Paradise (Monasterio di Santa Caterina detto del Paradiso) was founded in 1471, ten years after Catherine’s canonization, and its members came from the *mantellate* who previously had met in the Chapel of the Vaults in San

41 For the original location of this altar and its furnishings see Hall, “The Ponte in S. Maria Novella,” 157–73.

42 On the Sanctuary of St. Catherine see Riedl/Seidel, *Die Kirchen von Siena*, 2:57–304; Toncelli, *La Casa*; Torriti, *La Casa e la Basilica*.

43 Riedl/Seidel, *Die Kirchen von Siena*, 2:58; published by Marie-Hyacinth Laurent, “Appendice,” 472–73; original in ASS, Notarile, fols. 14<sup>v</sup>–15<sup>r</sup>.

44 Riedl/Seidel, *Die Kirchen*, 2:58–9; ASS, *Guida-Inventario*, vol., 48.

45 Noffke, *Vision*, 157.

46 This oratory was not finished until 1546, see Kirwin, “The Oratory,” 199–220; and Riedl, “Das Altarretabel,” 299–313.

Domenico.<sup>47</sup> The main structure of the monastery was made possible by a donation of several small houses from the Malavoti family.<sup>48</sup> This new institution was not formed from one of the original devotional spaces of Catherine herself, but instead it was an expansion of her group of tertiaries from their humble chapel in San Domenico. They had now chosen to live together, remaining uncloistered, rather than with their families.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, the Monastery of St. Catherine of Eternal Life (Monasterio di Santa Caterina di Vita Eterna) was founded in 1494 by the tertiaries of the new Observant Dominican monastery of Santo Spirito in order to create an uncloistered religious community in honour of St. Catherine.<sup>50</sup>

Florence similarly witnessed the foundation of lay groups dedicated to St. Catherine in the fifteenth century. The above-mentioned group of women who owned an altar of St. Catherine in Santa Maria Novella was most likely a group of Dominican tertiaries, rather than *consorelle*, since the group is named in the Italian documents as “S. Caterina da Siena delle Terziere” and “Terziere dell’Ordine.”<sup>51</sup> Another newly-founded Dominican Third Order community in Florence dedicated to St. Catherine was the Capitolo di Santa Caterina in Via Gualfonda, which also met close to Santa Maria Novella.<sup>52</sup> These third order foundations were in addition to the establishment of the Monasterio di Santa Caterina da Siena, founded in 1494 on Piazza San Marco.<sup>53</sup> Finally, there is mention of a flagellant confraternity dedicated to Sts. Bernardino and Catherine that met in Santa Maria degli Alberighi as early as 1478.<sup>54</sup>

Regarding the question of women's participation in *disciplinati* confraternities, as Meersseman has noted, one must be aware of the function of rhetoric in contemporary descriptions of women flagellating with men.<sup>55</sup> Certainly the Compagnia di Santa Caterina della Notte in Siena claimed that Catherine participated in the discipline

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47 ASS, *Guida-Inventario*, 2:178. The documents for this institution are housed in ASS, Conventi, files 1148–1272. File 1152 includes documents that specifically discuss the origins of the convent and the 1430 chapters of the *mantellate*. On the Monastery of Saint Catherine of Paradise see Riedl/Seidel, *Die Kirchen*, 2:6–56.

48 ASS, *Guida-Inventario*, 2:178.

49 Reardon, *Holy Concord within Sacred Walls*, 11.

50 ASS, *Guida Invetario*, 41.

51 Borghigiani, *Cronaca Annalistica*, transcribed in Orlandi, *Necrologio di S. Maria Novella*, 2:401. Despite being described as a tertiary group in Italian, English-language scholars have referred to it as a “lay company” using the name Compagnia di Santa Caterina or Congregazione, see Thomas, *Art and Piety*, 246–47. While using the term “congregazione”, Thomas nevertheless refers to the group as one of “Third Order women,” Thomas, “Images of St Catherine,” 171. In his reference to a possible consistory that met in Santa Maria Novella, Henderson calls this group S. Caterina delle Donne, *Piety and Charity*, 451.

52 Thomas, *Art and Piety*, 246. See also Padoa Rizzo, “Sulla iconografia,” 280–83.

53 del Migliore, *Firenze città nobilissima illustrata*, 205–06. Also see Thomas, *Art and Piety*, 246–47; and Padoa Rizzo, “Sulla iconografia,” 278.

54 Henderson, *Piety and Charity*, 449.

55 Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, 501.

with their earlier members.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps this claim was a way to defend the significance of their foundation and assert its ties to Catherine, but the presence of a separate yet adjacent room to their oratory allows for the possibility of accommodating Catherine's participation in the discipline with these men. Whether the claim of the members of Santa Caterina della Notte is simply rhetorical or not, there is no question that Catherine herself practiced the discipline, as evidenced by her biographies and the testimonies of her companions. Raymond of Capua repeatedly describes Catherine's use of the scourge from a very young age; considering the function of Raymond's *vita* for establishing the orthodoxy and therefore sanctity of Catherine, his assertion of this aspect of her identity suggests its acceptance.<sup>57</sup>

Even more remarkable evidence of women's participation in the discipline comes from another of Catherine of Siena's hagiographical sources. A pen and ink drawing in the margin of an early fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Libellus de supplemento*, or *Supplement*, written by Tommaso of Siena as an expansion of the material included in Raymond's official *vita* of Catherine, depicts the *Flagellation of Catherine of Siena by a Consorella*.<sup>58</sup> Catherine kneels with her hands crossed at her chest and her eyes open yet looking down toward her left where another woman stands wearing the same habit of the *mantellate* as she. The woman looks down at Catherine while raising her right arm in the air, holding a scourge that she lowers toward Catherine's back. This drawing evinces not only the established fact that Catherine practiced the discipline, as is depicted in another drawing in the manuscript, but also that she did so together with others.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the drawing further asserts the corporate nature of Catherine's devotion, an aspect of her identity explored in the present article.

After Catherine joined the sisters of penance, Raymond describes her as enclosed in her room at home in solitary prayer for nearly three years. The solitary, visionary aspect of Catherine's identity is certainly well-known, but after these three years, she entered more publicly into the world. At that time Catherine began to worship with her sisters in their chapel and work and pray at the Hospital. The act of flagellation by a penitent was meant to exhibit humility and obedience in an attempt to experience the pain of Christ's Passion. This practice, however, need not be done only in solitude, for displaying the act of flagellation in front of others added to one's sense of humility, in imitation of Christ's public humiliation and agony in his Passion. It was the motivation for pious laypersons to join together in flagellant confraternities. In the drawing *Flagellation of Catherine of Siena by a Consorella*, Catherine's act of penitence is heightened by the assistance of another. In the text

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<sup>56</sup> See n. 36 above.

<sup>57</sup> Raymond of Capua, *Life of Catherine*, 58.

<sup>58</sup> For an illustration and a discussion of the entire cycle of drawings in the manuscript see Moerer, "Visual Hagiography," 89–102 and figure 8.

<sup>59</sup> Drawing of *Catherine of Siena Conducting the Discipline*. For an illustration see Moerer, "Visual Hagiography," 91, figure 3.

accompanying the image, Tommaso cites Raymond's description of Catherine's practice of the discipline and being flagellated at a very young age.<sup>60</sup>

Still, the rhetorical aspect of the textual and visual evidence for Catherine's corporate practice of the discipline must be recognized. Both Tommaso and Raymond were constructing Catherine of Siena's hagiography according to previously established models of sanctity in order to argue for, and ultimately gain, her canonization. The *confratelli* of the Compagnia di Santa Caterina della Notte were, in turn, looking to capitalize on their connection to their local saint and civic heroine. Certainly there is a degree of idealization present. And yet, the inclusion of the corporate nature of Catherine's devotion in sources meant to assert orthodoxy and excite a cult following suggests legitimacy.

As the Dominican Third Order gained in popularity and prestige in the fifteenth century, with a founder to celebrate and with their rule written and confirmed, and as women's participation in confraternities increased moving toward the sixteenth century, we find the figure of Catherine of Siena commemorated in text, image, and historical memory as both a *consorella* and a *mantellata*.

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60 The corresponding lines of text are, "Quod etiam huic virgini beate Catherine contigit aliquando utpote per socias disciplinari, ut patet in hac secunda parte huius libelli modicum supra hunc tractatum, ex quibus utique disciplinis seu flagellis propter carnis et maxime virginalis teneritudinem, in eadem livores et signa infallibiliter remanebant." Transcribed from Caffarini, *Libellus de supplemento*, 141.

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